# Pure Dhamma 

## A Quest to Recover Buddha's True Teachings



## Table of Contents

Part I Home ..... 1
Part II Buddha Dhamma ..... 5
1 User's Guide to Pure Dhamma Website ..... 7
2 Buddha Dhamma - A Scientific Approach ..... 12
Introduction - A Scientific Approach to Buddha Dhamma .....  12
Theories of Our World - Scientific Overview ..... 16
Mind and Matter - Buddhist Analysis ..... 18
Sensual Pleasures - The Hidden Suffering ..... 22
Kammic Energy Leads to Consciousness ..... 25
Brain and the Gandhabba ..... 29
Mind Is Not in the Brain ..... 29
Gandhabba in a Human Body - an Analogy ..... 32
Persistent Vegetative State - Buddhist View ..... 35
Patient H.M. - Different Roles of Brain in Memory ..... 39
Memory Recall for Gandhabba in a Human Body ..... 43
Our Two Worlds - Rupa Loka and Nāma Loka ..... 46
Autobiographical Memory - Preserved in Nāma Loka ..... 47
Rūpa and Rūpakkhandha, Nāma and Nāmagotta ..... 50
Response to a Sensory Stimulus - Role of Gati/Anusaya ..... 54
Ārammaṇa Plays a Critical Role in a Sensory Event ..... 58
Nāma Loka and Rūpa Loka - Two Parts of Our World ..... 62
Tipiṭaka - A Systematic Approach ..... 66
Tipiṭaka - The Uniqueness of Buddha Dhamma ..... 66
Pāli Canon Is Self-Contained but Requires Detailed Explanation ..... 69
Vinaya Piṭaka - More Than Disciplinary Rules ..... 73
Abhidhamma Piṭaka - Deeper Analyses of Concepts ..... 76
Antarābhava and Gandhabba ..... 79
Antarābhava - No Connection to Gandhabba ..... 79
Antarābhava Discussion in Kathāvatthu - Not Relevant to Gandhabba ..... 82
How Do We See? - Role of the Gandhabba ..... 86
Interpretation of the Tipiṭaka - Gandhabba Example ..... 91
3 Buddhahood Associated Controversies ..... 96
Buddhahood Controversies - Introduction ..... 96
Pātịāriya (Supernormal Abilities) of a Buddha - Part I ..... 99
Pāṭihāriya (Supernormal Abilities) of a Buddha - Part II ..... 103
4 What is Buddha Dhamma? ..... 108
5 Foundation of Dhamma ..... 112
6 The Importance of Purifying the Mind ..... 115
7 The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma ..... 119
The Grand Unified Theory of Dhammā - Introduction ..... 119
Our Two Worlds: Material and Immaterial ..... 123
31 Realms Associated with the Earth ..... 128
Gandhabba - Only in Human and Animal Realms ..... 132
Body Types in 31 Realms - Importance of Manomaya Kāya ..... 137
Gandhabba Sensing the World - With and Without a Physical Body ..... 141
Nibbāna in the Big Picture ..... 146
8 Buddha Dhamma: Non-Perceivability and Self-Consistency ..... 150
9 Saṃsāric Time Scale, Buddhist Cosmology, and the Big Bang Theory ..... 154
10 Evidence for Rebirth ..... 156
11 Power of the Human Mind ..... 160
Power of the Human Mind - Introduction ..... 160
Difference Between Jhāna and Stages of Nibbāna ..... 162
Power of the Human Mind - Anāriya or Mundane Jhānā ..... 166
Power of the Human Mind - Ariya Jhānā ..... 170
Are There Procedures for Attaining Magga Phala, Jhāna and Abhiññ̄a? ..... 172
12 Transfer of Merits (Pattidāna) - How Does it Happen? ..... 176
13 First Noble Truth is Suffering? Myths about Suffering ..... 180
14 Vinaya - The Nature Likes to be in Equilibrium ..... 183
Part III Key Dhamma Concepts ..... 186
1 Basic Framework of Buddha Dhamma ..... 190
Buddha Dhamma - Noble Truths, Paṭicca Samuppāda, Tilakkhaṇa ..... 190
Noble Truths, Paṭicca Samuppāda, Tilakkhaṇa - Key Relationships ..... 193
Anicca Nature, the First Noble Truth, and Paṭicca Samuppāda ..... 197
Tilakkhana - Introduction ..... 201
Anicca and Anatta - Two Characteristics of the World ..... 201
Anuloma Khanti and Sammattaniyāma - Pre-requisites for a Sotāpanna ..... 205
Anicca Nature - Not Possible to Overcome Suffering in This World ..... 209
Dukkha in Tilakkhaṇa Is a Characteristic - Not Dukkha Vedanā ..... 212
Attachment to Things with Dukkha Lakkhaṇa Leads to Dukkha ..... 215
How Does Anicca Nature Lead to Dukkha? ..... 218
Anatta is a Characteristic of the World, not About a "Self" ..... 223
Anatta in Anattalakkhaṇa Sutta - Part 1 ..... 226
Anatta in Anattalakkhaṇa Sutta - Part 2 ..... 229
2 San ..... 233
What is "Say"? Meaning of Saysāra (or Saṃsāra) ..... 233
Sañkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka ..... 237
Sañkhāra - Life is a Bundle of Sańkhāra ..... 242
Difference Between Dhammā and Sañkhāra ..... 244
Kamma are Done with Sańkhāra - Types of Sañkhāra ..... 249
3 Nibbāna ..... 253
Nibbāna - Is it Difficult to Understand? ..... 253
The Four Stages in Attaining Nibbāna ..... 256
What Are Rūpa? (Relation to Nibbāna) ..... 260
Nirāmisa Sukha ..... 262
Does the First Noble Truth Describe only Suffering? ..... 264
Nirodha and Vaya - Two Different Concepts ..... 268
Nibbāna "Exists", but Not in This World ..... 270
4 Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta ..... 276
Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta - Wrong Interpretations ..... 276
Anatta and Dukkha - True Meanings ..... 282
Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta - According to Some Key Suttas ..... 285
Anicca - True Meaning ..... 290
Anicca - Inability to Keep What We Like ..... 290
Anicca - Repeated Arising/Destruction ..... 295
Anicca - Worthlessness of Worldly Things ..... 296
Anicca - The Incessant Distress ("Pīlana") ..... 300
How to Cultivate the Anicca Saññā ..... 304
How to Cultivate the Anicca Saññā - II ..... 307
If Everything is Anicca Should We Just give up Everything? ..... 310
Anattā - A Systematic Analysis ..... 312
Anattā in Anattalakkahana Sutta - No Soul or an Ātma ..... 313
Anatta - No Refuge in This World ..... 315
Dasa Akusala and Anatta - The Critical Link ..... 319
Anatta - the Opposite of Which Atta? ..... 322
Anattā (Mundane Interpretation) - No "Unchanging Self" ..... 326
Tilakkhaṇa - English Discourses ..... 329
The Way to Nibbāna - Transcription of a Discourse by Waharaka Thero ..... 331
Sotāpanna Stage and Tilakkhaṇa ..... 332
Sakkāya Diṭṭhi and Tilakkhaṇa ..... 332
Sakkāya Diț̣̣hi - Getting Rid of Deeper Wrong Views ..... 336
Associations (Sevana) - A Root Cause of Wrong Views ..... 340
Why are Tilakkhana not Included in 37 Factors of Enlightenment? ..... 344
Two Versions of 37 Factors of Enlightenment ..... 346
Types of Bodies in 31 Realms - Connection to Jhāna ..... 350
Finest Manomaya Kāya of an Arūpāvacara Brahma ..... 352
5 Gati, Bhava, and Jāti ..... 356
Namagotta, Bhava, Kamma Bīja, and Mano Loka (Mind Plane) ..... 356
Gati and Bhava - Many Varieties ..... 359
Gati to Bhava to Jāti - Ours to Control ..... 363
Memory, Brain, Mind, Nama Loka, Kamma Bhava, Kamma Vipāka ..... 367
Bhava and Jāti - States of Existence and Births Therein ..... 369
Cuti and Marana - Related to Bhava and Jāti ..... 372
Anusaya, Gati, Bhava - Connection to Manomaya Kāya (Gandhabba) ..... 376
Difference Between Taṇhā and Upādāna ..... 379
Pāpa Kamma Versus Akusala Kamma ..... 384
6 Sorting out Some Key Pali Terms (Taṇhā, Lobha, Dos a, Moha, etc) ..... 388
Kama Tanhā, Bhava Tannhā, Vibhava Tanhā ..... 388
Tanhā - How We Attach Via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance ..... 390
Lobha, Rāga and Kāmacchanda, Kāmarāga ..... 393
Lobha, Dosa, Moha Versus Rāga, Paṭigha, Avijjā ..... 395
What is Avijjā (Ignorance)? ..... 397
Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways ..... 400
Indriya and Āyatana - Big Difference ..... 402
Hetu-Phala, Paccuppanna, and Paṭicca Samuppāda ..... 405
Diṭṭhi (Wrong Views), Sammā Diṭṭhi (Good/Correct Views) ..... 407
Correct Meaning of Vacī Sañkhāra ..... 409
Kāmacchanda and Icca - Being Blinded by Cravings ..... 413
7 The Five Aggregates (Pañcakkhandha) ..... 417
Five Aggregates - Introduction ..... 417
Difference Between Physical Rūpa and Rūpakkhandha ..... 421
Rūpakkhandha and Rūpa Upādānakkhandha ..... 424
Arising of Five Aggregates Based on an Ārammaṇa ..... 427
Memory Records - Critical Part of Five Aggregates ..... 432
Pañca Upādānakkhandhā - Introduction ..... 436
Five Aggregates - Connection to Tilakkhaṇa ..... 439
Five Aggregates and Tilakkhaṇa - Introduction ..... 439
Icca, Nicca, Anicca - Important Connections ..... 444
"Me" and "Mine" - The Root Cause of Suffering ..... 449
Difference Between "Me and Mine" and Sakkāya Dițṭhi ..... 453
Sakkāya Ditṭhi - "Me and Mine" View ..... 457
Atta - Two Very Different Meanings ..... 461
Saññā (Perception) ..... 466
Vedanā (Feelings) ..... 466
Viññāṇa (Defiled Consciousness) ..... 468
Rūpa (Material Form) ..... 471
Pañcakkhandha or Five Aggregates - A Misinterpreted Concept ..... 473
Pañcaupādānakkhandha - It is All Mental ..... 478
8 Nāma \& Rūpa to Nāmarūpa ..... 482
Mental Aggregates ..... 482
What is Sañña (Perception)? ..... 482
Saññā - What It Really Means ..... 483
Future Suffering - Why It Arises ..... 485
Vipallāsa (Diṭṭhi, Saññā, Citta) Affect Sañkhāra ..... 488
Ps 1.8 Treatise of Distortions - Vipallāsakathā ..... 493
Samāropanahāra vibhañga ( Ne 19 ) ..... 497
What Is Vedanā (Feelings)? ..... 505
Vedanā and Samphassa Jā Vedanā - More Than Just Feelings ..... 505
Vedanā - What It Really Means ..... 508
Does Bodily Pain Arise Only Due to Kamma Vipāka? ..... 512
Sañkhāra - What It Really Means ..... 515
Rūpa Aggregate ..... 520
Bhūta and Yathābhūta - What Do They Really Mean ..... 520
What are Rūpa? - Dhammā are Rūpa Too! ..... 524
Viññāṇa Aggregate ..... 529
Viññāṇa - What It Really Means ..... 529
Kamma Viññāṇa - Link Between Mind and Matter ..... 533
Anidassana Viññāṇa - What It Really Means ..... 537
Nāmarūpa Formation ..... 541
Kamma Viññ̄ạ̣a and Nāmarūpa Pariccheda Ñāṇa ..... 542
Part IV Living Dhamma ..... 546
1 Essential Buddhism ..... 548
Four Noble Truths - Suffering and Its Elimination ..... 548
Introduction to Citta, Vedanā, Saññā, Sañkhāra, and Viññāṇa ..... 552
Viññ̄ṇa - Consciousness Together With Future Expectations ..... 556
Connection Between Sañkhāra and Viññ̄āna ..... 561
Viññāṇa and Sañkhāra - Connection to Paṭicca Samuppāda ..... 564
Breath Meditation Is Addictive and Harmful in the Long Run ..... 567
Ānāpānasati Eliminates Mental Stress Permanently ..... 572
Ānāpāna and Satipaṭṭhāna - Fundamentals ..... 576
Sati in Ānāpānasati/Satipaṭ̣̆hāna - Two Meanings of Sati ..... 578
2 Living Dhamma - Overview ..... 584
Living Dhamma - Introduction ..... 584
Peace of Mind to Nibbāna - The Key Step ..... 587
Starting on the Path Even without Belief in Rebirth ..... 590
3 Dhamma with Less Pāli ..... 593
Buddha Dhamma for an Inquiring Mind - Part I ..... 593
Root of All Suffering - Ten Immoral Actions ..... 597
Is Suffering the Same as the First Noble Truth on Suffering? ..... 598
Dhamma, Sañkhāra, Sañkhata, Rūpa, Viññāṇa, Gati, Āsava, Anusaya ..... 601
Complexity of the Mind - Viññāṇa and Sañkhāra ..... 605
Citta, Manō, Viññ̄n̄a - Nine Stages of a Thought ..... 607
4 Living Dhamma - Fundamentals ..... 612
What Are Kilesa (Mental Impurities)? - Connection to Cetasika ..... 612
Suffering in This Life - Role of Mental Impurities ..... 616
Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta - Relevance to Suffering in This Life ..... 617
How Are Gati and Kilesa Incorporated into Thoughts? ..... 617
Noble Eightfold Path - Role of Sobhana Cetasika ..... 618
Getting to Samadhi ..... 622
Sexual Orientation - Effects of Kamma and Gati (Sañkhāra) ..... 623
5 Mundane Sammā Samādhi ..... 627
Micca Dițṭhi - Connection to Hethu Phala (Cause and Effect) ..... 627
Suffering in This Life and Paṭicca Samuppāda ..... 628
Suffering in This Life and Paṭicca Samuppāda II ..... 629
6 Transition to Noble Eightfold Path ..... 631
Is It Necessary for a Buddhist to Eliminate Sensual Desires? ..... 631
Sīla, Samādhi, Paññā to Paññā, Sīla, Samādhi ..... 634
Ye Dhammā Hetuppabhavā.. and Yam Kiñci Samudaya Dhammam. ..... 639
7 Samādhi, Jhāna (Dhyāna), Magga Phala ..... 644
Samādhi, Jhāna, Magga Phala - Introduction ..... 644
Vitakka, Vicāra, Savitakka, Savicāra, and Avitakka, Avicāra ..... 646
Jhānic Experience in Detail - Sāmaññaphala Sutta (DN 2) ..... 650
Ascendance to Nibbāna via Jhāna (Dhyāna) ..... 653
Paññāvimutti - Arahanthood without Jhāna ..... 658
Mundane versus Supramundane Jhāna ..... 661
Nirodha Samāpatti, Phala Samāpatti, Jhāna, and Jhāna Samāpatti ..... 666
8 Mental Body - Gandhabba ..... 672
Our Mental Body - Gandhabba ..... 672
Gandhabba State - Evidence from Tipiṭaka ..... 677
Antarābhava and Gandhabba ..... 681
Ānantarika Kamma - Connection to Gandhabba ..... 686
Mental Body (Gandhabba) - Personal Accounts ..... 690
Abnormal Births Due to Gandhabba Transformations ..... 692
Cattāro Āhāra for Mental Body or Gandhabba ..... 695
Micchā Ditṭhi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage ..... 698
Working of kammā - Critical Role of Conditions ..... 702
Part V Dhamma and Science ..... 706
1 Dhamma and Science - Introduction ..... 709
2 Origin of Life ..... 713
Origin of Life - There is No Traceable Origin ..... 714
Human Life - A Mental Base (Gandhabba) and a Material Base (Cell) ..... 717
Clarification of "Mental Body" and "Physical Body" - Different Types of "Kāya" ..... 721
Four Types of Births in Buddhism ..... 724
Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception ..... 728
Cloning and Gandhabba ..... 731
Living Cell - How Did the First Cell Come to Existence? ..... 736
Mystical Phenomena in Buddhism? ..... 740
Views on Life ..... 744
Views on Life - Wrong View of Materialism ..... 745
Wrong View of Creationism (and Eternal Future Life) - Part 1 ..... 748
Wrong View of Creationism (and Eternal Future Life) - Part 2 ..... 751
Worldview of the Buddha ..... 754
Buddhist Worldview - Introduction ..... 755
Contact Between Āyatana Leads to Vipāka Viññāṇa ..... 760
How Do Sense Faculties Become Internal Āyatana? ..... 764
Indriya Make Phassa and Āyatana Make Samphassa ..... 768
Wider Worldview of the Buddha ..... 772
The Framework of Buddha Dhamma ..... 772
The Suffering (Dukkha) in the First Noble Truth ..... 777
Dangers of Ten Types of Wrong Views and Four Possible Paths ..... 781
Sammā Dițṭhī - Only One Leads to the Noble Path ..... 785
Fear of Nibbāna (Enlightenment) ..... 789
Worldview of the Buddha - Explanatory Material ..... 793
Ghost 1990 Movie - Good Depiction of Gandhabba Concept ..... 793
Mental Body Versus the Physical Body ..... 797
"Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars - Part 1 ..... 801
"Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars - Part 2 ..... 805
Origin of Life - One Creates One's Own Future Lives ..... 809
3 Good Explanations - Key to Weeding Out Bad Versions of Dhamma ..... 815
Consciousness and the Brain ..... 816
Matter Creates Mind or Mind Creates Matter? ..... 816
4 Conscious ness - A Dhamma Perspective ..... 818
Consciousness Dependence on Number of Dimensions ..... 818
Six Kinds of Consciousness in Our 3-D World ..... 819
Expanding "Consciousness" by Using Technology ..... 821
Expanding "Consciousness" by Purifying the Mind ..... 822
5 Consistencies with Science ..... 826
Second Law of Thermodynamics is Part of Anicca! ..... 826
Quantum Entanglement - We Are All Connected ..... 828
Infinity - How Big Is It? ..... 830
Gödel's Incompleteness Theorem ..... 832
Truine Brain: How the Mind Rewires the Brain via Meditation/Habits ..... 835
How Habits are Formed and Broken - A Scientific View ..... 839
6 Inconsistencies with Science ..... 844
Neuroscience says there is no Free Will? - That is a Misinterpretation! ..... 844
The Double Slit Experiment - Correlation between Mind and Matter? ..... 848
Vision (Cakkhu Viññāṇa) is Not Just Seeing ..... 851
Part VI Elephants in the Room ..... 856
1 Word-for-Word Translation of the Tipitaka ..... 857
Elephant in the Room 1 - Direct Translation of the Tipitaka ..... 857
Niddesa (Brief Description) of Paṭicca Samuppāda ..... 861
Paṭicca Samuppāda During a Lifetime ..... 865
Idappaccayatā Paṭicca Samuppāda - Bhava and Jāti Within a Lifetime ..... 865
Change of Mindset Due to an Ārammana ..... 869
Khandhā in Idappaccayatā Paṭicca Samuppāda ..... 872
Seeing Is a Series of "Snapshots" ..... 876
Aggregate of Forms - Collection of "Mental Impressions" of Forms ..... 880
Rūpakkhandha in Idappaccayatā Pațicca Samuppāda ..... 883
Five Aggregates - Experiences of Each Sentient Being ..... 887
Pañcupādānakkhandha - Attachment to One's Experiences ..... 891
Noble Truth of Suffering- Pañcupādānakkhandhā Dukkhā ..... 894
Sakkāya Diṭṭhi and Pañcupādānakkhandhā ..... 898
Bhava and Jāti Within a Lifetime - Example ..... 902
Often Mistranslated Pāli Keywords ..... 905
Rāga and Jhāna - Two Commonly Misunderstood Words ..... 906
Elephant in the Room 2 - Jhāna and Kasina ..... 910
Samādhi, Jhāna, and Sammā Samādhi ..... 910
Jhāna, Jhāya, and Jhāyi - Different Meanings ..... 913
Elephant in the Room 3 - Ānāpānasati ..... 917
Ānāpānasati - Overview ..... 917
Assāsa Passāsa - What Do They Mean? ..... 920
Ānāpānasati Not About Breath - Icchānañgala Sutta ..... 924
Mahārāhulovāda Sutta and Ānāpānasati ..... 927
Part VII Three Levels of Practice ..... 932
1 Moral Living and Fundamentals ..... 935
The Basics ..... 936
The Pale Blue Dot ..... 936
The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Āsava) ..... 937
Habits, Goals, and Character (Gati or Gathi) ..... 940
Wrong Views (Micchā Dițṭhi) - A Simpler Analysis ..... 942
Four Noble Truths: Recipe for Problem Solving ..... 945
First Noble Truth - A Simple Explanation of One Aspect ..... 949
Difference between a Wish and a Determination (Parāmitā) ..... 951
Calming the Mind ..... 953
Key to Calming the Mind - The Five Hindrances ..... 953
Solution to a Wandering Mind - Abandon Everything? ..... 956
Right Speech - How to Avoid Accumulating Kamma ..... 958
Three Kinds of Happiness - What is Nirāmisa Sukha? ..... 959
Learning Buddha Dhamma Leads to Nirāmisa Sukha ..... 961
How to Taste Nibbāna ..... 965
Need to Experience Suffering in Order to Understand it? ..... 966
Does Impermanence Lead to Suffering? ..... 968
Buddha Dhamma and Buddhism ..... 971
What is Unique in Buddha Dhamma? ..... 971
A Buddhist or a Bhauddhayā? ..... 974
Where to Start on the Path? ..... 977
Recent Evidence for Unbroken Memory Records (HSAM) ..... 979
Buddhism without Rebirth and Nibbāna? ..... 981
"Self" and "no-self": A Simple Analysis - Do We Always Act with Avijjā? ..... 985
Dhamma Concepts ..... 988
Kilesa - Relationship to Akusala, Kusala, and Puñña Kamma ..... 989
Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala) ..... 992
Puñña Kamma - Dāna, Sīla, Bhāvanā ..... 996
Details of Kamma - Intention, Who Is Affected, Kamma Patha ..... 999
The Five Precepts - What the Buddha Meant by Them ..... 1003
What is Kamma? - Is Everything Determined by Kamma? ..... 1006
How to Evaluate Weights of Different Kamma ..... 1009
Account of Angulimāla - Many Insights to Buddha Dhamma ..... 1011
The Four Bases of Mental Power (Cattāro Iddhipāda) ..... 1016
Why is it Necessary to Learn Key Pāli Words? ..... 1017
Buddha Dhamma and Morality ..... 1020
Origin of Morality (and Immorality) in Buddhism ..... 1020
Is Eating Meat an Akusala Kamma (Immoral Deed)? ..... 1022
Do Things Just Happen? - The Hidden Causes ..... 1025
Craving for Pornography - How to Reduce the Tendency ..... 1028
2 Working Towards Good Rebirths ..... 1032
Sansāric Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Āsava) ..... 1032
Complexity of Life and the Way to Seek "Good Rebirths" ..... 1034
How to Avoid Birth in the Apāyā ..... 1035
Rebirth - Connection to Suffering in the First Noble Truth ..... 1037
How the Buddha Described the Chance of Rebirth in the Human Realm ..... 1041
Nakhasikha Sutta (SN 22.97 SN 56.51 SN 13.1 SN 20.2) ..... 1044
Dutiyachiggalayuga Sutta (SN 56.47, 56.48) ..... 1047
Assu Sutta (SN 15.3) ..... 1049
Kamma, Debt, and Meditation ..... 1051
How do we Decide which View is Wrong View (Ditṭhi)? ..... 1053
Three Kinds of Diț̣hi, Eightfold Paths, and Samādhi ..... 1056
Implications of the Rebirth Process in Daily Life and in Society ..... 1058
What Does Buddha Dhamma Say about Creator, Satan, Angels, and Demons? ..... 1060
Pațisandhi Citta - How the Next Life is Determined According to Gati ..... 1063
3 Seeking Nibbāna ..... 1065
Atṭha Purisa Puggalā - Eight Noble Persons ..... 1065
Āsava, Anusaya, and Gati (Gathi) ..... 1070
The Way to Nibbāna - Removal of Āsavā ..... 1074
Kaṇh (Dark) and Sukka (Bright) Kamma and Kammakkhaya ..... 1076
Dasa Samyojana - Bonds in Rebirth Process ..... 1080
The Cooling Down Process (Nibbāna) - How the Root Causes are Removed ..... 1086
Why is Correct Interpretation of Anicca, Dukkha, Anattā so Important? ..... 1089
How to Cultivate the Noble Eightfold Path starting with Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta ..... 1091
Difference Between Giving Up Valuables and Losing Interest in Worthless ..... 1094
4 Sotāpanna Stage of Nibbāna ..... 1098
The Sotāpanna Stage ..... 1099
Why a Sotāpanna is Better off than any King, Emperor, or a Billionaire ..... 1102
Myths about the Sotāpanna Stage ..... 1106
Sotāpanna Anugāmi and a Sotāpanna ..... 1108
Sotāpanna Anugāmi - No More Births in the Apāyā ..... 1113
Four Conditions for Attaining Sotāpanna Magga/Phala ..... 1118
Sotāpatti Anga - The Four Qualities of a Sotāpanna ..... 1122
Sammā Dițṭhi - Realization, Not Memorization ..... 1126
How Does One Know whether the Sotāpanna Stage is Reached? ..... 1130
Assāda, Ādīnava, Nissarana ..... 1135
Assāda, Ādīnava, Nissaraṇa - Introduction ..... 1135
How Perceived Pleasures (Assāda) lead to Dukkha ..... 1139
Kāma Guna, Kāma, Kāma Rāga, Kāmaccfanda ..... 1142
Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways ..... 1146
Feelings: Sukha, Dukha, Somanassa, and Domanassa ..... 1149
Kāma Assāda Start with Phassa Paccayā Vedanā or Samphassa Jā Vedana ..... 1152
Sakkāya Ditṭhi is Personality (Me) View? ..... 1156
Akusala Citta - How a Sotāpanna Avoids Apāyagāmi Citta ..... 1161
What is the only Akusala Removed by a Sotāpanna? ..... 1163
Udayavaya Ñāna ..... 1167
Udayavaya (Udayabbaya) Ñāna - Introduction ..... 1167
Nibbatti Lakkhana in Udayavaya Ñāṇa ..... 1169
Āhāra (Food) in Udayavaya Ñāṇa ..... 1172
Udayavaya Ñāna - Importance of the Cittaja Kāya ..... 1175
Part VIII Tables and Summaries ..... 1180
1 Pāli Glossary ..... 1181
2 Pāli Glossary - (A-K) ..... 1189
3 Pāli Glossary - (L-Z) ..... 1198
4 List of "San" Words and Other Pāli Roots ..... 1210
5 The 89 (121) Types of Citta ..... 1215
6 Cetasika (Mental Factors) ..... 1218
7 Rūpa (Material Form) - Table ..... 1220
8 Rūpa - Generation Mechanisms ..... 1223
9 Rūpa Kalāpa (Grouping of Matter) ..... 1225
10 Akus ala Citta and Akus ala Vipaka Citta ..... 1229
1137 Factors of Enlightenment ..... 1232
12 Conditions for the Four Stages of Nibbāna ..... 1235
13 Ultimate Realities - Table ..... 1237
1431 Realms of Existence ..... 1239
Part IX Paṭicca Samuppāda ..... 1243
1 Paṭicca Samuppāda - "Pati+ichcha" + "Sama+uppāda" ..... 1246
2 Sakkāya Diṭṭhi and Paṭicca Samuppāda ..... 1250
Sakkāya Dițṭhi - Wrong View of "Me" and "Mine" ..... 1250
What Reincarnates? - Concept of a Lifestream ..... 1254
Anatta and Sakkāya Diṭ̣hi - Two Different Concepts ..... 1257
3 Paṭicca Samuppāda - Essential Concepts ..... 1260
Nibbāna - Rāgakkhaya Dosakkhaya Mohakkhaya - Part 1 ..... 1260
Pañca Nīvaraṇa and Sensual Pleasures (Kāma) ..... 1264
What is "Kāma"? It is not Just Sex ..... 1267
Icchā, Taṇhā, Kāma - Root Causes of Suffering ..... 1270
Jāti - Different Types of Births ..... 1274
Bhava - Kammic Energy That Can Power an Existence ..... 1278
Bhava and Punabbhava - Kammic Energy Giving Rise to Renewed Existence ..... 1281
Concepts of Upādāna and Upādānakkhandha ..... 1283
Where Are Memories "Stored"? - Connection to Pañcakkhandha ..... 1283
Loka Sutta - Origin and Cessation of the World ..... 1286
Dukkha Samudaya Starts With Samphassa-Jā-Vedanā ..... 1290
Key Steps of Kammic Energy Accumulation ..... 1293
Generating Kammic Energy in the "Upādāna Paccayā Bhava" ..... 1297
Six Root Causes - Loka Samudaya (Arising of Suffering) and Loka Nirodhaya (Nibbāna) ..... 1301
4 Kamma and Paṭicca Samuppāda ..... 1305
Kamma and Paṭicca Samuppāda - Introduction ..... 1305
Kāma Assāda - A Root Cause of Suffering ..... 1308
Gati (Habits/Character) Determine Births - Sañsappanīya Sutta ..... 1312
5 Paṭicca Samuppāda, Tilakkhaṇa, Four Noble Truths ..... 1317
Paṭicca Samuppāda - Introduction ..... 1317
What Did the Buddha Mean by a "Loka"? ..... 1319
Future Suffering (Loka/Dukkha Samudaya) Starts With Sensory Input (Ārammaṇa) ..... 1323
Sotāpanna - One With the "Wider Worldview" of the Buddha ..... 1326
Sotāpannā - Just Starting on the Noble Path ..... 1330
Yoniso Manasikāra and Paṭicca Samuppāda ..... 1333
Dhamma - Different Meanings Depending on the Context ..... 1337
Dhammānudhamma Paṭipatti - Connection to Paṭicca Samuppāda/Tilakkhaṇa ..... 1339
6 Understanding the Terms in Paṭicca Samuppāda ..... 1343
Distortion of Pāli Keywords in Paṭicca Samuppāda ..... 1343
Sañkhāra - Many Meanings ..... 1347
Sañkhāra - Should Not be Translated as a Single Word ..... 1348
Kamma and Sañkhāra, Cetanā and Sañcetanā ..... 1352
Kusala-Mūla Sañkhāra Are Needed to Attain Nibbāna ..... 1354
Rebirths Take Place According to Abhisañkhāra ..... 1359
Viññāna - Two Critical Meanings ..... 1362
Abhisañkhāra Lead to Kamma Viññāṇa ..... 1362
Two Types of Kamma Viññāṇa ..... 1366
Summary of Key Concepts About Viññ̄āna and Sañkhāra ..... 1369
Anidassana, Appaṭigha Rūpa Due to Anidassana Viññāṇa ..... 1372
Memory, Dhammā, and Viññāṇa Dhātu ..... 1378
Critical Influence of Wrong Views on Akusala Citta ..... 1378
Near-Death Experiences (NDE): Brain Is Not the Mind ..... 1381
Gandhabba (Mental Body) Separating from Physical Body in Jhāna ..... 1384
Where Are Memories Stored? - Viñ̃̃āṇa Dhātu ..... 1387
Citta Vithi - Fundamental Sensory Unit ..... 1392
Does any Object (Rūpa) Last only 17 Thought Moments? ..... 1396
Phassa (Contact) - Contact With Pasāda Rūpa ..... 1399
Arising of the Five Aggregates With an Ārammaṇa ..... 1402
7 Paṭicca Samuppāda - Overview ..... 1407
8 How Are Paṭicca Samuppāda Cycles Initiated? ..... 1409
9 What Does "Paccayā" Mean in Paṭicca Samuppāda? ..... 1413
10 Paṭicca Samuppāda Cycles ..... 1416
Avyākata Paṭicca Samuppāda for Vipāka Viññāna ..... 1416
Akusala-Mūla Upapatti Paṭicca Samuppāda ..... 1421
Uppatti Paṭicca Samuppāda (How We Create Our Own Rebirths) ..... 1424
Kusala-Mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda ..... 1428
Idappaccayatā Paṭicca Samuppāda ..... 1431
11 Paṭicca Samuppāda in Plain English ..... 1436
Introduction - What is Suffering? ..... 1436
Introduction-2-The Three Categories of Suffering ..... 1440
Avijjā Paccayā Sañkhārā ..... 1444
Sañkhāra Paccayā Viñ̃̃āṇa - 1 ..... 1446
Sańkhāra Paccayā Viñĩāṇa - 2 ..... 1449
Viññāna Paccayā Nāmarūpa ..... 1451
Nāmarūpa Paccayā Saḷāyatana ..... 1454
Difference between Phassa and Samphassa ..... 1456
Phassa Paccayā Vedanā....to Bhava ..... 1459
Bhava Paccayā Jāti....Jarā, Maraṇa, ..... 1463
12 Imas mim Sati Idam Hoti - What Does It Really Mean? ..... 1469
13 Paṭiloma Paṭicca Samuppāda - Key to Nibbāna ..... 1473
14 Paṭ̣̣hāna Dhammā ..... 1476
Paṭthāna Dhammā - Connection to Cause and Effect (Hetu Phala) ..... 1476
Anantara and Samanantara Paccayā ..... 1479
Āsevana and Aññamañña Paccayā ..... 1481
Part X Is There a 'Self’? ..... 1485
1 Citta-Basis of Our Experience and Actions ..... 1486
2 Vipāka Vedanā and "Samphassa jā Vedanā" in a Sensory Event ..... 1490
3 Kāma Guṇa - Origin of Attachment (Taṇhā) ..... 1495
4 Vision Is a Series of "Snapshots" - Movie Analogy ..... 1499
5 Do I Have "A Mind" That Is Fixed and "Mine"? ..... 1503
6 Chachakka Sutta - Six Types of Vipāka Viññāṇa ..... 1507
7 Sakkāya Ditṭhi in Terms of Attā or "Self" or "Ātma" ..... 1513
8 An Apparent "Self" Is Involved in Kamma Generation ..... 1518
9 Paṭicca Samuppāda - Not 'Self' or 'No-Self' ..... 1524
Taṇhā - The Origin of Suffering ..... 1524
Paṭicca Samuppāda - A 'Self' Exists Due to Avijjā ..... 1527
Kamma, Sańkhāra, and Abhisañkhāra - What Is "Intention"? ..... 1530
Vacī Sañkhāra - Sańkappa (Conscious Thoughts) and Vācā (Speech) ..... 1534
Taṇhā Paccayā Upādāna - Critical Step in Paṭicca Samuppāda ..... 1539
Moha/Avijjā and Vipāka Viñ̃̃āṇa/Kamma Viñ̃̃n̄ạna ..... 1543
Icchā (Cravings) Lead to Upādāna and to Eventual Suffering ..... 1547
Dhammā, Kamma, Sañkhāra, Mind-Critical Connections ..... 1552
Paṭicca Samuppāda - From Mind to Matter ..... 1556
Part XI Dhamma and Philosophy ..... 1561
1 Dhamma and Philos ophy - Introduction ..... 1562
2 Philos ophy of the Mind ..... 1565
3 Is Buddha Dhamma (Buddhism) a Religion? ..... 1568
4 The Infinity Problem in Buddhism ..... 1572
5 Free Will in Buddhism - Connection to Sañkhāra ..... 1576
6 Book Reviews ..... 1580
"Why Does the World Exist?" by Jim Holt ..... 1580
"Waking Up" by Sam Harris ..... 1582
"The Language of God" by Francis Collins ..... 1585
"Spark" by John Ratey ..... 1587
"The Life of the Buddha" by Bhikkhu Ñānamoli ..... 1588
Part XII Bhāvanā (Meditation) ..... 1592
1 1. Introduction to Buddhist Meditation ..... 1594
2 2. The Basics in Meditation ..... 1598
3 3. The Second Level - Key to Purify the Mind ..... 1601
4 4. What do all these Different Meditation Techniques Mean? ..... 1604
5 5. Ariya Mettā Bhāvanā (Loving Kindness Meditation) ..... 1607
6 6. Ānāpānas ati Bhāvanā (Introduction) ..... 1610
Arittha Sutta - To Arittha (On Mindfulness of Breathing) ..... 1611
7 7. What is Ānāpāna? ..... 1614
Ānāpānassati-sutta (Majjhima Nikāya 118) ..... 1616
8 Is Ānāpānasati Breath Meditation? ..... 1621
9 8. The Basic Formal Ānāpānas ati Meditation ..... 1625
10 Possible Effects in Meditation - Kundalini Awakening ..... 1628
11 9. Key to Ānāpānas ati - How to Change Habits and Character (Gati) ..... 1632
Introduction to Character or Personality (Gati) ..... 1632
A Broad View of the "Person" Trying to be a "Better Person" ..... 1633
How Character (Gati) Leads to Bhava and Jāti ..... 1635
12 Karaniya Metta Sutta-Metta Bhāvanā ..... 1638
13 10. Attaining the Sotāpanna Stage via Removing Diṭthās ava ..... 1641
14 11. Magga Phala via Cultivation of Satta Bojjhanga ..... 1645
15 12. Key Factors to be Considered when "Meditating" for the Sotapanna Stage ..... 1650
16 13. Kammattana (Recitations) for the Sotāpanna Stage ..... 1654
17 New Approach to Meditation ..... 1659
18 Anussati and Anupass anā - Being Mindful and Removing Defilements ..... 1660
19 Myths about Meditation ..... 1664
20 A Simple Way to Enhance Merits (Kusala) and Avoid Demerits (Akusala) ..... 1668
21 Pañca Indriya and Pañca Bala - Five Faculties and Five Powers ..... 1671
22 Possible Outcomes of Meditation - Samādhi, Jhāna, Magga Phala ..... 1674
23 What is Samādhi? - Three Kinds of Mindfulness ..... 1677
24 Getting to Samādhi via Formal Mediation Sessions ..... 1680
25 Are you not getting expected results from meditation? ..... 1684
26 How to Attain Samādhi via "Vipass ana Pubbanga Samatha" Bhavana ..... 1689
Part XIII Abhidhamma ..... 1691
1 Abhidhamma - Introduction ..... 1693
2 Essential Abhidhamma - The Basics ..... 1697
Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta) ..... 1697
The Amazing Mind - Critical Role of Nāmagotta (Memories) ..... 1701
Citta and Cetasika - How Viññāṇa (Consciousness) Arises ..... 1704
State of Mind in the Absence of Citta Vithi - Bhavanga ..... 1708
Bhava and Bhavanga - Simply Explained! ..... 1712
Citta Vīthi - Processing of Sense Inputs ..... 1715
Javana of a Citta - The Root of Mental Power ..... 1720
Cetasika - Connection to Gati ..... 1723
3 Mind and Consciousness ..... 1727
What is Mind? How do we Experience the Outside World? ..... 1727
What is Consciousness? ..... 1729
What is a Thought? ..... 1731
What is in a Thought? Why Gati are so Important? ..... 1735

1. Thoughts (Citta), Consciousness (Viññạ̣̄a), and Mind (Hadaya Vatthu) - Introduction ..... 1738
2. Viññāṇa (Consciousness) can be of Many Different Types and Forms ..... 1740
3. Viñnāṇa, Thoughts, and the Subconscious ..... 1743
4 Role of the Brain in Human Consciousness ..... 1746
Brain - Interface between Mind and Body ..... 1746
5 Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya) ..... 1753
Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya) - Introduction ..... 1753
Hidden World of the Gandhabba: Netherworld (ParaLoka) ..... 1757
Ghost in the Machine - Synonym for the Manomaya Kāya? ..... 1760
Manomaya Kāya (Gandhabba) and the Physical Body ..... 1764
Out-of-Body Experience (OBE) and Manomaya Kāya ..... 1767
Cuti-Pațisandhi - An Abhidhamma Description ..... 1771
6 Abhidhamma via Science ..... 1775
7 Why Do People Enjoy Immoral Deeds? - Diț़̣hi Is Key ..... 1776
8 Key to Sotāpanna Stage - Diț̣hi and Vicikiccā ..... 1780
9 The Origin of Matter - Suddhatṭhaka ..... 1784
10 What are Dhamma? - A Deeper Analysis ..... 1789
24 conditional relations Paccaya ..... 1793
11 Pabhas sara Citta, Radiant Mind, and Bhavanga ..... 1797
Part XIV Historical Background ..... 1803
1 Historical Background- Introduction ..... 1804
2 Methods of Delivery of Dhamma by the Buddha ..... 1806
3 Misconceptions on the Topics the Buddha "Refused to Ans wer" ..... 1807
4 Misinterpretations of Buddha Dhamma ..... 1810
5 Preservation of the Buddha Dhamma ..... 1812
6 Historical Timeline of Edward Conze ..... 1817
7 Why is it Critical to Find the Pure Buddha Dhamma? ..... 1820
8 Key Problems with Mahāyāna Teachings ..... 1822
9 Saddharma Pundarika Sutra (Lotus Sutra) - A Focused Analysis ..... 1826
10 What is Sunyata or Sunnata (Emptiness)? ..... 1830
11 Incorrect Theravada Interpretations - Historical Timeline ..... 1832
12 Buddhaghosa and Visuddhimagga - Historical Background ..... 1836
13 Buddhaghosa's Vis uddhimagga - A Focused Analysis ..... 1841
14 Background on the Current Revival of Buddhism (Buddha Dhamma) ..... 1846
15 Misinterpretation of Anicca and Anatta by Early European Scholars ..... 1850
16 Tipitaka Commentaries - Helpful or Misleading? ..... 1856
Part XV Buddhist Chanting ..... 1861
1 Buddhist Chanting - Introduction ..... 1862
2 Namaskaraya - Homage to the Buddha ..... 1863
3 Supreme Qualities of Buddha, Dhamma, Sangha ..... 1865
4 The Five Precepts - Pañca Sila ..... 1869
5 Sutta Chanting (with Pali Text) ..... 1870
6 Sādhu - Symbolizes Purified Hadaya Vatthu (Mind) ..... 1872
Part XVI Dhammapada ..... 1874
1 Manopubbangamā Dhammā.. ..... 1875
2 Sabba Pāpassa Akaraṇaṃ. ..... 1877
3 Appamādo Amata Padam. ..... 1878
4 Na Jacca Vasalo Hoti ..... 1880
5 Ārogya Paramā Lābhā. ..... 1882
6 Anicca vata Sañkhārā ..... 1884
7 Attā Hi Attano Nātho ..... 1886
Part XVII Sutta Interpretations ..... 1887
1 Sutta Interpretation - Uddes a, Niddes a, Paṭiniddes a ..... 1888
2 Pāli Dictionaries - Are They Reliable? ..... 1893
3 Nikāya in the Sutta Piṭaka ..... 1897
4 Mahā Satipaṭ̣hāna Sutta ..... 1899
Satipațṭāna Sutta - Structure ..... 1899
Satipaṭṭhāa - Introduction ..... 1903
Kāyānupassanā - Section on Postures (Iriyāpathapabba) ..... 1905
Kāyānupassanā - The Section on Habits (Sampajānapabba) ..... 1907
Prerequisites for the Satipațṭhāna Bhāvanā ..... 1909
What is "Kāya" in Kāyānupassanā? ..... 1911
5 Mahā Cattārīs aka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty) ..... 1915
Mahācattārīsaka Sutta ..... 1918
6 Sutta Learning Sequence for the Present Day ..... 1926
7 Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta ..... 1929
Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta - Introduction ..... 1929
Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta Text ..... 1932
Essence of Buddhism - In the First Sutta ..... 1937
Majjhimā Paṭipadā - Way to Relinquish Attachments to this World ..... 1942
Tiparivaṭ̣a and Twelve Types of Ñāna (Knowledge) ..... 1945
Relinquishing Defilement via Three Rounds and Four Stages ..... 1948
8 Anguttara Nikāya - Suttā on Key Concepts ..... 1952
Dasa Akusala/Dasa Kusala - Basis of Buddha Dhamma ..... 1952
Dasa Akusala/Dasa Kusala - Basis of Buddha Dhamma - 2 ..... 1955
9 Na Cetanākaraṇīya Sutta ..... 1959
10 Paṭhama Mettā Sutta (AN 4.125) ..... 1962
11 Kukkuravatika Sutta (Majjhima Nikāya 57) - Kammakkhaya ..... 1966
12 Buddhism and Evolution - Aggañña Sutta (DN 27) ..... 1972
13 Tapussa Sutta (AN 9.41) - Akuppā Cetovimutti ..... 1977
14 Yamaka Sutta (SN 22.85) - Arahanthood Is Not Annihilation but End of Suffering ..... 1981
15 Three Types of "Bodies" - Poṭ̣hapāda Sutta (DN 9) ..... 1984
Part XVIII Myths or Realities? ..... 1987
1 Animis Locana Bodhi Poojā - A Prelude to Acts of Gratitude ..... 1988
2 Pāramitā and Niyata Vivarana - Myths or Realities? ..... 1991
3 Tis arana Vandana and Its Effects on One's Gati ..... 1995
4 Does the Hell (Niraya) Exist? ..... 1999
5 Can Buddhist Meditation be Dangerous? ..... 2004
6 Boy Who Remembered Pāli Suttas for 1500 Years ..... 2008
7 Do Buddhists Pray and Engage in Idol Worshipping? ..... 2011
Part XIX About Author ..... 2014
Part XX Quantum Mechanics and Dhamma ..... 2016
1 Quantum Mechanics and Dhamma - Introduction ..... 2017
2 Quantum Mechanics and Consciousness ..... 2021
Will Quantum Mechanics Be Able to Explain Consciousness? ..... 2021
The Observer Effect in Quantum Mechanics ..... 2025
3 Quantum Mechanics - A New Interpretation ..... 2030
What Is a Wave and What Is a Particle? ..... 2031
Photons Are Particles Not Waves ..... 2034
Basis of the Proposed Interpretation - Feynman's Technique in QED ..... 2037
Feynman's Glass Plate Experiment ..... 2038
Feynman's Method of "A Particle Exploring All Possible Paths" ..... 2042
"Exploring All Possible Paths" Leads to Fermat's Principle of Least Time ..... 2045
Part XXI References ..... 2051
1 Parinibbāna of Waharaka Thero ..... 2052
2 Pure Dhamma - Sinhala Translation ..... 2057
3 Pure Dhamma - German Website ..... 2058
4 New/Revised Posts ..... 2059
Google Translations to Other Languages ..... 2067
Pure Dhamma Discussion Forum Guidelines ..... 2068
How to Post/Reply to a Forum Question ..... 2070
April - July 2017 ..... 2071
January - March 2017 ..... 2072
Essays - 2019 ..... 2072
Essays - 2018 ..... 2075
Essays - 2017 ..... 2077
Essays - 2016 ..... 2080
January 2016 ..... 2080
February 2016 ..... 2080
March 2016 ..... 2081
April 2016 ..... 2081
May 2016 ..... 2081
June 2016 ..... 2082
July 2016 ..... 2082
August 2016 ..... 2082
September 2016 ..... 2082
October 2016 ..... 2083
November 2016 ..... 2083
December 2016 ..... 2083
Essays - 2015 ..... 2083
December 2015 ..... 2084
November 2015 ..... 2084
October 2015 ..... 2084
September 2015 ..... 2085
August 2015 ..... 2085
July 2015 ..... 2085
June 2015 ..... 2085
May 2015 ..... 2085
April 2015 ..... 2086
March 2015 ..... 2086
February 2015 ..... 2086
January 2015 ..... 2087
Essays - 2014 ..... 2087
December 2014 ..... 2087
November 2014 ..... 2088
October 2014 ..... 2088
September 2014 ..... 2089
August 2014 ..... 2089
July 2014 ..... 2090
June 2014 ..... 2090
Revised Posts April - July 2017 ..... 2090
Revised Posts - January to March 2017 ..... 2091
Revised Posts - 2017 ..... 2092
Revised Posts - 2016 ..... 2094
January 2016 Revisions ..... 2095
February 2016 Revisions ..... 2095
March 2016 Revisions ..... 2095
April 2016 Revisions ..... 2096
May 2016 Revisions ..... 2096
June 2016 Revisions ..... 2096
July 2016 Revisions ..... 2097
August 2016 Revisions ..... 2097
September 2016 Revisions ..... 2097
October 2016 Revisions ..... 2098
November 2016 Revisions ..... 2098
December 2016 Revisions ..... 2098
Revised Posts - 2015 ..... 2099
December 2015 Revisions ..... 2099
November 2015 Revisions ..... 2100
October 2015 Revisions ..... 2100
September 2015 Revisions ..... 2101
August 2015 Revisions ..... 2102
July 2015 Revisions ..... 2102
June 2015 Revisions ..... 2103
May 2015 Revisions ..... 2104
April 2015 Revisions ..... 2105
Revised Posts - 2014 ..... 2105
5 Buddha Dhamma - In a Chart ..... 2106
6 Pure Dhamma Essays in Book Format ..... 2107
7 Nirāmisa Sukha - In a Chart ..... 2108
8 Popup Pali Glossary with Pronunciation ..... 2109
9 Reflections on 2019 ..... 2111
10 Reflections on 2018 ..... 2113
11 Reflections on 2017 ..... 2115
12 Reflections on 2016 ..... 2118
13 Reflections on 2015 ..... 2121
14 Reflections on 2014 ..... 2123
15 List of Pāli words with diacritical mark ..... 2125
16 Mars Curiosity Photos Suggest Life May Have Existed on Red Planet ..... 2129
17 Recent Publications on Benefits of Meditation ..... 2130
18 Laniakea: Our home supercluster ..... 2131
19 Think Outside the Box! ..... 2132
20 There are as many creatures on your body as there are people on Earth! ..... 2133
21 News Article on Robin Williams and Buddhist Meditation ..... 2134
22 World Historical Timeline ..... 2135
23 Second Largest Religion by State in the US ..... 2140
24 Introduction to "Rebirth by Francis Story" - Ian Stevenson ..... 2142
25 Thirty One Planes of Existence ..... 2143
26 Curiosity Rover finds Crater probably was once a Giant Martian Lake ..... 2145

27 Did Not Get a Res ponse to Your Comment? ........................................................................................................... 2146
28 Ancient teeth found in China challenge modern human migration theory ......................................................... 2147
Part XXII Sitemap 2148

## I Home

## Pure Dhamma

## A Quest to Recover Buddha's True Teachings

Website: https://puredhamma.net/

- Buddha Dhamma
- Key Dhamma Concepts
- Living Dhamma
- Dhamma and Science
- Elephants in the Room
- Three Levels of Practice
- Tables and Summaries
- Paticca Samuppāda
- Is There a 'Self'
- Dhamma and Philosophy
- Bhāvanā (Meditation)
- Abhidhamma
- Historical Background
- Buddhist Chanting
- Dhammapada
- Sutta Interpretations
- Myths or Realities?
- About Author
- Quantum Mechanics and Dhamma
- References
- Sitemap


## Welcome!

Revised August 12, 2019; August 16, 2020; May 28, 2022; July 4, 2022
Note: Now you can select the "dark mode" (good for nighttime reading) or the "regular mode" by clicking the "crescent Moon icon" at the bottom right.

- I have been told that some browsers display the following message when opening the puredhamma.net webpage: "puredhamma.net wants to know your location." I am not sure why that message comes up. There is no need for the website to know anyone's location. Please say "no" to any such request.

Buddhism (Buddha Dhamma) describes the "laws of nature" as discovered by the Buddha 2500 years ago. This website presents those teaching per the Pāli Canon, Tipiṭaka. Even though I am a Buddhist by birth, I never bothered to look into the question of why I was a Buddhist. When I retired several years ago, I first started reading widely on many subjects, including science, philosophy, and religion.

- When I started to glean the profound message of the Buddha, I realized that I had not known much about my own "religion." Furthermore, it had been "contaminated" over its long history. Since 2009, I have been trying to find the essence of the message of the Buddha. I wanted to share the results with the rest of the world; see, "About."

There seem to be three types of people who become interested in "Buddhism":

1. Those who have gone through hardships see that there is suffering "in this world," and seek solutions.
2. Those getting to old age are beginning to see that there are signs of possible problems looming in the future. That includes aging, various ailments, not being able to get satisfaction from those things that provided comfort before, etc.
3. Those who are intellectually motivated, and exposed to Dhammapada verses or some other types of sayings by the Buddha, see a glimpse of a broader world view of the Buddha.

Some of those who have been to meditation retreats realize that there is indeed a second option compared to seeking material wealth and indulging in sense pleasures. Especially for those people in categories 1 and 2, it becomes clear that indulging in sense pleasures does not have staying power. On the other hand, the sense of well-being achieved via insight meditation (not breath meditation) has staying power and does not go down as one gets old.

- I believe that for people in any category, it is a good idea first to understand what the Buddha's message was. Those who are intellectually motivated will be able to get a complete picture, and thus a better intellectual satisfaction. For those in categories 1 and 2, a much better idea of how to focus their efforts will become apparent with an insight into why focusing efforts on purifying the mind will be beneficial.
- January 30, 2019: For those who are new to Buddha Dhamma (or want to look at the essential fundamentals, see, "Essential Buddhism."
- Today, there are many incorrect interpretations of Buddha's teachings. See the new section on "Elephants in the Room."

I believe that anyone could benefit in some way by first getting a complete overview of the Buddha Dhamma, which is about a "world" that is much more expansive and complex than the one we perceive with our senses. The mind is the precursor to everything in this world: "Manopubbangamā Dhammā..."

This website was launched in early January 2014. As of August 2020, it has around 600 posts. You may want to look at some new sections listed at the end of this post. Some early posts may need revisions.

- I discuss many "scientific aspects" to illustrate that Buddha Dhamma is a complete world view that has withstood all scrutiny for 2500 years. However, my main goal is to convey the benefits of actual practice.
I have experienced much of what I discuss here. The reason that I started this website is to share that experience with anyone interested. The "practice" part will come out as I lay down the basic ideas. To practice something, one needs to know what to practice. (Note added May 29, 2014: I posted the first few essays on meditation under "Bhāvanā (Meditation)." November 6, 2014: The first 12 posts provide a meditation program that one could follow systematically; my own experience is in the 10th and 11th posts).
- Buddha Dhamma is NOT a religion to be followed by following rituals or blindly following a few precepts. It describes laws of nature that need to be "grasped" and "lived." Dhamma means "to bear"; to
bear something, it needs to be understood. Then it becomes clear WHY one must live life in a certain way.
- This website is not a blog but a Content Management System (CMS). The material does not belong to me, but to the Buddha. What I try to do is to keep the information accurate to the best of my ability. I will be making changes to the format and even the contents either to revise as needed or to present better. So, please make sure to go back and read "old topics" once in a while.
- Also, one needs to contemplate the ideas presented; just quickly going through them may not yield many benefits.

Another aspect that I try to highlight is the CONSISTENCY of Buddha Dhamma. You will see links from any given area to other sections. The Buddha is called "Bhaghavath" [bhagava] because he analyzed the same thing in many different ways. They are all consistent internally, as well as with the primary axioms such as 31 realms of existence, the concept of kamma, and rebirth.

- As science has progressed mainly over the past hundred or so years, consistency with science is becoming apparent as well. But science has not grasped the importance of the mind (over matter) yet. In some of the posts, I am making predictions about what will be discovered by science in the future. To have a timestamp, I started putting the date of publication of new posts beginning in late October 2015.
- Please send your suggestions/comments/questions and also let me know of any technical issues with the site using the "Comments" tab. I do not plan to have a discussion forum, so your comments will not be published.
- I usually write four to five essays a month, and they are in the "New/Revised Posts" in the menu at the bottom of each page. Engaging/relevant news articles are also on that menu.
- I started posting the date of publication in new posts starting on October 23, 2015. Thus, if a web post is not dated, it must have been published before October 23, 2015.

The Buddha said, "Sabba dānaì Dhamma dānamं jināti," or "Gift of Dhamma excels all other gifts." Please inform others about this site if you benefit from it. [Sabba-rasaì dhamma-raso jināti. All taste(s) the dhamma-taste excels.]

- However, we should only inform others. Humanity has suffered enough from those who have tried to force their views on others. As the Buddha said, "Come and see for yourself!."

The Buddha also said, "Sabba ratin Dhamma ratin jināti," or "Taste of Dhamma excels all other tastes (pleasures)." I hope you will have the patience to look around the site to learn enough pure Dhamma to start enjoying its taste.
Note added/revised December 7, 2016: I have added a "Font Size Selector" on the top right so that any reader can control the font size.

- There are two other possible tools: 1. Each post can be printed using the PRINT button below that post. 2. All the posts at the site can be downloaded using three eBook formats. One can read them on electronic readers like Amazon Kindle: Pure Dhamma Essays in Book Format.

Note addled June 8, 2017: As of today, there are over 450 posts on the website. Recently, I have been getting inquiries on "where to start?." I just added the following post to summarize various sections and how to locate posts of interest: "User's Guide to Pure Dhamma Website."

April 14, 2018: Discussion forum initiated in December of 2017: "Forum." Updates and new posts at "New / Revised Posts."

March 2018: New section on "Quantum Mechanics and Dhamma."
November 20, 2018: I have disabled comments on individual posts. You can make comments at the "Forums" or send me an email: lal@puredhamma.net.

July 10, 2019: New section on "Origin of Life."
July 31, 2020: New section on "Buddha Dhamma - A Scientific Approach."
February 19, 2021: New subsection on "Paticca Samuppāda - Essential Concepts."
July 2, 2021: New subsection on "Basic Framework of Buddha Dhamma."
February 28, 2022: New section on "Elephants in the Room."
It is important to know that there is a special convention to write Pāli words: "Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars - Part 1." There is also a "Pāli Glossary - (A-K)."

## II Buddha Dhamma

- User's Guide to Pure Dhamma Website
- Buddhahood Associated Controversies
- Buddha Dhamma - A Scientific Approach
- Introduction - A Scientific Approach to Buddha Dhamma
- Theories of Our World - Scientific Overview
- Mind and Matter - Buddhist Analysis
- Sensual Pleasures - The Hidden Suffering
- Kammic Energy Leads to Consciousness
- Brain and the Gandhabba
- Mind Is Not in the Brain
- Gandhabba in a Human Body - an Analogy
- Persistent Vegetative State - Buddhist View
- Patient H.M. - Different Roles of Brain in Memory
- Memory Recall for Gandhabba in a Human Body
- Rūpa and Rūpakkhandha, Nāma and Nāmagotta
- Our Two Worlds - Rūpa Loka and Nāma Loka
- Autobiographical Memory - Preserved in Nāma Loka
- Rūpa and Rūpakkhandha, Nāma and Nāmagotta
- Response to a Sensory Stimulus - Role of Gati/Anusaya
- Ārammana Plays a Critical Role in a Sensory Event
- Nāma Loka and Rūpa Loka - Two Parts of Our World
- Tipitaka - A Systematic Approach
- Tipitaka - The Uniqueness of Buddha Dhamma
- Pāli Canon Is Self-Contained but Requires Detailed Explanation
- Vinaya Pitaka - More Than Disciplinary Rules
- Abhidhamma Pitaka - Deeper Analyses of Concepts
- Antarābhava and Gandhabba
- Antarābhava - No Connection to Gandhabba
- Antarābhava Discussion in Kathāvatthu - Not Relevant to Gandhabba
- How Do We See? - Role of the Gandhabba
- Interpretation of the Tipitaka - Gandhabba Example
- Buddhahood Controversies - Introduction
- Pātihāriya (Supernormal Abilities) of a Buddha - Part I
- Pātihāriya (Supernormal Abilities) of a Buddha - Part II
- What is Buddha Dhamma?
- Foundation of Dhamma
- The Importance of Purifying the Mind
- Subsection: The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma
- The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma - Introduction
- Our Two Worlds: Material and Immaterial
- 31 Realms Associated with the Earth
- Gandhabba - Only in Human and Animal Realms
- Body Types in Different Realms - Importance of Manomaya Kāya
- Gandhabba Sensing the World - With and Without a Physical Body
- Nibbāna in the Big Picture
- Buddha Dhamma: Non-Perceivability and Self-Consistency
- Samsāric Time Scale, Buddhist Cosmology, and the Big Bang Theory
- Evidence for Rebirth
- Subsection: Power of the Human Mind
- Power of the Human Mind - Introduction
- Difference Between Jhāna and Stages of Nibbāna
- Power of the Human Mind - Anariya or Mundane Jhānā
- Power of the Human Mind - Ariya Jhānā
- Are There Procedures for Attaining Magga Phala, Jhāna and Abhiññā?
- Transfer of Merits (Pattidana) - How Does it Happen?
- First Noble Truth is Suffering? Myths about Suffering
- Vinaya - The Nature Likes to be in Equillibrium


### 2.1 User's Guide to Pure Dhamma Website

## June 8, 2017, revised October 1, 2017; August 28, 2022

As of August 2022, there are over 700 posts on the website. Recently, I have been getting inquiries on "where to start?" when one first comes to the website.

1. First, there are a few general tools that can be used to navigate the website:

- Following is what the home page of the site should look like.



## Welcome!

- If you do not see it like that with the menu system, you should update your browser (Google Chrome, Microsoft Explorer, Firefox, etc) so that you would be able to see the menu as shown above.
- Another way to look at the whole menu is "Pure Dhamma - Sitemap." All posts are categorized under sections and subsections there. One could scan through it to locate relevant posts of interest.
- The "Search" button at the top right is also good at extracting relevant posts for a given keyword or keywords.
- I have added a "bread crumbs" link at the top of each page so you can see which section/subsection the page belongs to. You can go to that section/subsection and read more on that topic.
- January 30, 2019: For those new to Buddha Dhamma (or just want to look at the essential fundamentals, see "Essential Buddhism."
- February 28, 2022: New section pointing out the glaring inconsistencies (with the Tipitaka) in the current Theravāda texts: "Elephants in the Room."

2. First, for those familiar with Buddha Dhamma (Buddhism), I like to point out that three main misconceptions are prevalent today. They not only block the path to Nibbāna but are micchā dițthi that could be responsible for rebirth in the ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$. I am not trying to scare anyone, but "making adhamma to be dhamma is a serious offense."

- Misinterpretation of anicca, dukkha, anatta: "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta - Wrong Interpretations."
- Misinterpretation of breath meditation as Ānāpānasati: "Is Ānāpānasati Breath Meditation?."
- Insisting that the gandhabba (manomaya kāya) is a Mahāyāna concept: "Gandhabba State - Evidence from Tipitaka."
- These misconceptions are not the fault of current Theravādins; they have been handed down for hundreds of years, as explained in the "Historical Background." However, it makes no sense to adhere to them when solid evidence is presented, per the above posts and many others on this website.
- Of course, no one should be able to insist, "this is the only truth, and nothing else is the truth," but the truth can be verified to one's satisfaction by critically examining the evidence. I am open to discussing any valid contrary evidence. We need to sort out the truth for the benefit of all.

3. Now, let us discuss which sections could interest people with different backgrounds on their exposure to Buddha Dhamma.

- The "Moral Living and Fundamentals" section is a good start for anyone since the fundamentals of Buddha Dhamma are discussed. In particular, the subsections, "Buddha Dhamma and Buddhism" and "Dhamma Concepts" could be informative.
- The subsection on "Working Towards Good Rebirths" broadens the concepts discussed in the above subsection to indicate how one's actions need to be tailored to seek rebirths in higher realms and to avoid births in the lower realms (apāyā) in case one is unable to attain any stages of Nibbāna in this life.
- Even those exposed to "Buddhism" may realize that some fundamental aspects have been misrepresented in many textbooks and websites.

4. The "Buddha Dhamma" section is a more advanced version of the above-mentioned sections. It discusses the basis of the Buddha Dhamma, i.e., the importance of purifying one's mind in the first few posts.

- The Buddha described a wider world of 31 realms of which we know only two: the animal and human realms: "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma."
- Then it discusses how the Buddha could see that "bigger picture" in the post, "Buddha Dhamma: NonPerceivability and Self-Consistency."
- The two posts "Samsāric Time Scale, Buddhist Cosmology, and the Big Bang Theory" and "Evidence for Rebirth" discuss how we have been going through the birth/death/rebirth process from hte beginningless time.

5. For those who have had exposure mainly to "Mahāyāna Buddhism," the following two posts will provide an idea of why Mahāyāna sutrās are very different from the suttā that the Buddha delivered: "Saddharma Pundarika Sutra (Lotus Sutra) - A Focused Analysis" and "What is Sunyata or Sunnata (Emptiness)?."

- Further details on how various "schools of Buddhism" - like Mahāyāna, Vajrayāna (Tibetan), Zen, etc. - evolved within the first 1000 years after the Buddha can be found in the "Historical Background" section.

6. Even Theravāda Buddhism - which is supposed to be closest to the Buddha's original teachings - has been contaminated over the years, mainly due to three key reasons. The first reason is losing the true interpretations of ten types of micch $\bar{a}$ ditṭhi (wrong views).

- There are two types of Eightfold Paths: mundane and transcendental (lokuttara). One needs to first get into the mundane Path by getting rid of the 10 types of micchā ditthi; see "Buddha Dhamma - In a Chart"" and "Mahā Cattārīsaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty)."
- One of the ten micchā dittthi is "para loka ("paralowa" in Sinhala) or the world of gandhabba does not exist." Many people think that gandhabba is a Mahāyāna concept, but that is a big mistake; see below.
- One cannot even get into the mundane Eightfold Path if one believes that para loka and gandhabba are not real.

7. Second, various Hindu meditation techniques - including wrong interpretations of kasina meditation and $\bar{A} n a ̄ p a ̄ n a s a t i ~(a s ~ b r e a t h ~ m e d i t a t i o n) ~-~ w e r e ~ i n c o r p o r a t e d ~ i n t o ~ T h e r a v a ̄ d a ~ t e a c h i n g s ~ e s p e c i a l l y ~ a f t e r ~$

Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga; see, "Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga - A Focused Analysis," and the posts referred to there.
8. Third and most important reas on is the incorrect translation of key Pāli words like anicca and anatta by the Early European scholars in the 1800 s, see, "Misinterpretation of Anicca and Anatta by Early European Scholars."

- Let us briefly discuss each of those three and point to a few more relevant posts.

9. Many people don't realize that the concept of gandhabba (mental body) is a critical component in explaining how life functions in human and animal realms.

- First, it is a misconception that gandhabba is a Mahāyāna concept; see "Antarabhava and Gandhabba" and "Gandhabba State - Evidence from Tipitaka."
- Without the concepts of gandhabba, it is not possible to explain so many rebirth stories and out-of-body experiences that have been widely reported in recent years; see, "Evidence for Rebirth" and "Manomaya Kāya and Out-of-Body Experience (OBE)."
- The main opposition to the concept of gandhabba in current Theravāda circles is the misconception that it is an "antarābhava," i.e., between two bhava. But a human gandhabba is in the same "human bhava.'This is clarified in "Antarabhava and Gandhabba."
- The critical role of the mental body (gandhabba) in giving rise to multiple births (jāti) within human and animal existences (bhava) has been disregarded. However, not believing in the existence of gandhabba is a micch $\bar{a}$ ditṭhi, and is a hindrance to attain the Sotāpanna stage; see, "Miccā Ditthi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage."
- Because of its high importance, gandhabba is discussed in two main sections: "Mental Body Gandhabba" and "Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya)."

10. Regarding the problems with Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga - published 1500 years ago - the two issues mentioned above are:

- Regarding kasiña meditations discussed in the Visuddhimagga, there is not a single sutta in the Tipitaka that discusses kasina meditation.
- Regarding the breath meditation discussed in the Visuddgimagga, no suttā in the Tipitaka discusses BREATH MEDITATION. Those suttā have been mistranslated. Furthermore, there is a sutta in the Tipiṭaka that specifically says breath meditation is not Ānāpānasati meditation, see, "Is Ānāpānasati Breath Meditation?."

11. The critical problem of incorrect translation of anicca and anatta has prevented so many people from making progress over the past 200 years. I strongly recommend the post, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta - Wrong Interpretations."

- More posts can be found in the section, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta." The correct interpretation of many relevant key sutt $\bar{a}$ is discussed in that section.
- The introductory timeline on those historical developments is given in "Incorrect Theravāda Interpretations - Historical Timeline," and all relevant posts are in the "Historical Background" section.

12. Now let us turn to an issue of relevance to many new to Buddha Dhamma. Many people - especially in Western countries - have a hard time believing in rebirth; see, "Buddhism without Rebirth and Nibbāna?."

- The section, "Living Dhamma," is specially designed for one to start following Buddha Dhamma even without believing in the concept of rebirth.
- The first two subsections there are good to be read by everyone. One can experience a real "cooling down" even without believing in rebirth.
- The latter subsections gradually take one to advanced concepts, and the latter sections are appropriate even for people with advanced backgrounds in Buddha Dhamma. One would be able to clarify advanced concepts in later subsections.

13. Once one starts looking into Buddha Dhamma seriously, it is a good idea to learn a few basic things about the Pāli language. The Pāli Canon, first transmitted orally and then written 2000 years ago, still has all the suttā composed by the Buddha and memorized by Ven. Ānanda.

- See "Preservation of the Dhamma" and other relevant posts in the "Historical Background."
- While the Buddha encouraged delivering Dhamma to others in their native language, there are some advantages to learning at least some key Pāli words, see, "Why is it Necessary to Learn Key Pāli Words?."
- In particular, learning the meanings behind some key roots like "san" makes a huge difference in gaining an understanding of keywords like samisāra and sammā, see, the subsection on "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Samsīra)."

14. Learning the correct meanings of the suttā in the Tipiṭaka is essential to learning Buddha Dhamma. Most existing literature, even on Theravāda, has incorrect translations.

- The section "Sutta Interpretations" discusses some key suttā in the Tipiṭaka.
- It is a good idea first to read two important posts in that section, "Sutta Interpretation - Uddesa, Niddesa, Patiniddesa" and "Pāli Dictionaries - Are They Reliable?."
- Short and succinct sayings of the Buddha in the Dhammapada provide deep insights in short verses. Some of these are discussed in the "Dhammapada" section.

15. Meditation (both formal and informal) is essential to following the Path of the Buddha. The "Bhāvanā (Meditation)" provides a series of posts on the fundamentals of meditation and also on advanced topics.

- A critical misconception that is prevalent today is that Annāpānasati bhāvanā is breath meditation. Several posts discuss the correct version, and the post, "Is Ānāpānasati Breath Meditation?" discusses evidence from the Tipitaka that breath meditation is not Annāpāna.
- The Satipaṭthāna bhāvanā is discussed in the subsection, "Mahā Satipatthāna Sutta."

16. Buddha Dhamma is based on the principle of causation (cause and effect), which in Pāli is Patticca Samuppāda. The principles are discussed in the section "Paticca Samuppāda."

- While the meaning of Paticca Samuppāda is clear from its name itself, "Paticca Samuppāda "Pati+ichcha"+"Sama+uppāda"," the main concepts are discussed in plain English: "Paticca Samuppāda in Plain English."
- Comprehension of the Four Noble Truths requires understanding Paticca Samuppāda and Tilakkhaṇa. See "Paticca Samuppāda, Tilakkhana, Four Noble Truths."
- Just because causes exist does not necessarily mean that effects (results) will follow. There must be suitable conditions for those results (also called vipāka). This is discussed in detail in the subsection "Patthāna Dhamma."

17. Chanting of sutt $\bar{a}$ and reciting the virtues of Buddha, Dhamma, and Sañgha can prepare one's mind to be receptive to learning Dhamma and thus could be an important part of the practice, see, "Buddhist Chanting."

- The section on "Myths or Realities?" is also important since it discusses many concepts and practices that some considere to not belong to Buddha Dhamma.

18. For those who would like to see how compatible Buddha Dhamma is with modern science, the "Dhamma and Science" section is a good resource.

- That section points out both consistencies and inconsistencies with modern science.
- Modern science has had to revise or come up with new theories to explain many phenomena over the past 500 years, but Buddha Dhamma (in the Tipitaka) has remained the same for over 2500 years.
- I predict the remaining inconsistencies will also be resolved in favor of Buddha Dhamma.

19. The section on "Tables and Summaries" is an important collection of posts summarizing bits of information or "data" that are not necessary to be memorized but could be needed to explain things in detail.

- There are several posts with listings of types of citta, cetasika, 28 types of rūpa, etc., in this section.
- There is also a Pāli glossary with pronunciation: "Pāli Glossary - (A-K)" and "Pāli Glossary - (L-Z)."
- The section on "Comments/Reviews" has two subsections on "Discussion of Comments" and "Book Reviews."

20. Some either have already learned Abhidhamma, or would like to learn. For them, the "Abhidhamma" section could be useful. There are several subsections in this section on various topics.

- The section on "Abhidhamma via Science" highlights some overlaps between Abhidhamma Science.
- One of my favorite subjects is Abhidhamma. When one has proceeded along the Path to some extent, it could be useful to learn Abhidhamma, which will help gain a deeper understanding.

21. Finally, but most importantly, three important subsections discusse issues involved in attaining magga phala (stages of Nibbāna). The primary goal of this website is to provide enough material for one to attain the Sotāpanna stage of Nibbāna.

- First, the concept of Nibbāna is a puzzle to many. It is discussed in several posts in the subsection: "Nibbāna."
- Some critical points to consider by those making an effort in that direction are discussed in the subsection: "Seeking Nibbāna."
- The first goal of those who seek Nibbāna is the Sotāpanna stage. Many concepts are requirements for achieving that goal are discussed in the subsection: "Sotāpanna Stage of Nibbāna."
- The section, "Living Dhamma" is specially designed for one to start following Buddha Dhamma even without believing in the concept of rebirth, all the way to the Sotāpanna stage. People with a more advanced background can start at later subsections, skipping the early ones.


### 2.2 Buddha Dhamma - A Scientific Approach

July 31, 2020

- Introduction - A Scientific Approach to Buddha Dhamma
- Theories of Our World - Scientific Overview
- Mind and Matter - Buddhist Analysis
- Sensual Pleasures - The Hidden Suffering
- Kammic Energy Leads to Consciousness
- Brain and the Gandhabba
- Mind Is Not in the Brain
- Gandhabba in a Human Body - an Analogy
- Persistent Vegetative State - Buddhist View
- Patient H.M. - Different Roles of Brain in Memory
- Memory Recall for Gandhabba in a Human Body
- Our Two Worlds - Rūpa Loka and Nāma Loka
- Autobiographical Memory - Preserved in Nāma Loka
- Rūpa and Rūpakkhandha, Nāma and Nāmagotta
- Response to a Sensory Stimulus - Role of Gati/Anusaya
- Ārammana Plays a Critical Role in a Sensory Event
- Nāma Loka and Rūpa Loka - Two Parts of Our World
- Tipitaka - A Systematic Approach
- Tipitaka - The Uniqueness of Buddha Dhamma
- Pāli Canon Is Self-Contained but Requires Detailed Explanation
- Vinaya Pitaka - More Than Disciplinary Rules
- Abhidhamma Pitaka - Deeper Analyses of Concepts
- Antaräbhava and Gandhabba
- Antarābhava - No Connection to Gandhabba
- Antarābhava Discussion in Kathāvatthu - Not Relevant to Gandhabba
- How Do We See? - Role of the Gandhabba
- Interpretation of the Tipitaka - Gandhabba Example


### 2.2.1 Introduction - A Scientific Approach to Buddha Dhamma

July 31, 2020; revised August 2, 2020

## A Scientific Approach to Buddha Dhamma

1. Buddha Dhamma is the Grand Unified Theory (a theory that explains everything about this world) that scientists are seeking. They do not realize it because the correct version of it, with its deeper aspects, has not been available in English. There are two major relevant points.

- First, scientists will never get to a Grand Unified Theory until they realize that mental phenomena must be a part of such a theory. Modern science only focuses on just "material phenomena." The reason is the following incorrect assumption by them: Psychological (mental) aspects arise from matter. The Buddha
taught that it is the other way around: Mind is the forerunner of ALL phenomena, mental and material.
- The second point is the following. When scientists propose a brand new theory, they just use a set of assumptions. Some assumptions (axioms) are revolutionary and opposed by other scientists at the beginning. We will discuss such a prominent case below. The point is that they are not starting off with a truly essential set of axioms that cover mental as well as physical phenomena.

I will use the standard scientific method in this series of posts. I will start with a set of "assumptions," even though those are NOT ASSUMPTIONS for a Buddha. Upon attaining the Buddhahood, a Buddha DISCOVERS those fundamental laws of Nature.

## What Is a Scientific Approach?

2. Most of the time, science makes progress in a gradual step-by-step way. An existing scientific theory is "tweaked" to get a better agreement with new experimental results.

- However, In some cases, scientists come with "previously unheard" theories to explain new observations. Most other scientists are first skeptical about such a drastically new approach. But if it turns out to be able to explain observations, then it becomes accepted over time.
- Such a "revolutionary change" is a paradigm change. A good example is theories on atomic structure. There, paradigm changes happened twice within the past 100 years, as we will see below.


## Western Theories of the Atom Started with Democritus

3. Around the time of the Buddha, Democritus (400 B.C.E.) proposed that all matter is made of indivisible particles called atoms. But nothing much was known about atoms at that time.

- Democritus just assumed that if one keeps cutting in half a piece of a given material (say, an aluminum foil), it will reach a stage where it would not be possible to cut. That ultimate "indivisible" unit, he called an "atom."
- That picture has changed drastically over the years, especially within the past 150 years or so.
- Of course, Buddha's ultimate unit of matter was a suddhatthaka. It is also electrically-neutral, just as Democritus' atom. However, a mind can create a suddhatṭhaka with javana citta. A suddhatthaka is a billionth times smaller than an atom in modern science. See, "The Origin of Matter - Suddhatthaka."


## Modern Theories of the Atom

4. John Dalton, in 1803, proposed a modern theory of the atom. He suggested that different materials are made of different atoms and that a given atom cannot be broken down into smaller parts.

- For example, an oxygen atom would be eight times bigger than a hydrogen atom, but an oxygen atom CANNOT be made by combining eight hydrogen atoms. Hydrogen and oxygen have different types of "building blocks" or different atoms.
- Dalton was able to make some progress with his model.


## Plum-Pudding Model of the Atom by J. J. Thomson

5. In the late 1800s, there were many experiments on electrical discharges. J. J. Thomson discovered that negatively-charged electrons could be removed from an atom. Since atoms are electrically neutral, in 1904, he proposed that an atom is made of a positively-charged material with electrons embedded in it.

- That is analogous to plums embedded in a pudding. Thus, it came to be known as the "plum-pudding model" of an atom. See, "WebLink: wikipedia.org: Plum Pudding Model" for that model of an atom.

The following video illustrates this point:
WebLink: youtube: Discovery of the Electron: Cathode Ray Tube Experiment

- Therefore, the indivisibility of the atom was no longer accepted. Yet, Thomson's model still preserved one aspect of the original model of Democritus. An atom could be visualized as a "single unit" with two kinds of particles packed together. Later on, the positively-charged component was found to be due to protons, and a neutral particle (neutron) was also found to be inside an atom.


## Rutherford's Discovery of Mass-Concentrated Nucleus

6. Soon after that another English physicist, Ernest Rutherford, directed small alpha particles (much smaller than an atom) to a thin gold foil. He observed that most particles went right through the foil. However, some got deflected and a few even bounced back. It appeared that the atoms were mostly empty space, but there was something dense and small in there that bounced off some of the projectile particles.

- Based on those experiments, Rutherford, in 1911, proposed a radically new theory of the atom. He proposed that the positively-charged component of an atom be in a tiny volume in comparison to the rest of the atom. That central volume also contained the bulk of the mass of the atom. This region would be known as the "nucleus" of the atom. Negatively-charged electrons would be outside that nucleus, but Rutherford did not propose a model for that "outer layer" of the atom with electrons.


## Bohr's Planetary Model of the Atom

7. In 1913, Niels Bohr came up with another paradigm change for atomic structure. He purposed that the electrons "revolved around" a tiny nucleus, a small core that contained all the protons. That is similar to the structure of the Solar System, where the planets revolve around the Sun.

- Thus, some called it the "planetary model" another name for the "WebLink: wikipedia.org: Bohr Model." That planetary model of the atom was able to explain many experimental observations.


## WebLink: youtube: Discovery of the Nucleus: Rutherford's Gold Foil Experiment

- Atoms of different materials have different numbers of protons (and electrons). For example, a hydrogen atom has one proton in the nucleus and one electron moving around it. An oxygen atom has eight protons and eight electrons, etc.
- However, Bohr's planetary model unable to explain a growing number of other observations.


## Quantum Mechanics

8. In the end, the planetary model of the atom was replaced by another change of paradigm. That was the modern quantum mechanical treatment of the atom. It was first postulated by Wolfgang Pauli in 1925, using Heisenberg's matrix mechanics.

- Many other scientists including Einstein, Max Planck, Niels Bohr, and Erwin Schrödinger contributed to the development and refinement of the new quantum theory. They postulated the occurrence of energy in discrete quantities (quanta) in order to explain phenomena such as the spectrum of black-body radiation, the photoelectric effect, and the stability and spectra of atoms. Thus the name "quantum mechanics."
- In quantum theory, the position of an electron in an orbital cannot be specified. One could only calculate the likelihood of an electron being at a given location. It is known as the Copenhagen interpretation of quantum mechanics. See, "WebLink: wikipedia.org: Copenhagen interpretation."
- That is the accepted theory at present. However, there are still many unresolved issues in quantum mechanics. Even though it is able to calculate the results of ANY experiment, it is "too abstract" for many, including Einstein. The current position is summarized by the sentence "Shut up and calculate!" as
discussed in "WebLink: wikipedia.org: Copenhagen interpretation." I have discussed a new interpretation of quantum mechanics, "Quantum Mechanics and Dhamma - Introduction."


## Ability to Explain Observations - Primary Requirement of a Scientific Theory

9. The determining factors of a scientific theory are the ability to explain observations and selfconsistency. It does not matter how crazy the new theory appears to be, as long as it meets those two criteria. As we saw above, quantum theory is accepted today despite not being an "understandable" theory.

- In fact, as long as a theory fulfills those criteria, objections by even the most prominent scientists cannot prevent a good theory from taking hold.
- For example, Einstein opposed quantum theory. He tried to come up with a "better explanation" until he died. Despite his objections, quantum theory became firmly established.
- Quantum theory, in its current form, is incomprehensible to even many scientists. The problem is that it is just a mathematical tool to make calculations. Even physicists do not have an "intuitive grasp" of the underlying aspects of quantum mechanics.


## Scientific Approach to Buddha Dhamma

10. In this section, we will use the above discussed "scientific approach." We will start with the "new theory about the world" put forth by the Buddha. It was a revolutionary theory 2600 years ago and still remains a revolutionary theory today.

- Just like even Einstein was unable to come to terms with the quantum theory, many people today find it difficult to comprehend Buddha Dhamma.
- However, much of the current confusion lies in the fact that many people are not aware of the "full and complete theory" of Buddha Dhamma. They have seen only parts of Buddha's theory and conclude that those ideas are too "esoteric" or "mystical."
- Yet, unlike quantum mechanics, anyone can understand Buddha Dhamma, if the basic principles are understood.
- I hope that by presenting a "complete theory" using a "bottom-up approach" we can take a fresh perspective of some concepts like kamma, rebirth, and Nibbāna.


## The Necessary Components of Buddha Dhamma

11. We need to convince ourselves of the validity of the basic concepts in Buddha Dhamma before being able to comprehend the deeper teachings like Paṭicca Samuppāda, Tilakkhaṇa (anicca, dukkha, anatta,) and the Four Noble Truths.

- Those basic concepts (equivalent to "assumptions" or "axioms" in scientific theories) are the laws of kamma, the existence of 31 realms, and the rebirth process within those realms.
- However, those concepts are not assumptions. They are laws of Nature, discovered by a Buddlha. When one starts understanding (and practicing) Buddha Dhamma, one will see the truth of that statement.


## References

1. Wikipedia article, "WebLink: wikipedia.org: Scientific method"
2. Here is another video that provides a somewhat different perspective of the evolution of theories of atoms: WebLink: youtube: The History of Atomic Chemistry: Crash Course Chemistry \#37

### 2.2.2 <br> Theories of Our World - Scientific Overview

August 9, 2020; revised July 25, 2022
We will first briefly discuss three main theories of our world. Then we will start a broader discussion of Buddha's description of this world.

## Theories of Our World - According to Modern Science

1. Western science has been studying our world since the time of the ancient Greeks. But its focus has been on the material world. There have been investigations on TWO fronts. The structure of matter and the origin of life.

- Investigations on the structure of matter started with Socrates and Aristotle. As discussed in the previous post, Democritus proposed the first atomic theory, which has evolved into current studies on quantum physics. See "Introduction - A Scientific Approach to Buddha Dhamma" and Ref. 1 below.
- The second front is on the origin of life or the study of the living world. That includes plants and conscious life. See "WebLink: wikipedia.org: History of biology." Modern science believes that living cells evolved FROM inert matter ("abiogenesis.") See Ref. 2 for more details.
- Both conscious and non-conscious (plant) life have living cells as the basis. See "Origin of Life There is No Traceable Origin."
- A separate area of research looks into how consciousness (or mental phenomena) can arise from inert matter. See "WebLink: wikipedia.org: Consciousness." As discussed, modern science CAN NOT explain the origin of conscious life.


## Theories of Our World - Religious Explanation

2. Of course, the other prevailing explanation of the origin of life is that a Creator created the whole world, including all the stars, planets, our Earth, and the first forms of life on Earth.

- Even though easiest to state, this explanation has no factual basis. One HAS TO accept it based purely on the faith of a Creator.
- See, for example, "WebLink: answersingenesis.org: Evidence for Creation."


## Theories of Our World - Buddhist Explanation

3. Even though Buddha Dhamma (commonly known as Buddhism) is normally considered a religion, it is NOT a religion, as described in \#2. It can be treated as a scientific theory, as we will do in this series of posts.

- Buddha Dhamma provides a complete description of our world.
- However, the Buddha did not try to provide detailed descriptions of material phenomena. He taught that finding such details will only take precious time away from the urgent need to find the truth about the unimaginable suffering associated with the rebirth process.
- Therefore, much of the Sutta Piṭaka and the Vinaya Piṭaka focus on the "problem of suffering" and how to stop future suffering in the rebirth process.
- As we know, Buddha's teachings are contained in three Pitaka or Tipitaka. The third one, Abhidhamma Pitaka, describes the building blocks of our world in great detail. That includes material (rūpa) and mental (citta and cetasika) aspects. If one is interested in figuring out those details, not in the other two Pitaka, one needs to understand the Abhidhamma material.
- However, it is not necessary to go to the great depths of Abhidhamma to get an idea about the underlying principles. In the upcoming posts, we will do such a simplified analysis. That discussion will augment the series of posts on "Origin of Life."


## Overview of Modern Science

4. The focus of modern science is on figuring out the origin and the behavior of matter. Scientists consider mental phenomena to be secondary and to arise from inert matter! Most scientists believe that mental phenomena arise in the brain.

- There are several proposals on how the mind (or thoughts) can arise from matter. But there is no credible theory that comes even close to begin to explain it. See "WebLink: wikipedia.org: Consciousness."
- A critical outcome of this approach is that modern science falls under the "annihilation view" (uccheda ditthi.) That wrong view says that life ENDS at the death of the physical body.


## Evidence Against Proposed Scientific Theories of the Mind

5. Since mental phenomena are supposed to arise in the brain, that conclusion (in red in \#4) leads to two critical implications.

- The death of the brain - thus the death of a human - is the ABSOLUTE end of that life. There is no way to "transfer" the memories of one life to another. Thus, the rebirth process is COMPLETELY ruled out in modern science.
- Furthermore, it also RULES OUT the possibility of Out-of-Body Experiences (OBE), including Near-Death Experiences (NDE.)
- Let us briefly discuss evidence regarding those three areas.


## Evidence from Rebirth Accounts

6. I will just provide one account here. In their book, "Soul Survivor: The Reincarnation of a World War II Fighter Pilot," Bruce and Andrea Leininger detail the amazing story of their son's recount of a past life.

Here is a recent youtube video on it:
WebLink: youtube: Boy Remembers His Past Life As a World War II Pilot!!

- More rebirth accounts are discussed in "Evidence for Rebirth."


## Evidence from Out-of-Body Experiences (OBE)

7. In his book "Travels," the famous author of Jurassic Park, Michael Crichton (1988, p. 307), mentions his ability to "shift my awareness out of my body and move it around the bedroom." He says, "..I didn't think anything about it... I assumed that anybody could do it..".

- A similar account has been given by a woman recently who also thought that "everybody could do it": https://abcnews.go.com/Health/woman-body-experiences/story?id=22825927
- A series of books, including "Journeys of the Body," has been written by Robert A. Monroe based on his experiences.


## Evidence from Near-Death Experiences (NDE)

8. Only a few people can experience OBE at will. Typically, OBE happens under stressful conditions, most commonly during heart operations. These have a special name of near-death experiences (NDE.) The following video provides a good summary of NDE accounts.

- There are many books on NDE. "Consciousness Beyond Life" by Pim van Lommel (2010) gives detailed accounts of case studies of NDE experienced by people undergoing heart operations.
- A recent book, "Dying to be me: My Journey from Cancer, to Near Death, to True Healing," by Anita Moorjani (2012), describes her NDE experience.


## Current Philosophical Ideas on Consciousness

9. Philosophers put forth their ideas when science cannot make much progress. Physics evolved from philosophy.

- There are many ideas in philosophy about consciousness, including one (for example, by Daniel Dennett) that says consciousness is not real!
- The following video is a presentation by David Chalmers, a leading philosopher on consciousness. He makes much more sense and gets to the heart of the issue.
WebLink: youtube: Hard Problem of Consciousness - David Chalmers


## Consciousness Is a Fundamental Aspect of Nature

10. In the following video presentation, David Chalmers makes some important points.

- Around 8 minutes, he explains that current theories of our world cannot accommodate consciousness.
- Then he proposes to investigate the possibility that consciousness is a fundamental aspect of nature that CANNOT be derived from other entities (such as matter.)
- Another philosopher who believes that consciousness cannot be derived is Thomas Nagel. He discusses that in his book in Ref. 3. That is what the Buddha explained; see "Buddha Dhamma - A Scientific Approach."

WebLink: youtube: How do you explain consciousness? | David Chalmers

## Further Information

1. The scientific effort on a single theory to explain material phenomena, "Grand Unified Theory."
2. Scientific studies on the emergence of life from inert matter, "Abiogenesis."
3. Thomas Nagel, "Mind \& Cosmos: Why the Materialist Neo-Darwinian Conception of Nature Is Almost Certainly False" (2012).
4. Evidence emerges from several investigations that a brain is not necessary to have conscious experiences. I encourage watching the following video.
WebLink: youtube: Is There Life After Death? moderated by John Cleese - 2018 Tom Tom Festival

### 2.2.3 Mind and Matter - Buddhist Analysis

August 15, 2020; revised August 16, 2020
Mind and matter go together in Buddha Dhamma. It is one meaning of "nāmarūpa." It starts at a level much finer than the atomic level in modern science. It is even below the elementary particle level.

## The Three Basic Building Blocks of Buddha Dhamma

## 1. Everything in this world arises out of three building blocks: citta, cetasika, and rūpa.

- An analogy in modern science is to start with electrons, protons, and neutrons (elementary particles would be even more fundamental). A tasty cake, an oak tree, or a nuclear bomb all have origins in those fundamental particles.
- In the same way, Buddha Dhamma (the theory) can start with those three fundamental entities. They can describe all mental phenomena as well as material phenomena.
- On the other hand, modern science can describe ONLY material phenomena. It just ASSUMES that mental phenomena come out of material phenomena. But that assumption has NOT been validated. See the previous post, "Theories of Our World - Scientific Overview."
- Modern science cannot explain how a living-being is born. It seems to say that "it just happens." We will discuss that below.


## Connection Between Mind and Matter

2. In Buddha Dhamma, analysis of rūpa directly provides the connection between mind and matter.

- In Abhidhamma, there are 28 types of rūpa. However, there are only a few types of rūpa that are sufficient to start our discussion here.
- We will start with six types of rūpa directly related to the mind and are essential in sensing the external world. First, there is hadaya vatthu, the "seat of the mind," where thoughts (citta) arise. Seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and body touching sensations are sensed at five pasāda rūpa: cakkhu, sota, ghāna, jivhā, and kāya.
- We are accustomed to the idea that we see things with our eyes, hear with our ears, etc. But all those five physical sense faculties just have inert matter. Inert matter cannot "sense" or "feel" anything.
- Scientists go one step further and say that eyes, ears, etc. only capture the corresponding visual, auditory,..signals. They say that it is in the brain that those sensations are processed and "detected." But they have no idea how such a "feeling" or "sensation" can arise in a brain. After all, the brain itself is made of inert atoms and molecules!


## Brain Sends Those Signals to the "Actual Sensing Units"

3. It is correct that the brain processes those sensory signals captured by eyes, ears, etc. However, there is nothing in the brain that actually "detect" or "experience" those signals.

- As mentioned above, those actual sensing units are the hadaya vatthu and the five pasāda rūpa. I will stick to these Pāli terms, and you will see that it is necessary to do so. The English vocabulary does not have corresponding words.
- Now, we need to discuss two issues. Where are those six "sensing units" located? Also, how can they "feel" or "sense" those signals? Let us consider the latter question first.
- It is kammic energy that creates those six elementary sensory units (hadaya vatthu and the five pasāda rūpa of cakkhu, sota, ghāna, jivhā, kāya) at the beginning of a new existence. For simplicity, let us call those six entities "sensing units." In some existences, there are less than six. For example, a rūpāvacara Brahma has only three, and an arupāvacara Brahma has only one (just hadaya vatthu.)
- ONLY kammic energy can create those special types of rūpa. They have a trace of matter (suddhatthaka) AND also the ability to "feel" or "experience" the sensory inputs. That is the FUNDAMENTAL connection between mind and matter.


## Kammic Energy - Origin of Life

4. It is the kammic energy created by a STRONG previous kamma that leads to a new existence as a result (vipāka) of that kamma.

- For example, if person X kills another person, then that person X would have created a kammic seed (or a kamma bija) that can germinate and give rise to existence in hell. If the kamma were rape, that would create a kammic seed to be born an animal. The vipāka (result) is according to the kamma. That is described in detail in "Paticca Samuppāda."
- At the beginning of a new existence, kammic energy creates a set of "sensing units" appropriate for that existence. All living-beings in the kāma loka (six Deva realms, the human realm, and the four apāy $\bar{a}$ ) have all six units listed in \#3 above.


## Examples of Various Existences

5. Without getting deeper into Pațicca Samuppāda, let us try to get the basic idea of that process. It just says that an existence corresponds to the kamma that gave rise to that existence.

- Someone who cultivates one of the four highest jhāna (arupāvacara jhāna) will be born as an arupāvacara Brahma. Someone in such an arupāvacara jhāna does not experience any of five sensory inputs (seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching). As a result (vipāka) of cultivating such a $j h a ̄ n a$, one would be born in the corresponding arupāvacara realm (there are four such realms.) An arupāvacara Brahma cannot see, hear, smell, taste, or touch anything. He has only a hadaya vatthu, and thus, can only think (just like the experience in an arupāvacara jhāna.) A hadaya vatthu is the LEAST bit of matter that can sustain mind (mental activity.)
- Therefore, existence as an arupāvacara Brahma is the simplest. One is free of burdens of making a living to buy houses, cars, or even food. There is no need to eat. That "Brahma body" only has a hadaya vatthu, which is so small that a Brahma cannot be seen even with the finest microscope scientists have. Kammic energy sustains that "body" with just an unimaginably small amount of "matter."
- At the next higher level of "complexity" are the 16 rūpāvacara Brahma realms. As you can guess now, birth in a rūpāvacara Brahma realm is a vipāka of cultivating rūpāvacara jhāna. A human can get into a rūpāvacara jhāna by suppressing or removing the cravings for close-contact sensory pleasures (eating, smelling, and touching.) The bottom line is that a rūp$\overline{\boldsymbol{a} v a c a r a ~ B r a h m a ~ c a n ~ o n l y ~ s e e ~ a n d ~}$ hear in addition to being able to think. Thus, a rūpāvacara Brahma would have only cakkhu and sota pasāda rūpa in addition to hadaya vatthu. Thus he would have only three "sensing units."
- It is only in the kāma loka (six Deva realms, the human realm, and the four apāy $\bar{a}$ ) that living-beings have all six "sensing units" listed in \#3 above. Births in kāma loka are much more complex, and that is where one needs a better understanding of Patticca Samuppāda to describe various births such as animal and hell beings. Of course, those births in the four ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$ are due to akusala kamma.


## A Human Gandhabba Is a Set of Six "Sensory Units"

6. At the beginning of human existence, kammic energy creates a human gandhabba (or a manomaya $k \bar{a} y a$ ) with a hadaya vatthu and five pasāda rūpa. That is the basic mind and matter overlap (nāmarūpa) in a human.

- Just like it is impossible to see a Brahma, it is not possible to see a gandhabba. A gandhabba is almost like a Brahma, but with a full set of pasāda rūpa.
- After created by kammic energy, a gandhabba stays with that "invisible body" may be for even many years. When a "matching womb" becomes available, it is pulled into that womb by kammic energy.
- Modern science can explain the growth of a baby, starting with an embryo in a womb. But it CANNOT explain how that baby became CONSCIOUS.
- The conception of a human baby (i.e., creating an embryo from an inert zygote) happens when a gandhabba comes into the womb and merges with the zygote. For details, see "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception."


## Many Physical Bodies For a Single Mental Body (Gandhabba)

7. Therefore, a human being does not start with a physical body, i.e., with physical eyes, ears, etc. or the brain. As the Buddha explained, a physical body is a temporary residence for a human gandhabba. Within a human existence (that may last thousands of years), a gandhabba may acquire MANY different physical bodies. See, "Bhava and Jāti - States of Existence and Births Therein."

- When the gandhabba is trapped inside a physical body, it has to get external sensory signals indirectly. The eyes, ears, etc. capture those sensory signals, which are then processed by the brain. We will discuss how the brain transfers that information to the gandhabba in a future post.
- It is a human existence (bhava) that is hard to get. But within a human bhava, one may be born many times with different human bodies. That is why we have so many rebirth stories where one is reborn within several years.
- For the duration of a human bhava, one will have ONLY ONE mental body (manomaya kāya), also known as gandhabba. Of course, that gandhabba may undergo some changes. But it will last the whole duration of that human bhava.


## Pāli Word for Eye Is Not Cakkhu - It Is Nayana or Akkhi

8. Most people do not realize the following critical fact. Pāli words for eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and the body, are nayana (or akkhi), kaṇna, nāsā (or nāsik $\bar{a}$ ), jivhā, and sarīra or deha or kāya.

- The Pāli words cakkhu, sota, ghāna, jivhā, kāya refer to the five pasāda rūpa associated with the manomaya kāya (gandhabba).
- Thus, two words could be used in both ways either to refer to a physical sense faculty or a pasāda rūpa (jivhā and kāya).
- While inside a physical body, a gandhabba is shielded from the external world. We will discuss how pasāda rūpā receive signals from the physical sensory faculties in the next post.
- In the Abhidhamma analysis of $r \bar{u} p a$, the five pasāda rūpa are listed as five fundamental types of rūpa. Thus, it is clear that cakkhu, sota, ghāna, jivhā, kāya DO NOT refer to eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and the physical body!
- On p. 236 of Ref. 1, they are listed as "sensitive phenomena." If you look at p. 237, the Pāli term is "pasāda rūpa." The five types of pasāda rūpa are \#5 through \#9 in Table 6.1 on p. 237. I tried to make that clear in the post, "Rūpa (Material Form) - Table."
- In Ref. 1, the description of $r \bar{u} p a$ is in Chapter VI (pp. 234-263.)
- By the way, I will use Ref. 1 as the standard text on Abhidhamma for this series of posts. I have provided a link to the free pdf version. Ref. 2 is good as well.


## Summary - Special Types of Rūpa With Ability to "Sense"

9. There are six "sensing units" (created by kammic energy) that have the ability to "sense" or "experience." That kammic energy is created with citta and cetasika. Therefore, it is a cyclic process (and why the rebirth process has no beginning!). We will discuss that intricate mind and matter connection in upcoming posts.

- We started the post by pointing out that citta, cetasika, and rūpa can describe EVERYTHING in this world.
- In the above, we went through a simple description of the arising of a living-being with a set of "sensing units." That particular living-being will then do more kamma and create the seeds for more future births.
- That is how the rebirth process continues.
- However, by understanding this relationship between mind and matter, we have the ability to avoid "bad births" and also to attain Nibbāna. We will get into details in future posts.


## References

## 1. "Comprehensive_Manual of Abhidhamma," by Bhikkhu Bodhi (2000.)

2. "Buddha Abhidhamma - Ultimate Science," by Dr. Mehm Tin Mon. Both are free publications. Click the link to open the pdf.

### 2.2.4 Sensual Pleasures - The Hidden Suffering

## August 22, 2020; revised June 15, 2022

## Sensual Pleasures (Kāma Assāda)

1. The word sensual means the gratification of physical senses. It may have a sexual connotation, but not necessarily. We will use that word in that sense to represent the meaning of the Pāli word "kāma." People like sensual pleasures because they have "kāma rāga." [assāda : [m.] gratification, taste; enjoyment; satisfaction.]

- Such sensory contacts occur in close proximity. The three main "close sensory contacts" involve eating, smelling, and body touches (including sex.) However, visuals and sounds also are used to enhance these three sensory experiences.
- Therefore, "kāma rāga" means craving for sensual pleasures (tasty foods, nice fragrances, bodily comforts, etc.) not just for sex. See, "What is "Kāma"? It is not Just Sex."
- All five sensory contacts are available in most of the lowest 11 realms (four apāy $\bar{a}$, human realm, and six Deva realms.) Thus, kāma loka includes those 11 realms.
- However, those sensual pleasures (kāma assāda) come at a price. There is much suffering in kāma loka, as we will see below.


## What Is a Body (Kāya)?

2. In the previous post, we saw that out of 31 realms in this world, living-beings in 20 realms do not have physical bodies like ours. Brahmā in those 20 realms have only a trace of matter. They cannot be seen even with the best scientific instruments available today. See "Mind and Matter - Buddhist Analysis." Therefore, we need to abandon our perception of "solid, dense" bodies like ours to be universal.

- There is also the following related issue. We conventionally translate the Pāli word "kāya" as "body." Now, we are only used to "physical, dense bodies" like ours or animals. The idea of a living being with very little matter (and thus invisible to us) is strange to most of us.
- However, the Pāli word "kāya" means a "collection." As we know, a living being is a collection of five aggregates (pañcakkhandha) in Buddha Dhamma. An entity that can support those five aggregates has a "kāya."
- In English, also we sometimes use "body" as a collection or aggregate. Some examples are "body of water" and "body of evidence."
- Brahma has a set of "bare minimum" (a trace of) rūpa that can support the five aggregates, as discussed below. A "k $\bar{a} y a$ " of a living being is a collection of aggregates of mind and matter.
- The Pāli word for a physical body is "sarīra" even though the word " $k \bar{a} y a$ " is sometimes used.


## Why Do Humans Need Dense Physical Bodies?

3. Then, a question comes up. Why do humans need physical bodies? We discussed that human (and animal) life also starts with an "invisible body" (gandhabba), just like for a Brahma. A dense physical body arises later on when that gandhabba gets into a womb. See the previous post, "Mind and Matter - Buddhist Analysis." Why doesn't the gandhabba stays with that invisible body?

- We need physical bodies to taste the food, smell nice odors, have sex, etc. Those sensory experiences REQUIRE dense bodies. We highly value those "bodily-contacts" and constantly think, speak, and work to get more.
- But there is a "hidden price to pay" for close-contact sensory pleasures. Such dense bodies are prone to diseases, injuries, and body pains. Unfortunately, such problems are not very evident at a young age, and for most people, by the time they realize these problems, it is too late. Their brains are getting weak too, and they may not be able to learn the deeper teachings of the Buddha.
- Most living-beings in the 11 realms of kāma loka have dense bodies. The bodies of Devas are a bit less dense but dense enough to experience those three sensory inputs. The word " $k \bar{a} m a$ " implies such close contact.
- Let us consider a different approach to see the "drawbacks" and "dangers" in sensual pleasures. Let us look into how Brahmā in 20 realms (out of 31 realms in the world) overcome the desire for sensual pleasures and live for billions of years in "jhānic bliss" in those realms.


## Sufferings Due to "Dense Bodies" Is Absent in Brahma Realms

4. Out of the 31 realms of our world, the higher-lying 20 realms of Brahmā are absent from any suffering (diseases like cancer, injuries, brain defects, or even body aches). As we discussed in \#2, those Brahmā do not have dense bodies like ours. To be born in Brahma realms, one must overcome kāma rāga at least temporarily; see, "Rebirths Take Place According to Abhisanikhāra."

- Their "physical bodies" have just an unimaginably small amount of "matter" that is a billion times smaller than an atom in modern science. It is better to call it an invisible "magnetic body" or an "energy field." Some people think these Brahma have ONLY the mind, but that is not correct. The Buddha stated that the mind could not exist without a material base. These Brahmā have "bodies" with the least amount of matter in Buddha Dhamma, a suddhat! haka.
- Furthermore, there is no need to eat since there is no dense physical body to maintain. The subtle "body" of a Brahma is sustained by kammic energy.
- Of course, "bodies" that are invisible is a strange notion to many people. That is why the Buddha said his Dhamma has never been known to the world.
- How do those Brahmā get such "invisible bodies" that are not subject to any suffering (illnesses, injuries, hunger, etc.)?


## Births in Arūpāvacara Brahma Realms

5. As briefly mentioned in the previous post, one can be born in those four realms by cultivating the four highest jhāna. In fact, those who cultivate such jhāna enjoy the same life experiences as arūpāvacara Brahmā (with just the ability to think.)

- Anāriya yogis get to such jhāna using various techniques, but abstaining from sensual pleasures is a requirement. Such anāriya yogis normally stay away from sensual attractions by living in forests, especially away from women. But Noble Persons (Ariyas) get to such jhānā by cultivating wisdom and comprehending the dangers of sensual pleasures. Once getting to Ariya jhāna, one could associate with
even the most beautiful women without being tempted. For example, an Anāgāmi has no kāma rāga. [anāriya : [adj.] [doublet of anariya] not Ariya, ignoble, Sn. 815 (v. l. SS. anariya)]
- The four arūpāvacara Brahma realms correspond to optimum levels of mettā, karuṇā, muditā, and upekkhā.
- For details, see "WebLink: accesstoinsight.org: The Four Sublime States" by Nyanaponika Thera. To quote from that article, "Brahma is free from hate; and one who assiduously develops these four sublime states, by conduct and meditation, is said to become an equal of Brahma (Brahmasamo). If they become the dominant influence in his mind, he will be reborn in congenial worlds, the realms of Brahma. Therefore, these states of mind are called God-like, Brahma-like."
- These arūpāvacara Brahmā (in the four highest realms) have the "smallest bodies" of all living beings. In the Abhidhamma language, they only have the "seat of the mind" (hadaya vatthu) for thinking. They do not have any of the five "physical senses" of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, or body touches.


## Births in R̄̄pāvacara Brahma Realms

6. Rūpāvacara Brahmā have only a "bit more complex bodies" with the addition of two pasāda rūpa of cakkhu and sota. They can see and hear, in addition to being able to think. As we know, the 16 rūpāvacara Brahma realms lie below the 4 arupāvacara Brahma realms. See, " 31 Realms of Existence" and "The Thirty-one Planes of Existence."

- Note that rūpāvacara Brahmā can "see" and "hear' without having physical eyes and ears like humans. I explained in the previous post ("Mind and Matter - Buddhist Analysis.") that we do not see or hear with our physical eyes and ears. Our physical eyes are like cameras that only "take pictures" of the external world for the gandhabba trapped inside the dense physical body. Also see, "Vision Is a Series of "Snapshots" - Movie Analogy."
- A human can be assured of birth in a rūpāvacara Brahma realm by cultivating rūpāvacara jhāna. The 16 realms in rūpāvacara Brahma loka correspond to the four lower jhānā at various "strengths."
- Even to get to the four lower jhāna corresponding to the 16 realms in rūpāvacara Brahma loka, one needs to suppress at least the desire for sensual pleasures (or "kāma rāga") in addition to abstaining from immoral deeds (dasa akusala.) That is why all suttā on jhāna have a verse with, "vivicceva kāmehi, vivicca akusalehi dhammehi." or "withdrawn from sensuality, withdrawn from akusala thoughts." See, "Jhānic Experience in Detail - Sāmaññaphala Sutta (DN 2)."


## Why Do People Cultivate Jhāna?

7. Sensory pleasures due to "close contacts" (eating, smelling, sex, and other "bodily-comforts") come at a price, as we discussed in \#3. Such "close-contacts" are possible ONLY with a complex, dense body. However, such a dense body is subjected to various types of ailments.

- In addition, the ability of the physical body to provide such sensory experiences GO DOWN with age. At old age, the taste buds don't work well. One may not be able to smell odors the same way as one used to. And, one's sexual capabilities go down as well. One can clearly see such drawbacks.
- Furthermore, there is also a hidden danger in such cravings for sense pleasures. The pursuit of sense pleasures INEVITABLY lead to immoral deeds sooner or later. People kill, rape, steal, and lie to get possession of "material things" that provide those sensory contacts. Such actions are papa kamma (or strong immoral deeds) that can lead to bad results (vipāka). In particular, they can lead to rebirth in the 'bad realms' or apāy $\bar{a}$.
- Ancient yogis (even before the Buddha,) realized that sense pleasures (kāma assāda) have such bad consequences. They saw that by staying away from such sense pleasures, one could GET INTO

particular. They focused their minds on "neutral objects" such as one's breath or a kasiña object. With such techniques, they were able to get to both rūpāvacara and arupāvacara jhānic states.


## Why Are Such "Non-Buddhist" Jhāna Techniques Are Useless in the Long Run?

8. We remember that ascetic Siddhattha (before attaining the Buddhahood) learned such mundane jhāna techniques from two yogis, Āḷāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta. The Bodhisatta realized that such techniques do not remove kāma rāga from one's mind, but can only SUPPRESS them.

- While cultivation of such a jhāna will lead to rebirths in a Brahma realm, the existence in that realm WILL END once that kammic energy runs out. Then one can be reborn in an apaya in the future. The only PERMANENT solution is to end the rebirth process. That DOES NOT mean extinction, because there is no "soul-type entity" going through the rebirth process. See, "What Reincarnates? Concept of a Lifestream." For a deeper analysis, "Yamaka Sutta (SN 22.85) - Arahanthood Is Not Annihilation but End of Suffering." Both those at puredhamma.net.
- The Bodhisatta spent six more years pursuing the way to permanently REMOVE kāma rāga (and other defilements) from the mind.


## The Permanent Solution Is Nibbāna

9. Upon attaining the Buddhahood, the Buddha realized that one must first understand the unfruitfulness and dangers in pursuing such sensory pleasures. That is the ONLY way to PERMANENTLY remove cravings for sensual pleasures and to avoid rebirths in the apāy $\bar{a}$ due to INEVITABLE temptations in $k \bar{a} m a$ loka.

- Just with that understanding of the anicca nature, one becomes a Sotāpanna and be free of rebirths in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$. That is when one ENTERS the Noble Path.
- Then, by following that Noble Path, one can become free of kāma rāga first, and stop rebirths anywhere in kāma loka at the Anāgāmi stage.
- The main point is that birth in ANY of the 31 realms of this world WILL end up in death. Even the "relatively peaceful" life in a Brahma realm will end in death. There is no refuge anywhere in the 31 realms. Therefore, the ONLY permanent solution is to stop any and all rebirths. Of course, that process starts with understanding the overall rebirth process among the 31 realms. That understanding is embedded in the Four Noble Truths (and Tilakkhana.)
- We are going through this process to get a better understanding of that grand scheme of things.


### 2.2.5 <br> Kammic Energy Leads to Consciousness

August 29, 2020; revised August 30, 2020
Kammic energy leads to consciousness in all living beings. In this post, I am not going to refer to a specific type of consciousness (like cakkhu viññanna or mano viñnān̄a) but just the ability to generate any types of viñ $\tilde{n} \bar{a} n a$ in any of the 31 realms. Let us first recap our discussion so far in the new section, "Buddha Dhamma - A Scientific Approach,"

## Kammic Energy Leads to Consciousness

1. In this new section, we discuss Buddha Dhamma using a novel approach. One critical point is that the essence of ANY living being is a set of "sensing faculties" created by kammic energy.

- As we remember from the previous few posts, the main difficulty with the scientific community's current efforts is identifying how feelings (consciousness) can arise in the brain made of inert matter. As some
philosophers have pointed out, consciousness is NOT derived from matter. See, "Theories of Our World - Scientific Overview."
- In simple terms, the Buddha said that there is a set of elementary units of matter with the ability to faciitate CONSCIOUSNESS. See "Mind and Matter - Buddhist Analysis."
- Those are the hadaya vatthu (seat of mind) and a set of five pasāda rūpa (cakkhu, sota, ghāna, $j i v h \bar{a}, k \bar{a} y a)$. These are UNIQUE bits of matter with the ABILITY to EXPERIENCE things in the world. I cannot emphasize enough the importance of comprehending the uniqueness of these six entities.
- Kammic energy leads to consciousness because kammic energy alone can create those six entities.


## Why Life Cannot Be Created in a Laboratory

2. Those six "sensing faculties" (unimaginably small) can ONLY be created by kammic energy. That kammic energy is produced in THOUGHTS (specifically javana citta.) We will discuss this in detail in the future.

- That is why it will NEVER be possible to CREATE life (a conscious living being) in a laboratory. Consciousness does not arise in a chemical process or by increasing the processing power of computer chips.
- Kammic energy leads to consciousness, and our minds create kammic energy. Thus, we create our own future lives!


## Seeds (Kamma Bīja) for New Existences

3. It is kammic energy that produces seeds (kamma bïja) that give rise to a new set of "sensing units" for future existences.

- "Good seeds" generated by good kamma (puñña abhisankkhāra) can give rise to good rebirths (in human and higher realms.) Births in the highest four Brahma realms are due to $\bar{a} n e \tilde{n} j a ~ a b h i s a n ̃ k h a ̄ r a, ~ a ~$ special kind of "good abhisañkhāra."
- Bad rebirths (in the four lowest realms or apāy $\bar{a}$ ) arise due to "bad seeds" generated by immoral kamma (apuñ̃̃a abhisañkhāra)
- However, a seed cannot germinate and give rise to life if one has lost the craving for doing the corresponding kamma. Thus, one attains Nibbāna by cultivating pañ̃̃ā (wisdom) and getting rid of attachment to worldly things (tanhh $\bar{a}$.) We will discuss that later, but it has been discussed in other sections.
- First, let us discuss different types of kamma bīja with some examples.


## Good Seeds and Bad Seeds

4. Person X likes to enjoy sensory pleasures to the extent that he/she is willing to do any immoral deed to enjoy them. If X kills a human, that mindset is very powerful and creates a kamma bïja that can lead to rebirth in hell. If X kills an animal that generates a "smaller kamma bija," but if X keeps killing animals regularly, that kamma bïja will get stronger and, at some point, will be strong enough to lead to rebirth in hell.

- There is a person Y who engages in good deeds. That person enjoys feeding those in need (bhikkhus, poor people, animals, etc.) He/she would instinctively help those who fall into hard times and is able to forgive actions by others. Such a person builds up strong good kamma bīja to give rise to rebirths in human and higher realms.
- Then there is person Z who has understood the drawbacks of sensory pleasures. He/she has a natural tendency to cultivate jhāna by minimizing engaging in sensory pleasures and dasa akusala in general.

The first four jhāna fall under puñ̃̃a abhisañkhāra and can lead to rebirths in the 16 rūpāvacara Brahma realms. The higher jhāna fall under āneñja abhisañkhāra and can lead to births in the 4 arupāvacara Brahma realms.

- Those are a few examples of the types of abhisañkhāra (or kamma) that keep us bound to the rebirth process. They ALL fall under "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" in the akusala-mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda process. In the detailed explanation of that step, those sañkhāra are described as "apuñña abhisañkhāra, puñña abhisañkhāra, and āneñja abhisañkhāra." See, \#11 through \#13 in "Kamma, Sañkhāra, and Abhisañkhāra - What Is "Intention"?."
- Our own kammic energy leads to consciousness (in future lives.) That consciousness may arise in any of the 31 realms.


## The essence of a Living Being - The "Primary Sensory Units"

5. "Awareness" happens at hadaya vatthu, the seat of the mind. "Seeing" happens at the hadaya vatthu with the help of cakkhu pasāda rūpa. Similarly, "hearing" happens at the hadaya vatthu with the help of sota pasāda rūpa. The other three physical senses work the same way with ghāna, jivhā, and kāya pasāda rūpa.

- In addition, hadaya vatthu can recall past memories.
- Based on those six types of external signals, thoughts arise in the hadaya vatthu.
- That happens in EVERY living-being. Every living being has a maximum of six of those "sensory units."


## Living Beings in Most Realms Have Only "Primary Sensory Units"

6. In the post, "Mind and Matter - Buddhist Analysis," we noted that living beings in 20 of the 31 realms in this world have only such sensory units and nothing else (no physical bodies.)

- The 16 rūpāvacara Brahma realms have hadaya vatthu and two pasāda rūpa.
- The 4 arūpāvacara Brahma realms have only the hadaya vatthu.
- They all have just a "mental body" and no "solid body" like ours. But our gandhabba is similar to them.


## Dense Bodies In Kāma Loka

7. The situation is the 11 realms of kāma loka is more complex. That complexity is necessary to accommodate "close sensory contacts" of smell, taste, and body touch. Such contacts are not possible for the mental body (gandhabba); see, "Ghost 1990 Movie - Good Depiction of Gandhabba Concept."

- A gandhabba needs to get into a womb and make a physical body to experience "close sensory contacts" of taste, smell, and touch. That process is described in "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception."
- However, it is not the dense body that FEELS or EXPERIENCES those sensory contacts. Sensory experience happens ONLY at hadaya vatthu with the help of the corresponding pasāda rūpa.
- Depending on the type of the "physical body," there are different mechanisms to transfer the information generated in the "physical body" to the corresponding pasāda rūpa and then to the hadaya vatthu (seat of the mind.)
- However, if the "mental body" (gandhabba) comes out of a human's physical body, it can see and hear without having eyes and ears. There are many verified accounts of such Out-of-Body Experiences. See, "Mental Body (Gandhabba) - Personal Accounts" and "Out-of-Body Experience (OBE) and Manomaya Kāya."
- Also, see the Wikipedia articles, "WebLink: en.wikipedia.org: Out-of-body experience" and "WebLink: en.wikipedia.org: Near-death experience."


## Our Dense Physical Bodies are Just "Shells"

8. Out dense physical bodies weighing tens of kg (or hundreds of pounds) DO NOT sense ANYTHING.

- The crucial mental body (gandhabba) with the six "sensing units" is "trapped" inside the physical body. That allows it to experience the three additional senses of smell, taste, and touch. However, it also forces the gandhabba to experience "seeing" and "hearing" with physical eyes and ears.
- Therefore, a gandhabba trapped inside a physical body cannot sense ANYTHING without the aid of the five physical senses AND the brain.
- The (physical) sensory faculties (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body) can be considered mechanical instruments to capture external signals. For example, eyes are like two cameras taking pictures.
- It is the brain that analyzes the sensory signals captured by those five "sensing equipment." But the brain does not EXPERIENCE anything either. It breaks down those signals to a level that can be received by the five pasāda rūpa. Then each pasāda rūpa transfers that information to the hadaya vatthu. That is when we EXPERIENCE such a signal.
- Therefore, the brain is just a very fancy computer. Of course, the design of the brain is also by kammic energy, as is the design for all body parts. That "design" or the "blueprint" is in the gandhabba. We will discuss those details in the "Buddhist model" in a future post.


## Complexity In the Kāma Loka

9. The simplest in the kāma loka are the 6 Deva realms. Devas are born with "full physical bodies." Such 'bodies" are like ours but much more subtle. We can't see Devas either.

- On the other hand, we know a lot about how our physical bodies and brains work, thanks to many scientists' efforts over the past hundred years or so. Animal bodies work pretty much the same way.
- However, scientists have the wrong idea that such experiences are FELT in the brain, and it is the brain that generates our thoughts. Some scientists and philosophers are beginning to realize that, as we discussed to some extent in "Theories of Our World - Scientific Overview."


## Summary

10. I am going through this slowly because it is critically important to understand the basic structure of "our world."

- "Our world" is much more complex than what we can directly experience. We can only "see" two realms: the human and animal realms.
- That "wider world view" can be seen ONLY by a Buddha with a highly-purified mind. It covers 31 realms in total.
- Kammic energy leads to consciousness (or life) in all those realms.
- It is necessary to understand how births occur in each realm. As we discussed above, the root causes are the types of kamma we commit based on how we think, speak, and take actions based mainly on vaci and $k \bar{a} y a$ sañkhāra. We do not have DIRECT control over mano sañkhāra. They arise automatically due to our gati (character/habits.) But we CAN control vacī and kāya sañkhāra and thereby control our gati. See, "Gati (Habits/Character) Determine Births - Samsappanīya Sutta."
- We have discussed those aspects in other sections. But we will go through some of them as needed here. I will also refer to other sections since it is not possible to cover everything in one section.


### 2.2.6 Brain and the Gandhabba

September 6, 2020

- Mind Is Not in the Brain
- Gandhabba in a Human Body - an Analogy
- Persistent Vegetative State - Buddhist View
- Patient H.M. - Different Roles of Brain in Memory
- Memory Recall for Gandhabba in a Human Body


### 2.2.6.1 Mind Is Not in the Brain

September 6, 2020
The mind is not in the brain, but the brain is essential for the mind to work as long as the gandhabba is inside the physical body.

## Relevant Summary of Previous Posts

1. In the previous posts, we discussed that only in the kāma loka that some living beings have physical bodies with brains. Brahmā in 20 realms do not have physical bodies or brains. See "Mind and Matter Buddhist Analysis," "Sensual Pleasures - The Hidden Suffering," and "Kammic Energy Leads to Consciousness."

- Of course, modern science is not aware of realms other than the human and animal realms. That is one reason that most scientists believe that consciousness arises in the brain.
- Per Buddha Dhamma, humans and animals (and other beings in kāma loka) REQUIRE physical bodies to have access to close sensory contacts (taste, smell, and touch.) That, in turn, REQUIRES a brain to control the movement of heavy body parts. See, "Our Mental Body - Gandhabba."
We will discuss that more in the next post.
- But let us first review the current status of scientific research on the efforts by scientists to explain consciousness to arise in the brain.
- We already discussed the following roadblock facing "materialistic science": How can feelings arise in inter matter? That is the "hard problem of consciousness" that philosopher David Chalmers discussed in the video in \#9 and \#10 of "Theories of Our World - Scientific Overview."


## Mind Is Not in the Brain

2. The following video summarizes the current status of scientists' attempts to prove that consciousness arises in the brain. Many of them, who spent their whole lives looking into this issue, have concluded the following: The brain does play a role in consciousness. But consciousness does not arise in the brain.

WebLink: youtube: Neuroscientific Evidence: Irreducible Mind (Part 1)

- @ 3 minutes: Neuroscientist Wilder Pennfield argued that "the causal force is missing within the brain that can account for the actions and intentions." How can intention arise in inter matter?
- @ 4 minutes: There are correlations between the mind and the brain, but correlation does not mean causation. That is where science got stuck. However, it is fully explained in Buddha Dhamma. The brain is just a conduit facilitating body movements. A gandhabba does not have a brain. The brain becomes necessary only where a solid physical body is required for close sensory contacts for sensory pleasures (kāma assāda.)


## More Comments About the Above Video

3. Around 5 minutes, the author explains the "Visual Binding Problem," which is a part of a broader "unified perception." This is important.

- Let me give you another example. Suppose you are in a restaurant and see someone entering the restaurant. It is an old friend you have not seen any many years. But how long does it take you to recognize who it is, and even recall some "good old memories"?
- I discussed that in detail at \#4 through \#6 in "Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)."
- The mind is not in the brain and can work MUCH faster than the brain. In the above examples, recognition happens not in the brain, but in the mind. We will discuss details in future posts.

4. At 8 minutes: Instead of the brain giving rise to mind, the evidence is emerging that the mind can affect the brain. The brain has this property called "plasticity." That means our thoughts can make some brain changes, especially "re-wiring of neural connections" and even repairing some minor damages to the brain.

- The video in the following section a presentation by neuroscientist Dr. Schwartz mentioned here. He has successfully treated some patients with Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD.)
- In fact, the correct mindful meditation (Satipattthāna or Ānāpānasati; not breath meditation) can vastly improve brain function in all of us to help grasp deeper aspects of nature. That is what entails following the Eightfold Noble Path. We will get to that in the future.
- At 13:45 minutes: A study found that it is possible to control one's sexual urges by "applying the mind." They were able to control brain activity with "mind control."
- It is clear that the mind is not in the brain because it can affect brain activity.


## You Are More than Your Brain

5. More and more scientists and philosophers realize that "you are more than your brain." A human has the freedom and capability to change his/her destiny.

- Dr. Jeffrey Scwartz is a neuroscientist who has developed a novel program to treat OCD successfully. He has written several books on the subject of the mind, including Ref. 1 below.
- Here is a recent presentation of Dr. Schwartz on the subject:

WebLink: youtube: Jeffrey Schwartz: You Are More than Your Brain - Science Uprising Extra Content

- Dr. Schwartz was one of the early scientists to become aware that we (our minds) are more than our brains. He did most of his studies in the 1980s and 1990s. Since then, there have been more studies conducted using new techniques for brain imaging.


## More Evidence against Materialism

6. The current Western tradition of thinking is that the only things that really exist are the atoms and the void. Everything else, including the mind, is reducible to matter made of atoms. That world view is "materialism."

The following presentation by Dr. Michael Ignor provides a summary of evidence against materialism from recent research by many neuroscientists.

## WebLink: youtube: Michael Egnor: The Evidence against Materialism

- At 5 minutes: Cutting a brain in half does not lead to significant changes in a person. If the brain gave rise to consciousness, one would expect such a drastic change would lead to a huge change in personality (and perhaps to two personalities). But the changes were insignificant (except that it relieved the patients of susceptibility to seizures.
- At 7 minutes: Research of Dr. Wilder Pennfield showed that probing various areas of the brain could not affect personal characteristics, such as intellect, political biases, habits, etc. There is a "core personality" that does not depend on the brain. But, of course, if the brain is dead, then such attributes cannot manifest.
- More evidence that the mind is not in the brain!


## Those in Vegetative States May Be Fully Conscious

7. Another notable fact from the video by Dr. Ignor is that some of the "brain-dead" patients in "vegetative states" could be fully conscious.

- At 9:30 minutes: People who are "brain dead" and are in vegetative states may be "alive inside." They are just not able to express their feelings because they cannot talk or move body parts. A discussion of Dr. Owen's brain scan studies (mentioned by Dr. Ignor) is in Ref. 2. There are aspects of the mind that cannot be destroyed even with severe brain damage. I will discuss this more in the next post.
- At 15:30 minutes: Libet experiments on free will that seemed to suggest that humans do not have free will. Also, see, "Neuroscience says there is no Free Will? - That is a Misinterpretation!" More information providing evidence that humans do have free will in Ref. 3.
- At 19:30 minutes: The book by Bennett and Hacker referred to y Dr. Ignor is Ref. 4.
- At 22:20 minutes: Importance of intentionality that we touched on in \#2 above. How can intentionality arise from the lifeless matter in a brain?


## Teleology - Purpose of Things in the World

8. At 25 minutes, the discussion turns to teleology. Teleology is about "a reason or explanation for something to exist." See Ref. 5. An acorn grows into an oak tree and not to an apple tree. The blueprint for bringing an oak tree into existence is in that tiny seed. Of course, the acorn needs to germinate and extract all necessary material from the earth to grow into that huge oak tree.

- So, even scientists like Dr. Ignor cannot explain the ROOT CAUSES for either an oak tree or a human being comes into existence. Therefore, they assign that to a Creator. In their view, it is the Creator that designs EVERYTHING in this world. That is the "WebLink: wikipedia.org: Teleological argument" for the existence of a Creator. It sometimes goes as "WebLink: wikipedia.org: Intelligent Design."
- As Dr. Ignor asks around 26 minutes what the purpose of an eye is. He would say that it was created by the Creator for humans to see. He says that there is a "grand mind" (that of the Creator God) behind the universe. That is because Dr. Ignor is not aware of the "previously unknown theory of the Buddha."
- But the Buddha said that we create our own future eyes because we like to enjoy seeing things in this world! Again, this needs to be explained in a bigger picture.
- An acorn giving rise to an oak tree is very similar to a gandhabba giving rise to a human body. That gandhabba is unimaginably smaller than an acorn but has the blueprint for the human body. The gandhabba starts building the body while inside the mother's womb, by taking nutrition from the mother. Once born, the baby starts eating food, and that is how the body of a full-grown adult comes into being. See, "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception."


## If Mind Is Separate From the Body, What Happens to It at the Death of the Body?

9. Therefore, there is strong evidence emerging to support the idea that the mind is not in the brain, even though the brain helps facilitate the mind's workings. That gives rise to the following critical question. If the mind is something more than the brain (and the physical body), what happens to that mind when the body dies?

- For those who have not been exposed to true Buddha Dhamma, there could be only one option. That is the ASSUMPTION that the mind (stated to be "soul") must be going to either heaven or hell forever.
- But as we have already discussed, the mind creates "seeds" for future lives. Many such "seeds" exist for many future lives (some with physical bodies and brains) for ANY living being. That is why we all have been in this rebirth process from a time that cannot be traced back. See, "Origin of Life - There is No Traceable Origin."
- The "previously unheard Dhamma" is that living beings themselves are responsible for creating SEEDS for their future lives. Furthermore, living beings are also responsible for creating their environment to live in! That includes living things without consciousness (like vegetation) and the whole environment for all of that to exist. This is a VERY DEEP subject. But we will first address the issue of living beings creating the seeds their future lives.
- Both aspects are explained with Paticca samuppāda. We will, of course, first focus on human beings and other living beings.


## References

1. Jeffrey Schwartz, "You Are Not Your Brain: The 4-Step Solution for Changing Bad Habits, Ending Unhealthy Thinking, and Taking Control of Your Life", (2012)
2. Dr. Owen's brain scan studies are discussed in the following video:

WebLink: youtube: This Neuroscientist Uses fMRI to Communicate With People in a Vegetative State Freethink
3. Alfred R. Mele, "Free: Why Science Hasn't Disproved Free Will" (2014)
4. M. R. Bennett and P. M. S. Hacker, "Philosophical Foundations of Neuroscience" (2003)
5. Wikipedia article, "WebLink: wikipedia.org: Teleology."

### 2.2.6.2 Gandhabba in a Human Body - an Analogy

September 11, 2020

## Gandhabba in a Human Body Senses Differently Than When Outside

1. The six critical entities in the gandhabba (hadaya vatthu and the five pasāda rūpa of cakkhu, sota, $\boldsymbol{g h a ̄ n a}, \boldsymbol{j} \boldsymbol{i} \boldsymbol{\nu} \overline{\boldsymbol{a}}, \boldsymbol{k} \overline{\boldsymbol{a}} \boldsymbol{y} \boldsymbol{a}$ ) are responsible for the amazing feats of cognition. See, "Mind and Matter Buddhist Analysis,"

- As we have discussed, a gandhabba has only a trace of matter and is invisible. It is essentially an invisible "mental body."
- When outside the physical body, a gandhabba can hear and see by itself without having eyes and ears like us. This idea of a living being without a physical body like ours is hard to imagine for us. But Brahmā in the higher 20 realms have such "invisible bodies."
- Of course, a Brahma or a gandhabba cannot taste, smell, or touch, since they do not have "dense solid bodies."
- But when trapped inside a physical body, a gandhabba can experience all five sensory inputs. However, now the gandhabba depends on the brain to receive those sensory inputs.
- One way to get the basic idea is to look at the following analogy. This analogy works ONLY for the five physical senses.


## A Soldier in a Totally-Enclosed Military Tank

2. Visualize a soldier operating a fully-enclosed military tank. I do not even know whether such "totallyenclosed" military vehicles exist. But one can visualize it. Consider a tank that is essentially a big metal box without even a single window. It has video cameras and microphones mounted on it to capture the scenes and sounds. It also has guns mounted on it that can shoot heavy artillery shells over long distances.

- Let us also assume that the tank's movement is also fully automated, i.e., the soldier cannot drive it manually.
- There is a sophisticated computer system that controls all those activities. The soldier makes the decisions on where to go, what to shoot at, etc.
- Now, suppose the computer system breaks down completely. The soldier is fully alive but he/she is incapable of knowing what is happening outside. $\mathrm{He} /$ she is also incapable of moving the tank or firing its guns. To someone looking from outside, it appears that the tank is "lifeless." It is no different from a nearby rock.


## A Gandhabba inside a Physical Body

3. In the same way, a gandhabba trapped inside a physical body cannot see, hear, taste, smell, or touch anything without the aid of the brain.

- The physical body, just like the military tank, cannot "sense anything." But it has a set of five "instruments" to interact with the external world (eyes, ears, tongue, nose, and body).
- Then there is a brain, just like the on board computer in the military tank, that controls those body parts. It performs two types of tasks. (1) Process external signals coming through those five body parts and pass them to the gandhabba inside. (2) It also carries out the instructions given by the gandhabba to control those body parts. Thus the gandhabba speaks and controls body movements with the aid of the brain.
- In the case of extensive brain damage, the gandhabba will not be able to get any information from outside the body. It will also not be able to speak or move body parts either because those tasks are also accomplished by the brain.
- That is why a "brain-dead person" in a "vegetative state" shows no sign of life, as we will discuss.


## How Can a Gandhabba Move a Heavy Physical Body?

4. Again the "tank analogy" is helpful. The soldier does not have the energy to move the tank. That energy comes from the fuel in the tank. Therefore, the tank will become "lifeless" if fuel runs out. The computer system will also not have the power to run.

- The physical body, just like the tank, cannot move without energy. That energy comes from the food that the human eats.
- Furthermore, the brain cannot function either without having enough energy provided by the food human eats.
- It turns out that the brain consumes roughly $25 \%$ of the energy produced by food digestion. That gives an idea of the immense workload on the brain. It has to process all the information coming in through the five senses AND also to move body parts to speak and to carry out other bodily actions.


## More Comparisons Of the Two Cases

5. More bodily actions can be visualized that way. For example, gandhabba cannot throw a stone. But gandhabba in a human body can get the physical body to throw a stone (with the help of the brain.) It takes
a lot of energy to throw a stone. But that energy does NOT come from the gandhabba. that comes from the food consumed by the physical body.

- Correspondingly, the soldier cannot throw the heavy artillery. But he/she can set up the computer to aim and fire the guns. The energy to propel heavy projectiles comes from the fuel in the military tank.
- If the computer breaks down, the soldier will be helpless and will not be able to see or hear what is happening outside. Furthermore, he/she will not be able to move the tank or shoot artillery shells. That is just like a "brain-dead person" in a vegetative state (see below.)


## Why Can't the Gandhabba "See-Through" the Physical Body?

6. If a gandhabba outside a human body can travel through walls, and see/hear through walls, why cannot it see and hear without the physical eyes and ears while inside the physical body?

- That is a manifestation of kammic energy dictated by the purpose of the physical body. The physical body arises to provide a way for the gandhabba to experience close contacts of taste, smell, and touch. That NECESSITATES its entrapment inside the physical body.
- Again, the military tank analogy is useful. The soldier will be able to see and hear without the aid of that tank-mounted equipment when he is outside the tank. But while being INSIDE the tank, he CANNOT see outside without the use of the equipment. In the same way, the gandhabba is TOTALLY shielded once inside the physical body.

7. There is another aspect of why a gandhabba in a human body becomes isolated. Kammic influences block the gandhabba from "seeing through the physical body." That is a mechanism to make the physical body subject to kamma vipāka.

- Some people incur brain damage due to kamma vipāka. Being trapped inside one's own body and not being able to communicate with others is unimaginably harsh, as we will see below.
- In general, "being trapped inside a heavy body" is one mechanism for humans to "pay for the privilege" of having a physical body to enjoy sense pleasures. Without exception, those who have had out-of-body experiences describe a joyful feeling of "lightness."


## What Happens if the Computer System (Brain) Malfunctions?

8. There are two possible scenarios in each of the cases. Let us consider the tank analogy first.
a) If part of the on-board computer-controlled circuitry malfunctions, the soldier may be able to do only certain tasks. For example, suppose the circuitry that controls automated driving and the guns malfunctions. Then he would be unable to do anything with the tank (either to move it or to fire the guns.) But he may be still capable of seeing and hearing what is happening outside.
b) If the computer completely breaks down, then the soldier would be completely isolated. He will not see or hear what is happening outside, in addition to not being able to do anything with the tank.
9. In the case of a gandhabba in a human body, the above two scenarios are analogous to two possible situations for a person in a vegetative state.
a) If only certain areas of the brain circuitry are damaged (especially the brain stem), that person may be able to see and hear but may be incapable of moving body parts to respond to them.
b) If the brain is totally damaged, that person may not see or hear AS WELL AS not be able to respond either.

- Yet, the gandhabba inside is alive and well in both those cases, just like the soldier in the tank.
- We will discuss the case of a person in a "vegetative state" in detail in the next post.


## How Does A Gandhabba See/Hear When Outside a Physical Body?

10. Another possible question is: "How does the gandhabba see and hear when outside the human body?"

- It is only in the human (and animal) realms that beings communicate via speech (and bodily gestures). In other realms, living beings communicate directly via sañ̃ $\bar{a}$, one of the five aggregates (pañcakkhandha).
- Not all living beings can communicate with all others via saññ̄ā (it depends on the realm.) When possible, communications take place via sañ̃ñ generated in one's thoughts.

11. That mode of communication is similar to one's experience with dreams. In a dream, we do not "hear" what others say in the same way when we hear speech normally, i.e., through the ears. In a dream, we perceive what they are saying. We perceive sañña $\overline{\text {. }}$

- We also do not "see dreams" with our eyes, which are closed while we sleep.
- Here, we need to remember that the "real sensing elements" are not the physical eyes, ears, etc., but the five pasāda rūpa: cakkhu, sota, ghāna, jivhā, and kāya. See, "Mind and Matter - Buddhist Analysis."


## The Blind Woman Who Could See With an Out-of-Body Experience

12. The following real-life account provides a good understanding of the working of the gandhabba in a human body versus outside.

- In some cases, people are born with the cakkhu pasāda rūpa in good condition, but the optic nerve (or the physical eye itself) may be damaged. In that case, they cannot see because the brain is not getting a signal from the eyes.
- But if the gandhabba can come out of the body, it can see by itself. The following video clearly illustrates this situation.
WebLink: youtube: Near Death Experience - Blind woman 'sees' while out of body

13. Note that she had "never seen anything" in her whole life. It seems that either her physical eyes or the optic nerve/visual cortex in the brain had been damaged at birth. But the cakkhu pasāda rūpa was fully functional. That is why she was able to see when the gandhabba came out of her body.

- However, in other cases, one may be born blind because one may not be born with the cakkhu pasāda rūpa. In that case, even if the gandhabba comes out of the body, it would not be able to see.
- All five sensory faculties are in the gandhabba or the manomaya kāya. Those signals are first processed by the brain before the signals arrive at the corresponding pasāda rūpa. Then that pasāda rūpa transfers the signal to the hadaya vatthu and it is the hadaya vatthu that really "sees", "hears", etc. See "Mind and Matter - Buddhist Analysis."

All posts in this subsection at "Buddha Dhamma - A Scientific Approach."

### 2.2.6.3 <br> Persistent Vegetative State - Buddhist View

September 18, 2020; revised September 19, 2020
Some people in "persistent vegetative state" may have awareness per Buddha Dhamma. (1). As long as the physical body is alive, there is life. (2). Depending on the extent of brain damage, awareness of the external world may or may not be there.

## What Is a "Vegetative State" or Unresponsive Wakefulness Syndrome?

1. A persistent vegetative state is when a person is awake but showing no signs of awareness for an extended time. Such a patient may have awoken from a coma, but still don't seem to have regained awareness (Refs. 1, 2 [Ref. 1, and Ref. 2]).

- Ref. 1 states, "A vegetative state is when a person is awake but showing no signs of awareness."
- According to Ref. 2, a person in a vegetative state "completely lack cognitive function."
- The term "vegetative state" may have come from "vegetable-like" in the sense that the body is obviously alive, but does not show any sign of awareness. A vegetable is also "alive," but of course, does not have any awareness.
- But there is a clear difference between "being aware" and "being able to communicate that one is aware." Some people classified to be in a "vegetative state" may be aware but not able to communicate that they are aware. This difference is VERY CLEAR in the Buddhist explanation.


## There Could be Awareness in a Person Classified to be in a "Vegetative State"

2. Scientists are beginning to realize that there is a "thinking being" in a human body in a "persistent vegetative state." In 2010, it was proposed to refer to this condition as unresponsive wakefulness syndrome or UWS (Ref. 3.)

- However, many still consider ANY person in a vegetative state to be "clinically dead." Disconnecting life-support is legally allowed.
- In Buddha Dhamma, the issues become much clear. The gandhabba is fully alive inside. Since the brain's areas controlling body movement and speech are disabled, it cannot show awareness. But depending on the condition of the other areas of the brain, it may or may not be aware of the surroundings. That means a person in a vegetative state COULD BE fully aware of his/her surroundings just like a normal person.
- Progress in neuroscience now makes it possible to check whether such a person is aware of the surroundings, even if he/she cannot express that via speech or bodily movements. We will discuss that below. Let us first discuss the general picture per Buddha Dhamma.


## A Person in a Persistent Vegetative State - Buddhist Explanation

3. In the previous post, we described the workings of the gandhabba (mental body) and the physical body where the brain plays a significant role.

- One part of the brain (neocortex) provides the gandhabba with the sensory inputs coming through the physical sense faculties (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body.)
- There is a separate brain circuit (brain stem) that controls speech and bodily movements. Per gandhabba's instructions, that part of the brain controls the movement of body parts.
- We discussed those two aspects using an analogy of a military tank operated by a soldier. Here, an onboard computer has two circuits: One to bring in external video and audio to the soldier. The other part of the computer-controlled circuit drives the tank and fires the guns mounted on the soldier's tank per instructions. See, "Gandhabba in a Human Body - an Analogy."


## "Vegetative State" is Proper Terminology If the Brain Is Fully Damaged

4. If there is extensive damage to the onboard computer and all circuits under its control, the soldier is completely isolated. $\mathrm{He} /$ she would not be able to see/hear what is happening outside OR to drive the tank or fire its guns.

- Similarly, if the brain is fully damaged, the gandhabba will not be able to see, hear, taste, smell, or touch (It will also not be able to recall any past events as we will discuss later.) Furthermore, since the brain cannot help with speech or other body movements, the gandhabba cannot show any life sign.
- However, the soldier inside the tank is alive. Similarly, the gandhabba inside the physical body is also fully alive.
- It is because that the gandhabba is alive that the physical body stays alive. The physical body can be in that "persistent vegetative state" as long as the gandhabba stays inside AND the physical body is on life-support (food and water provided.)
- Thus, the term "vegetative state" is appropriate in this case, since the gandhabba cannot respond AND is totally unaware of what is going on. In Abhidhamma terminology, the mind is in the bhavañga state. There are no "active thoughts" or citta vithi.


## If Only the Brain Stem Damaged, Gandhabba May Have "Awareness"

5. Now, let us consider the second possible scenario. If only the brain stem is damage d, that person may see and hear but is incapable of moving body parts to respond to them.

- In the military tank analogy, this is similar to when the computer circuits for driving and firing of guns are damaged. The video and audio equipment are working, so that the soldier can see and hear what is going on outside, but is unable to move the tank or fire its guns. To someone looking from outside, the military tank appears to be totally disabled.
- Similarly, some people who appear to be in persistent vegetative states may be fully aware of what is going on. They have no abilities of body movements and cannot speak or move even a finger. Thus, they are unable to express anything with words or bodily movements.
- The following video is about a woman in a vegetative state for two years and was able to recover. During those two years, she heard and saw what was going on. However, there was "no sign of life" in her other than her vital signs.
WebLink: youtube: Miracle Drug Wakes Up Woman In A Coma After 2 Years | My Shocking Story


## Gandhabba of a Person in a Persistent Vegetative State is Fully Alive in All Cases

6. Therefore, as long as the body's vital functions are intact, the gandhabba inside is alive and well. In other words, the fact that the physical body does not decay MEANS that the gandhabba inside is alive.

- Of course, if life-support disconnected the physical body will die. Then the gandhabba would move out of the dead body.
- Some people in a "vegetative state" may not be able to think in addition to not being able to respond. That is a "strong vegetative state," as discussed in \#4. That is similar to a living being in the asañña realm with no thoughts or perceptions.
- On the other hand, some who are classified to be in a "persistent vegetative state" may be fully aware of what is happening, as discussed in \#5.
- The following amazing video describes the accounts of three people who were in vegetative states for years per \#5. They recovered and say that they were able to see or hear everything. But they were incapable of even moving a finger, let alone talk, so they could not acknowledge that they knew what was happening.
WebLink: youtube: This Guy Came out of a 12-Year Coma and What He Told Amazed Everyone
- Imagine being in a situation like that! Totally helpless. That is one example of anatta nature! This is why anatta means much more than just "impermanence." One can get into situations where one loses
any control over one's situation. Most animals are like that throughout their lives. They have to bear whatever happens.


## Is There a Way to Check if a Person In a Vegetative Stats Is Aware of Surroundings?

7. It would be horrible to discontinue life-support for a person who cannot communicate but is fully aware of what is happening. As we saw in the above video, some people in persistent vegetative states CAN see and hear everything. They cannot speak or even make bodily gestures to indicate that they can see and hear.

- Imagine being in such a situation. In some cases, the medical staff and even the family members may be talking about taking away life support! That would be a cruel punishment even though not intended.
- But new imaging technology developments have made it possible to find out whether a given patient is aware, even though unable to communicate. The following video explains the technology. A Neuroscientist Used fMRI to Communicate With People in a Vegetative State:
WebLink: youtube: This Neuroscientist Uses fMRI to Communicate With People in a Vegetative State Freethink
- According to this doctor, about 1 in 5 patients (from a sample of several hundred in his study) were fullly aware! Hopefully, this technique will be adopted in the future before deciding to remove life support.
- Note that the thirst person discussed in the video in \#6 (@9.06) underwent this brain scan diagnosis.


## The Buddhist Explanations Are Very Clear on Many Moral Issues

8. The prevalent "materialistic view" is making it difficult to understand some critical moral issues with clarity. What we discussed above is just one example.

- Another actively-debated issue is related to the fact that there is no clear understanding of the conception of a baby per materialistic view. The only thing that is universally accepted is that the conception STARTS with the formation of a single cell (zygote) when a sperm cell joins an egg cell in the mother's womb.
- But that zygote is inert. When does it become alive? Some people even say it is not alive until it is born! Yet, one can clearly see that the baby is alive in the womb with the heart pumping.
- In the Buddhist view, the situation is crystal clear. The inert zygote becomes alive when a gandhabba "descends to the womb" (okkanti) and merges with that zygote. That normally happens within a day or two of sexual intercourse. Thus, the time of conception is well-defined. See, "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception."


## References

1. Brain Foundation article: "Vegetative State (Unresponsive Wakefulness Syndrome)"
2. Wikipedia article: "Persistent vegetative state"
3. S. Laureys et al., "Unresponsive wakefulness syndrome: a new name for the vegetative state or apallic syndrome (2010)"
4. An insightful summary;

WebLink: youtube: Brain Dead Patients May Not Actually Be Brain Dead
5. Here is a longer video on two subjects. One was in the vegetative state for 20 years before recovering. She recovered in 2004 but remembers others talking about the terrorist attack on 9/11/2001 (@34:30.)

WebLink: youtube: Woman in a Coma For 20 Year Wakes Up (The Real Sleeping Beauty)| Only Human

All relevant posts at the subsection, "Buddha Dhamma - A Scientific Approach." Posts on the connection between the brain and gandhabba (mental body) at "Brain and the Gandhabba."

### 2.2.6.4 <br> Patient H.M. - Different Roles of Brain in Memory

September 25, 2020; revised April 11, 2022
Patient H.M. provided a critical clue to the role of the hippocampus in memory preservation. Studies on him and a few other patients point to direct and indirect roles played by the brain in preserving memories. The Buddhist and scientific descriptions are the same for habitual (procedural) memory but different for autobiographical (declarative) memory.

## Major Components of the Brain

1. The following diagram shows the brain divided into three regions. The following bullet points provide the KEY FUNCTIONS of each area. It is a crude description but provides a simple picture.

- The cerebellum (indicated in red) controls body movements. The cerebellum also helps with body balance and remembering repetitive tasks. If there is significant damage to the brain stem, one is likely to die. The brain stem controls vital functions like breathing.
- The limbic system plays a vital role in memory. It also deals with emotions.


Components of the limbic system are indicated in black.

- The neocortex (indicated in blue) is the largest area of the brain and manages sensory inputs such as vision and hearing. It is also the "thinking brain." It wraps around the limbic system, starting from the edge of the cerebellum.

Click on the link to download the figure: "Major Components of the Brain."

## Structural Information on the Three Regions of the Brain

2. The above figure shows a brain cut in the middle. Some components of the limbic system have two parts on either side. For example, the hippocampus and amygdala have two identical structures on the brain's left and right sides. [The hippocampus is a small, curved formation in the brain that plays an important role in the limbic system. The hippocampus is involved in the formation of new memories and is also associated with learning and emotions. The amygdala is a collection of cells near the base of the brain. There are two, one in each hemisphere or side of the brain. This is where emotions are given meaning, remembered, and attached to associations and responses to them (emotional memories). The amygdala is considered to be part of the brain's limbic system.]

- On the other hand, the brain stem and cerebellum are single structures.
- In contrast to both, the neocortex has different areas specialized for various tasks. Analysis of sensory inputs happens in the back (visual and auditory cortex.) Parts of the frontal cortex manage planning, speech, and related motor control aspects. The neocortex accounts for $76 \%$ of the brain.


## Overview of Our Discussion So Far

3. Now, we can better visualize our discussion so far in the previous few posts, especially the post on "Persistent Vegetative State - Buddhist View." Let us first go over that post.

- The brain stem regulates breathing, heart rate, and blood pressure. Therefore, it is likely that people in vegetative states do not have significant damage to their brain stems.
- The loss of motor control (body movements) is likely due to damage to the cerebellum.

damaged, the patients would not be able to see or hear as well.
- The visual and auditory cortexes are close to the cerebellum (left figure). Click to download the figure: "Neocortex Areas and Cerebellum." The limbic system is hidden in this view.
- That roughly matches what we discussed in the previous post about different situations of people in vegetative states. For example, suppose there is damage to the cerebellum area but minimal damage to the visua/auditory cortexes. Such patients may be able to see/hear but not able to respond.
- On the other hand, if visual/auditory cortexes and the cerebellum are
- We discussed those two situations in the previous post.


## The Opposite of a "Vegetative State" - Living Without Memory

4. Now, let us discuss a few people who were unfortunate to face different problems due to a third region of the brain located close to the middle of the brain. As we can see from the first figure above, the limbic system lies underneath the neocortex and sits above the brain stem/cerebellum area.

- The limbic system is the "emotional center" of the brain because it controls emotions. It has several components, including the hippocampus, amygdala, and thalamus.
- Our focus here is on the hippocampus. As we will see, it plays a significant role in memory.
- There are two symmetrically-placed hippocampi on either side of the brain. Surgeons removed both of them in a patient who went by the name "patient H.M."


## The account of "Patient H.M." - Critical Role of Hippocampus

5. Patient H.M. (or Henry Molaison) suffered from frequent bouts of seizures. In 1953, a surgeon removed both his hippocampi in an attempt to solve that problem. Even though the episodes went away, HM suffered a devastating memory loss.

- HM lost the ability to retain NEW memories. But he could remember events up to the operation but could not remember anything for more than a few minutes AFTER the operation. The following video explains it in more detail.
WebLink: youtube: What happens when you remove the hippocampus? - Sam Kean
- After extensive studies on patient HM (he died in 2008) and on several other patients with memory loss, neuroscientists have concluded that the hippocampus is the component in the brain that strengthens shortterm memories to long-term memories and "passes them over to the neocortex."
- However, they do not know how those memories can be "passed over to another brain region" or how the brain can keep such "long-term memories" for long times. In the next post, we will discuss some people's ability to remember past events extensively. For example, some people can remember what they ate for lunch several years ago on a specific arbitrary date! We will discuss that in upcoming posts.
- The extensive study of patient HM is vital since it allows us to pinpoint one brain component responsible for long-term memories.


## Nomenclature of Memory

6. We need to be aware are some standard terms used by neuroscientists. That will help us understand the content in the following videos.

- Autobiographical (or episodic or declarative, or explicit) memory is about remembering events, facts, etc. These memories are about dates, events, names, etc. They are the same as nāmagotta in Buddha Dhamma. In Buddha Dhamma, nāmagotta are not in the brain but reside in the "viññāna plane." There is a "transmitter" in the brain that transmits memories to the "viññāna plane." Then there is a "receiver" in the brain that makes it possible to recall memories from the "viññāṇa plane." More on that in upcoming posts.
- The other is habitual (or procedural or implicit) memory or being able to do repetitive tasks like playing the piano, riding a bicycle, brushing teeth, etc. They are related to one's habits. These memories are "hard-wired" in the brain. It appears that the cerebellum in the brain is where such "memory connections" take place.
- Anterograde amnesia is the failure to store memories after trauma. Retrograde amnesia is the failure to recall memories before the trauma. The loss of the hippocampus leads to anterograde amnesia.


## Further Details on Patient H.M.

7. The following video is a bit long. But it provides a lot of information.

## WebLink: youtube: Patient HM and Jacopo Annese

- @ 4 minutes: Hippocampi on both sides of the brain surgically removed. After that, he couldn't remember anything that had happened minutes ago. Of course, he could remember events before the operation.
- Imagine the hippocampi to be the "transmitter." Suppose it transmits new memories to the "viñãāṇa plane," where they remain intact forever. Then suppose another component (yet unidentified) in the brain can help recall memories. That "receiver" worked for patient H.M. since he could recall memories formed BEFORE removing the hippocampi.
- We will discuss this "theory" in the next post. But keep this in mind as we continue the discussion here.
- @4:40 minutes: "Declarative memory" is the same as the aforementioned autobiographical memory. "Procedural memory" is the same as "habitual memory."
- @5:40 minutes: The narrator says there is only one book on patient H.M., But there are two more. See Ref. 1.

8. The Nova clip @ 7 minutes says that memories are created and erased by chemical processes. But that is not consistent with either Buddha Dhamma or recent findings in science.

- @ 8:40 minutes: The account of H.M.'s medical problems led to surgery.
- @ 10 minutes: Patient H.M. could remember everything that happened before his operation.
- @ 10:30 minutes: Dr. Milner concluded that the hippocampus MAKES long-term memories. But we will see that there is a better explanation.
- @ 11:00 minutes: The drawing experiment showed that he could learn repetitive processes. As we will see below, that comes under "habitual memory" (learning a motor skill) controlled by the cerebellum. But, of course, he had no memory of going through those trial runs of drawing the star.
- @ 12 minutes: Current scientific explanation of memory formation. This explanation is also consistent with Buddha Dhamma. Construction of "habitual memories" or motor skills appears to occur in the cerebellum.


## The Account of Patient E.P.

9. The account of a different person, patient E.P. starts at 4:30 minutes. In 1992, E.P. suffered a viral infection that seemed to have damaged parts of the limbic system. That is very similar to the case of Clive Wearing that we will discuss below.

- @ 17 minutes: Patient E.P. could not retain memories of events AFTER coming down with the infection. But he remembered events before that. Thus, he does not have autobiographical memories of events AFTER the infection.
- @ 19:30: The virus destroyed areas around the hippocampus. After that damage, patient E.P. could not retain any NEW autobiographical information. But he remembers everything that happened BEFORE that virus-induced damage. That is similar to the case of patient H.M.
- @ 22 minutes: The narrator says the hippocampus helps "record the memories." But as we will see, the hippocampus transmits those memories to the viññ̄ạna plane.
- @ 24 minutes: Brief discussion of Clive Wearing.
- @ 25:40 minutes: The account of Dr. Jacopo Annese, who compiles records of the brains of people with different backgrounds, including those with memory problems.
- @ 30:10 to 32 minutes: The brain of patient H.M. The discussion relevant to our topic stops at 32 minutes.
- @ 32 minutes to end: Work of Dr. Annese. He plans to make a repository of complete brain scans of 1000 people.
- Next, we discuss a third patient who lost ALL his memories AND cannot make ANY memories.


## Clive Wearing - Musician With Seven Second Memory

10. Clive Wearing was a reputable musician. A herpes virus damaged his brain (around the limbic system) just over a few days in 1985. Unlike patient H.M. and patient E.P., he cannot recall ANY memories. He can remember only those events within the last seven seconds. His situation is even worse than that of the previous two patients.

- Therefore, he cannot recognize anyone. Even though he cannot remember his wife's name, he knows that she is a special person in his life.
- So, he virtually lives "just at that moment"!
- The following video is a bit long. But it provides a lot of information.

WebLink: youtube: The Man With The Seven Second Memory (Amnesia Documentary) | Real Stories

## Significant Deductions from Clive Wearing's Case

11. Note in the beginning that he can play the piano but cannot remember anything that happened even several seconds ago!

- Therefore, his habitual memory is intact (consistent with his cerebellum undamaged.) But he has anterograde AND retrograde amnesia, i.e., total loss of autobiographical memory. Therefore, he seems to have lost both the transmitter (hippocampus) and "receiver" (cannot be identified yet.)
- @ 6:40 minutes: He says it is like being dead. No thoughts of any kind, except the one that passes by. In that sense, his state is a kind of a "vegetative state" even though he can maintain his physical activities.
- @ 9:30 minutes: The account of how he lost memory in several days in 1985.

12. Here are more notable things from the above video:

- @ 10 minutes: How he lost memory within several days. The herpes virus crossed the blood-brain barrier and got into the brain. There is only a one-in-a-million chance of that happening!
- @14 minutes; He says he cannot think about anything. That is why he initially cried all day long. He says it is like being dead.
- @ 19 minutes: Every moment is the beginning of consciousness! He repeats that at @ 43 minutes. No thoughts mean like being dead! He was fortunate to be able to play the piano. As we mentioned, such "learned memories" remain hard-wired in the cerebellum. That is a notable difference from "episodic memories," which are not (and cannot be) "stored" in the brain. We will discuss that in the next post. That is also why he can dress by himself, eat and do other "regular activities" by himself.

13. We can learn a lot about the working of the brain and the gandhabba by carefully analyzing the accounts of patient H.M., patient E.P., and Clive Wearing.

- We will continue the discussion in the next post.


## References

1. Books on patient H.M.: Philip J. Hilts, Memory's Ghost (1996). Suzanne Corkin WebLink: PDF Download: Permanent Present Tense: The Unforgettable Life of the Amnesic Patient, H. M. (2013). Luke Dittrich Patient H.M.: A Story of Memory, Madness, and Family Secrets (2017).
2. Book on Clive Wearing: Deborah Wearing, Forever Today (2005).
3. One could Google and find much more information on any of these topics. I have provided just enough material to get the basic idea.

All posts in this section at, "Buddha Dhamma - A Scientific Approach."

### 2.2.6.5 Memory Recall for Gandhabba in a Human Body

October 2, 2020; revised October 3, 2020
Memory preservation and recall involve two components in the brain per Buddha Dhamma. We identify the "transmitter" as the hippocampus. The "receiver" is tentatively identified to be in the posterior visual areas of the cortex possibly the precuneus.

## Key Points From the Discussion So Far

1. When outside the physical body, a gandhabba can see, hear, and recall memories "directly." The invisible gandhabba sees and hears with the cakkhu and sota pasāda rūpa and recall memories directly in hadaya vatthu. Kammic energy creates up to six sensory units, including those three. See "Mind and Matter - Buddhist Analysis."

- When inside a physical body, a gandhabba is TOTALLY shielded from outside. But thanks to that solid, dense body, the gandhabba can taste, smell, and touch things too. But ALL six types of interactions with the external world now REQUIRE a functional brain.
- Using an analogy of a military tank, we discussed how the brain analyzes the sensory inputs coming through five physical senses (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body) and passes them to the gandhabba. See, "Gandhabba in a Human Body - an Analogy."
- Now, let us discuss the critical role played by the brain in the memory preservation/recall process.


## Memory Preservation/Recall for a Gandhabba Inside a Human Body

2. The sights, sounds, tastes, odors, and touchable objects are in the external world. In the same way, our memories are also in the external world.

- Of course, that Buddhist view differs from the scientific view that the memories are "stored" in our brains. See, "Mind Is Not in the Brain."
- The "physical world" or "rūpa loka" that is spread out in space ( $\bar{a} k \bar{a} s a ~ d h a \bar{a} u)$ is only one part of our world.
- That physical world has a mental counterpart. It is the "mental world" or "nāma loka" associated with the viññāna dhātu. Our memories or "nāmagotta" (as well as plans and our kamma bija) are in that nāma loka.

3. Out of the five aggregates (pañcakkhandha), the rūpakkhandha encompasses everything associated with the rūpa loka. The other four aggregates (vedanakkhandha, saññākkhandha, sañkhārakkhandha, and viññānakkhandha) are associated with the nāma loka. We will discuss that in more detail in upcoming posts.

- As discussed in the above-mentioned posts, eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and the physical body brings in the five physical sensory inputs to the gandhabba trapped inside the physical body. The brain plays a key role in processing those sensory inputs and passing them to the gandhabba.
- Two brain components play critical roles in memory preservation/recall for the gandhabba trapped in a physical body. Let us discuss that now.


## A Transmitter and a Receiver of Memory in the Brain

4. The five physical senses need to "bring in" external sensory inputs from the physical world. People, animals, and things in the rūpa loka can be seen with the eyes. Our physical bodies can touch those things, etc.

- On the other hand, records of our thoughts (nāmagotta) need to be first sent out of the physical body to the nāma loka (viññāña dhātu.) Those thoughts arise in the gandhabba inside the physical body. As thoughts arise in gandhabba, the "transmitter" in the brain transmits them to the outside.
- We can recall those records as needed, with the aid of the "receiver" in the brain.


## The Critical Roles of the Transmitter and the Receiver

5. If the transmitter in the brain does not work, then records of one's thoughts cannot be transmitted out to the viññāna dhātu. That means those records WILL NOT be saved. If someone's transmitter stops working, the recording of nāmagotta will stop.

- If the transmitter keeps working, but the receiver stops working, then one will not be able to recall ANY of the memories. However, one's nāmagotta will continue to accumulate in the nāma loka.
- Of course, if both transmitter and receiver fail, then one's nāmagotta will not be saved, AND one will not be able to recall ANY memories.

6. Now, let us see what happens when that person dies and is reborn with a human body again. If both the transmitter and receiver work in the new life, then the only problem would be the following.

- If the transmitter had not worked for a certain time period in the previous life, nāmagotta for that period would be missing FOREVER.
- That last scenario would be similar to the case of nāmagotta missing for the time spent in the asañña realm. For that whole time spent in the asañña realm, there would be no thoughts, and thus no "events" to record.


## Identification of the Transmitter of Nāmagotta as Hippocampus

7. In the previous post, "Patient H.M. - Different Roles of Brain in Memory," we discussed the case of patient H.M. As explained in \#4 in that post, a surgeon removed H.M.'s hippocampus to treat a different medical problem.

- After the surgery, H.M. lost to the ability to recall anything that happened AFTER the operation. But he was able to recall events that took place BEFORE the operation.
- The fact that he was able to recall some memories means that the receiver was working!
- The second clue is that he cannot recall new memories made AFTER the operation, which means the transmitter was removed in operation. Only one small part of the brain (hippocampus) was removed in operation. Thus it is a clear-cut case that the hippocampus is the transmitter!
- By the way, patient E.P. discussed in \#9 of that same post had the same issue of not recalling only those memories created AFTER an incident. In that case, a virus attacked E.P.'S brain area that contained the hippocampus. Thus his account is also consistent with the hippocampus being the transmitter.


## Loss of the Receiver Leads to Complete Loss of Episodic Memories

8. What would happen if the receiver is damaged? Of course, one would not be able to recall anything at all.

- We discussed the case of Clive Wearing in that same post starting at \#10. Clive did lose ALL memories. Thus, it is clear that Clive lost the receiver.
- However, he lost his memories due to a viral attack just like patient E.P. It was not a specific brain component like for patient H.M.
- There was much more damage to Mr. Wearing's brain than for patient E.P.'s brain. Some areas in the frontal and temporal lobes and the area around the hippocampus were damaged. There are many small components around the hippocampus (like the amygdala.) I could not find more specific information on the damaged areas of Mr. Wearing's brain.
- On the other hand, his cerebellum (located in the back of the head) did not have any damage. Thus, he was able to do routine tasks using habitual memory. He was even able to play the piano, as we discussed in that post. As discussed in \#12 there, "learned memories" remain hard-wired in the cerebellum. His cerebellum did not have any damage
- But he would not recall playing the piano a minute after he finished playing! He could not recall ANY "episodic memories" because his "memory receiver" was damaged. His transmitter (hippocampus) was also damaged.


## Tentative Identification of the Receiver

9. A recent study monitored various regions of the brain when a subject was asked to recall a past event. I just came across this publication today, October 3, 2020.

- The authors of the publication state, "..Results showed that initial access was very fast, did not activate the hippocampus, and involved activation of predominantly posterior visual areas, including the precuneus."
- As we discussed above in \#7, we believe that the hippocampus is the transmitter. Thus, this study is consistent with that.
- The publication is available for free distribution: WebLink: PDF download: Highly Superior Autobiographical Memory-The role of the precuneus-Mazzoni-2019.


## Connection to the Ability to Recall Past Lives - Why Scientists Are Wrong

10. Since memories (nāmagotta) remain preserved in the nāma loka (viñ̃āṇa dhātu), they will NEVER be lost. That is why some children can recall their past lives.

- On the other hand, if memories are "stored in the brain," as some scientists speculate, recalling a past life would be impossible. Thus, even if just ONE one numerous past life accounts is correct, that model has to be discarded.
- Of course, those who cultivate abhiññā powers can recall MANY past lives. The Buddha recalled how he received "niyata vivarana" to become a Buddha from many previous Buddhas who lived billions of years ago! See, "Pāramitā and Niyata Vivarana - Myths or Realities?"
- Further evidence is building up from numerous Near-Death-Experience (NDE) studies conducted by heart surgeons. We discussed those problems with the "memories stored in the brain" theory in the post, "Theories of Our World - Scientific Overview."


## Buddha Dhamma Is Self-Consistent and Compatible With Scientific Findings

11. Buddha Dhamma is fully self-consistent. See, "Buddha Dhamma: Non-Perceivability and SelfConsistency." All the posts at this website are self-consistent and are consistent with the Tipitaka.

- Over the years, scientific theories kept changing to be consistent with new findings. I predict that science WILL discard the idea that memories remain stored in the brain. It is just a matter of time.
- Another piece of recent evidence is the following. Some people can remember what happened in any ARBITRARILY selected day, even several years ago. It Is as though their memories were digitally recorded.
- Our brains are not digital, as proven in recent years. They do not work the same way as digital computers. It is impossible to "record" events in such detail in our brains.
- We will discuss accounts of some of those people with "perfect memories" in the next post.

All posts in this section at, "Buddha Dhamma - A Scientific Approach."

### 2.2.7 <br> Our Two Worlds - Rupa Loka and Nāma Loka

October 9, 2020

- Autobiographical Memory - Preserved in Nāma Loka
- Rūpa and Rupakkhandha, Nāma and Nāmagotta
- Response to a Sensory Stimulus - Role of Gati/Anusaya
- Ārammana Plays a Critical Role in a Sensory Event
- Nāma Loka and Rūpa Loka - Two Parts of Our World


### 2.2.7.1 Autobiographical Memory - Preserved in Nāma Loka

October 9, 2020; revised October 10, 2020 (added the video in \#7)
Autobiographical memory (nāmagotta) remains preserved in nāma loka (mental world.) Material things are


## Our Two Worlds - Rūpa Loka and Nāma Loka

1. Living beings enjoy material things in the rūpa loka. We are all familiar with our material world (rūpa loka), which has "things" that we can see, hear, taste, smell, and touch.

- We also enjoy RECALLING past experiences and also recalling anticipated future events (desires or expectations.) Both those types remain in our mental world (nāma loka.)
- A satta (living being) results when attaching to either of the two. See \#6 of "Me" and "Mine" - The Root Cause of Suffering."


## Autobiographical Memory Versus Habitual Memory

2. When we say "we remember" something, that memory could be one of two things.

- We remember past events like attending a wedding or a funeral, the birth of a child, etc. which is autobiographical memory. A memory of what one ate for dinner on any arbitrary day, even years ago, falls into the same category. Everything that you did from the moment of waking up to going to bed goes into autobiographical memory.
- On the other hand, remembering how to ride a bike (or play the piano) is also a memory. Even if you don't ride a bike for many years after learning it, you can recall that memory fairly quickly later on. It would not be like learning to ride a bike for the first time in your life. Such a "capability" is a habitual memory.
- There is recent evidence that some people have exceptional abilities with autobiographical memory. They can recall what happened on any arbitrary day within the past several years in great detail. Let us discuss that now.


## Highly Superior Autobiographical Memories (HSAM)

3. These studies started with Jill Price, who contacted a team of scientists in the early 2000s about her ability to recall anything from 1974 onwards. Since then, scientists have studied more people with that ability.

- Scientists have coined the term Highly-Superior Autobiographical Memories (HSAM, pronounced HSAM) to describe their abilities.
- The following video illustrates how astounding their memories are:

WebLink: youtube: Endless Memory, Part 1

## Notable Facts

4. It starts with Louise Owen's account. Note that around 2 minutes, she says she "scanned through April 21 of that year to April 21, 1992." It is like playing back a recorded file. She started on April 21, 2011 (the
year she answered that question) and jumped (in her memory) year by year until getting to April 21, 1991. We cannot imagine how she did that, but you can see how quickly she "got to that specific date." She said she went through 25 twenty-firsts and zeroed in on the one in 1991. That is amazing! Of course, we cannot even imagine how she accurately described events on all those arbitrary dates given to her.

- @ 4 minutes: It is NOT memorization. Instead, it is the same way we can recall what happened a few hours ago. It just comes to our minds. But, of course, we cannot do that for more than a day or two in the past (unless it is a notable event.)
- @ 4:35: The account of Jill Price, the first person to be identified with HASM ability. But she did not want to meet with the others that we will later in the video. She was the only one who was not happy to have that ability (HSAM.)
- @ 4:50 Brad Williams, Rick Barron, and Bob Petrella. @ 5:50, the person checking the account of Bod Petrella got the date wrong, not him!
- @ 6:00 Actress Mary Lou Henner. @ 8:15, she says it is like playing back a DVD! That is not possible with "neuronal connections in the brain" (see below).
- @ 9:45 The meeting of five HSAM memory wizards.
- @ 11 minutes: They are all "ordinary people" with no exceptional or unusual capabilities.
- @ 11:50 They "re-live" their recalled experiences.


## Brain Scans of Those With HSAM

## WebLink: youtube: Endless Memory, Part 2

5. Here is a list of important information from the above video.

- @ 1 minute: MRI scans of HSAM people's brains. Their left temporal lobes and the caudate nucleus (in the limbic system) are somewhat more prominent. As we saw, these are the suspected receiver and transmitters in the brain. See, "Memory Recall for Gandhabba in a Human Body."
- Disregard the comment about the possible connection to OCD (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder). Latter studies (see Ref. 2) show that there is no connection.
- @ 6:20: Memories do not need to be "memorable." They remember mundane, unextraordinary things. Bob remembered 19 seasons of Pittsburgh Steelers football games in 19 seconds! They show on the recorded video playback at $7: 33$ is t Bob played back in his mind a few seconds ago.
- @ 8:45: Do their memories clutter up their minds, i.e., do all those memories hang around in their minds all the time? No. They call any specific memory as needed, just like scanning through a recording. They can "pull up the right information at the right time." Dr. McGaugh says it is a puzzle, but it is NOT a puzzle in the Buddhist explanation. Those memories are fully intact in the nāma loka. Those with the ability can extract that information at any time.
- @ 9:35 DNA and other types of testing.


## A Recent Account of HSAM With More Information

## WebLink: youtube: The woman who remembers everything $\mid 60$ Minutes Australia

6. The previous two videos came out soon after finding several people with HSAM abilities. The above video is from 2019 and has further information about two other individuals, Becky and Markie.

- @ 2:10: Becky "re-lives" her old experiences. We saw that in the previous videos too, but this account is more explicit.
- @ 2:50: She can recite any page from any of the seven Harry Potter books. That is truly amazing. She must have read the books very carefully so that each word got "recorded." It is essential to realize that what is "recorded" as nāmagotta are our thoughts, as they arise.
- @ 5:00: Becky thought everyone could do it. It was a puzzle to her why her Mom could not remember something that happened five years ago!
- @ 7:00: Out of 60 people identified with HSAM capability since 2008, Becky is the only one with autism.
- @ 7:20: Relevant brain regions of HSAM people are not as unusually large, as initially thought (see \#4.) However, there may be more connections between brain areas.
- @ 8:20: Account of Markie Pasternak, who remembers every day of her life since age 10.
- @ 10:55: Becky and Markie meet.
- @ 11:00 minutes: Becky remembers everything from the first year she was born!
- @ 11:45: Becky is a Harry Potter fan. No wonder she could remember all seven books, page by page.


## Current Scientific Hypothesis on Memory Preservation

7. The following short video provides a good idea of the present scientific concept of "memory formation." WebLink: youtube: How memories form and how we lose them - Catharine Young

- It says memories "form in the hippocampus" and then "transfer" to other regions in the brain. They came up with that hypothesis after studies on patient H.M. As we have discussed, after removing the hippocampus from patient H.M.'s brain, he lost the ability to recall memories formed AFTER the operation. But since he could remember old memories, scientists concluded that those old memories must have been "transferred" to other regions in the brain.
- That is the ONLY way to explain the accounts by patient H.M. within the "memory stored in the brain" hypothesis. However, they have not explained HOW that transfer process takes place. They would have a hard time explaining the abilities of those with HSAM, in particular.
- @ 1 minute: Discussion of synapses and "long term potentiation" or "stabilization of memories." But does not jive with memory recall by those with HSAM. Preservation DOES NOT require repetition. EACH EVENT (like remembering what one ate for dinner) remains preserved. As thoughts ARISE in one's mind, a record is kept instantaneously as nāmagotta. That is hard for us to imagine, but many features of nāma loka (viññāṇa dhātu) are not conducive to our experiences.
- @ 1:20: Memory records are NOT lost. It is only the ability to recall that is lost. However, people with HSAM have a near-perfect ability to recall memories, vividly displayed by Becky in \#6 above. She can remember word-by-word what she had read! But it is true that as one gets older, the "receiver" in the brain gets weaker, and therefore the ability will become less with age.


## Difference Between Autobiographical and Habitual Memories

8. The cases of Clive Wearing and patient H.M. that we discussed in "Patient H.M. - Different Roles of Brain in Memory" provides a good idea about the difference.

- Clive lost ALL of his past autobiographical memory, presumably due to losing both the "transmitter" and "receiver" of nāmagotta. But he had perfect habitual memory as demonstrated by his ability to conduct daily routines and also being able to play the piano.
- Patient H.M. lost only part of his autobiographical memory since he lost only his transmitter (hippocampus.) His habitual memory also remained intact.
- The above videos are about people with exceptional autobiographical memory. It is likely to be related to better performance of the receiver circuitry in the brain.
- It is a good idea to read previous posts in this series and absorb these key points.


## Only Habitual Memories Are Stored In The Brain

9. As we discussed in "Patient H.M. - Different Roles of Brain in Memory," habitual memory involves an entirely different brain region, presumably the cerebellum. These memories get established by repeating a given task over and over until the neural connections become strong (in the cerebellum). Thus, II contend that the scientific model discussed above in \#7 pertains ONLY to habitual memories.

- Synaptic wirings are indeed responsible for habit formation (see, "How Habits are Formed and Broken A Scientific View "),
- However, it is a stretch to assume that "video-like recordings" of all past events get recorded in neural connections!
- Strengthening of neural circuits DOES NOT happen in autobiographical memory preservation. A record of each thought or action gets preserved! Of course, only a few people can recall most of them.


## Further Problems With "Autobiographical Memory Storage in the Brain" Hypothesis

10. If autobiographical memory storage is in the brain, one would lose all such memories at death.

- However, there is mounting evidence that many people can recall their previous lives. See "Evidence for Rebirth." Even if just one of the thousands of such accounts is true, then the theory of "memory storage in the brain" fails.
- There is more evidence from the out-of-body experiences (OBE) and near-death-experiences (NDE.) Scientists and physicians have studied numerous cases in each category. How do those experiences result without a physical brain? See, "Out-of-Body Experience (OBE) and Manomaya Kāya."
- According to Buddha Dhamma, those who cultivate abhiññā powers can recall autobiographical memories (nāmagotta) with high-precision. They can recall events from previous lives as well. The level of accuracy and how far back in previous lives depend on the practitioner. The Buddha could remember as far back as he wished. It is the same as with HSAM, but those with abhiñña powers can see memory records (nāmagotta) of past lives.

Finally, several years ago, I wrote the following post, which has some additional information: "Recent Evidence for Unbroken Memory Records (HSAM)" It has a video on Jill Price, the person to be identified to have HSAM.

## References

1. WebLink: PDF download: A Cognitive Assessment of Highly Superior Autobiographical Memory-LePort-2018
2. WebLink: PDF download: Highly Superior Autobiographical Memory-The role of the precuneus-Mazzoni-2019

### 2.2.7.2 Rūpa and Rūpakkhandha, Nāma and Nāmagotta

October 16, 2020; revised October 17, 2020; September 10, 2022

Rūpa and rūpakkhandha, together with nāma and nāmagotta, help describe two parts of our world: rūpa loka and nāma loka. Rūpa (forms) are in the rūpa loka (material world), and rūpakkhandha includes mental images of ALL rūpa that we have ever experienced (but not directly preserved.) The four nāma aggregates are preserved in the nāma loka (immaterial or mental world) as nāmagotta.

## Critical Differences Between Rūpa Loka and Nāma Loka

1. We are familiar with the rūpa loka or the material world. It has people, animals, trees, Sun, Moon, stars, etc. One distinct feature of the rūpa loka is that EVERYTHING has a finite lifetime, i.e., no permanent existence. Each "thing" comes into existence, exists for a finite time, and is then destroyed. No exceptions.

- We experience the rūpa loka using the five physical sense faculties. We see "things" with our eyes, hear sounds via vibrations in the air, smell things when tiny particles enter our noses, taste things when they touch our tongues, and feel the touch sensation when things touch our skins.
- Each physical contact involves an interaction of a sensory faculty with external "things" or "rūpa" or "forms." The result is a mental image of a rūpa that arises in the mind. The collection of all possible such MENTAL IMAGES is the rūpakkhandha. Thus, rūpa and rūpakkhandha are two different things.

2. Furthermore, nāma loka is our "main world." With that mental image of a rūpa, four types of "mental attributes" or "nāma" arise in mind: vedan $\bar{a}$, saññ $\bar{a}$, sañkh $\bar{a} r a$, and viññạna. Records of only those four " $n \bar{a} m a$ " entities are preserved in nāma loka as nāmagotta. When we recall such nāmagotta, we can re-create the corresponding rupa in our minds.

- We experience the nāma loka with the mind, the sixth sense faculty.
- One unique aspect of nāma loka is that all our thoughts will leave a PERMANENT record (nāmagotta) in the nāma loka.
- Thus, even though rūpa in the rūpa loka decay and die, nāmagotta in nāma loka never die, as stated in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Najīrati Sutta (SN 1.76)" which states, "rūpaï jīrati maccānaï, nāmagottaì na jīrati."
- Until a Buddha explains, humans don't even think much about the nāma loka or the mental world. It is also called the viñ̃n̄ạna dhātu.


## "Seeing" Is In a Thought (Cakkhu Viññạ̣̄a)

3. Let us take a simple example to illustrate this point. Suppose you are looking at an apple on your desk. An apple is a physical object.

- You can see the apple if there is light in the room. Light bounces off the apple and enters your eyes. The brain processes that apple's image and passes it over to cakkhu pasāda rūpa in the gandhabba. The cakkhu pasāda rūpa makes contact with the hadaya vatthu and transfers that image to the hadaya vatthu, the "seat of the mind," as we discussed. See "Gandhabba in a Human Body - an Analogy."
- What we stated above appears in Pāli as, "Cakkhuñca paticca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhu viññāṇam.". That just means cakkhu viññanna (or seeing) arises when a rūpa makes contact with the cakkhu (short for cakkhu pasāda rūpa.) Here, pațicca $[p a t!i+c a]$ means cakkhu and rūpa "getting together" or "making contact."

4. Thus, "seeing" is a cakkhu viñ̃̄̄̄ṇa (a thought.) We see that apple when a cakkhu viññāna arises in our minds. This is a fundamental fact, but it is good to clarify it. When we see that apple, a thought arises in our mind saying, "it is an apple."

- The apple that you saw is NOT the same as the apple itself. It is just an image of the apple captured by your eyes. "Seeing" happens in your mind.
- Every time you see an object, that "image" goes into the "rūpa aggregate" or "rūpakkhandha." However, that rūpakkhandha is NOT preserved. When you recall memory, you "regenerate that mental image" in your mind. We will discuss that mechanism in upcoming posts.
- There in no record of rūpakkhandha (aggregate of forms) in the rūpa loka! Rūpa and rūpakkhandha are different entities.


## That Holds for the Other Sense Faculties - The Origin of Nāmagotta

5. Similarly, we hear a sound with thought and recall a memory with thought. All six sense faculties work the same way.

- As soon as a thought arises in mind, the critical point is that it is transmitted to the nāma loka (via the mana indriya in the brain), where a record of that will stay forever. This may sound astonishing, but that can be shown to be correct. How else would those people with HSAM be able to recall their memories with such precision? See the post, "Autobiographical Memory - Preserved in Nāma Loka." Some children can recall their past life and those with abhiññā powers can recall many past lives in great detail.
- We will discuss the details of the "memory preservation" process in the future. But it turns out that it is not the rūpakkhandha that is preserved, but the other four aggregates: vedan $\bar{a}$, saññā, sañkhāra, and viññāna. The four mental aggregates are preserved as a memory record or nāmagotta.
- That is how the Buddha recalled how he received "niyata vivarana" from Buddha Dīpañkara, who lived many billions of years ago by recalling those "memory records" are nāmagotta.


## Each Person Has His/Her Nāmagotta Preserved

6. Each event that we experience has a rūpa, vedanā, sañ̃̃̄, , sañkhāra, and viñ $\tilde{n} \bar{a} n a$ associated with it. For example, when we see an apple, the associated $r \bar{u} p a$ is the MENTAL IMAGE of the apple (which becomes part of rūpakkhandha.)

- That event also has a vedanā, i.e., we know that we saw that apple. The associated saññ̄ is the recognition of the object as an apple. Then we may generate sañkhāra about it; for example, we may be to decide to eat it (as a vacī sañkhāra.) Then the viññāna encompasses all those AND any associated plan (to eat it.) All five of those automatically added to the corresponding AGGREGATES (COLLECTIONS), i.e., rūpakkhandha, vedanakkhandha, sañ̃̄̄̄kkhandha, sañkhārakkhandha, and viññānakkhandha.
- And the four mental components get added to his/her nāmagotta.
- Thus it is critical to see that each person's five aggregates (pañcakkhandha) are THEIR OWN. One's pañcakkhandha is one's whole world! One has experienced all of it.
- To emphasize, only the four mental components are preserved in the nāma loka. The rūpa loka has only "material things." Thus, rūpakkhandha is NOT preserved. The rūpa component (the associated mental image) is "re-generated" only when one recalls that past event. We will discuss that recalling process later.


## Memory Recall - Each Person Has His/Her Nāmagotta

7. Pick the name of a friend that you have not seen for many years. How long does it take to recall his/her face? Almost instantly.

- That is the same way those people with HSAM recall their past. I urge everyone to re-read the post, "Autobiographical Memory - Preserved in Nāma Loka."
- That post gives an idea of how precisely one's experiences are preserved in the nāma loka. I must emphasize that one's experiences are the same as one's thoughts that arose in mind at THAT TIME. However, that depends on one's ability to recall that memory. An average human doesn't even remember many past events.
- When someone with HSAM recalls a past event, he/she RE-LIVES that experience. But it is not so vivid for those who do not have HSAM.
- But the point is that over 50 people have such vivid and detailed "re-living" of past experiences means that those detailed records have been kept somewhere.

8. As discussed in that post, recalled memories resemble to digital records preserved in video form. For example, in \#5 of that post, Bob Petrella recalled past events as accurately as video recording playback. In \#6, we saw how Becky "re-lives" her past experiences as a child.

- As discussed in that post, habitual memories (like riding a bike) remain "stored" in the brain. However, it would be unimaginable to assume that detailed autobiographical memories (what happened on a past arbitrarily-picked day several years ago) can be "stored" in the brain.
- The brain is NOT a digital computer. It is essential to think and grasp this key idea.
- Now, let us look into another aspect of nāma loka.


## "Seeing" Something Can Lead to a Lot of Mental Activity

9. "Seeing" is a mental activity, as we saw above in \#3 and \#4. But if the object seen is attractive or repulsive, that can lead to more mental activity.

- For example, suppose you want to buy a car and go to a showroom and see a car you like. Then until you buy that car, your mind will be preoccupied with the car. You will spend some time thinking about various aspects, such as whether you want to go to other showrooms to get a better price, how to pay for it, etc.
- All those are "mental activities" that go on in your mind. Billions of thoughts run through your mind pondering such issues. Those are "vacī sañkhāra (vitakka/vicāra)" that arise in your mind. See, "Correct Meaning of Vacī Sañkhāra."
- You may spend hours thinking about the car. That whole time, you are in the nāma (or mano) loka. You may not even know what is happening around you. If you are deeply engrossed in your thoughts, you may not even hear someone addressing you or a nearby clock striking a chime at the top of the hour.


## We Live In Both Worlds (Rūpa Loka and Nāma Loka)

10. Every time we experience something in the rūpa loka, we INVARIABLY need to "check back" in nāma loka to identify what we experienced. It is critical to understand this point.

- When we see a person, we would not know who it is UNLESS we have some experience with him/her. The mind is VERY FAST. It goes back to records (nāmagotta) and recalls previous events of seeing and interacting with that person. We are not even aware that such a process happens.
- However, some people with brain damage cannot recognize people because of their inability to recall nāmagotta.
- Here is the account of Clive Wearing that we discussed in the post, "Patient H.M. - Different Roles of Brain in Memory."
WebLink: youtube: The Man With The Seven Second Memory (Amnesia Documentary) | Real Stories
- As we see in the video, he cannot remember someone he talked to several minutes ago. Both his 'transmitter" and "receiver"" (interacting with the nāma loka) were damaged. He cannot recall any memory. So, he cannot "match" what he is experiencing now with his past experiences.
- The account of Clive Wearing helps explain the difference between rūpa and rūpakkhandha (and between nāma and nāmagotta.) He can interact with the rūpa loka but cannot access his memories (nāmagotta) in the nāma loka. Therefore, he cannot "make sense" of the rūpa he experiences.
- It is a good idea to review the following post: "The Amazing Mind - Critical Role of Nāmagotta (Memories)."

All relevant posts at "Buddha Dhamma - A Scientific Approach."

### 2.2.7.3 Response to a Sensory Stimulus - Role of Gati/Anusaya

October 21, 2020
Response to a sensory stimulus is instantaneous with emotions arising automatically. There is NO time lag. That automatic initial response depends on one's gati (character/habits.) Gati, in turn, depends on one's anusaya (hidden cravings/defilements.)

## Response to a Sensory Stimulus Comes from the Mind

1. It is not the eyes that see, it is not the ears that hear. It is the mind that sees, hears, tastes, etc. We discussed that in "Mind and Matter - Buddhist Analysis" and "Gandhabba in a Human Body - an Analogy." It is important to refresh memory on what we discussed in previous posts since we are getting into deeper aspects.

- Let us review that process with a "seeing event." When eyes capture the image of an object, the brain analyzes that signal and passes over to cakkhu pasäda in the gandhabba. Then the cakkhu pasäda transfers it to the hadaya vatthu (seat of mind) and that is when we experience that particular "seeing event." That sensory process starts with a rūpa coming to contact with the mind. Phassa is the Pāli word for that contact.
- Upon receiving that "signal" a citta (loosely translated as a thought) arises with the "seeing sensation." That is cakkhu viññāna.
- But cakkhu viññanna is much more than taking a picture with a camera. Simultaneously with seeing that image, a set of mental factors arise in the mind. The mind recognizes (sañ̃̃̄ $\bar{a}$ ) the object and generates some initial "actions." That involves recalling past experiences with the "manasikāra" cetasika and incorporating various other cetasika like joy (pitit) or hate (dosa.)
- In a "hearing event," one hears a sound when the ears capture a sadda rūpa (a sound wave) and that signal makes contact with the mind in a similar process.
- The other three physical senses work the same way. They involve gandha rūpa (fragrant molecules entering the nose), rasa rūpa (food particles touching the tongue), and photthabba rūpa (solid objects touching the skin.)


## The Sixth Sensory Stimulus Is Dhammā (Memories/Kamma Vipāka)

2. In addition to the five physical sense inputs, there is a sixth sense input DIRECTLY to the mind. Suppose you are in a sound-proof and totally dark isolated room by yourself. Is the only sensation you have the touch of your feet with the floor? No. You can be thinking about anything that you wish. You can recall memories AND THEN think about them. Recalling memories is part of dhamm $\bar{a}$ making contact with the mind ("manañca paṭicca dhamme ca uppajjati mano viññānam..") [Here, pațicca $[p a t ̣ i+c a]$ means mana and dhamme "getting together" or "making contact."]

- Dhamma rūpa (memories/kamma vipāka) make contact with the hadaya vatthu (seat of the mind) without the help of a pasāda rūpa.
- We discussed that process in the last several posts in "Buddha Dhamma - A Scientific Approach." In particular, we discussed that memory preservation and recall involve a transmitter and a receiver in the brain. See, "Autobiographical Memory - Preserved in Nāma Loka," and "Rūpa and Rūpakkhandha, Nāma and Nāmagotta."
- Now, let us take an example to understand some more details of the response to a sensory stimulus. Let us consider a visual input as an example.


## Recognition (Sañ $\tilde{\tilde{a}}$ ) of an object ( $\overline{\text { Arammana) happens fast }}$

3. Suppose three people A, B, C are sitting in a small coffee shop. They are all facing the door, and person $X$ walks in. Suppose that person $X$ is a close friend of $A$, worst enemy of $B$, and that $C$ does not know $X$ at all. We will also assume that all are males.

- So, let us see what happens within a split second. A recognizes X as his friend, and a smile comes to his face. B recognizes X as his enemy, and his face gets darkened.
- On the other hand, C's mind does not register anything about X , and X is just another person to him. He immediately goes back to whatever he was doing.

4. That is an example of a "cakkhu viññāna," a "seeing event." It is over within a split second, just like taking a photo with a camera takes only a split second, where the image in captured on the screen instantaneously.

- However, something very complicated happens in a human mind when a "seeing event" occurs. It is much more complicated than just recording "a picture" in a camera.
- It is critically important to go slow and analyze what happens so that we can see how complicated this process is (for a human mind) to capture that "seeing event."


## Within That Split Second, a Complex Process Takes Place

5. Within that split second, A recognizes X as his good friend, and pleasant emotions arise in his mind, and he becomes happy. B recognizes X as his worse enemy, and bad emotions arise in his mind, and he becomes angry. On the other hand, C identifies X as a man or a woman, and no feelings register in his mind.

- We don't think twice about these observations usually. But if one carefully analyzes what happens, one can easily see that this is an amazingly complex process.
- How does the SAME "seeing event" (seeing X) lead to all these very different changes in the minds of three different people? (and the emotions even show up on their faces!)
- No one but a Buddha can see this fast time evolution of a citta.
- The Buddha has analyzed the response to a sensory stimulus in minute detail. We will discuss only the critical basic features here.


## Four Features of a Seeing Event (Cakkhu Viññāṇa)

## 6. The "seeing event" has four essential steps:

- First, the rūpa in question (rūpa rūpa, sadda rūpa, gandha rūpa, rasa rūpa, photthabba rūpa, or a dhamma rupa) comes into contact with the MIND. The initial contact of the external $r \bar{u} p a$ with the mind involves the phassa cetasik $\bar{a}$.
- The "event" registers in the mind and one gets into an emotional state (pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral, which is called sukha, dukha, and upekkha in Pāli.) That is vedana $\overline{\text {. }}$
- One recognizes the object, and that is called sañ̃ $\bar{a}$.
- Fourthly, based on vedanā and saññā, one MAY also generate other mental factors (cetasik $\bar{a}$ ) such as anger, joy. It is the cetana $\bar{a}$ cetasik $\bar{a}$ that "incorporates" such mental attributes to the citta.
- A few more cetasikā play key roles in the above processes. Let us briefly address those.


## Other Essential Cetasikā Contributing to the Above Process

7. First, it is the jivitindriya cetasik $\bar{a}$ that keeps the seat of the mind (hadaya vatthu) alive. Then there is ekaggat $\bar{a}$ cetasik $\bar{a}$ that keeps the citta focused on ONE sensory input at a time. They are both essential cetasikā.

- The manasikāra cetasikā plays an equally critical role. It RECALLS previous related experiences that "match" or are relevant to the current sensory experience. For example, A in the above example recognizes X as a friend only because A's mind "scanned through past experiences" and recognized X as a friend. Thus, without the manasikāra cetasik $\bar{a}$, the sañ̃̄̄ $\bar{a}$ cetasik $\bar{a}$ could not have identified X .
- Based on that recognition, more cetasika like joy (pīti) can arise, as did in A. On the other hand, patigha anusaya in B led to thoughts of anger in B . Of course, C would have different kinds of anusaya too, but none was TRIGGERED by seeing X since X was a total stranger.
- Note: If A or B was an Arahant, that Arahant would also identify X, but no feeling of joy or anger would arise since an Arahant would not have any gati/anusaya left.


## Manasikāra and Cetanā - Two Critical Cetasikā That Automatically Trigger Gati/Anusaya

8. The "cetan $\bar{a}$ " cetasik $\bar{a}$ carries out the complex process of incorporating other cetasik $\bar{a}$ and putting together that citta in response to a sensory stimulus.

- The generic name sañkhāra represents any combination of such "extra cetasikā."
- The net result of the sensing process is viñãāna. In this example, it is a cakkhu viññāna.
- The four steps in \#6 happen in that sequence, but no one but a Buddha can "see" such a fast process.
- All this happens within a billionth of a second DURING the arising of that cakkhu viññạ̄na.


## Importance of Recalling Past Experiences

9. To recognize X , one must first recall any possible past interactions with X . It turned out that A and B did have past experiences (interactions) with X , but C did not. The manasikāra cetasikā does that in a billionth of a second!

- We discussed how certain areas in the brain (the "receiver") get that information from the nāma loka. See, "Patient H.M. - Different Roles of Brain in Memory," "Memory Recall for Gandhabba in a Human Body," "Autobiographical Memory - Preserved in Nāma Loka," and "Rūpa and Rūpakkhandha, Nāma and Nāmagotta."
- It is necessary to understand the material in those posts to understand the critical points that I am trying to make in this post. One's gati/anusaya resides with one's mental body or gandhabba. That gandhabba is trapped inside the physical body. Unless it can recall past events with the help of the brain, the gandhabba is unable to recognize people. If one cannot identify someone as a friend or foe, feelings of love or anger cannot arise. That is the simplest way to put it.
- There are two special cases where the above point becomes clear. One is that a newborn baby appears to have no "defilements." The other is a case where critical parts of the brain are damaged. Let us briefly discuss them.


## Newborn Baby Has no Hidden Defilements (Anusaya)?

10. It seems that a newborn (or even a year-old) baby has no defilements. That is only because of the following two facts: (1) the baby's brain has not developed yet, and, (2) the baby has not formed that many relationships yet (other than with the parents.) It has no "sense of self" or "sakkāya."

- In the beginning of the "WebLink: suttacentral: Mahāmālukya Sutta (MN 64)," the Buddha points out this fact that sakkāya ditthi cannot arise in a new-born baby. That is exactly because of what we discussed above. There is no way to trigger the hidden anusaya in that baby.
- To quote the above translation: "For a young tender infant lying prone does not even have the notion 'identity,' so how could identity view (sakkāya diṭthi) arise in him? "


## Brain-Damaged People Still Have Anusaya/Gati - They Just Cannot be "Triggered"

11. A person with extensive brain damage is like a newborn baby. The brain is unable to recall memories in response to a sensory stimulus.

- The unfortunate saga of Clive Wearing illustrates the importance of the ability to recall memories. If you have forgotten, you may want to watch the video on Clive Wearing, who lost his memories due to brain damage. The video is at \# 10 of "Rūpa and Rūpakkhandha, Nāma and Nāmagotta."
- As we see there, Clive just "lives in the present moment." He cannot think about the past or future (thinking about the future REQUIRES past experiences.) Every person is a total stranger to him (except his wife, but even then he forgets about her too if she is not there with him.)
- Suppose Clive had an arch enemy, Z. Suppose that the enmity was so bad that before the brain damage Clive would get mad even thinking about Z .
- But Z would be a total stranger to Clive after the brain damage. What happens if Clive now goes to a restaurant and Z is sitting at an adjacent table? Since Clive cannot recognize Z (as his enemy,) he would not become angry. Even if $Z$ comes to Clive's table and say something nasty, Clive would not get angry. Instead, Clive will be puzzled as to why Z is shouting at him.
- Does that mean Clive's gati and anusaya have disappeared? Of course not. The gandhabba inside would still have the same gati and anusaya that Clive had before the brain damage. It is just that the gandhabba does not recognize Z as an enemy because it is UNABLE to "match" Z as his arch-enemy.
- Thus, understanding the concept of the gandhabba (and how it interacts with the external with the help of the brain) helps clarify many complex issues that otherwise cannot be explained.
- The following \#12 through \#14 are technical points.


## Seven "Universal" Cetasikā

12. ANY citta will ALWAYS have seven cetasikā. A citta would not arise without them.

- Thus, we see that the seven "universal" cetasikā are phassa, vedanā, sañ̃̄ $\bar{a}$, cetanā, manasikāra, $j$ jivitindriya, and ekaggat $\bar{a}$. Those seven are "universal cetasikā" that arise in ANY citta.
- Other types of cetasikā MAY arise based on one's gati/anusaya AND the ārammaṇa.


## Viññāna Is the Overall Sensory Experience in Response to a Sensory Stimulus

13. Viñ $\tilde{n} \bar{a} n a$ is the overall sense experience encompassing all those seven cetasik $\bar{a}$ PLUS all other cetasik $\bar{a}$ (included in sañkhāra.)

- But viññāna may also include "future expectations" IF one's mind attaches to that ārammaṇa. See, "Viñ̃̃āna - What It Really Means."
- We can safely say that viññāna is the overall sensory experience, INCLUDING one's expectations based on that sensory experience. That is why one's facial expressions may change too, according to such expectations.


## Nothing Faster in the World Than the Arising of a Citta

14. Buddha said it is hard to find any phenomena in this world that change faster than the mind: "WebLink: suttacentral: Añguttara Nikāya (1.48)."

- The short sutta says: "Nāhaì, bhikkhave, aññaì ekadhammampi samanupassāmi yaí evaì lahuparivattaì yathayidaì cittaì. Yāvañcidaì, bhikkhave, upamāpi na sukarā yāva lahuparivattaim cittan"ti."
- Translated: "I consider, bhikkhus, that there is no phenomenon that comes and goes so quickly as citta. It is not easy to find an analogy (a simile) to show how quickly citta can change."

15. It is essential to understand the concepts of gati and anusaya. The best way to find relevant information is to use the "Search" box on the top right. I put in "gati anusaya" in the search box and it came up with the following related posts: "WebLink: Pure Dhamma: Search Results for gati anusaya."

- All relevant posts in the current section at "Buddha Dhamma - A Scientific Approach."


### 2.2.7.4 Ārammaṇa Plays a Critical Role in a Sensory Event

## October 28, 2020; revised October 18, 2021

Arammaña means the focus of the mind at a given moment. It plays an equally important role as gati/anusaya in response to a sensory stimulus. For example, when you look at someone, that person is the $\bar{a} r a m m a n ̣ a$. When you hear a sound, that sound is the ārammana.

## The Role of Gati (Character/Habits) and Anusaya (Latent Defilements)

1. To get started, we need to review what we discussed in the previous post, "Response to a Sensory Stimulus - Role of Gati/Anusaya." In that post, we discussed the sequence of events taking place within a split second of sensory input. There we used the following example.

Suppose three people A, B, C, are sitting in a small coffee shop. They are all facing the door, and a middleaged male $\mathbf{X}$ walks in. Suppose that person $X$ is a close friend of $A$, the worst enemy of $B$, and that $C$ does not know X . We will also assume that all are males.

- So, let us see what happens within a split second. A recognizes X as his friend, and a smile comes to his face. B recognizes X as his enemy, and his face darkens.
- On the other hand, C's mind does not register anything about X , and X is just another person to him. He immediately goes back to whatever he was doing.
- X is the $\bar{a}$ rammana for $\mathrm{A}, \mathrm{B}$, and C in the above case.

2. We made the following critical observations.

- With the help of manasikāra cetasika, the minds of $\mathrm{A}, \mathrm{B}$, and C recalled past events relevant to X within a split-second. Thus, they instantly identified X as friend, enemy, and neutral, respectively.
- Those "good" memories in A trigger rāga anusaya, and A becomes happy. However, B recalls his "bad memories" with X , which triggers patigha anusaya. Of course, C may have various types of anusaya, but X did not trigger any of those since C has had no prior interactions with X (and since X looked like any average person.)


## Even Without Prior Specific Interactions, an Ārammaṇa Can Trigger Defiled Thoughts

3. Now, let us consider a different scenario with another person, Y, entering the coffee shop. Let us assume that $\mathbf{Y}$ is $\mathbf{B}$ 's girlfriend, who is quite attractive. Suppose $A$ is not in good terms with Y and that $\mathbf{C}$ is a young male who has never seen Y . Now, the ārammaña for $\mathrm{A}, \mathrm{B}$, and C would be very different ( Y is an attractive female while X was an average middle-aged male.)

- Now, we see that the moods of A and B will reverse. A will be instantaneously unhappy to see Y, and B will be happy to Y .
- Regarding C, the situation could be very different too. If Y appears attractive to him, C may instantaneously form a lustful state of mind.
- Even though C had never seen Y before, C got interested and formed lustful feelings about Y . It was NOT a memory of Y that triggered the interest in C. It was his own gati/anusaya to be attracted to a beautiful woman. Of course, he has had interactions with many OTHER women, and the mind compared those memories in a split-second!


## Dependence on the "Thought Object" (Ārammana)

4. We see why a given person does not have a "good" or "bad" mindset permanently. That is related to the fact that there are no fixed gati/anusaya either. The above two examples, $\mathrm{A}, \mathrm{B}$, and C , generated different overall mindsets upon seeing X and Y .

- What kind of mindset arises depends on the gati/anusaya of the person AND the sense object (ārammana.)
- The two different ārammaṇa in \#1 and \#3 triggered two very different gati/anusaya in all three people $\mathrm{A}, \mathrm{B}$, and C .


## Two Analogies for Anusaya and Ārammaṇa

5. One can get a good idea of the concepts of anusaya and arammaña with the following analogy. Anusaya is like gunpowder. An ārammana is like a flame. The gunpowder can stay dormant for a long time, but it will ignite if one heats it.

- For an anāriya yogi who had avoided sense attractions for long, kāma rāga anusaya can be like wet gunpowder. A tiny flame may not ignite it. But if a flame of sufficient heat can ignite such well-hidden anusaya too. There are accounts in the Tipitaka where the sight of an attractive woman (strong $\bar{a}$ rammanal brought lustful thoughts to anāriya yogis and removed their iddhi powers. On the other hand, kāma rāga anusaya in an Arahant cannot be "triggered" by ANY ārammaṇa. Here, gunpowder is not present.
- The tendency to get angry is due to patigha anusaya. Those with a high level of patigha anusaya can get angry with the slightest provocation or with even a weak ārammana.

6. In another analogy, anusaya is like some mud settled down at the bottom of a glass. The water in that glass looks clean.

- However, that mud will come up if one uses a straw to disturb the water. Now the water would not look clean anymore. Here stirring with a straw is like perturbing a "settled mind" with a strong ārammaṇa.
- In an Arahant, there is no "mud" or any anusaya. Thus, "the water in the glass will be clear" no matter how hard one tries to stir it.
- That "mud" was cleansed not in a physical process but just with wisdom, i.e., just by understanding the fundamental nature of this world (Four Noble Truths/Tilakkhana/Pațicca Samuppāda.) We will get to that in future posts in this series in a systematic way.
- A Buddha comes to the world to teach "how to cleanse the mind by controlling it" ("Sacitta pariyo dapaṇä̀.") See, "Sabba Pāpassa Akaranam...."
- More details on anusaya at "Āsava, Anusaya, and Gati (Gathi)."


## An Average Human Will Have Both Good and Bad Anusaya (and Gati)

7. We usually call someone a "good person" based on their overall character, i.e., if that person displays more "good character" than "bad character" over time. But only an Arahant is "definitely a moral person," acting $100 \%$ morally all the time.

- Even though this is a complex subject, the basic features are those mentioned above. One needs to analyze different situations to grasp these ideas. That is actual vipassana meditation! The word $v i p a s s a n \bar{a}$ means "special and clear vision" of the true nature of the world.
- One needs to understand how the mind works to make progress on the Path. Only a Buddha can DISCOVER and EXPLAIN the critical role of the MIND.
- Once we understand the fundamentals, it would be easy to analyze ANY given situation. That is why it is worthwhile to spend time and grasp what we have discussed so far.


## Key Points on Gati and Anusaya

8. As we have discussed, anusaya are "latent" or "hidden" tendencies. Even though generally referred to as "latent defilements," they could be "hidden morals," too.

- When "bad anusaya" are triggered, one displays bad gati (character/habits). On the other hand, "hidden morals" can be activated, bringing good gati to the forefront.
- For example, we label someone a hardened criminal because he is mainly engaged in evil deeds with "bad gati" in full display. But good morals in him could be awakened by seeing a child/older person in distress, and he may help them as needed.
- There is no "absolutely good" or "absolutely bad" person other than an Arahant. Any other person would have both good and bad anusaya hidden at various degrees. An Anāgāmi, for example, would have very little "bad anusaya" (and thus "bad gati") left.


## The Role of the Arammaṇa Can Come in Different Ways

9. Our discussion in \#3 shows that the ārammaña in question could be something that one had never SPECIFICALLY encountered before. Young men are generally attracted to young women, and vice versa.

- If an ārammaṇa matches one's gati/anusaya, one will attach to it.
- Suppose someone offers Z a fruit that Z had never seen or tasted. Just by seeing the fruit, Z may not be interested in it unless it looks similar to a fruit he had eaten before.
- However, Z eats it and realizes that he likes that TASTE. Then Z "falls in love" with that fruit. He would want to eat it in the future whenever he gets a chance.
- That taste in the fruit is a "kāma guṇa." Guṇa means a "quality" or "a characteristic." Most people tend to associate the word "kāma" with "sensuality." However, "kāma" could be anything that is "enticing" or "makes one happy." We will discuss that in detail in the future.


## A Summary of Hadaya Vatthu, Physical Body, Brain, Rūpa Loka, and Nāma Loka

10. Let me summarize our discussion so far in this series of posts, "Buddha Dhamma - A Scientific Approach." Life encompasses interplay among the following entities.

- The gandhabba (with the hadaya vatthu and five pasāda rūpa) is the thinking entity.
- However, it is trapped inside the physical body and cannot access the external world consisting of two parts. (1) The rūpa loka with sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches. (2) The nāma loka with memories and kamma bïja.
- The gandhabba accesses those sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches in rūpa loka with the help of eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and the body. Here, the brain plays a critical role.
- It accesses memories and kamma bīja in the nāma loka with the help of a transmitter and receiver in the brain. The brain also processes all those signals from outside and passes them to the gandhabba.
- The gandhabba decides what to do in response to such sensory inputs. The brain implements those commands from the gandhabba by moving body parts (for speech and bodily actions.)


## Rūpa Loka and Nāma Loka - Two Parts of Our World

11. We have a "mental world (nāma loka)" as well as a "material world (rūpa loka)." (1) The "material world" is the same for all of us. (2) But each person creates their own "mental world" based on that "material world."

- A mind experiences both those worlds. It experiences the material world with the help of the five physical senses. The mind experiences the mental world on its own.
- "Things" in the mental world (memories or nāmagotta) come to mind directly (without a corresponding pasāda rūpa.) However, the "transmitter" and the "receiver" in the brain play critical roles in that process. They come to the mind as dhamm $\bar{a}$, which includes our memories and also expectations for the future. We will discuss that latter part (expectations) in the future.
- On the other hand, the five physical senses (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body) help the mind experience those things in the material world.


## Nāma Loka is Very Different from the Rūpa Loka

12. Nāma loka has no spatial boundaries. That is why we cannot ask, "where are the memories store d"? We ask that wrong question based on our ingrained perceptions of the rūpa loka.

- In rūpa loka, everything has spatial locations. A tree in the front yard is so many feet away from the house. The great wall is in China, and the Eifel Tower is in Paris, France. To see the Eifel Tower one needs to go to Paris.
- In contrast, our memories do not have spatial locations. We can access memories from ANYWHERE. Whether one is in China or France, one can recall memories. When Neil Armstrong landed on the Moon, he was able to recall memories.
- However, both the receiver and transmitter in the brain must be in good condition for the memory to work correctly. We discussed the unfortunate cases of Clive Wearing and a few others in recent posts. They were unable to recall parts or all of their memories. See, "Brain and the Gandhabba."
- Our memories and our kamma bīja (that can bring vipāka in the future) are also in nāma loka. A given kamma bīja (no matter whether created many lives ago) can bring back vipāka ANYWHERE. It does not matter whether one is in China or France. When conditions become right, a kamma bïja can trigger vipāka.
- We will discuss that in more detail in the next post.

All relevant posts in the current section at "Buddha Dhamma - A Scientific Approach."

### 2.2.7.5 Nāma Loka and Rūpa Loka - Two Parts of Our World

November 4, 2020; revised November 6, 2020; August 1, 2022

## Nāma Loka Is One of Two Parts of Our World

1. We have a "mental world (nāma loka)" as well as a "material world (rūpa loka)." The material world is the same for all of us. But each person creates one's mental world based on that material world. We briefly discussed that in the previous post, "Ārammana Plays a Critical Role in a Sensory Event."

- A mind experiences the material world with the help of the five physical senses. Then it plans to re-live any "pleasurable experiences" again and again. That is related to greed or lobha (a reduced version is kāma rāga or the craving for sensory pleasures.)
- If it were a "bad experience," the mind would avoid any such future experiences by taking various actions. Such actions may involve dosa (hatred), or its reduced version is patigha ("friction" or "annoyance.")
- Both of the above actions will lead to future suffering. That suffering can be greatly-enhanced if someone's actions include strong dasa akusala. Such a "totally covered" mind has moha and can lead to immediate and harsh suffering.
- But even those who live moral lives cannot escape future suffering because they are not aware of the "real nature" of the world. They have a lower version of moha (i.e., avijjā), the ignorance referred to in the Four Noble Truths.


## Previously Unknown Teachings

2. That last bullet point about future suffering is unknown to the world in the absence of a Buddha. Only a Buddha can discover that our world is much more expansive (with 31 realms), where life in some realms can be full of suffering.

- Other religions teach that one would be guaranteed "fiture happiness" in heavenly worlds if one lives a moral life.
- With his knowledge about a much wider world of 31 realms, the Buddha showed that there is no realm in this world where one can avoid suffering. Furthermore, suffering in the lowest four realms (apāy $\bar{a}$ ) can be quite harsh.
- Therefore, the key question is, how is it possible that one who lives a moral life is still subjected to suffering in future births?
- The explanation is in the "previously unheard Dhamma" of a Buddha. In the current series of posts, we first need to understand our "nāma loka." Of course, there are other ways to get there, mainly by just realizing the dangers of pursuing sense pleasures.


## Everything in the World Belongs to One of Six Dhätu

3. The Buddha categorized everything in the world into six types of dhātu: pathavi, āpo, tejo, vāyo, $\bar{a} k \bar{a} s a$, and viñ $\tilde{n}$ ăna. The conventional translation of the word "dhātu" is "element," but in this context, "essence" may be a better translation.

- We are quite familiar with our "physical world" made of pathavi, appo, tejo, and vāyo spread out in space ( $\bar{a} k \bar{a} s a ~ d h a \bar{t} t u$.$) Therefore, those five d h \bar{a} t u$ are associated with the $r \bar{u} p a ~ l o k a$.
- The sixth, viñ̃̃ạ̄a dhātu, is associated with the nāma loka.
- When one dissociates with the world of 31 realms, one merges with Nibbāna dhātu. See, "WebLink: sultacentral: Nibbānadhātu Sutta (Iti 44)."


## Viññāna Dhātu Is Nāma Loka

4. Viñ̃̄̄̄ṇa dhātu INCLUDES all mental entities: vedanā, saññā, sañkhāra, and viññāna.

- Here, viññaṇ̄a is a bit complex. It is of two types. (1) Vipāka viñnāṇa arises when we experience something with any of the six senses. Thus, it can be one of the six types of viññāna: cakkhu, sota, ghāna, jivhā, kāya, and mano. They arise as kamma vipāka or RESULTS of kamma. (2) Kamma viñ̃̃āna arises ONLY in mind as mano viññāna.
- Unlike vipāka viñ̃āạa, kamma viñ̃ñana has ENERGY. That energy arises in javana citta when we DO kamma.
- As we see, the experiences through any of the six senses give to "mental entities" that are in viñ̃̃āṇa dhātu.
- In other words, the mind experiences both parts of our world.


## Viññāna Dhātu Is Very Different From Other Five Dhätu

5. According to modern science, our mental world is a byproduct of the material body (specifically the brain.) It only deals with the rūpa loka and disregards the nāma loka (viññāna dhātu) altogether.

- Modern science is not equipped to tackle the mind yet. Unlike material objects that are inert and thus follow pre-set rules (like Newton's laws of motion,) the mind of EACH PERSON is unique. Thus, while we can accurately predict the path of a rocket, we cannot predict any given person's actions.
- The Buddha explained that the mind is the precursor to the material world. That is a complex subject, but I hope you are at least beginning to get the idea that our future rebirths (and thus any physical bodies in future births) arise due to our thoughts (specifically javana citta, which arise when we engage in strong kamma.)


## No Spatial Boundaries In Nāma Loka (Viññạṇa Dhātu)

6. Another unique feature of the mind (or nāma loka or viññāna dhātu) is that there are no "spatial locations" or "spatial boundaries" in viññanna dhātu. We cannot ask WHERE it is located. It is everywhere and anywhere. See the previous post, "Ārammana Plays a Critical Role in a Sensory Event."

- The absence of spatial boundaries in nāma loka becomes apparent when we realize that we only access the nāma loka while dreaming.
- The arupāvacara Brahmas do not have access to the rūpa loka. As we have discussed, they do not have any of the five physical senses or the corresponding five pasāda rūpa. They have the hadaya vatthu, which can only recall memories. Those memories come directly to the hadaya vatthu since they don't have brains.


## The Best Way to Visualize Viññāṇa Dhātu - Dreams

7. When we dream, our minds are ONLY in the nāma loka. As we have discussed before, all five physical senses "go to sleep" while we sleep, which is when we dream.

- We see, hear, smell, taste, and touch WITH OUR MINDS when we dream.
- As we know, there are no "spatial locations" in dreams. We see a dream. We cannot say where it was. If we see a jungle, our mind is there. We feel as if we are in a jungle.


## Nāma Loka and Rūpa Loka Co-Exist

8. When we dream, our five physical senses become inactive. In a primitive way, our minds detach from $\bar{a} k \bar{a} s a$ dhātu. A mind is then in just viññāṇa dhātu. That is why we don't perceive "locations" in dreams. We see people, buildings, trees, etc., but a location is not defined.

- Another way to state that is to say viññāna dhātu normally co-exists with the $\bar{a} k \bar{a} s a d h a ̄ t u$. However, when we dream, the mind detaches from $\bar{a} k \bar{a} s a d h \bar{a} t u$ (since the five physical senses are not active) and is engaged only with the viññanna dhātu (nāma loka.)


## Mind Separates From Rūpa Loka After the Fourth Jhāna

9. A mind detaches from the rūpa loka when transcending the fourth jhāna, the highest rūp $\overline{\mathrm{a}} \mathrm{vacara}$ $j h a ̄ n a$. This is a technical point that can be skipped by those not familiar with Abhidhammajjhāna.

- One is aware ONLY of the "infinite space" (no other rūpa) when one gets to the fifth jhāna or the "ākāsānañcāyatana" (meaning "infinite space.") When one transcends the $\bar{a} k a \bar{s} a \overline{n a n ̃ c a ̄ y a t a n a ~ a n d ~ g e t s ~}$ to the viññānañcāyatana (or infinite viñ̃̄āna.) This is when the mind (viññāna) "decouples" or "separates" from "space." Now, the mind has no awareness of space or the rūpa loka.
- That is why the highest four jhānā are "arūpāvacara jhāna." Arūpa means "without rūpa." The only rūpa there would be a trace of matter associated with hadaya vatthu of arupāvacara Brahmā. Even in $\bar{a} k \bar{a} s a \bar{n} a n ̃ c \bar{a} y a t a n a$, there is only space and no other "rūpa."


## Kamma Bhava Is Also In Nāma Loka

10. The nāma loka encompasses (includes) kamma bhava. The appropriate bhava manifests under the right conditions. If we drink too much alcohol, we get drunk and get into a mindset of a drunkard. We may stay in that "drunkard existence" for a few hours.

- At the moment of death (if it is at the end of human bhava, a mind will grasp a new bhava (existence) and instantaneously be born in that existence at the CORRESPONDING spatial location. For example, if one can grasp a Deva existence, one will be instantaneously born a thousand miles above the Earth in that Deva realm.
- That is also why a human can be born INSTANTANEOUSLY as a Deva in a Deva realm at the end of the human bhava. Grasping of a patisandhi viññāna of a Deva happens instantaneously at the corresponding spatial location (in a Deva realm). The viñ̃̃āna dhātu does not have spatial restrictions.


## It is EVERYWHERE!

- That happens because the viññāṇa dhātu is normally "merged with" ākāsa dhātu. They overlap. Thus, based on the type of paṭisandhi viñ̃ñạna, one will automatically be born in the appropriate spatial location in ākāsa dhātu.
- That is a very brief description. But it is enough for now to get the basic idea.


## A Gandhabba Is Shielded From Both Loka While Inside a Physical Body

11. A gandhabba is shielded from both the rūpa loka and the nāma loka while inside a human body.

- As discussed in previous posts, a gandhabba accesses the outside material world (rūpa loka) using the five physical senses of eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body. It accesses the näma loka using the "transmitter" and "receiver" in the brain. See "Brain and the Gandhabba." It is good to review posts in that subsection.
- For a gandhabba inside a physical body, sensory signals from outside must come through the five "physical sensors" mounted on the body (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body.) The brain plays a vital role in transferring those signals to the gandhabba inside.
- In the same way, memories experienced by the gandhabba "go out" to the viññāna dhātu via a "transmitter" in the brain. Old memories in viññaṇa dhātu "come back" via a "receiver" in the brain. Recent findings in medical science allowed us to identify the "transmitter," as we discussed.


## Consequences of a Gandhabba Trapped and Isolated Inside a Physical Body

12. Even though viññāna dhātu is everywhere, it is NOT present inside the physical human body. As we discussed before, the "entrapment" of a gandhabba inside a physical body is a kammic effect.

- This is also why an Arahant does not attain Parinibbāna until the death of the physical body. The "subtle body" of a gandhabba cannot "bear the Arahanthood" and dies instantly when it comes out of the dead physical body of an Arahant.
- That is also why there are no Arahants in Brahma loka. As soon as a Brahma attains the Arahanthood, the death of the subtle Brahma body follows.


## Buddhist Model of Memory Preservation and Retrieval

13. All memories (from an untraceable beginning) are in nāma loka or viññāna dhātu, which may also be called "viññāna plane" or "nāma loka." Of course, our kammic energies (kamma bija) are also in nāma loka.

- Those "physical entities" we see, hear, etc., reside in ākāsa dhātu.
- We are familiar with our "physical world" spread out in space ( $\bar{a} k \bar{a} s a ~ d h a \bar{a} t u$ ), where each "thing" has its specific location. We tend to automatically carry over that concept to viññāna dhātu. However, the viññāna dhātu is very different from the $\bar{a} k \bar{a} s a$ dhātu. There are no spatial restrictions in viñ $\tilde{n} \bar{a} n a$ dhātu.
- Thus, we cannot talk about a "specific location" for memories. They are just in nāma loka. That is why memories can be recalled effortlessly, whether one is on Earth or the Moon.


## Summary of Discussion So Far

14. We have been discussing the role of the brain in our mental activities; see "Brain and the Gandhabba." In this Buddhist model of human life, the human body is only a "shell" controlled by the "mental body" or gandhabba. See "Gandhabba in a Human Body - an Analogy."

- Human existence is not limited to a single life of about 100 years with a human body. Like in many other realms, human existence can be very long, at least several thousand years. See "Bhava and Jāti - States of Existence and Births Therein." Therefore, each of us could have lived previous human lives within the current human existence (bhava.) If so, some of us may be able to recall one or two past lives. But it is very rare to recall a previous life in another existence, for example, a Deva bhava or an animal bhava.
- A gandhabba can smell, taste, or touch only if it is inside a physical body. The physical body makes those contacts. The brain is the intermediary in all sensory interactions when the gandhabba is inside a physical body.
- The brain also helps recall memories in the nāma loka, as we discussed above-more details about that memory recall process in future posts.
- In previous posts, we discussed the role of the brain in some special situations, including total or partial "vegetative states."

All relevant posts in the current section at "Buddha Dhamma - A Scientific Approach."

### 2.2.8 <br> Tipitaka - A Systematic Approach

November 11, 2020

- Tipitaka - The Uniqueness of Buddha Dhamma
- Pāli Canon Is Self-Contained but Requires Detailed Explanation
- Vinaya Pitaka - More Than Disciplinary Rules
- Abhidhamma Pitaka - Deeper Analyses of Concepts


### 2.2.8. 1 Tipiṭaka - The Uniqueness of Buddha Dhamma

November 11, 2020; revised \#1, \#3, \#10 on November 12, 2020

## The Need for a Systematic Approach

1. Tipitaka (Tripiṭaka in Sanskrit) is the Pāli Canon, which contains the teachings of the Buddha. It is selfconsistent. It is also a vast collection of texts (in 57 volumes) divided into three sections (Pitaka) of Sutta, Vinaya, and Abhidhamma.

- How would one even begin to understand that vast material? That is especially a daunting task for someone who has had no prior exposure to Buddha Dhamma.
- Two main issues need to be looked at. (1) Understand the primary and ultimate goal of a Buddhist, (2) Cultivate familiarity with key Pāli words that CANNOT and SHOULD NOT be translated into English.
- Just trying to understand various suttas (with the difficulty of comprehension in a wide range) could be a waste of time. First, one needs to focus on a few suttas that provide the Buddha's key message. But that itself requires understanding the meanings of some key Pāli words.
- In the new section, "Buddha Dhamma - A Scientific Approach." I am trying to address both those issues. This new subsection will hopefully clarify some related issues.


## The Uniqueness of Buddha Dhamma

2. A Buddha is a unique "being." Even though born a human, he transcended his human birth and attained the Buddhahood. The Buddhahood is a title attained by those who can purify their minds to the utmost. For example, Einstein had a much higher level of "intelligence" than an average human, but a Buddha's mind is infinitely superior. A Buddha appears in the world very rarely, once in many billions of years.

- A Buddha can "see" the true and complete characteristics of our world. Thus, Buddha Gotama revealed a world of 31 realms that is much more vast and complex than the two realms (human and animal) that are discernible to an average human.
- He also revealed to us a rebirth process that has no discernible beginning. A given "lifestream" evolves from one existence to another among the 31 possible realms.
- Rebirth is not a random process. It follows the principle of causation (causes lead to results; with the removal of causes, no results can manifest.) Translated to Buddha Dhamma, birth results from previous actions DONE WITH greed, anger/hate, and ignorance. With the removal of those "defilements" from a mind, the rebirth cycle will stop since necessary causes have been removed.
- But why would one want willingly to make an effort to stop the rebirth process? Before getting to that, we first need to look at the two main prevailing world views.


## False Premise of Other Religions

3. World's major religions are based on two fundamental premises: (1) If you live a moral life, you get to go to heaven forever, and (2) If you live an immoral life, expect to suffer forever in hell. Such a claim appear sound and logical, and most people are attracted to that simple premise. See, "Wrong View of Creationism (and Eternal Future Life) - Part 1."

- However, the Buddha taught that just living a moral life WILL NOT guarantee the removal of future suffering. Permanent removal of future suffering REQUIRES stopping the rebirth process.
- By living a moral life, one MAY get a "good birth" in the next life, but that WILL NOT stop future subsequent births with harsh suffering.
- By the way, if someone says one "should not criticize other religions," that statement is made out of ignorance. One needs to be able to criticize false premises, no matter where they are found. If one finds a similar issue in Buddha Dhamma, one should bring it up for discussion. I have discussed some such issues at, "Mystical Phenomena in Buddhism?" and "Myths or Realities?"
- Real compassion is to help others understand the true nature of our complex world. That will enable one to get rid of an unimaginable amount of future suffering. Of course, it is up to each individual to decide whether to accept any given explanation about the world's nature.
- The second major false premise is the view that life ends with the physical body's death.


## Rebirth is Not True? - Another False Premise

4. In the materialistic view, one lives only the present life, ending with the physical body's death. In this view, there are absolutely no consequences to one's actions (other than for breaking the mundane laws.) For example, if you kill another human, you may go to jail (if caught,) but there would be no other consequences.

- The book "Free Will" by the atheist intellectual Sam Harris provides the rationale of a "materialist." At the beginning of the book, he described heinous crimes committed by two individuals, Hayes and Komeisarjevsky. Then on page 4, he writes, "as sickening as I find their behavior, I have to admit that if I were to trade places with one of these men, atom to atom, I would be him: There is no extra part of me that could decide to see the world differently or to resist the impulse to victimize other people." (highlighting mine.)
- That quote embeds the essence of materialism. A person is just an assembly of atoms and molecules, nothing more. Also, see "Views on Life - Wrong View of Materialism."
- But then the question arises, "why is Sam Harris NOT CAPABLE of such heinous crimes?" Those crimes were not done at the spur of the moment. They had planned those crimes. I don't think Sam Harris or any other decent human is CAPABLE of committing such PLANNED crimes. One would first need to get into such a defiled mindset. Hitler planned and killed millions of Jews. Not many people are CAPABLE of such actions.
- Both types of major wrong views discussed above arise because one is not aware of the complex web of causes and effects discussed in detail in the Tipitaka. Can things happen without causes?


## Nothing Happens Without Reasons/Causes

5. Modern science agrees that nothing happens without a cause(s). In the past, people believed that earthquakes, floods, floods, etc. happen due to the "will of the Creator God." Now we know that there are natural causes for each of those, and there is no need to invoke a Creator.

- In the same way, if one wins a million dollars in a lottery or breaks a leg in an accident, that would not be the "will of a higher intelligence." Those are results (vipāka) of previous good/bad actions (kamma.)
- Similarly, there are reasons (root causes) why some people are born healthy and wealthy, some are born at the opposite end, and an infinite variety in between. By the way, all those animals had been humans in past lives too.
- Therefore, just by using that causation principle, one can come to the reasonable conclusion that there must be causes for the diversity of births. One is born poor due to the causes (bad actions) from a previous life. Similarly, one is born an animal because one had behaved like an animal in human existence in the past. A Deva in a Deva realm is born there because of good deeds in past lives.
- There are also reasons why criminals like Hayes and Komeisarjevsky or Hitler are capable of acts of violence. Their defiled minds led them to behave like animals.
- There are reasons (causes) for anything to happen. It is just that finding those root causes is not easy because the world is complex. The rebirth process is necessary for the laws of kamma to bring forth such a variety of possible outcomes within life and from life-to-life.
- Only a Buddha can provide that complete picture. Out of that picture emerges the way to stop future suffering altogether.


## Buddhist Explanation Requires a Wider World View

6. The principle of causation that explains all that is Pațicca Samuppāda. That is at the heart of Tipiṭaka text. I have tried to explain it in various ways. See, for example, "Origin of Life."

- I have recently started another, more fundamental approach in the series, "Buddha Dhamma - A Scientific Approach." But such approaches are needed ONLY IF one has doubts about the rebirth process or the other underlying aspects like laws of kamma.
- In the Buddha's days, too, there were people with both wrong views discussed in \#3 and \#4. There were teachers like Makkhali Gosala, Ajita Kesakambali, Purana Kassapa, Pudhaka Kaccayana, Sanjaya Belatthiputta, and Nigantha Nataputta who taught various versions of wrong views as described in the Tipitaka.
- The Buddha engaged them in some occasions to illustrate the soundness of Buddha Dhamma. See, for example, "WebLink: suttacentral: Brahmajāla Sutta (DN 1)," "WebLink: suttacentral: Aggañña Sutta (DN 27)," and "WebLink: suttacentral: Cūlasaccaka Sutta (MN 35)."


## The Need to Correctly Interpret the Tipitaka

7. Therefore, the basic framework to explain the deep and complex true nature of this world of 31 realms is in the Tipitaka. Various aspects are in all three sections (Pitaka) of the Tipiṭaka: Sutta, Vinaya, and Abhidhamma.

- A Dhamma teacher needs to have the following qualifications: (1) Know the meanings of key Pāli words.
(2) The ability to explain succinct and deep verses in the Tipitaka.
- Both those REQUIRE the translator to be an Ariya or a Noble Person who has attained the Sotāpanna stage.
- Let me make an analogy to explain that.

8. Suppose a medical text needs to be translated from English to French.

- Would it be possible for a person well-versed in English and French to do a good job, UNLESS he/she is also a SPECIALIST in that particular field of medicine?
- Translating a text REQUIRES a deep understanding of the SUBJECT.
- Translating Pāli text in the Tipiṭaka to English REQUIRES much more than English proficiency and some knowledge in Pāli. A CLEAR understanding of the DEEP CONCEPTS in Buddha Dhamma is NECESSARY.
- It is not just a matter of learning Pāli grammar and to use various Pāli-English dictionaries that are available.
- In this particular case, the SPECIALIST is a Noble Person. One MUST be at least a Sotāpanna to be able to explain even the basic concepts correctly.


## Which Interpretation Is Correct?

9. Of course, the question arises: "How would one know whether anyone claiming to be an Ariya (Noble Person) is indeed one or not?" Any person can make that claim. The Buddha allowed one to make that declaration if one is certain that he/she has been "freed from the rebirths in the ap $\bar{a} y \vec{a}$ " or has attained the Sotāpanna stage. See, for example, "WebLink: suttacentral: Dutivabhayaverūpasanta Sutta (SN 55. 29)" The same passage appears in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Mahāparinibbāna Sutta (DN 16)."

- That is where each person has to make the decision. If two teachers claim to have the "correct explanation" AND those two are very different, only one is right or closer to the truth. It is up to each person to decide who could be right based on the totality of writings from those two.
- Of course, even an Ariya can make mistakes. Unless one is a Sammā Sambuddha Like Buddha Gotama, one COULD make mistakes. However, those mistakes would be MINOR compared to the key mistakes that an anāriya is BOUND TO make. One is an anāriya until becoming at least a Sotāpanna Anugāmi (who has begun to understand the Noble Truths on Suffering.)


## Understanding the "Hidden Suffering"

10. To understand the key message of the Buddha, it is necessary to understand the "big picture" of a rebirth process among 31 realms. The Tipitaka explains it in detail. Without an idea of that big picture, it does not make sense to try to "attain Nibbāna." Attaining Nibbāna MEANS "stopping the rebirth process."

- One would NOT want to stop a "good thing" from happening over and over. If repeated births is a "good thing," the Buddha would not have labored for 45 years to convince us that many future births for an anāriya (one who has not understood the Noble Truths) will be filled with unbearable suffering.
- The Buddha explained that humans (and other living beings) are incapable of seeing the hidden dangers of the rebirth process.
- The average human perceives that worldly things bring happiness. In the contrary, craving for those worldly things can ONLY lead to unimaginable suffering in future lives. Such cravings CANNOT be willfully suppressed. Those cravings NATURALLY go away when one starts comprehending the real nature of this world.
- That is the "previously unheard Dhamma" of a Buddha. It goes against all the prevailing views that we discussed above.
- We will continue that discussion in the next post: "Tipitaka - A Systematic Approach."

All posts in this section at "Buddha Dhamma - A Scientific Approach."

## Pāli Canon Is Self-Contained but Requires Detailed Explanation

## November 19, 2020; revised November 24, 2020; August 23, 2002

Pāli Canon is the standard collection of scriptures in the Theravāda Buddhist tradition. That collection has all the necessary teachings of the Buddha. However, the key concepts need to be explained in detail by a Noble Person (an Ariya.)

## Initial Oral Transmission

1. After the passing away of the Buddha, his teachings were handed down ORALLY from one generation to the next over about five hundred years. It had been prepared for easy oral transmission. That becomes clear
when one listens to the recital of a given sutta. As a child, I had memorized several suttas without much difficulty.

- Even today, some people have memorized large sections of the Tipiṭaka, especially in Myanmar (formerly Burma). In Myanmar, there are special examinations to test memorization. See, Tpitakadhara Sayadaws of Myanmar (Burma) in Five Decades." Also, see "Memorizing the Tipitaka. "
- That is why the Pāli Canon survived entirely in content over that long period of oral transmission. There were groups of bhikkhus who memorized overlapping sections and passed them down.
- A major reason for the assembly of the First Buddhist Council within three months of the Buddha's Parinibbāna - around 480 BCE - was to organize the vast material that had been accumulated.
- Within the next two hundred years, two more Councils were held to recite and verify the teachings and to finalize the Tipitaka in three broad categories ("ti" + "piṭaka" or "three baskets"). The second was held about a century after the first one.
- The third was held in 250 BC at Pataliputra under the patronage of King Asoka. The "three baskets" were completed at this Council with the finalization of the Abhidhamma Pitaka.
- That material was written down in that exact form when it became possible to preserve written material for a long time; see \#2 below.


## Texts of the Tipitaka

2. That completed Tipitaka was written down in 29 BCE at the Fourth Buddhist Council in Matale, Sri Lanka. See "Welcome to Aluvihāra Rock Cave Temple" for information about the location where the Tipitaka writing took place. By then, techniques had become available to preserve written material for a long time.

- That is why the Pāli Canon (Tipiṭaka) can be trusted to have the Buddha's original teachings. Details at "Sutta Interpretation - Uddesa, Niddesa, Patiniddesa."
- The other earliest written Buddhist documents are from Gandhāra in modern northwestern Pakistan; see "The Buddhist Literature of Ancient Gandhāra" by Richard Salomon (2018.) However, those do not provide a complete version of the Tipitaka; see p. 83 of the book.
- Around the turn of the first millennium, translations of the Tipitaka to Chinese and subsequently to Tibetan also took place. The original manuscripts in the Pāli Tipitaka can be expected to contain most of the original discourses delivered by the Buddha.


## The Authenticity of the Tipitaka

3. After the initial writing, the whole Tipitaka was periodically re-written on specially prepared ola (palm) leaves over the next 2000 years. The leaves deteriorated over time and needed to be re-written every $100+$ years. Even though that was a very labor-intensive process (there are 57 large volumes in the modern printed version of the Pāli Canon), it served another important purpose.

- Sinhala language (both spoken and written) changed over the past 2000 years. The need to re-write it every 100 or so years made sure that the Sinhala script changes were taken into account. That assured authenticity.
- The following video gives an idea about how those leaves were prepared and what tools were used to write:


## WebLink: youtube: Ola Leaf manuscripts

4. The fourth Buddlhist Council was the last Council attended exclusively by Arahants. The writing of the Pāli Canon took place during that Council. That provides credence to the authenticity of the Tipittaka. Of course, no one can dispute that each Piṭaka is inter-consistent and consistent with the other two Pitaka.

- The discourses of the Buddha were said to have been delivered in Māgadhi ("maga" + "adhi" or Noble path) language. The written form was called the Pāli. But Pāli does not have a script, so it was written down with Sinhala script.
- That also provides a clear way of sorting out the Mahāyāna literature. They are all in Sanskrit and never in Pāli. Mahāyānic philosophers wrote all the Sanskrit sutt $\bar{a}$ (more correctly sutrā) in Sanskrit.
- Furthermore, the Tipiṭaka was NEVER translated to Sanskrit. The Buddha prohibited that. See "Preservation of the Buddha Dhamma."


## "Double-Meanings" of Many Keywords

5. The Sutta Pitaka contains the bulk of the original discourses delivered by the Buddha. It had been specially put into a format suitable for easy oral transmission.

- The Buddha knew that Buddha Dhamma would go through periods of decline where bhikkhus capable of interpreting the sutt $\bar{a}$ would not be present. Thus the sutt $\bar{a}$ were composed in a way that only the "conventional" meaning is apparent. That was a necessary step to preserve the sutt $\bar{a}$, especially before writing became commonplace.
- It is important to remember that Ven. Ānanda had memorized all the sutta $\bar{a}$, which he then recited at the First Buddhist Council, just three months after the Parinibbāna of the Buddha.
- Ven. Ānanda was Buddha's personal assistant over the last few decades of the Buddha's life. The Buddha likely condensed each sutta, and Ven. Ānanda memorized each of them. The Buddha synthesized each sutta in a "double meaning" way for them to survive the "dark periods." That point will become clear as we discuss it further.
- Then, at the first Buddhist Council, all the sutt $\bar{a}$ were recited and sorted into various categories (Nikāyā). We still have that same Sutta Piṭaka.
- The Vinaya Pitaka also remains in the same original form. Only the Abhidhamma Pitaka was finalized at the Third Buddhist Council. Then all three finalized Pitakas were written down at the Fourth Council. See "Preservation of the Buddha Dhamma."


## Need for Detailed Explanations

6. The critical point here is that a sutta is a CONDENSED version of discourse in many cases. For example, the Dhamma Cakka Pavattana sutta was delivered to the five ascetics overnight. Imagine how many written pages would be if written verbatim! Yet, it was summarized in a few pages. The same is true for all the important sutt $\bar{a}$. Otherwise, it would have been impossible to transmit all those thousands of sutt $\bar{a}$.

- Each Pāli keyword (like ānāpāna, anicca, and anatta) is packed with a lot of information. Commentaries (called "Attha Kathā") were written to expound on the meaning of important Pāli words and also to explain the key verses (like "ye dhammā hetuppabbava...")


## Importance of the Commentaries

7. Thus, deep suttas were meant to be used with the commentaries. Pāli suttā are not supposed to be translated word-by-word.

- Most Sinhala commentaries were burned in the Anuradhapura era; see "Incorrect Theravāda Interpretations - Historical Timeline."
- Fortunately, three original commentaries written by the main disciples of the Buddha (Ven. Sāriputta, Ven. Kaccayana, etc.) during the time of the Buddha had been included in the Pāli Canon (in the Khuddhaka Nikāya) and thus survived. The current revival of pure Dhamma by Waharaka Thero and a few other Theros in Sri Lanka is partially due to their perusal of these three documents
(Pațisambhidāmagga, Petakopadesa, and Nettippakarana). [Paṭisambhidāmagga by Ven. Sāriputta and Petakopadesa, \& Nettippakarana by Ven. Kaccayana]
- Once the deeper meanings stay hidden for a long time, only a few with the Patisambhidā $\tilde{N} a \bar{n} a$ can understand AND explain even those three commentaries. Certain jāti Sotāpannas are born with that the Patisambhidā Ñāna from time to time. Waharaka Thero was one of them. From the time of Buddhaghosa, the deeper meanings had been hidden until Waharaka Thero unearthed them in recent years.


## Tipiṭaka Transmitted With Mundane Meanings During "Dark Periods"

8. Therefore, there are "dark periods" when bhikkhus with the Pațisambhidā Ñāna are not born for a long time. During such times, people use conventional interpretations. And that served the purpose of keeping the suttā intact, especially before written texts became common. Even though people understood only the mundane versions, the text was faithfully transmitted.

- A perfect example is the Ānāpānasati Sutta (some of which are also part of the Satipatṭhāna Sutta). As we discussed in "What is Ānāpāna?", the conventional meaning of the word ānāpāna is to tie up " $\bar{a} n a$ " with breath inhaling and " $\bar{a} p \bar{a} n a "$ with breath exhaling. That was consistent with the breath meditation that has been there in the world at any time. Many yogis practiced it at the time of the Buddha. He learned those methods from such yogis before attaining Buddhahood.
- Other examples are the translation of the keywords of anicca and anatta as impermanence and "noself." Even though those two meanings are embedded in the correct meanings, the deeper meanings are broader. No English word has the same meaning as anicca (or anatta.) Even the word "dukkha" DOES NOT refer to just the suffering one feels. Rather, Dukkha Sacca (Noble Truth on Suffering) is about the CAUSES of FUTURE suffering.
- The true meanings of those words will EMERGE as we systematically go through the upcoming posts.


## Explanation of Dhamma - Uddesa, Niddesa, Patiniddesa

9. A deep dhamma concept may appear in the Pāli Canon (especially in the Sutta and Abhidhamma) as just an "uddesa" or "utterance."

- "Niddesa" is a "brief explanation" that appears in one of the three commentaries mentioned above. Finally, "patiniddesa" means explaining in detail with examples to clarify complex or "knotty" points by a bhikkhu (or a knowledgeable layperson) during a discourse (or in a text today.) See "Sutta Interpretation - Uddesa, Niddesa, Patiniddesa."
- For example, in the suttas on Anuloma Paticca Samuppāda, it is stated in the uddesa version: "avijjā paccayā sañkhārā, sañkhāra paccayā viññānam, .. ending in ".. Evametassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa samudayo hotī" $t i$ OR "the whole mass of suffering." The STOPPING of the "the whole mass of suffering" is stated also in the niddesa version in Paṭiloma Paṭicca Samuppāda as, "avijjā nirodhā sañkhāra-nirodho, sañkhāra nirodhā viññāna nirodho,.." ending with "end of the whole mass of suffering."
- However, both sañkhāra and viññāna arise in an Arahant. That seems to be a contradiction when it is stated that sañkhāra nirodhā (cessation of sañkhāra) and viññāna nirodhā (cessation of viññāna.)
- In the commentary Patisambhidamagga Pakarana, it is clarified in the short form (niddesa) to say that those sañkhāra removed by an Arahant are abhisañkhāra and that only kamma viññāṇa do not arise in an Arahant.
- Then, that needs to be explained in detail (patiniddesa) as in the post, "Anuloma Patiloma Paticca Samuppāda - Key to Sotāpanna Stage."


## It Is an Offense to Misinterpret Buddha Dhamma

10. It is an offense to misinterpret sutt $\bar{a}$ or other material in the Pāli Canon. That is in several sutta $\bar{a}$ in the WebLink: suttacentral: Bālavagga of Anguttara Nikāya 2.21-31.

- For example, AN 2.23 is a short sutta that says: "Bhikkhus, these two misrepresent the Buddha. What two? (i) One who explains what was not spoken by the Buddha as spoken by him. (ii) One who explains what the Buddha spoke as not spoken by him. These two misrepresent the Buddha. These are two who slander the Tathāgatā."


## Summary

11. The following are the key points from the above discussion that I wish to emphasize:

- Many suttā are designed to convey "conventional" meanings while keeping the "deep meanings" embedded in them.
- Those "deep meanings" bring out the uniqueness of Buddha Dhamma.
- Word-to-word translation of the suttā does not convey the message of the Buddha. Examples are critical Pāli words like ānāpāna, anicca, and anatta.
- The surviving three original commentaries in the Pāli Canon (Tipitaka) can verify the deep meanings of the keywords/phrases. Once a Noble Person clarifies them with Patisambhidā Nā̄na, any other Noble Person can explain those meanings to others.
- Posts on the three Pitaka: "Tipitaka - A Systematic Approach."

All posts in this section at "Buddha Dhamma - A Scientific Approach."

### 2.2.8.3 Vinaya Pitaka - More Than Disciplinary Rules

## November 26, 2020

Vinaya Piṭaka contains much more information than Vinaya rules for bhikkhus/bhikkhunis.

## Introduction - Need to Consult All Three Piṭaka

1. The Buddha said that if there is any doubt or a concept that is not clear, one should check with Sutta, Vinaya, and Abhidhamma. These basically refer to the Tipiṭaka (three baskets) of Sutta Piṭaka, Vinaya Pitaka, and Abhidhamma Piṭaka.

- Most people refer to the Sutta Piṭaka and forget about the other two. Abhidhamma Pitaka is a bit hard to understand, and without a firm grasp of basics, it is harder.
- Most people think that the Vinaya Pitaka is just for the bhikkhus and bhikkhunis. But there are sections in the Vinaya Pitiaka that have details that are not in the other two Pitiaka.
- The following article provides details of the Vinaya Pitaka: "WebLink: accesstoinsight.org: Vinaya Pitaka - The Basket of the Discipline." We will only discuss some key features.
- For someone who is "new to Buddhism," the introductory article by Bhikkhu Bodhi could be useful: "WebLink: accesstoinsight.org: The Buddha and His Dhamma."


## A Balanced Approach - Importance of the Vinaya Pitaka

2. It is prudent to use a balanced approach to learn Buddha Dhamma. Instead of diving into analyzing deep suttas, one needs first to get an idea about the Buddha, the necessary moral background, and basic concepts like kamma and rebirth.

- In the beginning, both the Sutta Piṭaka and Vinaya Piṭaka can be quite helpful. One should get into Abhidhamma only after getting a good idea about the background, key concepts, and the ultimate goal.
- While the Sutta Piṭaka discusses dhamma concepts, the Vinaya Pitaka provides the background settings for the following two cases: (1) for many suttas, and (2) for many Vinaya rules.


## Background for Key Suttā

3. The Vinaya Pitaka provides an illuminating background account for many suttas.

- For example, the WebLink: suttacentral: Mahāvagga of the Vinaya Piṭaka has a chronological account of the events following Buddha's Enlightenment. The English translation at Sutta Central is good: "WebLink: suttacentral: On Awakening."
- That account describes in detail Buddha's daily activities following the attainment of the Buddhahood. It also explains in detail how the Buddha delivered and discussed, over several days, the material condensed in the WebLink: suttacentral: Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta (SN 56.11) to the five ascetics.
- That is why some highly-condensed suttas SHOULD NOT be translated word-by-word. It takes many posts to discuss in detail, even just the key verses of a deep sutta. See, "Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta."


## Background for Vinaya Rules

4. For many years after the Buddha's Enlightenment, there were no disciplinary rules for the bhikkhus. Those who ordained as bhikkhus in those early years had fulfilled most of their "pāramitä" and did not need much clarification of dhamma concepts. They also were 'self-disciplined," and it was not necessary to impose rules.

- Most Vinaya rules were set up to handle particular situations where one or more bhikkhus had done things that were not appropriate. The Vinaya Piṭaka provides background accounts for many such cases. Such accounts provide insights into dhamma concepts as well as providing reasons for enacting such rules.
- For example, there was no rule for the bhikkhus to abstain from eating after Noon. There were few other reasons to impose that rule, but one reason was to discipline those who started wearing robes to "live an easy life." That rule was enacted probably after 20 years or so, and by that time, most people had become faithful followers of the Buddha. They held bhikkhus in high regard and took care of all their needs.
- There is an account in the Vinaya Pitaka for another reason for that rule. One bhikkhu went for an alms-collection after dark, and a woman had thrown dirty water from a cooking pot at the bhikkhu because she could not see him.

5. Here is another example. Any bhikkhu commits a pārājika offense (which is one of the four most serious offenses) by declaring supermundane attainments like jhana or magga phala (uttarimanussadhamma), knowing that he does not have such attainments.

- Of course, any bhikkhu (or a layperson) can declare genuine attainment if the need arose. But if it is done without really having such attainments that is a pārājika offense for a bhikkhu. He must give up the robes since he would not be able to make progress.
- That Vinaya rule was enacted after a group of bhikkhus decided to make such claims to receive alms during a famine. That account is described in the Vinaya Pitaka: "WebLink: suttacentral: The training rule on telling truthfully."
- There were reasons for enacting each of the 227 rules for bhikkhus and 311 rules for bhikkhunis. Those accounts are given in the Vinaya Pitaka.


## "The Life of the Buddha" Is a Good Resource

6. The book, "The Life of the Buddha" by Bhikkhu Nānamoli is good to read and keep as a reference for two reasons:

- It provides a chronological record of the Buddha's life (after the Buddhahood),
- Detailed accounts of significant events by combining accounts in the sutta with those taken from the Vinaya Piṭaka.

7. For example, it provides the background for delivering some major suttā or verses.

- For example, there is a detailed account (pp. 55-60) of how the Buddha had to perform even a few miracles to convince Uruvela Kassapa, his two brothers, and 1000 of their followers before they agreed to listen to the WebLink: suttacentral: Āditta Pariyāya Sutta (SN 35.28) or the Fire Sermon (page numbers quoted are for the 2001 First BPS Pariyatti edition.)
- So, we can see that it was not easy in those early days for the Buddha to convince some of the ascetics who had their own beliefs of what Nibbāna was about.

8. The subsequent chapters provide a good chronological account of what happened until the Parinibbāna. One can get a sense of which major sutt $\bar{a}$ were delivered at around what time.

- There are accounts on the two chief disciples, and short accounts of other important personalities such as Anāthapiṇ̣ika, Angulimāla, Visākha, etc. Chapter 7 describes the formation of the order of bhikkhunis.
- Several encounters with the Māra Devaputta are scattered throughout the book.
- One paragraph on p. 109 is on how the Buddha visited the Tāvatimsa deva realm and delivered Abhidhamma. A summary was conveyed to Ven. Sariputta expanded it with the help of his students to the form that we have today.
- There is a chapter on Devadatta, which describes events that are not found in sutt $\bar{a}$ : For example, how he attained (anāriya) jhānā and iddhi (super-normal powers) powers and using those iddhi powers how he appeared on the lap of Prince Ajatasattu as a baby wrapped in snakes.
- It provides a good account of Devadatta's efforts to take the life of the Buddha and how he lost all those super-normal powers and $j h a \bar{a} \bar{a}$ at the end.
- More at "The Life of the Buddha" by Bhikkhu Nānamoli."


## An Example From the Book

9. I will provide the following as an example of what is in this book that is not available in any sutta. It describes how the five ascetics attained the Sotāpanna stage over several days with the delivery and discussions of the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta.

Here is a direct quote from p. 45 of the book (starting from the point where the Buddha had just finished the first delivery of the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta):
"Then Añ̃ata Kondañña, who had seen and reached and found and penetrated the Dhamma, whose uncertainties were left behind, whose doubts had vanished, who had gained perfect confidence and became independent of others in the Teacher's Dispensation, said to the Blessed One: "Blessed One, I wish to go forth under the Blessed One and to receive the full admission?"
"Come, bhikkhu," the Blessed One said, "The Dhamma is well proclaimed. Live the holy life for the complete ending of suffering." And that was his full admission.

Then the Blessed One taught and instructed the rest of the bhikkhus with a talk on the Dhamma. As he did so, there arose in the venerable Vappa and the venerable Bhaddiya, the spotless, immaculate vision of the Dhamma. All that is subjected to arising is subjected to cessation. They, too, asked for and received the full admission.

These, having seen dhamma, attained dhamma, knowing dhamma ... having attained without the help of another full confidence in the teacher's instruction, spoke thus to the Blessed One: "May we, Blessed One, receive the going forth in the Blessed One's presence, may we receive ordination?"

Then living on the food they brought to him, the Blessed One taught and instructed the rest of the bhikkhus with a talk on the Dhamma. All six lived on the food brought back by the three of them. Then there arose in the venerable Mahānāma and the venerable Assaji the spotless, immaculate vision of the Dhamma, and they too asked for and received the full admission."

## More Resources on Background Material

10. The following is also a good resource: "WebLink: accesstoinsight.org: A Sketch of the Buddha's Life: Readings from the Pāli Canon."

- That post has extractions for various suttas and provides accounts before and after the Enlightenment.
- Another one (presumably tailored to young children) is: "WebLink: budsas.org: A Young People’s Life of the Buddha."

11. Posts on the three Pitaka: "Tipitaka - A Systematic Approach."

### 2.2.8.4 Abhidhamma Pitaka - Deeper Analyses of Concepts

December 3, 2020

## Abhidhamma Pitaka Goes Into Fine Details

1. The Abhidhamma Pitaka plays a critical role in the Tipitaka. Abhidhamma encompasses the deeper and detailed accounts of the material in the Sutta Pitaka. We can consider the following analogy to get an idea of the role of the Abhidhamma Pitaka.

- To drive a car, one needs to learn how to use various car components. Even more importantly, one needs to practice driving. That is how one needs to use the Sutta Pitaka. It is necessary to learn the key concepts in suttas AND to practice what one learns.
- In that analogy, Abhidhamma plays the role of a detailed account of how the car is assembled and the role played by each part. If the car breaks down, a knowledgeable technician can refer to that technical manual and figure out the problem. Similarly, someone knowledgeable in Abhidhamma can clarify a deep concept that needs a full and detailed analysis.
- In most cases, it is not necessary to learn Abhidhamma in detail. However, it helps to have a cursory background in Abhidhamma to understand deep suttas better.
- The following article provides a brief description of the Abhidhamma Pitaka: "WebLink: accesstoinsight.org: Abhidhamma Pitaka - The Basket of Abhidhamma."


## Historical Background

2. The Abhidhamma Pitaka was finalized at the Third Buddhist Council held about 200 years after the Parinibbāna (passing away) of the Buddha. Many English scholars (and texts) say that the Abhidhamma Piṭaka was a late addition to the Tipiṭaka. That is a misunderstanding.

- In the Introduction to his book, "A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma," Bhikkhu Bodhi provides a detailed account of the history of the Abhidhamma Pitaka; see pp. 9-11 of Ref. 1. An account with a few more details is given in Ref. 2. That can be summarized as follows.
- In the seventh year after attaining the Buddhahood, the Buddha visited the Tāvatimsa Deva world. There he delivered the material in the Abhidhamma Pitaka to Devas where the chief recipient was his
mother Mahāmāyā Devi, who had been born there. The material was delivered over three months, and each day the Buddha would descend to the human world for food. Each day, he would provide a synopsis of the teaching given to the Devas on that day to Ven. Sāriputta.
- Having learned the key aspects of the Abhidhamma, Ven. Sāriputta taught it to his 500 pupils, and thus the basis of the Abhidhamma Pitaka was established. They needed to work out a detailed account of the material in a way that others could understand.
- It took several generations of bhikkhus of the lineage of Ven. Sāriputta - over 200 years - to finalize the Abhidhamma Pitaka.
- Reference 2 provides a list of bhikkhus who contributed that effort, including Ven. Moggaliputta Tissa, who apparently contributed to the final version at the Third Buddhist Council.

3. At the First Buddhist Council, just three months after the Parinibbāna of the Buddha, only a framework of the Abhidhamma theory was recited. More was added at the second Council, and the task was completed only at the third Council led by Ven. Moggaliputta Tissa.

- That completed Tipitaka that was written down in 29 BCE at the Fourth Buddhist Council; see, "Preservation of the Buddha Dhamma."
- It is essential to realize that hundreds of Arahants at the Fourth Council wrote down the whole Tipitaka. That included the complete Abhidhamma Pitaka. Therefore, we can be confident about the authenticity of the Abhidhamma Pitaka AND the whole Tipiṭaka.
- That is why it is incorrect to say that Abhidhamma was "invented" by bhikkhus after the Parinibbāna of the Buddha.
- Those who make such statements have not studied Abhidhamma or have not understood the in-depth analyses in Abhidhamma. The minute details of the very fast citta vithi are discernible only to the mind of a Buddha. No one else can even invent such concepts. It is the inter-consistency that makes ALL the material in the Tipiṭaka trustworthy. See, "Buddha Dhamma: Non-Perceivability and Self-Consistency."


## The Enormity of the Material in the Abhidhamma Piṭaka

4. The Abhidhamma Pitaka contains about the same dhamma groups (dhammakkhandha) as the Sutta Pitaka and Vinaya Piṭaka COMBINED. It is said to contain 42,000 dhamma groups compared to 21,000 for each of the other two. Thus, there are 84,000 dhamma groups in the Tipiṭaka.

- Philosophers talk about mind and matter as the two basic entities in the world. Scientists have studied the matter in great detail. But neither scientists nor philosophers have any idea of even how to BEGIN to describe the mind. We have discussed that in "Theories of Our World - Scientific Overview."
- Abhidhamma breaks down all rūpa to be combinations of 28 elementary $r \bar{u} p a$. Those 28 types of $r \bar{u} p a$ are in the physical bodies of living beings and all inert matter.
- Then the mind is described in terms of citta (loosely translated as "thoughts") and cetasika (mental factors.) There are 89 (or 121 depending on categorization) types of citta, which arise with different combinations of 52 types of cetasika. Thoughts of any living being can be described in terms of those entities.
- To analyze the concepts in the suttas in terms of those "basic entities" is an exhilarating experience. Concepts can be investigated to depths as much as one wishes (and is willing to spend the time and effort).


## Introduction to Abhidhamma - Current Standard Text

5. The Abhidhamma Pitaka consists of the following categories: Dhammasañghaṇ $\bar{\imath}$ (Classification of Dhammas), Vibhañga (The Book of Divisions), Kathāvatthu (Points of Controversy) Puggala Paññatti
(Description of Individuals), Dhātukathā (Discussion about Elements), Yamaka (The Book of the Pairs), and Paṭthāna (The Book of Relations). Kathāvatthu provides an in-depth account of controversial issues discussed at the Third Buddhist Council compiled by venerable Moggaliputta Tissa. Mahāyāna concepts like "antarābhava" were shown to be inconsistent, for example. See "Antarābhava and Gandhabba."

- There is a vast and complex material in the Abhidhamma Piṭaka. This is why it took so long to finalize that material per \#2 and \#3 above.
- It is doubtful that anyone in recent years has read and comprehended all the material in the Abhidhamma Pitaka, especially Patthāna or the Yamaka.
- Most people try to understand one summarized text to get a basic idea about the contents in the Abhidhamma Pitaka. That standard text is Abhidhammatta Sangaha, a summary of the Abhidhamma Pitaka compiled by Ven. Anuruddha, an Indian bhikkhu. That text does not go to deeper issues but provides the fundamentals.
- That Päli text was translated to English by Ven. Narada in 1956 (Ref. 3.) Subsequently, it was revised by Bhikkhu Bodhi in 1993 (Ref. 1.)


## Critical Aspects of Buddha Dhamma

6. Even if one can understand the whole of the Abhidhamma theory, one MAY NOT understand the Buddha's message. One must first understand the Four Noble Truths (same as understanding Paticca Samuppāda or the true meanings of anicca, dukkha, anatta.)

- Abhidhamma only facilitates one to analyze situations to deep levels ONLY IF one starts with understanding the Buddha's message. That message is that there is a rebirth process where most rebirths happen in the four lowest realms where there are harsh levels of suffering. The only way to escape future suffering is to stop the rebirth process and to attain Nibbāna.
- Once one has that basic understanding, Abhidhamma helps make that picture very clear. One can resolve any remaining issues/doubts by studying the detailed analyses in Abhidhamma. In a way, one cannot even begin to grasp the value of a Buddha until one can see deep concepts explained in an amazingly consistent way from many different angles.
- Abhidhamma can solidify and "fill-in-the-blanks" of Buddha Dhamma from the sutt $\bar{a}$, which can be an exhilarating experience.


## Benefits of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka

7. Even though it is not necessary to have a deep knowledge of Abhidhamma, a basic understanding can be quite valuable.

- Abhidhamma starts at a basic level and proceeds to get to deeper levels systematically. Therefore, one can get a good understanding of key concepts like kamma, cetana, sañkhāra, viññāna, etc., by studying introductory Abhidhamma.
- Even if one does not wish to study Abhidhamma in detail, those basic concepts need to be wellunderstood.
- We will start discussing those essential concepts next.

The other two Pitakas were discussed in the subsection, "Tipitaka - A Systematic Approach."

## REFERENCES

1. "WebLink: PDF Download: Bhikkhu Bodhi-Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma," by Bhikkhu Bodhi (2000); this is a revised and updated version of Ref. 3 below. (click the link to open the pdf).
2. Dhammasanghani (first of the Abhidhamma books) in the Buddha Jayanthi Edition of the Tipitaka (2005); pp. XIII-XIV (in the Sinhala language.) Here is a link to an online version of the "Buddha Jayanthi Edition of the Tipitaka."
3. "WebLink: PDF Download: A Manual of Abhidhamma" Fifth Edition by Narada Thero (1987.) (click the link to open the pdf).

### 2.2.9 Antarābhava and Gandhabba

December 11, 2020

- Antarābhava - No Connection to Gandhabba
- Antarābhava Discussion in Kathāvatthu - Not Relevant to Gandhabba
- How Do We See? - Role of the Gandhabba
- Interpretation of the Tipitaka - Gandhabba Example


### 2.2.9.1 Antarābhava - No Connection to Gandhabba

## December 11, 2020; revised December 12, 2020 (\#7 revised and \#8 added)

## Antarābhava - Need to Understand the Terminology

1. Antarābhava is not a concept in Buddha Dhamma. Antarābhava ("antara" + "bhava") means "inbetween bhava." There are no such "gaps" between two existences (bhava.) It was a heretical view that existed even before the formal emergence of Mahāyāna.

- Some current Theravādins have the misconception that the gandhabba state (mental body or manomaya kaya) is the same as antarābhava, and thus needs to be rejected.
- However, the gandhabba state encompasses the whole of the "human bhava," within which there are many rebirths with physical human bodies.
- I will use two rebirths accounts to clarify the terminology and also to clarify this hugely misunderstood issue.


## Rebirth Account of Jeffrey Keene

## WebLink: youtube: Reincarnation, BORN AGAIN?

2. General John Gordon died in the Civil war. He was reborn as Jeffrey Keene in recent years.

- They are two "human bodies" that resulted from the same gandhabba (mental body or manomaya $k \bar{a} y a$ ). Those two births (as General Gordon and Jeffrey Keene) are within the same "human bhava."
- When General Gordon died, the mental body (gandhabba) came out of that dead body. Then that gandhabba was in the "paraloka" waiting for a suitable womb.
- Many years later, gandhabba was pulled into Jeffrey Keene's mother's womb, which is how he was born ( $j \bar{a} t i)$ with that physical body.
- Therefore, both General Gordon and Jeffrey Keene are in the same "lifestream." They belong to the "same human bhava."
- This clearly explains the position of the Buddha about rebirth. Jeffrey Keene is NOT the same as General Gordon. However, Jeffrey Keene's life is irrevocably connected to that of General Gordon. Therefore, it is also NOT correct to say that there in no connection between them.
- It is the same HUMAN mental body (gandhabba) that was reborn ( $j \bar{a} t i$ ) with physical human bodies twice (as General Gordon and Jeffrey Kean).

3. A few more observations may be helpful.

- Even though the physical bodies of General Gordon and Jeffrey Keene were remarkably close, that does not happen all the time. Parents' physical features (their DNA) also contribute to the physical features of any child.
- There is a large time gap between those two lives. It is possible that there could have been more births with physical bodies in between.
- The time gap between successive lives can vary hugely. In some cases, there may be only days or months, but more typically, there are gaps of several years.
- The gandhabba does not have the choice of "selecting a womb." When a zygote is created in the womb of a woman following sexual intercourse, a gandhabba matching the parents' general gati is pulled into the womb. See "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception."


## Rebirth Account of James Leininger

## WebLink: youtube: Reincarnation - Airplane Boy (abc Primetime)

4. The relevant points are noted below.
@ beginning: The narrator asks: "Could we come back as someone else"?

- It is not "someone else" that comes back or reborn. It is the same lifestream with a different appearance (physically.) Those successive births ( $j \bar{a} t i$ ) are within the same human bhava. In other words, it is the same "lifestream." See, "What Reincarnates? - Concept of a Lifestream."
@ 0.3 minutes: James Houston, Jr. was shot down over the Pacific Ocean on March 3, 1945. James Leininger was born some 60 years later and started talking about "getting shot by the Japanese."
@ 3:20 minutes: The narrator says, "dead can be reborn."
- That is not the right way to describe the situation. It is the same lifestream that is reborn with a different physical body!
@ 4 minutes: Usually, a child's memories of a previous life fades away around $7-8$ years.
(a) 5 minutes: James Leininger's own account of getting shot.
(a) 7:30 minutes: James Leininger provided the name of a friend, Jack Larson, from his previous life, and correctly says that his plane took off from the ship "Natoma." This is STRONG evidence.
@ 8:20 minutes: He describes himself as James 3 because, in his previous life, he was James Houston, Jr (i.e., James 2).
@ 10:40 minutes: The dad, Bruce Leininger, says that he thinks his son came back because "he had something to finish."
- No. We all come back. We can come back in human form and also in other forms corresponding to any of the 31 realms.
@ 10:55 minutes: Comments of Anne Barron, sister of James Houston, Jr.
@ 11:30 minutes: Comments of Prof. Kurtz, who does not believe in rebirth, says the account of James Leininger (a two-year-old) is made up. It is, of course, up to each person to make that decision. There are many more rebirth accounts and other types of evidence as Near-Death Experiences and Out-of-the Body Experiences; see "Evidence for Rebirth."


## Are Those Successive Births in Different Bhava?

5. The above two accounts provide us with the opportunity to clarify the two concepts of human bhava and human $j a \bar{a} t i$.

- Those who question the gandhabba state must answer the following questions: "Are James Houston and James Leininger in two different bhava?"
- If they answer "yes," then the following must be true: In between those two human bhava, that lifestream must have been in a different bhava, such as animal bhava or Deva bhava.
- However, the Buddha clearly stated getting a human bhava is extremely difficult. There could be millions or even billions of years between successive human bhava. See, "Rebirth - Connection to Suffering in the First Noble Truth."
- Therefore, it is clear that those two successive births (jāti) are within the same human bhava. Further details at, "Bhava and Jāti - States of Existence and Births Therein."


## The "Antarābhava" Issue Raised at Third Buddhist Council Was a Different Issue

6. The concept of an antarābhava was discussed and rejected at the Third Buddhist Council. It is documented in the Kathāvatthu section of the Abhidhamma Pitaka.

- There was no discussion on gandhabba regarding that issue. I will discuss that in detail in the next post, "Antarābhava Discussion in Kathāvatthu - Not Relevant to Gandhabba."
- Therefore, it is a critical error to identify the gandhabba state as an antarābhava. Rather, the gandhabba state encompasses a whole human bhava.


## Insights on "Self" and "No-Self" Issue

7. This is also a good opportunity to get insights into the "Self" and 'No-Self" Issues.

- Is James Leininger the SAME as James Houston? Of course not. They lived very different lives and did not look the same either. Is Jeffrey Keene the same as General Gordon in \#2 above? Even though there were some physical resemblances, they were very different and lived different lives. As we can see clearly, the physical bodies of those two individuals are entirely different. James Houston's physical body had disintegrated a long time ago. At some point in the future, that "lifestream" may be born a Deva, Brahma, animal, etc. No ESSENCE propagates from life-to-life, especially from bhava-to-bhava. A Deva bhava is vastly different from a human bhava or animal bhava. That is why the Buddha rejected the idea of an unchanging "self" or "soul."
- However, there is obviously a STRONG CONNECTION between the two lives in each of those cases. There would be no James Leininger if there were no James Houston. James Leininger is a descendant of that same "lifestream." As we can see clearly, the physical bodies of those two individuals are entirely different. James Houston's physical body had disintegrated a long time ago. However, there is an UNBROKEN connection in the mental body. In fact, James Leininger must have inherited SOME of the mental characteristics- such as anusaya - of James Houston (there would have been some changes in the intervening time.) Thus, the Buddha rejected the idea of "no-self" as well. As long as the samisäric process is there, an unbroken (mental) lineage exists between any two stages within that lifestream.


## Nothing In This World Worthwhile to be Taken as "Mine"

8. The real issue is whether there is anything in this world that is worthwhile to be "taken to be mine." Immoral actions done with such vision/perception can create kammic energies leading to "bad bhava" such as animal bhava. That is what we need to be concerned with. That is what the Buddha stated in his very first discourse by, "samikhittena pañcupādānakkhandhā dukkhä" OR "in brief, the origin of
suffering is the craving for the five aggregates of rūpa, vedanā, sañ̃ $\bar{a}$, sañkhāra, and viñ $\bar{n} \underline{a} a$ (pañcupādānakkhandha)." [sañkhittena means being overthrown by defilements]

- Even though human bhava is much longer than 100 years, living beings spend most of their time in other existences (bhava) with unimaginable suffering because of not seeing that "big picture" of the long rebirth process that spans not only human bhava but much worse bhava.
- When the human bhava ends and a "bad bhava" (for example an animal bhava) is grasped, that animal is NOT the preceding human. But it has a "cause and effect connection" to the previous human bhava. When in animal bhava, for example, that animal cannot even think about these issues; but it still has the perception of "me and mine." But that animal is totally helpless. That is anatta nature! This is the outcome of having the wrong view of "'This is mine, I am this, this is my self'." That is the meaning of the Pāli verse, "etaì mama, esohamasmi, eso me attā"" $t i$
- That change of bhava happens at the cuti-patisandhi moment, at the end of the human bhava. There could be many "deaths" of human bodies before that. For example, General Gordon and Jeffrey Keene in \#2 above were just two births ( $j \bar{a} t i$ ) within a single human existence (bhava.) That is the difference between bhava and $j \bar{a} t i$, in this context. See, "Bhava and Jāti-States of Existence and Births Therein."
- These are complex issues. The key is to get some traction, and then it will become easier.


### 2.29.2 Antarābhava Discussion in Kathāvatthu - Not Relevant to Gandhabba

December 16, 2020; revised December 17, 2020; July 16, 2022

## Antarābhava Was Discussed at the Third Buddhist Council

1. The concept of an antarābhava was discussed and rejected at the Third Buddhist Council. It is documented in the Kathāvatthu section of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka.

- Many current Theravādins say that the concept of an antarābhava is associated with gandhabba. They say that since antarābhava was rejected at that Council, the concept of a gandhabba was rejected.
- However, gandhabba was not even mentioned in that discussion at the Third Buddhist Council. I will fully translate and discuss the relevant sections of Kathāvatthu in this post to put this issue to rest.


## Antarābhava Discussion in Kathāvatthu

2. Many "heretical views" that were discussed and emphatically rejected by a group of Arahants at the Third Buddhist Council held in India at the time of Emperor Asoka. Ven. Moggaliputta Tissa recorded those discussions in the Kathāvatthu section of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka.

- The relevant section is "WebLink: suttacentral: Antarābhavakathā," and an incomplete English translation is there: "WebLink: suttacentral: Of an Intermediate State."
- For those who understand the Sinhala Language, a complete Sinhala translation is in the Buddha Jayanthi Tipitaka. See pp. 340-355 of "WebLink: PDF file: 48.OTAP_KathaVatthu_Prakarana 2-Sinhala."
- Here, we will translate some key verses, first providing the Pāli text and then a translation (with details as necessary.) Hopefully, anyone will understand what was rejected and not rejected (or even discussed.)


## Is Antarābhava Within the Three Major Existences?

3. At the beginning of the Pāli text, we can see that the wrong view about an "antarābhava" or an "intermediate state" was the following.

- Theravādins ask: "Atthi antarābhavoti? or "Is there an intermediate state?"
- The other side (heretics) says "Amant $\bar{a}$ " or "Yes."
- Theravādins ask: "Kāmabhavoti?" or "Is it in the kāma bhava?" and the answer is "Na hevaí vattabbe" or "That is not so."
- Similarly, the heretics say that this "intermediate state" in not in the rūpa bhava or the arūpa bhava.

However, all existences in this world MUST BE within one of those three major existences: kāma bhava, rūpa bhava, or arūpa bhava. Then each of those sub-divide into minor categories. For example, human bhava, and animal bhava are in the kāma bhava.

- But the heretics say that the "intermediate state" is not in any of the existences.


## Is Antarābhava In Between the Three Major Existences?

4. Theravādins ask: "Kāmabhavassa ca rūpabhavassa ca antare atthi antarābhavoti?" or "Does this intermediate state exist in between kāma bhava and rūpa bhava"?

- Heretics: No.
- Then the Theravādins declare "Hañci kāmabhavassa ca rūpabhavassa ca antare natthi antarābhavo, no ca vata re vattabbe-"atthi antarābhavo" ti" OR "If you affirm that there is no intermediate state between kāma bhava and rūpa bhava, then you cannot maintain your proposition."
- In the same way, the heretics admit that there is no intermediate state between rūpa bhava and arūpa bhava, and the Theravädins point out that the heretics' position is untenable.


## Antarābhava In Terms of Yoni, Gati, Viññāṇaṭthiti, Sattāvāsa

5. All living beings in this world belong to those three major types of bhava. Buddha explained all possible existences in this world in many other ways as well.

- All living beings can be categorized according to four types of yoni (modes of birth), gati (according to five major types of samंsāric habits), seven types of viñ̃̄̄ạnatthiti (stations of consciousness), and nine types of abodes (sattāvāsa.)
- The first two categories are discussed in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Mahāsīhanāda Sutta (MN 12)." The seven types of viññänatṭhiti discussed in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Sattaviññānatthi Sutta (AN 7.44)" and the nine types of satt $\bar{a} v \bar{a} s a$ in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Sattāvāsa Sutta (AN 9.24)"
- So, Theravādins ask: "Pañcamī sā yoni, chaṭthamī sā gati, aṭthamī sā viññānaṭṭhiti, dasamo so sattāvāsoti?" OR "Are there five types of yoni or six types of gati or eight types of viññānat!̣hiti or ten types of sattāvāsa?"
- Heretics admit that this antarābhava cannot be found under any of those categories.


## Does Antarābhava Fall Under Other Possible Categories?

6. There are many other ways of categorization discussed in that section "WebLink: suttacentral: Antarābhavakathā." However, the English translation there at Sutta Central is not complete.

- For those who understand the Sinhala Language, a complete Sinhala translation is in the Buddha Jayanthi Tipitaka per \#2 above.
- The point is that antarābhava cannot be found under ANY possible category that a living being can be put into.
- This post would be very long if I translated the whole section. However, let us look at one more important category.


## Does a Being in Antarābhava Have Pañcakkhandha (Five Aggregates)?

7. Theravādins ask: "kāmabhave/rūpabhave/arūpabhave atthi rūpaí vedanā sañña sañkhārā viññānanti?" OR "Do the five aggregates exist in kāma bhava, rūpa bhava and in arūpa bhava?"

- Heretics: "A$\overline{\text { mant }} \bar{a} "$ OR "Yes." As they agreed, the five aggregates are associated with a living-being in ANY bhava.
- Theravādins ask: "Antarābhave atthi rūpaì vedanā saññ̄à sañkhārā viññānanti? OR "Do the five aggregates exist in antarābhava?"
- Heretics: "Na hevaim vattabbe.." OR "That cannot be said."
- Here, the heretics admit that a being in antarābhava cannot be described in terms of the five aggregates!


## No Basis for the Claim of an Antarābhava

8. Therefore, it was shown without any doubt that the concept of an antarābhava does not fit into Buddha Dhamma.

- However, there was absolutely no connection made to the concept of gandhabba.
- Anyone can read the Pāli text in "WebLink: suttacentral: Antarābhavakathā" and see that the word gandhabba is not even mentioned.


## Antaräbhava Concept of Those Heretics Is Not The Same as Gandhabba

9. If the term gandhabba did not even come up in the discussion on antarābhava at the Third Buddhist Council, why do SOME present-day Theravādins say that the concept of gandhabba was rejected at that Council? The simple answer is that they may not have even read the text in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Antarābhavakathā" section of the Tipitaka!

- I have heard many bhikkhus just repeat what they heard from someone else, that the gandhabba state is a Mahāyāna concept, and it refers to an "intermediate state" or "antarābhava." They don't even try to verify that by looking up the Tipitaka.
- They may misunderstand that a human "bhava" starts with a human's birth (as a baby from a mother's womb) and that it ends when that physical body dies.
- That is a VERY BAD wrong view!
- Let us consider the following evidence against that false belief.


## Do "Human Bhava" Last Only 100 Years and "Fly Bhava" Last Only Several Days?

10. We know that a "dense body" of a human lasts for about 100 years, and a housefly lives only for several days. But that time is only a small fraction of the lifetime of the corresponding gandhabba! Whether a human or a housefly, it will be in that existence or bhava (as a human or a fly) for many thousands of years.

- As we know, the Buddha has emphasized strongly that it is VERY DIFFICULT to get a human existence (bhava.) See "Rebirth - Connection to Suffering in the First Noble Truth."
- On the other hand, many rebirth accounts from children worldwide show that they had been born with human bodies only several years previously! See "Antarābhava - No Connection to Gandhabba."
- Those previous births were within the same human bhava. It was the same human gandhabba that led to both those human births.

11. When the dense physical body of a human dies, that is not necessarily the end of the "human bhava." Unless the kammic energy of that human gandhabba is exhausted, gandhabba will stay alive. It will be pulled into another suitable womb at a later time. In between adjacent "births with human bodies," human existence continues in the gandhabba state.

- That gandhabba state is NOT an "antarābhava." It is IN "human bhava." A human gandhabba is human and has five aggregates. A subtle $r \bar{u} p a$ (invisible to us) associated with that gandhabba with a hadaya vatthu (seat of the mind) and five pasāda rūpa. It can think. It cannot touch, smell, or taste, but can see and hear. See "Ghost 1990 Movie - Good Depiction of Gandhabba Concept."

Similarly, when a fly dies, it will stay in that existence as a "fly gandhabba" and get into an egg to form another fly. That process will occur uncountable times for a fly before that "fly existence" ends!

- When a fly dies, it will stay as a "fly gandhabba" until it is pulled into an egg to start making another "dense fly body."


## Human (or Animal) Bhava (Existence) Can Last Thousands of Years

12. The four types of yoni (modes of births) mentioned in \#5 above are the following: Aṇ̣aja (egg born), jalābuj $\bar{a}$ (womb born), saimsedajā (typically translated as "moisture born" but has a better explanation), and opapātika (instantaneous birth).

- However, when a transition from one bhava to another (say, from human bhava to an animal bhava) takes place, only an opapātik $\bar{a}$ birth occurs where a NEW mental body (manomaya $k \bar{a} y a$ ) is generated by kammic energy.
- In many realms - including all 20 Brahma realms - that opapātika birth spans the whole bhava. They are born one time with a subtle (invisible to us) "mental body" (with a trace of matter), and that is all they have.
- However, in the human and animal realms, that "mental body" will get into a womb or an egg (in animals), leading to a physical body's birth. Those are conventionally called births ( $j \bar{a} t i$ ) within those two bhava. That "mental body" in the human or animal realms is given a special name of gandhabba.
- Those womb-based and egg-based births are two types of "births" mentioned above: aṇdajā and jalābujā, respectively. In some instances, the chemical composition needed to make the "seed" (for example, an animal's egg) forms in natural processes, and that is the fourth type, i.e., samsedaja birth.

13. As mentioned above, Brahmas and Devas do not go through the gandhabba state. They are born instantaneously (opapātika birth) and live for very long times (their whole life in that state.) Brahmas' subtle 'bodies" are very similar to humans' or animals' mental bodies (gandhabba state). See "Body Types in 31 Realms - Importance of Manomaya Kaya."

- It is mostly in the human and animal realms that first, a subtle manomaya kaya is born instantaneously, followed by the arising of dense physical bodies with one of the other three possibilities.
- We have discussed the birth of a human baby in "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception." Many such "births with physical bodies" can take place within a single human bhava.
- Now let us briefly discuss a few associated issues/conventions/terminology.


## Sometimes Gandhabba State Referred to as Paṭisandhi Viññāna

14. The "descend" of that pațisandhi viññāna to a womb is discussed in several suttas, including "WebLink: suttacentral: Assalāyana Sutta (MN 93)" where the term "gandhabba" is specifically used: "Jānāma mayam், bho-yathā gabbhassa avakkanti hoti. Idha mātāpitaro ca sannipatitā honti, mātā ca utunī hoti, gandhabbo ca paccupaṭthito hoti; evaì tiṇnaì sannipātā gabbhassa avakkanti hotī'ti."

Translated: "We do know that, sir. An embryo is conceived when these three things come togethercopulation of the mother and father, the mother is in the fertile part of her menstrual cycle, and the presence of a gandhabba." This is explained in detail in "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception."

- But in some other suttas, Such as "WebLink: suttacentral: Mahānidāna Sutta (DN 15)" the gandhabba is also referred to as patisandhi viññana. in some cases. That is because that manomaya $k \bar{a} y a$ is created by the kammic energy associated with a patisandhi viñ̃āṇa.
- For details, see "Gandhabba State - Evidence from Tipitaka."


## Other Use of the Name "Gandhabba"

15. There is a class of Devas called "gandhabba"; see, "WebLink: suttacentral: Suddhika Sutta (SN 31.1)" and the following many suttas in SN 31 (Gandhabba Vagga.) There are numerous types of Devas (in lower Deva realms) who intake (abba) odors of various plants and flowers (gandha), and thus that name. "WebLink: suttacentral: Mahāsamaya Sutta (DN 20)" identifies Dhataratṭha, King of the East is identified as "Chief of the Gandhabba Devas."

- There is also a group of petas with the name "gandhabba." They inhale "foul odors."
- To add to that, human gandhabbas are sometimes referred to as "tirokuḍda" or "tirokutta" because they can go through walls. See "WebLink: suttacentral: Tirokutta Sutta (Kp7)."
- Understanding the Tipitaka requires checking for inter-consistencies with a good understanding of underlying concepts and terminology usage.
- The word "right" can mean two different things "turn right" and "you are right." Similarly, the word "gandhabba" must be understood in a particular situation.


### 2.2.9.3 How Do We See? - Role of the Gandhabba

December 22, 2020; revised December 23, 2020; April 14, 2022 (Ref. 4 added among other revisions); September 21, 2022; September 22, 2022

The question "How do we see?" remains unanswered by science. The short post by the National Eye Institute, "WebLink: nei.nih.gov: How the Eyes Work," concludes: "These electrical signals travel from the retina through the optic nerve to the brain. Then the brain turns the signals into the images you see." That does not explain the important part, the EXPERIENCE.

## How Do We See?

1. Let us systematically see what happens when we "see" a tree. Please don't just read through, but stop and think about each point.

- Light reflected off the tree falls on our eyes and forms an image of that tree on the retina. As you can imagine, that image is tiny. That image then goes to the brain through a nerve in terms of a chemical/electrical signal.
- Scientists are stuck on what happens next: How does the brain "SEE" the tree using that chemica/electrical signal?
- Furthermore, we "see" that tree in great detail: leaves, individual flowers, fruits, etc. How is that possible? The images that land on the back of the eyes are TINY.
- Someone who has thought a lot about this issue is Jeff Hawkins, who is actively engaged in artificial intelligence (AI). In his book, "On Intelligence," he discusses current scientific knowledge on vision and other sensory inputs (Ref. 1.)


## Jeff Hawkins's Book "On Intelligence"

2. Starting on p. 55 of his book, Hawkins discusses how the image that falls on the back of the eye gets to the brain: "But let's take a closer look. Visual information from the outside world is sent to your brain via a million fibers in your optic nerve. .".

- "You can visualize these inputs as a bundle of electrical wires or a bundle of optical fibers.." he writes, "The inputs to the brain are like those fibers, but they are called axons, and they carry neural signals called "action potentials" or "spikes," which are partly chemical and partly electrical..".
- As discussed in that book, visual signals and all sensory inputs (sounds, taste, smell, and body touch) to the brain are similar. You hear a sound, see the light, and feel pressure, but there isn't any fundamental difference among these neural signals inside your brain. An action potential is an action potential.
- Scientists have not figured out how the brain distinguishes those different types of signals. Moreover, they have no idea how the mind "sees the light" or an image of that tree. Same for the other senses.
- They will never figure that out because it is NOT the brain that "SEES." It is the "hadaya vatthu" (seat of the mind") on the "mental body" (gandhabba) that feels the "seeing sensation." Of course, "gandhabba" is an "energy body" trapped inside the physical body. It can come out sometimes, especially during heart operations (Google 'Near-Death Experiences.")


## How Are Electrical/Chemical Signals Sensed or Experienced?

3. To quote more from that book (p. 56): "Your perceptions and knowledge about the world are built from these patterns. There is no light inside your head. It is dark in there. There is no sound entering your brain either; it is quiet inside. The brain is the only part of your body that has no senses itself. A surgeon could stick a finger into your brain, and you would not feel it. All the information that enters your mind comes in as spatial and temporal patterns on the axons."

- It is a mystery to science how the mind differentiates those chemical and electrical signals from the brain as vision, sound, taste, smell, and touch.
- For example, how do "pictures" materialize from those chemical and electrical signals? How does another set of signals lead to the sensation of sound?
- These are kammic effects that are not amenable to our minds. How kamma vipāka leads to various effects (including sight, hearing, etc.) is one of the four things that are unthinkable/incomprehensible to us and only comprehensible to a Buddha: "WebLink: suttacentral: Acinteyya Sutta (AN 4.77)."


## All Existing Scientific Theories Are Speculations

4. Scientists are trying to solve this puzzle by looking for answers in the brain. They have come to the end of the line here.

- Jeff Hawkins wrote that book in 2004. He posted the video in Ref. 2 (which discusses the brain) in 2006. He and many other scientists have done much work since that time. Yet they have made NO PROGRESS on the vital issue of "how those sensory events are EXPERIENCED."
- There are, of course, many THEORIES on that connection. For example, some have suggested that consciousness (EXPERIENCE) arises in brain nerve cells; see Ref. 3. However, plants also have microtubules. But plants, of course, cannot think.
- No matter how much they try, scientists WILL NOT be able to find a way to say that mental phenomena can arise in inert matter.
- Before discussing Buddha's description, let us review some relevant findings from recent scientific studies.


## Tiny Oak Seed Has the Blueprint for an Oak Tree

5. A tiny oak seed has the blueprint for the giant oak tree. That seed extracts necessary "materials" from the soil and "builds" that tree! Think about how complex that process is, i.e., oak seed giving rise to an oak tree!

## WebLink: youtube: Acorn to oak tree time-lapse

- The video does not show the latter stages of growing into a giant oak tree over many years.
- As we can see, all necessary "materials for the tree" come from the soil. The seed only has the blueprint for the tree!


## Gandhabba Has the "Blueprint" or the "Master Plan" for a Human Body

6. A baby's growth inside a womb (and then outside the womb) is not different from a seed growing into a tree.

- The zygote (formed by an egg from the mother and sperm from the father) is not different from a seed.
- The MAJOR difference is that a human can THINK, and a tree cannot.
- The THINIKING part in a human comes from the gandhabba! We discussed these details in the posts "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception" and "Cloning and Gandhabba."
- If you want to skip those two posts, you can read the Pāli and English translations of "WebLink: suttacentral: Mahātanhāsanikhaya Sutta (MN 38)" See Ref. 4 for the quote.
- Let us discuss another piece of evidence from recent scientific findings.


## Vision Is Not Continuous

7. Vision or "seeing" appears to us as continuous. We see people moving around, vehicles moving, animals running around, etc. However, "seeing" happens due to a series of "snapshots" our physical eyes take. Those chemical and electrical signals mentioned above come in packets of about 10 -millisecond duration.

- As an example, let us take the case of seeing a tree. The eyes send a series of "data packets" (chemical and electrical signals per \#2, \#3 above) to the brain. It is NOT a continuous stream of data that arrives via the optic nerve in the brain. The signal comes in "packets." Similar "data packets" come in from the other four physical senses. They are processed (in parallel) by the brain.
- Recent scientific studies show that a human needs at least $10-20$ milliseconds ( 1000 milliseconds $=1$ second) to look at the picture to recognize it. Similarly, a "sound packet" of about 30 milliseconds can be detected and identified. Thus, the brain processes sensory data in packets of about 10-30 millisecond duration.
- Some of those processes may happen in parallel in different brain regions. Further details in "Vision Is a Series of "Snapshots" - Movie Analogy." It is essential to read this post if one needs to understand Buddha's explanation fully.
- However, scientists have no idea how those "data packets" lead to seeing, hearing, etc. (actual sensory experiences)!
- Now we can start discussing Buddha's explanation.


## Sense Experience Happens in the "Mental Body" (Gandhabba)

8. Actual "seeing" (and hearing, smelling, etc.) goes on at the hadaya vatthu located in the gandhabba or the mental body. That is the critical point.

- In the case of "seeing a tree," the brain processes the data received from the eyes to a level that scientists CAN NOT probe. They are reduced (or "broken down") to the suddhatthaka level below the elementary particle level reached by scientists. At that stage, that signal gets transmitted through the mental body of the gandhabba to hadaya vatthu. That is where the sensory experience takes place!
- As discussed in \#7, the brain takes about 10-30 milliseconds to PROCESS data from each sense door. For example, when we are watching a movie, the brain needs to work non-stop to analyze visual and sound data for the movie's duration. That strains the brain, so it is impossible to watch more than one movie at a time without ending up with a headache.
- The brain consumes about $25 \%$ of the energy intake for the whole body!
- Such details could not be transmitted in the Tipitaka. Furthermore, during Buddha's days, people knew nothing about the brain. The Buddha could not provide this kind of detail at that time. We will discuss that in the next post.


## Science Will Never be Able to Create "Artificial Life" or "Artificial Intelligence"

9. That is also why science will NEVER be able to succeed in AI (Artificial Intelligence.) Note that AI differs from making efficient robots, which are purely mechanical. They can't THINK!

- Note that "artificial insemination" is not creating a new life. Scientists use DNA from humans (or animals) to form a zygote. That is not any different from a zygote produced in a womb. See "Cloning and Gandhabba."
- The bottom line is the following: Without a human gandhabba, sensory experience is not possible. The physical body is just a shell.
- That gandhabba can be created ONLY by kammic energy, based on a previous strong kamma (deed.) The laws of kamma work automatically. It is a natural process, like an oak seed giving rise to an oak tree.


## The difference Between a "Live Human" and a "Dead Body" Is Gandhabba

10. The gandhabbā is like a delicate mesh (or an "energy field") overlapping the physical body, with the hadaya vatthu located close to the physical heart. That is what gives life to the physical body.

- At the physical body's death, fine gandhabbā comes out of the physical body like a ghost. It is so fine that we cannot see it. But we all know that a body can be alive one second and become inert (like a piece of wood) at death.
- Have you touched a dead body (human or animal)? Touching it, you can immediately sense the difference between a dead body and a live person/animal.
- At death, the body starts to get cold as soon as the gandhabba comes out permanently from that body. The "life force" is no longer there! That life force is the gandhabba or the "mental body"!


## Transfer of Data from the Brain to Pasāda Rūpa/Hadaya Vatthu

11. Another critical point is that in the "energy body" of the gandhabbā, there are five "pasāda rūpa" located around the hadaya vatthu: cakkhu, sota, ghāna, jivhā, and kāya, that correspond to seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touch. Those 'sensing units" overlap the physical heart located far from the brain. Scientists will never be able to solve the problem just by analyzing brain processes!

- We have discussed related essential concepts in the sub-section, "Brain and the Gandhabba." As I remind you frequently, it takes a real effort to understand these concepts. With this post, we are going back to continue that discussion.
- The brain is like a sophisticated computer that analyzes those chemical and electrical signals discussed above in \#2 and \#3.
- It converts those chemicalelectrical signals to a form that the "hadaya vatthu" can "understand." That is where the "magic of seeing sensation" takes place.
- That transfer of "information" from the brain to pasāda rūpa around the hadaya vatthu happens in the "energy-body" of the gandhabba that overlaps the physical body.


## Only a Buddha Can Figure Out the Complex Connection Between Mind and Matter

12. That is what the Buddha taught 2500 years ago. Until scientists accept that mind and matter are two different entities, they will not proceed too far from where they are now. Of course, I have tried to express those ideas in terms of current terminology as much as possible.

- The ultimate realities of this world are citta, cetasika, and rūpa. Thoughts encompass citta and cetasika. They are in a separate category from rūpa. Citta and cetasika CANNOT arise out of rūpa! Stop and contemplate on that. That is why Abhidhamma is important.
- Someone who has studied Paṭicca Samuppāda (PS) may realize that it starts with sañkhāra (ALL mental) generated due to avijja. The PS cycle ends with the $j \bar{a} t i$ (birth) of an entity with the matter.
- The "connection" between mind and matter is "defiled consciousness" (or kamma viñ $\tilde{a} \bar{n} n a$ ), and viññāna arises ONLY in a hadaya vatthu (seat of the mind) in a gandhabba created ONLY by kammic energy.

13. That is a fascinating account amenable to inquiring minds. It is NECESSARY to live a moral life and be willing to "listen to reason." As the Buddha warned, not everyone can understand the profound Dhamma. It takes effort and faith (built on one's own experiences.)

- In upcoming posts, we will discuss the deep connection between mind and matter in detail. But you can find the key points in "The Origin of Matter - Suddhatthaka."
- Of course, many details in this post are not available in that form in the Tipitaka. That holds for many of my posts on gandhabba.
- However, those descriptions are fully compatible with the Tipitaka. I will discuss that In the next post.


## References

## 1. Jeff Hawkins, "On Intelligence" (2004).

2. WebLink: youtube: Jeff Hawkins: "How brain science will change computing."
3. "Can Quantum Physics Explain Consciousness? One Scientist Thinks It Might."
4. Following is the English translation of the critical passage at Sutta Central: "Mendicants, when three things come together an embryo is conceived. (Tiṇnaim kho pana, bhikkhave, sannipātā gabbhassāvakkanti hoti.)

In a case where the mother and father come together, but the mother is not in the fertile part of her menstrual cycle, and the spirit being reborn is not present, the embryo is not conceived. (Idha mātāpitaro ca sannipatitā honti, mātā ca na utun̄̄ hoti, gandhabbo ca na paccupaṭhito hoti, neva tāva gabbhassāvakkanti hoti.)

In a case where the mother and father come together, the mother is in the fertile part of her menstrual cycle, but the spirit being reborn is not present, and the embryo is not conceived. (Idha mātāpitaro ca sannipatitā honti, mātā ca utun̄̄ hoti, gandhabbo ca na paccupaṭthito hoti, neva tāva gabbhassāvakkanti hoti.)

But when these three things come together-the mother and father come together, the mother is in the fertile part of her menstrual cycle, and the spirit being reborn is present - an embryo is conceived. (Yato ca kho, bhikkhave, mātāpitaro ca sannipatitā honti, mātā ca utunī hoti, gandhabbo ca paccupaṭ!hito hoti-evaì tiṇnaì sannipātā gabbhassāvakkanti hoti.)

- Note that the translator has translated "gandhabbo" as "spirit." It is not a "spirit" as a "ghost." It is the "mental body," or the essence of the human being born! How come people don't ask that translator what that "spirit is"? This is why Buddha Dhamma has been hidden for all these years.
2.2.9.4 Interpretation of the Tipitaka - Gandhabba Example

December 30, 2020; revised January 7, 2021 (added \#12); re-written September 1, 2022
Interpretation of the Tipitaka requires much more than translating suttas word by word.

## Interpretation of the Tipitaka

1. The following issues are both important and relevant.
2. I need to ensure that I do not distort the teachings of the Buddha. That means I need to provide relevant CRITICAL passages in the Tipitaka when I discuss a subject.
3. However, the Sutta Piṭaka of the Tipiṭaka does not provide details on some aspects. Those details come in the Abhidhamma Pitaka and the three original commentaries in the Tipitaka. But still, it requires a $j \bar{a} t i$ Sotāpanna like Waharaka Thero to provide detailed explanations.
4. Lastly, we are lucky to live in a time where more details, for example, about the brain, are available from modern science. The Buddha could not explain the role of the brain because people knew nothing about the brain then. Further supporting evidence on related subjects is now widely available via the internet (examples are Evidence for Rebirth Accounts and Near-Death-Experiences or NDE.)

Depending on the topic, I have used one or more of the above three to write posts. Let me explain by discussing my approach to writing posts on the gandhabba (manomaya kāya,) where I utilized all three of the above.

## Details on the Gandhabba Concept

2. Many details about the manomaya kāya (gandhabba) are unavailable in the Tipitaka. However, there is enough essential evidence: "Gandhabba State - Evidence from Tipitaka." That is my posts' first layer.

- We have lost all of the Sinhala Atthakath $\bar{a}$ (early commentaries.) However, even if we had them, they would not provide details regarding the brain. Most of our knowledge about the brain is from modern science within the past 100 years or so.
- The Buddha only mentioned the brain as part of the body's 32 parts (Pāli word is matthalunga.) See "WebLink: suttacentral: Dvattimsākāra." I have not seen any details on the functions of the brain in the Tipitaka.
[Atthi imasmim kāye-
Kesā lomā nakhā dantā taco, maísamं nhāru aṭthi aṭthimiñjaí vakkamं, hadayamं yakanamं
 semham pubbo lohitaì sedo medo, assu vasā khelo siñghānikā lasikā muttanti.
Dvattiminākāraì.
There are in this body:
hairs of the head, body hairs, nails, teeth, skin; flesh, sinews, bones, bone-marrow, kidneys; heart, liver, pleura, spleen, lungs; intestines, mesentery, undigested food, excrement, the brain in the head; bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat; tears, grease, spit, mucus, synovial fluid, and urine.
The Thirty Two Fold Nature.]

3. When a jāti Sotāpanna like Waharaka Thero (who had attained the Sotāpanna stage in a previous life) is born, we learn important details. Furthermore, not all jāti Sotāpannas can provide such information either. One needs to have Pațisambhidā Ñạna to be able to grasp AND explain concepts in detail to others. Therefore, my posts' second layer of more information comes from Waharaka Thero's discourses.

- The third layer is due to two sources: First, recent scientific findings on many subjects like the brain, living cells, etc., provide corroborating evidence. For example, I have used such information in the "Origin of Life" series.
- Thanks to the internet, many rebirth accounts, Near-Death Experiences, Out-of-Body Experiences, etc., are now available to anyone. Those also provide invaluable supporting material to complex subjects discussed, including the gandhabba concept.
- Those two resources are the thirdl layer.
- The Buddha advised in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Aranavibhañga Sutta (MN 139)" that the main task of a bhikkhu (or a lay disciple) is to explain in detail the ideas embedded in the Tipitaka without distorting key concepts. I am responsible for ensuring that EVERYTHING is consistent with the first layer or the Tipiṭaka. That is why I welcome comments on any apparent inconsistencies.


## Gandhabba ("Mental Body") Is Primary, and the Physical Body Is Secondary

4. The role of the manomaya kaya is critical. The physical body is just a shell. It dies in about 100 years. The manomaya kāya (gandhabba) may live for thousands of years in the human bhava. See, "Antarābhava Discussion in Kathāvatthu - Not Relevant to Gandhabba."

- A fly lives only about a week. But "fly bhava" (or the existence of a fly) may last many thousands of years. Therefore, between births (as a "visible fly"), that fly would have the gandhabba or the manomaya kāya.
- As we discussed, the specific term gandhabba is used mainly for the manomaya kāya of humans and animals. But living beings in almost all 31 realms are born with a manomaya kāya. Brahmas in 20 realms have only the manomaya kāya.
- Thus, the manomaya kāya (mental body) is primary, and the physical body is secondary.


## Importance of the Commentaries

5. The Tipitaka was meant to be used with the commentaries. Also, knowledgeable bhikkhus or lay disciples were supposed to explain key concepts in detail. Many Pāli suttā require detailed explanations. See, "Sutta Interpretation - Uddesa, Niddesa, Patiniddesa."

- Most early Sinhala commentaries disappeared in the Anurādhapura era; see "Incorrect Theravāda Interpretations - Historical Timeline. "
- Fortunately, three original commentaries provided by the Buddha's foremost disciples (Ven. Sāriputta, Ven. Kaccāyana, etc.) during the Buddha's time have been included in the Tipitaka (in the Khuddaka Nikāya) and have survived.
- The current revival of pure Dhamma by Waharaka Thero in Sri Lanka is partially due to his perusal of these three commentaries of Paṭisambhidāmagga, Peṭakopadesa, and Nettippakaraṇa.
- Even those three commentaries are somewhat condensed. Waharaka Thero was able to expand on those concepts in detail. He provided the basic model of the manomaya kaya (gandhabba) with hadaya vatthu and five pasāda rūpa. The terms hadaya vatthu and pasāda rūpa appear only briefly in the Tipiṭaka (mostly in the Abhidhamma Piṭaka.) I have expanded that model using current scientific findings on the brain. Numerous posts are throughout the website: "WebLink: PureDhamma: Search Results for gandhabba."


## Gandhabba Model - Role of the Brain

6. Waharaka Thero provided the basic model where the brain processes incoming information from the eyes, ears, etc., passing those processed signals to hadaya vatthu via the complex manomaya kāya of the gandhabba.

- Just as the nervous system connects the brain to the other parts of the physical body via the nervous system, gandhabba's body has a "ray-like" (or electromagnetic) system that connects the brain to hadaya vatthu/pasāda rūpa. It can quickly pass information generated in the brain to the hadaya vatthulpasāda rūpa.
- That model is very much consistent with recent findings in science. I have referred to such recent scientific discoveries in my posts. See, for example, "Brain - Interface between Mind and Body," and the posts referred to there.
- I realize that many people have a hard time visualizing the gandhabba concept. They may want to reread the post." Ghost 1990 Movie - Good Depiction of Gandhabba Concept," which I recently revised; see especially \#1 there.


## Brain Analyzing "Data Packets"

7. In several posts, I have utilized recent scientific findings on the brain to explain our sensory experience. I hope such explanations provide a way to visualize the sensory recognition process easier. Such posts include "How Do We See? - Role of the Gandhabba" and "Vision Is a Series of "Snapshots" - Movie Analogy."

- Also, consistent evidence has been accumulating in several areas, including rebirth accounts, Near-Death Experiences (NDE), and Out-of-Body Experiences (OBE); see "Evidence for Rebirth," "Origin of Life" and "Buddha Dhamma - A Scientific Approach."
- Hopefully, both developments will help more people understand Buddha's teachings.
- In the days of the Buddha, people accepted Buddha's explanations without such detailed explanations. That society was vastly different from the "materialistic society" of today, where recent scientific and technological advances have given a dominant platform to "materialism."
- That is why many people have a deeply embedded wrong view that the "physical body" is all there is and that mental aspects (thoughts) arise in the brain.


## Scientific Knowledge Is Limited

8. Even a few hundred years ago, science had many issues of conflict with Buddha Dhamma on even the "material world." Of course, science is far behind in understanding "mental aspects" like consciousness, feelings, perceptions, etc.

- However, science has made much progress, resolving several significant inconsistencies about the universe's material aspects.
- For example, just 400 years ago, "science" believed in the geocentric model of the universe, i.e., Earth was the center of the universe, with stars embedded in a celestial sphere far above. See: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geocentric_model
- At that time, science and religion tried to attune their beliefs to that model. Most religions still adhere to those concepts; see the same Wikipedia article above.
- But 2500 years ago, the Buddha described our Solar system as a "Cakkavāla" or a planetary system. Not only that, but he also said there are uncountable such systems in the universe. He was well ahead of science because he had discovered the ultimate truths about this world.
- Here is a video from Carl Sagan to get an idea of how vast our "detectable universe" is:

WebLink: youtube: Humility - Carl Sagan

## Scientific Knowledge Is Expanding

9. Through the years, and mainly since the beginning of the 20th century, science has "re-discovered" some aspects of the Buddha's more expansive world, including the existence of billions of galaxies, EACH OF WHICH contains billions of planetary systems like our Solar system.

- But someone living in the 19th century is likely to have ridiculed the idea of innumerable planetary systems (cakkavāla) and could have said, "where is the evidence from science?". That aspect of Buddha Dhamma was not amenable to "science" at that time.
- Like that, many aspects of Buddha's Dhamma are not amenable to science at the current time. But science will accept more of the concepts in Buddha Dhamma with time.
- Details in "Buddhism - Consistencies with Science" and "Buddhism - Inconsistencies with Science."


## My Explanations of the Gandhabba Are Consistent With the Tipiṭaka

10. The detailed descriptions that I have provided on the workings of the gandhabba are not in the Tipitaka. The Buddha could not have offered such explanations when oridinary people were naware of the brain's functions.

- However, those descriptions are entirely CONSISTENT with the contents in the Tipitaka. Furthermore, they are also consistent with current scientific knowledge.
- Despite their intense efforts, scientists have reached an impasse in explaining how consciousness (and feelings like joy and sadness) can arise in the brain. See the post, "How Do We See? - Role of the Gandhabba." The pure materialistic model of science WILL NOT be able to explain such mental phenomena as consciousness, feelings, perceptions, etc.
- The main point of that previous post was that such mental phenomena CANNOT arise without a mental body (or manomaya kāya or gandhabba.) Reviewing the post Brain - Interface between Mind and Body is a good idea to understand the relationship between the brain and gandhabba. Other pertinent issues relevant to gandhabba are in "Antarābhava and Gandhabba."


## Summary

11. Interpreting the Tipitaka requires more than translating suttā word-by-word (which is a terrible way to teach Buddha Dhamma.) See "Word-for-Word Translation of the Tipitaka." More problems with current explanations in the "Elephants in the Room" section.

- One needs to explain concepts in a way that the audience can understand.
- When one COMBINES information from Tipitaka AND other resources such as modern science, one can better understand certain complex concepts.
- That statement holds for many posts on this website but is particularly true in the sections "Buddha Dhamma - A Scientific Approach" and "Origin of Life."

12. This post concludes the section on "Buddha Dhamma - A Scientific Approach." The main point was to illustrate that the manomaya $k \bar{a} y a$ is of utmost importance. In human and animal bhava, that manomaya kāya has a unique name gandhabba.

- That manomaya kāya is just a trace of energy, but it can sustain a whole existence. Just as an oak seed has the blueprint for a giant oak tree, that bit of energy is all that is needed to maintain our dense physical bodies. See \#5 of "How Do We See? - Role of the Gandhabba."
- Kammic energy sustains the manomaya kāya. The food we eat grows and supports our physical bodies.

13. All posts in the "Buddha Dhamma - A Scientific Approach" section.

### 2.3 Buddhahood Associated Controversies

July 9, 2020
Buddhahood Controversies - Introduction
Pātihāriya (Supernormal Abilities) of a Buddha - Part I
Pātihāriya (Supernormal Abilities) of a Buddha - Part II

### 2.3.1 Buddhahood Controversies - Introduction

July 9, 2020; revised August 6, 2022

## Overview

1. Buddhahood is a term that remains mired in controversy. In upcoming posts in this section, I will discuss three topics that have intrigued many people over the years. That will help cultivate faith in the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sañgha.
2. The wisdom and capabilities of a Buddha. We will clarify the implications of the three types of knowledge of a Buddha mentioned in \#8 below.
3. Current scientific knowledge is compatible with most of the "supernormal capabilities" of a Buddha. Scientists have not taken the time to do an in-depth analysis. Of course, most scientists do not know enough about Buddha Dhamma (or physics) to do such an analysis.
4. We will also discuss how the teachings of the previous Buddha (Buddha Kassapa) were transmitted as Vedic teachings in distorted form. That is why there are so many common terms in Buddhism and Hinduism, like kamma (karma), jhāna (dhyāna), and even Pațicca Samuppāda (Pratītyasamutpāda.) Of course, Buddha's Ānāpānasati meditation was misinterpreted as "breath meditation." All those concepts were there (just like now) at the time of the birth of Prince Siddhattha. We will discuss Tipitaka accounts where the Buddha pointed that out.

It is easier for an average human to grasp the mundane meanings (and difficult to grasp the deeper meanings.) That is why those mundane explanations periodically come up disguised as Buddhist teachings.

## Buddha Is a Title

2. Buddha is a title. Buddha is a human who becomes "Enlightened" or attains the Buddhahood. However, It is necessary to understand his teachings to a higher level to figure out the meaning of the word "Buddha."

- A Buddha has the "perfect mind." With a perfect mind, a Buddha knows everything about the world. Even though he lived more than 2500 years ago, he described the universe much as scientists found out within the past 100 years. And he provided many more details about our world (much more than the scientists) as we will discuss.
- One is not born a Buddha. The Buddhahood is attained or achieved. There have been many Buddhā in the past, and there will be many in the future. For example, the Buddha we are discussing now is Buddha Gotama. Buddha Kassapa immediately before him (a long time ago) and the next Buddha will be Buddha Maitreya.
- It is a rare occurrence to have a Buddha in the world. Sometimes, billions of years can go by without a Buddha. See \#14 of "Pāramitā and Niyata Vivarana - Myths or Realities?"
- Before we get into the knowledge of a Buddha, let us discuss some basic facts about Buddha Gotama.


## Prince Siddhattha

3. Buddha Gotama was born with the name of Siddhattha (Siddhārtha in Sinhala or Sanskrit), and his parents were Suddhodana and Mahā Māyā. Suddhodana was a king, and Prince Siddhattha was brought up in luxury. For example, in the WebLink: suttacentral: Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta (DN 10), the Buddha says that he had four palaces for the four seasons. An English translation of "WebLink: suttacentral: The Great Discourse on the Buddha's Extinguishment."

- Scattered throughout many suttā in the Dīgha Nikāya and Majjhima Nikāya are accounts of various stages of the life of the Buddha (before and after Enlightenment.) I will refer to a few below. It is a good idea to read them. Most translations are good enough, especially regarding such life accounts. Only when deep Dhamma concepts are discussed is one need to be careful about the correctness of the translation.
- For example, a brief account of Prince Siddhattha's life can be found in "WebLink: henri-van-zeyst: Basic Buddhist Concepts." More details - extracted from the Tipiṭaka - in "WebLink: accesstoinsightorrg: A Sketch of the Buddha's Life - Readings from the Pāli Canon."
- At the age of sixteen, Prince Siddhattha married princess Yasodhara. They were happily married for thirteen years and had a son, Rāhula. Yet, Prince Siddhattha was not satisfied. He felt a "discontent" or "dissatisfaction" lingering even while immersed in a luxurious life.
- We will briefly go through a series of events that led to a drastic change in Prince Siddhattha. Those four events are the Four Great Omens.


## Four Great Omens

4. On his rare visits outside the palaces, Prince Siddhattha saw an old person one day. He had never seen an old person. His faithful companion, Channa, explained that everyone gets old.

- On a subsequent visit, he saw a sick person and learned that everyone becomes sick. On the third visit, he saw a dead body and was told he would die one day too. Those three encounters made him think deeply about life, and his discontent with life grew steadily.
- On a subsequent fourth visit outside the palace, the prince saw a recluse, a spiritual seeker, and his calm demeanor intrigued the prince. Channa explained to him that there were many recluses like that. They were discontent with life and were searching for a solution to the universal problems associated with life. Those are sicknesses, getting old, and dying.
- As we note below, people at the time of the Buddha were familiar with the concepts of rebirth. Therefore, they knew about the "cycle of suffering in the rebirth process."
- With the sight of the recluse, prince Siddhattha realized that he would also need to give up the lay life and pursue the path to end that suffering associated with the perpetual cycle of birth, old age, sicknesses, and death. One dies only to be reborn to go through the same cycle!


## Influence of Teachings of Buddha Kassapa

5. Remnants of the teachings of the Buddha Kassapa from the deep past had come down through Vedic teachings. This is a critical point. As we will see later, the Buddha explained that only the mundane interpretations of Buddha Kassapa's teachings had survived.

- For example, people at that time were quite familiar with the laws of kamma, the rebirth process, five (or eight) precepts, and even Nibbāna. However, Vedic brahmins had used the Sanskrit language to transmit those teachings and used the Sanskrit words karma and nirvāna for the Pāli words kamma and Nibbāna.
- In another example, per Tipiṭaka, queen Mahā Māyā had regularly observed eight precepts.
- That is also why so many recluses were trying to figure out the way to Nibbāna (nirvāna), freedom from suffering in the rebirth process. Some thought that cultivating jhāna and getting rebirth in a Brahma realm is nirvāna (or end of suffering.) We will discuss that in the next post.


## Renunciation - Becoming a Recluse

6. Shortly after seeing the recluse, Prince Siddhattha left the palace in the middle of the night. Channa led him out on his horse Kanthaka. The prince cut his hair and put on robes suitable for an ascetic. Let us call him ascetic Siddhattha or the Bodhisatta.

- First, the Bodhisatta went to two of the well-known yogis of the day, Ālāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta. They taught him all they knew. He was able to get the highest jhāna (Nevasañ̃̃ $\bar{a} n \bar{a}$ sañ̃̄̄̄yatana) in a short time. Those teachers thought that they had attained Nibbāna.
- But the Bodhisatta realized that one could not get to Nibbāna merely by suppressing defilements (greed, anger, and ignorance) with breath meditation or mundane versions of kasina mediation. He realized attaining Nibbāna requires the removal of defilements for "complete purification."
- The Buddha has discussed those interactions with Ālāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Mahāsaccaka Sutta (MN 36)," "WebLink: suttacentral: Arivaparivesana Sutta (MN 26)" and various other suttā.
- You can access translations to English and several other languages by clicking the "down arrow" just above the name of the sutta at Sutta Central.


## Six Years of Extreme Asceticism

7. After leaving Āḷāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta, the Bodhisatta tried various methods of subjecting his body to extreme hardships. Other than pursuing mundane jhāna/kasiña, many yogis then thought one could remove defilements by inflicting such punishments to the body.

- Shortly after leaving Ālāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta, the Bodhisatta met five companions, Kondañ̃na, Bhaddiya, Vappa, Mahānāma, and Assajī. They were impressed with the Bodhisatta's determination and were convinced he would someday become a Buddha.
- By the way, the word Buddha (and Bhagavath) also came down in Vedic teachings. For example, the Bhagavad Gita (or "Recitals of Bhagavad") has many Vedic teachings originally from Buddha Kassapa. Of course, most concepts ended up with mundane interpretations.
- For example, "WebLink: suttacentral: Brahmāyu Sutta (MN 91)" provides a detailed account of brahmin Brahmāyu, who was well-versed in the three Ved $\bar{a}$ (tinṇain vedānaì pāragū). At the beginning of the sutta, brahmin Brahmāyu recites the qualities of a Buddha: 'itipi so bhagavā arahaim sammāsambuddho vijjācaraṇasampanno sugato lokavid̄̄ anuttaro purisadammasārathi satthā devamanussānaì buddho bhagavā'ti. Then he sends his pupil to the Gotama Buddha to check whether he has the "thirty-two marks of a great man (dvattimsamahāpurisalakkhaṇāni)." How would brahmin Brahmāyu know about the qualities of a Buddha? It had come down in Vedic teachings! It is good to read the English translation: "WebLink: suttacentral: With Brahmāyu (MN 91)."
- During most of those six years, the Bodhisatta subjected his body to various forms of hardship. The Buddha discussed those unimaginable sufferings in several sutta, including the "WebLink: suttacentral: Mahāsaccaka Sutta (MN 36)."


## Enlightenment (Attaining Buddhahood)

8. Finally, the Bodhisatta realized that subjecting the body to suffering is not the way to cleanse the mind of defilements. The Bodhisatta had to undergo six years of unnecessary suffering due to a hard-to-overcome bad kamma that he had committed against Buddha Kassapa. He had verbally abused Buddha Kassapa. I will just provide the link to the English translation of the sutta, MN 81: "WebLink: suttacentral: With Ghatikāra."

- On a Full Moon day in May, the Bodhisatta sat at the foot of a Bodhi tree, firmly determined to attain Buddhahood. The Buddha described the account of the events during that night in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Bodhirājakumāra Sutta (MN 85)," among several others.

During the night, the Buddha achieved three types of higher knowledge:

1. Ability to recall one's past lives (pubbe nivāsānussati nāāna),
2. The ability to see any living being's cuti (end of bhava) and patisandhi (grasping of a new bhava). This is the cutūpapāta $\tilde{n} \bar{a} n a$.
3. The attainment of the Buddhahood with āsavakkhaya $\tilde{n} a \bar{n} a$. That involved grasping the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path to Nibbāna.

- The Bodhisatta was now a fully-awakened Buddha or a Sammāsambuddha. He had gained knowledge about the wider world of 31 realms, how beings are born in those realms according to Paticca Samиррäda, etc. It was not mere speculation. He visited those realms and confirmed his findings, as we will discuss.


## Events After the Enlightenment

9. The Vinaya Pitaka provides a detailed account of events following the Enlightenment. Here is the English translation, "1. Going forth (Pabbajiā)." Another resource is discussed in "The Life of the Buddha" by Bhikkhu Nānamoli." I highly recommend reading those accounts. It provides a good idea of the initiation of the Buddha Sāsana, or the "ministry of the Buddha."

- Of course, the translations of some critical Pāli words are not correct there, especially anicca and anatta. That occurs in the account where the five ascetics attain Arahanthood over several days of discussing the first two suttā, the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta (SN 56.11) and the Anattalakkhana Sutta (SN 22.59), as I have discussed in many posts.
- Besides the description of deep Dhamma concepts, most English translations of suttā are good. Accounts of Buddha's life in many suttā in the Dīgha Nikāya and Majjhima Nikāya fall into that category.
- However, even then, most translators have doubts about the various abilities of the Buddha. They openly express their doubts about the validity of the rebirth process or Buddha's ability to visit various Deva and Brahma realms (even the existence of such realms), go through walls, and 'touch the Sun and the Moon," etc. See "Mystical Phenomena in Buddhism?"

10. The Buddha stated that he never taught anything that he had not verified by himself. Buddha Dhamma is not philosophy. Most "experts" who express such opinions are not even true Buddhists (in the sense of comprehending deep concepts in Buddha Dhamma.) They are "secular Buddhists" who do not believe in rebirth, the FOUNDATION of Buddha Dhamma. Furthermore, they have no background in science (particularly in physics), and do not realize that many "mystical phenomena" are not contradictory to modern physics!

- Other posts in this section: "Buddhahood Associated Controversies."


### 2.3.2 Pāṭihāriya (Supernormal Abilities) of a Buddha - Part I

July 17, 2020; revised January 23, 2022; October 14, 2022
 sutt $\bar{a}$ in the Tipiṭaka discuss them.

Kevaṭta Sutta (DN 11)

1. I will extract a few relevant portions of the text from the English translation, "WebLink: suttacentral: To Kevatta (DN 11)." I did not choose the other English translation since it translated "paṭihāriya" as "a demonstration" rather than a "miracle." Anyone can do a demonstration. A pātihāriya can be performed only by someone with "supernormal capabilities." As we will see below, these powers are mind-boggling!

- At the beginning of the sutta, Kevatta, a young householder, comes to the Buddha and says the Buddha should instruct his disciples to perform "miracles" to convince more people to embrace Buddha's teachings. The Buddha refuses, but explains that there are three types of "miracles."
- The Buddha replies: "Kevaṭta, there are three types of miracles which I have taught, having myself understood and realized them. And what are the three? The miracle of psychic power, the miracle of telepathy, and the miracle of instruction."


## The Miracle of Psychic Power (Iddhi Pātihāriya)

## 2. "And what, Kevaṭa, is the miracle of psychic power (iddhi pātihāriya)?

- "Here, Kevatṭa, a monk wields various psychic powers: He becomes many and then becomes one again. He appears and vanishes, goes unimpeded through walls, ramparts, and mountains as if through space. He can dive in and out of the Earth as if it were water, and he walks on water without sinking as if it were Earth. Sitting cross-legged, he travels through space like a winged bird. He can touch and stroke the Sun and the moon, so mighty. He exercises mastery as far as the Brahma-world."
(This verse explaining supernormal abilities appears in many suttā, including DN 2, DN 10, DN 28, MN 6, MN 73, MN 77, SN 12.70, SN 16.9, SN 51.11, SN 51.17, AN 3.60, AN 3.101, AN 5.23, AN 6.2, AN 10.97)
- Then the Buddha points out to Kevaṭta, that someone who has learned the "Gandhāra Charm" ("Gandhāra Trick" would be a better translation) can do some of that too. That is why the Buddha prohibited the display of such abilities. (Apparently, Gandhāra Trick can be compared to the "magic tricks" performed by magicians like David Copperfield today. However, the Gandhāra Trick seems much more powerful than any magic tricks performed today.)


## The Miracle of Telepathy ( $\bar{A} d e s a n \bar{a} P \bar{a} t ̣ i h a ̄ r i y a) ~$

3. "And what, Kevat!ta, is the miracle of telepathy ( $\bar{a} d e s a n a \bar{a} p a \bar{t} t i h a \bar{a} r i y a)$ ?

- "Here, a monk reads the minds of other beings, of other people, reads their mental states, their thoughts, and ponderings, and says: 'That is how your mind is, that is how it inclines, that is in your heart.'"
- Then the Buddha points out that those who have mastered the "Manika Charm" can also read other people's minds. Therefore, that also is not impressive.


## The Miracle of Instruction (Anusāsanī Pāṭihāriya)

## 4. "And what, Kevatta, is the miracle of instruction (anusāsan̄̄ pātitihāriya)?

- "Here, Kevatta, a monk teaches in this way: 'Reason in this way, do not reason in that way. Consider this and not that. Get rid of this habit, train yourself, and live life like that.' This, Kevaṭa, is what is called 'The miracle of instruction.'
- The Buddha explainsthe fruits of such instructions in detail by a learned bhikkhu who has learned Dhamma from the Buddha. How he learns to live a moral life and to cultivate Ariya jhāna by REMOVING defilements. Then the Buddha explains that SOME OF THEM can also cultivate all those supernormal powers mentioned above.
- First, let us look at the scope and implications of the "psychic powers" (iddhi bala.) All these are performed by a purified mind.


## Psychic Powers (Iddhi Pāṭihāriya) - Unimaginable

5. Technological advances drive modern society. Scientists have studied the properties of MATTER in great detail and have used those new findings to create "innovative devices" that help us work more efficiently. For example, they can build robotic machines that can do much work that human cannot do.

- So, it is indeed a "miracle" that Ven. Cūlapanthaka created a thousand "copies" of himself to do work around the temple. Once the work is complete, he can make them disappear. That is what is referred to as "He becomes many and then becomes one again" in \#2 above-relevant information on Ven. Cūlapanthaka at, "WebLink: suttacentral: Cūlapanthaka" and "WebLink: tipitaka.net: Dhammapada Verse 25 - WebLink: tipitaka.net: Cūlapantaka Vatthu."
- Let us discuss a few more of these "miracles" to see how amazing they are.


## Traveling Through the Air With Physical Body

6. Another modern technological advance is being able to travel long distances with cars, airplanes, and rockets. These became possible due to the collective efforts of many thousands of scientists starting from Galileo and Newton, over 300 years ago.

- However, as stated in the above accounts of Ven. Cūlapanthaka, traveling through the air with one's physical body is possible after cultivating iddhi bala. That is referred to as, "Sitting cross-legged, he travels through space like a winged bird" in \#2 above.

7. All these "psychic powers" have their basis in highly concentrated energy produced in the javana citta of the yogi. Yes. even other yogis at the time of the Buddha had cultivated SOME of these powers via cultivating anāriya jhāna. They could, for example, travel through the air carrying their physical bodies.

- As we know, javana cittā generates kammic energies that lead to future births. See "Javana of a Citta - The Root of Mental Power."
- The intensity or the power of javana citta can be vastly increased for those who have cultivated pātitihāriyā powers. Such a yogi can set up an "energy field" around his physical body, which can be controlled to move the physical body as he wishes.
- The video below demonstrates the basic idea of "electromagnetic levitation." A yogi would create such an "energy field" around his body and control it to move the body.

WebLink: youtube: Electromagnetic levitation device

- By the way, these days one can buy various "levitating things" like "levitating globes."


## Traveling to a Star System "In an Instant" - With Manomaya Kāya

8. The closest star (possibly with a set of planets) to us is four light-years away. That means if a rocket ship travels at the speed of light, it will take four years to get there. For comparison, the distance from the Earth to our Moon would take only 1.25 SECONDS. Therefore, a rocket ship traveling at the speed of light will take only 1.25 SECONDS to arrive at the Moon! But our rocket ships take about three days to get to the Moon. Therefore, with a modern rocket ship, it would take about 800 thousand years (this time, depending on the speed attained in interstellar space) to get to the NEAREST star.

- The capabilities of the Buddha (and some of his disciples with pātihāriyā powers) can be truly astounding. The Buddha could travel anywhere among the 10,000 "world systems" (dasasahassi lokadhātu). A "world-system" is a set of planets associated with a star, where one planet would have life. In our "Solar system," the Sun is the star, and life is based on Earth. See " 31 Realms Associated with the Earth."
- Therefore, it is mind-boggling even to imagine someone traveling to a star thousands of light-years away in an instant. Of course, the Buddha would travel such vast distances only with his "mental body" (manomaya kāya or gandhabba.)
- By the way, Brahmā from such 10,000 world-systems can visit Earth too. They have "bodies" that are equivalent to our mental bodies. They do not have dense physical bodies. Brahma $\bar{a}$ from the 10,000 world-systems came to listen to the Buddha's first discourse, Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta.
- Many suttā state that the Buddha would arrive in a Brahma world within the time taken for someone to straighten a bent arm, i.e., less than a second! That is how Brahma $\bar{a}$ from other world systems came to listen to Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta. "Brahma bodies" are almost equivalent to manomaya kāya of a gandhabba. (In comparison, a modern rocketship takes three days to get to the Moon.)
- Nothing analogous to such fast travel has yet been discussed in modern physics. I suspect that this is related to the recently established "non-locality" (or "quantum entanglement") in quantum mechanics: "Quantum Mechanics and Dhamma - Introduction.


## Going Through Walls, Mountains, etc.

9. Compared to "traveling through air with the physical body" discussed in \#6, and \#7 above, a much more complex technique comes into play when "going through walls or diving into the Earth." I have not seen such an action attributed to anāriya yogis. In this case, one breaks down the physical body to the elementary level of suddhatt!haka.

- "Matter" is mostly empty space. An atom is virtually empty. This basic idea is illustrated in the first 3 minutes of the following video.
WebLink: youtube: What Are Atoms Made Of?


## "Solid Matter" Is Mostly Empty Space!

10. We can get an idea about "how empty" an atom is, by just watching the first 3 minutes of the above video. As shown there, an atom is more than $99.999 \%$ empty!

- Then why is it that we cannot go through a wall? The answer is that two atoms cannot get too close to each other due to electromagnetic forces. That is not discussed in the above video. In a solid, two atoms cannot come too close, because the outer "electron cloud" of one atom will repel that of the second atom. Therefore, even a steel bar is mostly empty space.
- However, the Buddha taught that matter could be reduced below that of electrons and protons. That is the suddhatthaka level where there are no electromagnetic interactions (like the repulsion among electrons.) All the "material stuff" in a physical body can be reduced to an invisible suddhatthaka level. Scientists now know that an atom is divisible into smaller parts. The recently detected Higgs boson could be at the suddhatt thaka level.
- But scientists cannot reduce bulk matter to the suddhatthaka level. Moreover, they cannot take an object like an apple, break it down to below the atomic level, and then put it all back together. But one with high-end iddhi powers can do that!
- Such a yogi can reduce one's body to the suddhatṭhaka level, move it to another location very quickly and then put it back together! This was discussed slightly differently in \#6 through \#10 in the post, "Mystical Phenomena in Buddhism?"
- That approach of reducing the "material stuff" in a body to a form that can be transported to far destinations at high speed and then "re-assembling" back to the original form is part of science fiction these days, see "WebLink: wiki.org: teleportation." I remember watching the famous movie "WebLink: wikipedia.org: The Fly (1986 film)." In that movie, a fly gets into the "teleportation machine" with the human, and the "re-assembly" at the other end produces a "human fly"!


## Comparison With Modern Technology

11. As we can begin to see, modern science and Buddha Dhamma have two very different approaches for dealing with even material phenomena. Science is exclusively based on the study of inert matter. Buddha Dhamma can explain material properties in terms of mental phenomena. Of course, scientists are still way behind the Buddha.

- From what we discussed above, just think about one comparison. While the Buddha was able to visit Deva and Brahma worlds within a split-second, scientists have only made it to the Moon which takes three days.
- The scientists are not even aware of the existence of the Deva and Brahma realms.
- Deva and Brahma realms are up there above the Earth. They have very little "matter," so scientists cannot see them or their habitats. Our rocketships can go through their habitats without them even noticing it.
- The closest analogy we have is the depiction of a gandhabba in the 1990 movie "Ghost.' See, "Ghost 1990 Movie - Good Depiction of Gandhabba Concept." We can get a good idea of why we cannot see Devā or Brahmā (or their habitats) from watching that movie. Devā or Brahmā have "bodies" even more subtle compared to a human gandhabba.
- Unless the scientists can figure out how to implement teleportation, they will not be able to even travel to the nearest star with rocket ships. Buddha's "mind-based" technique is based on a different paradigm.
- In the Sīsapāvana Sutta (SN 56.31), Buddha said that he taught only a tiny fraction of what he knew. See "WebLink: suttacentral: In a Rosewood Forest."

There is no need to study or learn about iddhi pātihāriya in detail. I am providing this account to establish the following point. By controlling the mind, even a single person can get ahead of hundreds of years of scientific effort. The other two "miracles" discussed in "Pātihāriya (Supernormal Abilities) of a Buddha - Part II."

## Additional Resources

1. There is a Wikipedia article, "WebLink: wikipedia.org: Miracles of Gautama Buddha."
2. The above video is the second of a series of videos. More information on atoms in the following set of videos:

WebLink: youtube: What Is an Atom and How Do We Know?

### 2.3.3 Pāṭihāriya (Supernormal Abilities) of a Buddha - Part II

July 24, 2020

## Introduction

1. A different paradigm involves controlling material phenomena in Buddha Dhamma compared to modern science. For example, scientists have developed rocket technology to travel to the Moon. The Buddha was able to travel much further and much faster with "mind power" 2600 years ago. We discussed some examples in the previous post; see, "Pātihāriya (Supernormal Abilities) of a Buddha - Part I."

- The mind-based approach of Buddha Dhamma is much more powerful. Such unimaginable powers MAY ARISE automatically by just cleansing or purifying one's mind. However, only certain people can develop such abilities to control material phenomena. They had cultivated such powers in recent past lives.
- What is the use of being able to fly through the air like a bird or being able to travel to the Sun instantly and touch it if one is to born as an animal or worse in a future life?
- Controlling material phenomena is of no use to get a resolution to the universal problem of suffering associated with the rebirth process.
- That is why the Buddha explained to Kevatta that the miracle of instruction is the most important. Only a Buddha or a true disciple of the Buddha can provide such guidance as to how one can understand the problem of samisāric suffering and learn how to overcome it.


## The Miracle of Instruction (Anusāsana Pātihāriya)

2. In the Kevatṭa Sutta (DN 11), the Buddha explains to Kevaṭta that a Buddha (Tathägata) arises in the world with the perfect knowledge about the world. Then anyone could learn his teachings and follow them to reach full release from future suffering via attaining Nibbāna (Arahanthood.) The Buddha in that sutta describes the steps a Bhikkhu would go through, but the process is similar (and less strict) for a lay-follower.

- He would live a moral life, abstaining from killing/hurting other living-beings, without using improper forms of speech, and also controlling greed and anger. Most of all, he would learn the true nature of this world and remove many ingrained wrong views about this world. See, "Micchā Ditthi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage."
- Most of the first half of the sutta describes the recommended (more strict) lifestyle of a bhikkhu. It is a good idea to read the second half starting with the section on "Restraint of the Sense Faculties." See the English translation, "WebLink: suttacentral: To Kevatta (DN 11)."
- The Buddha advised a "middle-of-the-way" lifestyle that is away from both making one's body to hardships AND indulgence in sense pleasures.
- While following the Buddha's path, some people may also attain the ability to control material phenomena with psychic power (iddhi pätihāriya.) Let us specifically discuss that briefly now.


## What Are Iddhi?

3. Iddhi means "to cultivate" or to "grow" or "to make better."

- Those "supernormal" abilities that we discussed in the previous post result from cultivating four mental capabilities (Cattāro Iddhipādā.) They are chanda (desire for spiritual development/to attain Nibbāna,) citta (the mindset for that goal,) viriya (the effort,) and vimaimsā (figuring out the way by investigating.) The "WebLink: suttacentral: Vibhanga Sutta (SN 51.20)" discusses those factors in detail. It is a good idea to read the English translation there and also "WebLink: accesstoinsight.org: Iddhipada-vibhanga Sutta: Analysis of the Bases of Power."
- Note that chanda here does not refer to the desire for sensual pleasures (icchā.) Instead, it relates to a yearning for spiritual progress (for anariya yogis) and the desire to attain Nibbāna for those who are on the Noble Eightfold Path.
- While anariaya yogis can attain some supernormal powers, those achieved by Ariyā (Noble Persons with magga phala) are much more potent or powerful. Furthermore, an anariya yogi could lose those abilities (just like the ability to get into anariya jhāna) even in this lifetime.


## Anāriya Iddhi Powers Are Temporary

4. The Tipitaka account of Devadatta clearly illustrates this point. He was able to cultivate anariya jhāna and had developed some supernormal powers (iddhi) as well.

- By performing some supernormal tasks, Devadatta was able to impress Prince Ajātasattu. Having assumed the form of a young boy clad in a girdle of snakes, he appeared in Prince Ajātasattu's lap. Prince Ajātasattu was highly impressed and became a devout follower. Devadatta started thinking about
"replacing Buddha to lead the order of Sañgha." With that thought, Devadatta lost his supernormal capabilities.
- Still, Devadatta did not lose his ambition to "become the Buddha." Later on, he tried to take the life of the Buddha in several attempts. In the end, he was born in an apāya.
- The details are in the section starting with "The story of Devadatta" at, "WebLink: suttacentral: Schism in an Order (Sañghabheda)." It is a long read up to the end of the post, but it is worthwhile.


## What Is the Basis of Such Iddhi Powers?

5. This is where we start understanding the basis of "mental power."

- A mind burdened with greed, anger, and ignorance (about the real nature of this world) has no "strong and beneficial" abilities. Instead, such minds create "dark kammic energies," leading to unpleasant kamma vipāka in general and also rebirths in "bad realms." We know that those undesired realms are the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$ or the four lowest realms. The Pali terms for those three bad causes are lobha, dosa, moha.
- If a mind is absent from those three primary defilements, then actions (kamma) by such a "noncontaminated mind" create "clean kammic energies." Those lead to good kamma vipāka and rebirths in the 27 "good realms" lying at and above the human realm. In the absence of lobha, dosa, and moha, a mind creates kammic energies with, of course, alobha, adosa, amoha. Those are the three good causes.


## Births in the Four Lowest Realms Arise Due to Actions with Lobha, Dosa, Moha

6. The "dark energies" associated with thoughts associated with lobha, dosa, moha create "kammic energies" that can bring births ( $j \bar{a} t i$ ) in the apāyā. Those energies are "bhava" in the Paticca Samuppāda process. Therefore, "bhava paccayā jāti" means a "bad bhava" leads to a corresponding "bad birth."

- With the more robust the level of ignorance (moha,) the easier it is to do the seven akusala kamma $\bar{a}$. Those are false, hurtful, deceitful, and vain speech and killing, stealing, and sexual misconduct.
- A mind that free of lobha, dosa, moha (i.e., with alobha, adosa, amoha) is a "moral mind." It would know the difference between moral deeds and immoral deeds. In particular, it would try to avoid the seven akusala kamm $\bar{a}$ done with speech and bodily actions.


## Births Above the Human Realm Arise Due to Actions with Alobha, Adosa, Amoha

7. There are 26 realms above the human realm (six Deva, sixteen rupāvacara Brahma, and four arupāvacara Brahma realms.) Such births arise due to bhava energies created with thoughts devoid of greed and anger. Here deep ignorance or moha is absent and, thus, amoha. However, as we will see, there is still ignorance about the true nature of the world (avijj $\bar{a}$ ) left in mind.

- In other words, births in the 26 "good realms" arise due to the three root causes of alobha, adosa, amoha.
- Because of that, lives in those realms are relatively free of harsh sufferings.
- If we look at the lifetimes of those realms, they become longer for higher realms. See, " 31 Realms of Existence."
- The human realm is also "good," but there is significant suffering too. So, we need to treat the human realm differently from the other 30 realms. We discuss that now.


## The Human Realm is Unique

## 8. Human births could arise due to combinations of all six root causes.

- There are three main types of humans. Some have tihetuka births, meaning that particular human birth was due to a kamma with the three "good roots" of alobha, adosa, amoha. Another set of humans have only two good roots (dvihetuka births), either alobha/amoha or adosa/amoha. The third type has only one good root of amoha. Those are ahetuka births because they are "unfortunate births." (The word "ahetuka" here does not mean the absence of even a single good root)
- It is not possible to distinguish between tihetuka and dvihetuka births. But it is relatively easy to identify ahetuka births because they have little intelligence.
- All three types of humans experience both good and bad kamma. Even tihetuka people can come down with disease or injury. Even though the Deva realms also belong to the kāma loka (just like the human realm,) the bodies of $\operatorname{Dev} \bar{a}$ are not dense enough to cause any diseases/injuries.
- The root causes and how they lead to rebirths discussed in, "Six Root Causes - Loka Samudaya (Arising of Suffering) and Loka Nirodhaya (Nibbāna)."


## Second Uniqueness of the Human Realm

9. The human realm is also unique in the following way. Most rebirths are determined while in the human realm. Then they spend the lives in either lower or higher realms until the corresponding kamma $v i p a ̄ k a$ are "paid off." For example, a given human may do some bad deeds suitable for births in apāya but may change the lifestyle and cultivate jhāna. So, he/she would have created both good and bad bhava. Since developing a jhāna is an ānantariya kamma, a Brahma birth will come at his/her death. But unless he/she had attained a magga phala, a birth in an apāya will result after exhausting time in the Brahma realm.

- As we remember from the post, "Buddhism and Evolution - Aggañña Sutta (DN 27)," a newly-formed Earth would be entirely populated by humans (with Brahma-like subtle bodies.) But with time, cravings arise due to anusaya, and those with "bad gati" will be reborn in lower realms. If a Buddha does not appear in a given eon, most humans end up in the lower realms sooner. It is a complex issue.
- More details on anusaya at, "Āsava, Anusaya, and Gati (Gathi)."


## Living-Beings in Lower Realms Have Denser Bodies in General

10. In general, living-beings in the kāma loka (four lower realms, the human realm, and six Deva realms) have dense bodies with five sense faculties. In most cases, sensing odors, tastes, and bodily-touches REQUIRE dense bodies.

- Most living-beings have a craving for those "close-proximity" sense pleasures. They like to eat tasty foods, smell sweet odors, and to engage in sex. As long as a living-being does not lose cravings, they WILL NOT be free from the kāma loka. Now, some may cultivate anariya jhāna and be born in a Brahma realm but will return to the human realm at the end of that life.
- As we mentioned earlier, Devā do enjoy such 'close contacts," but those contacts are "softer." In Pali, the word "olarika" implies "close contacts with dense bodies in human and lower realms." In the Deva realms, the contacts and bodies are "sukuma" or softer. Deva also can be born in the apāy $\bar{a}$ after they exhaust their Deva lifetimes.


## The Journey Among the 31 Realms Is Perpetual

11. The above process has been going on for any of us from a time that is not possible to trace back. That is the samisāric journey or the rebirth process.

- Unfortunately, most of those births are in the four lower realms or $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$. But, of course, we would not know all this unless we learn it from a Buddha or a disciple of the Buddha.
- The "suffering" in the First Noble Truth is the harsh suffering in the apāy $\bar{a}$. Any pain and suffering that we FEEL NOW are due to past causes. We need to use appropriate medical treatments to alleviate such suffering.
- The First Noble Truth of Suffering refers to the harsh FUTURE suffering associated with the rebirth process. The good news is that the Buddha also explained how to stop that future suffering.


## The Miracle of Instruction (Anusāsana Pāṭihāriya) of a Buddha

12. The above description of the real nature of our world with 31 realms and a beginning-less rebirth process is not known to the world in the absence of a Buddha. Only a Buddha can discover them and explain it to the world. Furthermore, a Buddha also provides instructions on how to stop the perpetual suffering in the rebirth process.

- Those two aspects involve the "Miracle of Instruction (Anusāsana Pāṭihāriya)" of a Buddha.
- The other two "miracles" of psychic powers and telepathy are just two byproducts. But, as the Buddha told Kevaṭa in the Kevatṭa Sutta (DN 11), those are not that different from "magic tricks." They are real and not magic, as I have explained in "Pātihāriya (Supernormal Abilities) of a Buddha - Part I" and "Mystical Phenomena in Buddhism?" Still, they are not of long-term value.
- What is the use of being able to fly through the air like a bird or being able to travel to the Sun instantly and touch it if one is to born as an animal or worse in a future life?
- In the same way, what is the use of accumulation of billions of dollars in this life, only to be reborn an animal in a future life?
- This is why the Buddha advised us to focus on attaining Nibbāna. At least the Sotāpanna stage of Nibbāna.
- We will focus on the "Miracle of Instruction of a Buddha" in the upcoming posts. Then it will become apparent, from yet another angle, the uniqueness of Buddha Dhamma.


### 2.4 What is Buddha Dhamma?

Revised on January 16, 2016; major revision September 12, 2018; revised August 7, 2019; March 2, 2020

## Introduction

1. Many people, who are to a bit of Buddha Dhamma, see that there is something good about it. So, they just go to a meditation retreat and try to get a dose of Dhamma over several days.

- It is good to do that initially. But there is much more to Buddha Dhamma than to attain some temporary relief from the stresses of this life. If one can see that, then one needs to spend a bit more time and learn the full message of the Buddha.

2. If we learn the laws of motion from someone who does not fully understand them, it is harder to digest. We may even learn them incorrectly, in the case of a bit harder subject, say, relativity. If the person who explains does not have a good understanding of the theory of relativity, then it is likely that the person who learns it will not learn much.

- I have not only learned Buddha Dhamma, but have practiced it over the past ten years, and have seen the benefits for myself.
- As a scientist, I am amazed at the depth of Buddha Dhamma. You will be able to see what I mean if you spend some time here.


## A Wider World View

3. Benefits from Buddha Dhamma or the "worldview of the Buddha" can be two-fold.

- First is the spiritual aspect. One will be able to experience "peace of mind" even by reading and learning, but when one starts comprehending the critical message of the Buddha, that can have a profound impact.
- Second is the "intellectual aspect." Buddha Dhamma thoroughly explains the "laws of Nature." I have spent ten years studying it, and I am still learning. Once one starts digging deeper, one will see that modern science is far behind.

4. As I build up this site, anyone will be able to see that Buddha Dhamma is the ultimate Grand Unified Theory; see "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma."

- It explains everything not only that we can see, but also the existence of infinite number of worlds with living beings in 29 other realms of existence. We can only see the human and animal realms.
- Thus Buddha Dhamma is not a religion in the sense of providing salvation. Buddha was not a God, a prophet or a messenger. He was a human being who purified his mind to perfection so that he could see the whole of existence. Buddha was the perfect scientist who investigated the problem of life and found a complete solution. We all need to find our salvation by following the Path that he prescribed to purify our minds.


## Why Are There So Many Versions of Buddhism?

5. Thus Buddhism (Buddha Dhamma) is the most elaborate theory of "this world." It is called "pubbe anunussetu dhammesu" or a "Dhamma (or a theory on nature) that is not known to the world before a Buddha comes along." The Buddha uttered that phrase multiple times in his first sutta; see, "Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta Interpretation - Uddesa, Niddesa, Patiniddesa."

- However, it has "evolved" into many different versions since the Buddha Gotama revealed it to the world over 2500 years ago.
- During the past 2500 years many different versions of "Buddhism" have emerged; see, "Historical Background - Introduction." No one can claim, "this is the original version that was delivered by the Buddha." It is up to each individual to examine different versions and decide which version makes sense.
- Thus it pays to spend some time and try to find the version(s) closest to the original. That is not an easy task these days.
- I content that it is the Pāli Tipiṭaka, not Sanskrit sutras, and not in Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga. I have pointed out the inconsistencies in both Mahāyāna version and also in the current Theravāda versions with Visuddhimagga as the basis, see, "Historical Background" section.


## Key Concepts of Buddhism

6. It will be quite beneficial to read the "Moral Living and Fundamentals" section to get an idea of the basic principles.

- One cannot even begin to follow Buddha Dhamma unless one learns about the key concepts, see "Key Dhamma Concepts."
- The first stage of Nibbāna (Sotāpanna stage) is attained just by fully comprehending the "world view of the Buddha." Then one sees the fruitlessness of seeking lasting happiness in "this world" of 31 realms.

7. What is the central message of the Buddha? It is essential to read the section, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta."

- It is also important to realize that dukkha is not the feeling of suffering; that is dukha; see, "Does the First Noble Truth Describe only Suffering?."
- If one did not know that he was talking about a much "bigger world" than the world we directly experience, one would think of that statement as nonsensical. The laws of kamm $\bar{a}$ do not make sense unless one at least knows that the Buddha was talking about a rebirth process that has no beginning.

8. Newton discovered the three laws of motion which helped describe gravity. Instead of re-discovering them, we learn them at school. We have to learn from a teacher. But if the teacher does not know the material well, then a student will not be able to learn the correct laws of motion.

- One needs to learn from a true disciple of the Buddha, one who has not only studied it but also has experienced the benefits.
- Even though I use some "science examples", there is no need to know any science. A science background may be helpful mainly in the "Dhamma and Science" sections, but even there it is not necessary.
- The new section on "Quantum Mechanics and Dhamma" is more suitable for those who have at least a high-school background in physics.


## The Big Picture

9. Before one embarks on a journey, one needs to know what the trip is about, and what the destination is. Furthermore, whether it is worthwhile to undertake the trip. Please be patient and first find out what Buddha Dhamma is about, the big picture, first. Please spend some time learning about the key message of the Buddha before undertaking the journey. If one does not know where one is going (or the terrain), how can one reach the destination?

- Buddha Dhamma describes the true nature of "this world." But "this world" does not just mean our life as a human. "This world" is unimaginably complex. Scientists admit that they are aware of only $4 \%$ of the things in this universe; see, "The 4 Percent Universe: Dark Matter, Dark Energy, and the Race to Discover the Rest of Reality", by Richard Panek (2011). Also see, "Dhamma and Science" section for details.
- Please be patient and scan through the main sections to get a brief idea first. Getting the "whole picture" will take time, see, "User's Guide to Pure Dhamma Website."

10. The next question (especially when one sees that it is indeed a complex picture) that comes to one's mind is that "How do I know this picture is right?." One makes that decision based on one's own experience. But even before that, one could get a good idea by treating Buddha Dhamma as a scientific theory. That is why the section on "Dhamma and Science" is useful.

- Please pay special attention to the rebirth process. Many people wonder why rebirth bad. But they do not realize that the chance of rebirth as a human is extremely rare; see, "Rebirth - Connection to Suffering in the First Noble Truth."
- One must also realize that $j \bar{a} t i$ (birth) and bhava (existence in a given realm) are two different things; see, "Bhava and Jāti - State of Existence and Births Therein."
- Most are reborn in planes below the human realm where suffering is much worse. Scientists estimate that at any given time, there are one quadrillion (1000 trillion) ants living on Earth; this means for each human, there are million ants. Compared to about 7 billion of the human population, an incredible number of other living species live on this planet.
- Even on our bodies, we carry a large number of sentient beings: see, "There are as many creatures on your body as there are people on Earth!."
- The human population is insignificantly small compared to the animal population. Statistically, that gives an idea of the "probability of a human birth." We do not see the much higher populations in the other lower three realms because our minds are covered by defilements. If one develops $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$ and acquires abhiññā powers, one can see beings in some of those realms.
- October 25, 2019: I recently started a new subsection, "Origin of Life," that discusses many scientific, philosophical, and religious views of the origins of life.


## Is Buddhism Pessimistic?

11. Many people think the Buddha Dhamma is pessimistic. The Buddha just revealed the hidden suffering in "this world" and that it can be overcome;; see, "Does the First Noble Truth Describe only Suffering?."

- He showed that there is a better type of happiness, called nirāmisa sukha, that one gains as one moves away from "this world" towards Nibbāna; see, "Three Kinds of Happiness - What is Nirāmisa Sukha?."
- This nirāmisa sukha increases as one starts on the Noble Eightfold Path and makes a quantum jump (large gain in a short time) at the first stage of Nibbāna, the Stream Entry (Sotāpanna) stage. There are three more levels, and at the final level, Arahant, one becomes free from "this world" (no more rebirths) and attains Nibbāna.
- Thus Nibbāna is not just a promise to be fulfilled at death; it can be experienced in this very life. I invite you to take this journey with me for a while and see for yourself. As the Buddha said, "Come and see for yourself' [Dhamma quality: ehipassiko].

12. My goal is to provide at least some details of the complex world view that was provided by the Buddha, which has been muddled and distorted within the past 2500 years.

- "Our world" is much more complicated than what is grasped by our senses; see, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma."
- And our lives do not end with this one; see, "Evidence for Rebirth."
- Those two facts constitute the basis of the true nature of existence. One cannot comprehend the message of the Buddha until one at least has some idea about this "big picture."
- Many questions people have on concepts like kamma, morality, Nibbāna, etc., as well as philosophical questions like "why I am here?", or "why is the world the way it is?", will have answers within this big
picture. It is a complete world view, but it is up to each individual to determine whether it makes sense.
As the Buddha pointed out, the stakes are very high, and it is a good idea to take time and critically evaluate this big picture.

13. The following sections have information at various levels. Please scan through and find sections of interest.
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## $2.5 \quad$ Foundation of Dhamma

## Revised October 25, 2019

If you have not read the introductory post, "What is Buddha Dhamma?," please read and understand that first. It describes the unique aspects of Buddha Dhamma, in the sense that it is not a religion by some definitions, and the Buddha was not a savior.

## A Worldview Not Known Without a Buddha

## 1. There are two co-existing facets of Buddha Dhamma:

- The Buddha said, "This Dhamma is unlike anything that the world has ever seen." It needs a paradigm change to get into the "new perspective about this world view of the Buddha." One needs to be able to put aside all preconceived notions to understand the core message.
- However, the Buddha also said, "My Dhamma is good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good at the end." There is something to be gained from Buddha Dhamma for people who just come to know about it to those who have really grasped the core concepts. That is why I have separated posts into three categories on the site.
- Many essential terms and verses, even whole suttā, can be interpreted at several levels, ranging from superficial to profound meanings. As I build the site, I will try to give some examples. For example, the five precepts have much deeper meanings than the ones that are apparent. It is gratifying and exhilarating to see deeper meanings as one progresses. Thus, there is something to be gained at any level.


## Three Levels of Practice

2. There are three basic ways to practice Buddha Dhamma:

- At the fundamental level (see, "Moral Living and Fundamentals"), one can find happiness or suffering according to the way one lives one's life. One whose actions are harmful to oneself or the others will be living in misery. Someone may seem to be living in luxury but could be living with a stressed mind. We know about many wealthy/famous people who even committed suicide.
- At the next level, one leads a moral life and accumulates good kamma that could lead to a good rebirth. However, we need to keep in mind that even if one does not commit a single immoral kamma, the next birth could be a bad one. That is because we may have done enough immoral deeds in our previous lives; see, "Working Towards Good Rebirths."
- At the highest level, one will act to remove all evils from one's mind so that the mind becomes liberated from the body, which causes all suffering. Thus one will be working to achieve Nibbāna, the unconditioned, permanent happiness; see, "Seeking Nibbāna" and "Sotāpanna Stage of Nibbāna."

3. The organization of this site at three levels:

- Most people intuitively know the benefit of moral life. Dhamma will help understand why, and even point to some possible improvements.
- When one lives a moral life and EXPERIENCES the benefit of that, one will be automatically drawn to think about whether there is a life after death. One reads about the evidence for/against this possibility. If the answer is "yes," then one can find possible ways to work towards a better life in the next birth. That is not much different from the moral behavior above. It is just that one will learn a lot about "the world" that we live in.
- Once achieving the second stage, some may want to explore the third stage. That third stage encompasses THE message of the Buddha, that no matter where one is born in the next life there are NO guarantees that the lives after that will be suffering-free. That is the path to Nibbāna, to cease suffering permanently.


## A Systematic Approach Is Required

4. Going straight to the third level will be like trying to get into high school without finishing primary and secondary schooling.

- However, even if one has not yet heard anything about Buddha Dhamma before, some may be already at the second stage, and few may also be ready for the third stage. This life did not start at this birth. Each of us has come a long way and has molded our character through countless lives in the past. Thus, even if one is unaware of it, one may already be mentally prepared to tackle the third stage. So, please look around and find a starting point that is comfortable for you. See, "Where to Start on the Path?." Only you know about yourself!
- Also, see, "Starting on the Path Even without Belief in Rebirth" and "Is It Necessary for a Buddhist to Eliminate Sensual Desires?."


## Critical Thinking Is Essential

5. It is critical to realize that "knowledge" is not perfect at any level as long as one remains "in this world." Even though he was not talking about that, the famous physicist Richard Feynman illustrates this point well in this video:

## WebLink: YOUTUBE: Feynman Magnets and Why questions

- Let us take his example of someone slipping on ice. A drunk person stepping onto the ice-covered surface does not even realize that it is icy and slippery. At the next level, an alert person knows that the surface is freezing, and thus will be careful. But if one needs to understand why the icy-surface is slippery, then a bit of fundamental physics is required to understand "why ice is slippery." See the next post, "The Importance of Purifying the Mind."
- It is not necessary to understand "why ice is slippery" if one has an uncontaminated mind; a sober person with a calm mind will take precautions when stepping on an icy surface. More complex situations require the cleansing of an "average mind" further. That is where Buddha Dhamma makes a difference.


## A Defiled Mind Is Unable to Grasp Deep Dhamma

6. Even though humans have an innate sense of what is right and what is wrong, the human mind becomes cloudy due to the five hindrances (see, "Key to Calming the Mind - The Five Hindrances").

- Once Dhamma Theory is understood, just that understanding leads to the clearing up of some of these hindrances; furthermore, the logic of a moral life comes naturally out the Dhamma Theory. At least some idea of the foundations of Buddha Dhamma is CRITICAL before the "practice stage."
- If one living a moral life reads about the Dhamma Theory, he/she may be motivated to explore the second stage, i.e., to think about the validity of the process of rebirth, which is a fundamental axiom of Buddha Dhamma.
- When one LIVES a life with the belief that what one does in this life will affect how one will fare after this life, then one may realize the danger in this traversing this endless cycle of rebirths. That will lead to exploring the third stage, which is THE real message of the Buddha.


## Each Person Needs to Take the Initiative

7. No one else can steer anyone else to any meaningful mundane happiness with nirāmisa sukha (in this life or next) or to Nibbāna.

- The Buddha said, "Attā hi attano nātho, ko hi nātho paro siyā," or, "One indeed is one's refuge; how can others be a refuge to one?"
- Purification of the mind is the key. That means removing greed and anger and dispelling wrong views by learning Dhamma. That is the key to attain a peaceful life now, a better rebirth, or even to attain Nibbāna.
- Each one is in charge of one's mind. Others can only help.
- It is entirely up to the individual. This site will help one find the right path.

Next, "The Importance of Purifying the Mind", .........

## The Importance of Purifying the Mind

## Revised October 25, 2019; August 27, 2022

1. Analysis of a given situation always needs to be taken in the proper context. Let us again listen to Dr. Feynman's video in the previous post, "Foundation of Dhamma."

## WebLink: YOUTUBE: Feynman Magnets and Why questions

- It is worth discussing the case of an icy surface to look deeper than even Dr. Feynman did. He merely pointed out that there is no end to the sort of questions especially when a child keeps asking: "what is the reason for that?" at every step: "Why is Aunt Mimi in the hospital?" leads to the answer, "She fell on ice." Then, "Why did she fall on ice?" leads to "Because ice is slippery" which leads to, "Why is ice (and not concrete) slippery ?."


## Material Phenomena - Not the "Ultimate" Explanation

2. Up to this point, the child (or an average adult) can understand each answer BECAUSE, based on their life experiences, all those answers make sense. But the last question cannot be answered to the complete satisfaction of a child or an average adult, who does not have a background in physics.

- Unlike most other solids, ice has this peculiar property. When water is cooled, it expands and turns into ice.
- So, when Aunt Mimi stepped on the ice, the pressure of her weight caused the ice to shrink (i.e., become water). Thus a thin layer of water was formed between her shoes and ice, which caused her to slide and fall. Other solids tend to get more hardened under pressure, so there is no slipping due to that particular cause.

3. One does not need to know that bit of physics to avoid falling on ice. What was required to prevent falling was to have a keen sense of knowing that ice is slippery and one needed to take necessary precautions.

- May be Aunt Mimi was in an agitated state of mind and hurried out of the door without realizing that there was a thin sheet of ice on the driveway. If she were drunk, that would have also led to the same result. She would have been more careful if she were in a calm, relaxed state of mind.
- An agitated mind can result from excess greed and hate too. Most people do not realize this, but if we think back, we can remember instances where we made bad decisions because of a greedy or hateful state of mind. That is why getting into heated arguments can be risky. People even kill in a moment of rage.


## Buddha Dhamma - Mind at the Forefront

4. The teachings of the Buddha are unique. The mind is at the forefront, not material phenomena; see, "Manopubbangamā Dhammā..."

- Material phenomena originate with the mind. A deeper and lengthy discussion at "Origin of Life."
- But to understand those deep teachings, one's mind must be calm and clear. Five hindrances cause our minds to be clouded; see "Key to Calming the Mind - Five Hindrances." These have accumulated via bad habits that we have developed over countless lives; see, for example, "The Law of Attraction, Habits (Gati), and Cravings (Āsavas)."
- Each has different bad habits, but we all have them. Yet we can function "in this world" with that "baseline" (for example, not falling while walking on ice) if we do not make it worse by substance abuse or making the mind agitated (by getting angry or overly greedy), etc.


## Living a Moral Life Is Not Enough

5. Most people live their lives without resorting to extreme behaviors. That still does not allow us to see the true nature of "this world." The tide just carries us. We don't even examine whether it is a good idea to "just go with the flow."

- We do our best to make our lives better (materially) and eventually die without knowing that all those life struggles were in vain at the end.


## Importance of the Rebirth Process

6. The worse thing is that the story does not end at death but moves on to another phase (rebirth), where we will be doing precisely the same again.

- We have gone through this unending process for innumerable lives. Most of those have been much worse than our current human life. If one learns true Buddha Dhamma, one will "see" the fruitlessness of our struggles to seek happiness in a "world" that cannot provide that. Then one will try to get out of "this world" by following the Noble Eightfold Path of the Buddha and achieve permanent happiness.
- That is the crux of the message of the Buddha.
- We will be able to "see" the truth in the above paragraph (i.e., the true nature of "this world") if we start cleaning our minds to get rid of the five hindrances (see "How to Calm the Mind").
- There is mounting evidence for rebirth; see "Evidence for Rebirth."


## A Wider Worldview

7. A wider worldview is necessary for the rebirth process. We need to understand the broader view of "this world" of the Buddha. Many people plunge into "practicing Dhamma" without even having an idea of the "world view" of the Buddha. How can one practice if one does not know what the goal of that exercise is? The goals could be threefold:
i. to gain some peaceful state of mind in this life
ii. by looking at a more extended range, to make sure one will have a better life experience also in the upcoming births,
iii. to be released from this cycle of rebirths filled with dissatisfaction, and to seek permanent happiness, Nibbāna.

If the goal is one of the above three (and especially if (ii) and (iii)), then one needs to know what the complete "world view" of the Buddha was: This is the Buddha Dhamma.

- A comprehensive discussion at "Origin of Life."


## Original Teachings Are in the Tipiṭaka

8. It has been over 2500 years since the Buddha declared his message about the previously unknown broader world view. During that time, many distorted versions of Buddha's teachings appeared. See "Historical Background."

- My goal is to provide a more sensible, logical explanation based on the Theravāda Tipitaka that has remained unchanged. I have pointed out that in that section.
- Throughout this website, I have shown that Buddha Dhamma is self-consistent (within the Tipitaka), and is also compatible with many findings of modern science. See "Buddha Dhamma: Non-Perceivability and Self-Consistency" and "Dhamma and Science."

9. Since many are "just-looking" and have no reason to believe the truth of this worldview, I will present it as a theory. We will test this theory to see whether it meets the established scientific standards. I am used to that methodology as a scientist.

- Many people, especially in earlier times,decided on the enhanced EXPERIENCE as they followed the path. As one moves along the Path, this EXPERIENCE starts to transcend the sensory experience or sensual pleasures. There is a crucial difference between the sensory experience and the vastly enhanced experience of a purified mind.


## True Nature of This World

10. Once one understands what this broader worldview is, one can see that the solution to our problem existence does not depend on trying to probe deeper into material aspects at each step in an endless loop. We do not have enough time in this life to learn all that.

- Instead, it is just a matter of purifying our minds. A purified mind can "see" through one's refined experience as one follows the Path.

11. Stated succinctly; Buddha discovered that the solution to the problem of the existence is the failure to "see" the true nature of "this world." The true nature of this world is even more complicated than what science is finding out. See, "Worldview of the Buddha."

- But one only needs to see that "whole picture" and to realize that no matter where we are born, we will never find long-lasting happiness "in this world." That is because "this world" is inherently ever-changing, and that change is unpredictable.
- Everything "in this world" is in constant flux, but we cannot "see" that because our minds are "too cloudy" or 'too impure."


## Different Worldviews

12. There are religious approaches, but I will stay away from that subject. By the way, Buddha Dhamma is not a religion. It is scientific and is based on cause and effect (Pațicca Samuppāda.) There are no hypotheses about a Creator. The "conventional scientific method" started with the ancient Greeks at the same time that the Buddha lived.

- So, we have two scientific approaches. The mind-based scientific method of the Buddha and the conventional matter-based scientific method.
- Currently, most scientists are trying to figure out how the mind works by analyzing the brain. However, the mind is not in the brain. See "Near-Death Experiences (NDE): Brain Is Not the Mind."
- Buddha Dhamma is entirely consistent with the material aspects of science (as we will discuss). But in Buddha Dhamma, the mind precedes matter; matter is secondary.


## Three Characteristics of This World

13. Let us go back to the case of slipping on ice discussed in Dr. Feynman's video. To cope with an icy surface, all we need to know is to have prior EXPERIENCE with such a scenario. We also need an alert mind (that is not distracted by alcohol, anger, lust, etc.) to apply that experience to cope with the situation. That is the mind-based approach.

- When one carefully examines the "world view" within the Buddha Dhamma, one can see the problem of existence. ALL PARTS of this world are unsatisfactory, one can never maintain anything to one's liking for a long time. See, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta."
- That is all one needs to understand, not just read about. But that is the hardest; that is what requires an effort. Of course, one first needs to read and learn about this "world view."

Conventional Scientific Approach - The Focus Is on Material Phenomena
14. On the other hand, one could keep going down the line of questions probing deeper into the causes as to why ice is slippery, why water expands when it is cooled, the nature of chemical bonds, electrons and protons, about quarks that make up those protons, etc.

- It is quite right that this probing has led to many technological advances that we all enjoy today. I can write something on this site and get it to you within minutes; it is fantastic and very beneficial. But my point is that all this "probing deeper into material aspects" has not gotten us any closer to the questions on existence. Right now, science is approaching the limits of this probing because now we know that all matter is just energy.
- Even though we may benefit from technological advances, such benefits can be enjoyed only briefly (about 100 years) in the samisāric time scale. Buddha Dhamma provides a long-term solution.


## Buddha Dhamma - The Focus Is on the Mind

15. The Buddha stated 2500 years ago that, in the end, there is no benefit in probing deeper into material properties. All one needs to realize is that no matter what we achieve, they are all transitory, not stable. That requires purifying one's mind.

- When one truly comprehends the three characteristics of existence (see "Anicca - True Meanings"), and thus the unsatisfactory nature of this existence, one will not seek to gain "material things" but will endeavor to achieve Nibbāna. That only requires purification of one's mind. It does not require examining the outside material world in detail.
- When one goes deeper into the Buddha Dhamma, it becomes clear that mental energy is the basis of all existence. But that is a long story. We first need to see whether the "broader world view" of the Buddha makes sense.
- In 2019, I started a new subsection, "Origin of Life," that gets into a deeper analysis.

Next, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma",

### 2.7 The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma

Expanded May 20, 2016

- The Grand Unified Theory of Dhammā - Introduction
- Our Two Worlds: Material and Immaterial
- 31 Realms Associated with the Earth
- Gandhabba - Only in Human and Animal Realms
- Body Types in Different Realms - Importance of Manomaya Kāya
- Gandhabba Sensing the World - With and Without a Physical Body
- Nibbāna in the Big Picture


### 2.7.1 <br> The Grand Unified Theory of Dhammā - Introduction

## Revised May 20, 2016; December 22, 2018; July 6, 2019; August 21, 2019

1. According to Buddha Dhamma, EVERYTHING in existence can be put into four ultimate realities (paramattha):

- Thoughts (citta)
- Thought qualities or mental factors (cetasika)
- Matter (rūpa)
- Nibbāna

These entities described in detail in the Tables and Summaries and Abhidhamma sections; see, "Abhidhamma - Introduction."

- All existence "in this world" described in terms of the first three. And they are all conditional; each is born due to the presence of a cause. If there is no cause, none of these three will arise. That is the fundamental cause and effect (Paṭicca Samuppāda) in Buddha Dhamma.
- Causes are numerous, but the root causes are six: greed, hate, ignorance, non-greed, non-hate, and nonignorance.
- Nibbāna and those other three entities are mutually exclusive (things in this world are absent in Nibbāna); see, "WebLink: suttacentral: Pathamanibbānapatisamyuutta Sutta (Ud 8.1)" (English translation: "WebLink: suttacentral: The First Discourse about Nibbāna").

2. Nibbāna results with the removal of the three roots of greed, hate, ignorance (rägakkhyo, dosakkhayo, mohakkhayo Nibbānami).

- It is necessary to cultivate the three moral roots non-greed, non-hate, and non-ignorance first while in the mundane eightfold path. That allows one to comprehend Tilakkhana (anicca, dukkha, anatta) and get to the Noble Eightfold Path; see, "Buddha Dhamma - In a Chart."
- Therefore, one strives to remove greed, hate, and ignorance, which are "san"; see, "What is 'San'?." That is the key to Nibbāna, as laid out in the Noble Eightfold Path.

3. The citta arise and decay at a fast rate: billions of citta can arise and pass away each second. But as we will see in the Abhidhamma section, "active thoughts" occur relatively infrequently in "fast bursts" or citta $v i \bar{t} h i$. Cetasika is "embedded" in each citta. There are 89 types of citt $\bar{a}$ in all, and 52 types of cetasikas; see, "Tables and Summaries." Thus the mental realm is very complicated.

- For an introduction to the mind, see "Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)," "The Amazing Mind - Critical Role of Nāmagotta (Memories)," and "Do I Have "A Mind" That Is Fixed and "Mine"?" in that order.

4. Matter (rūpa) constitutes of 28 basic units, of which only four are truly fundamental. However, the smallest indivisible unit is called a "suddhatthaka"; see, "Rūpa - Generation Mechanisms" and "The Origin of Matter - Suddhatthaka." These suddhatṭhaka have very long lifetimes of a mahā kappa (basically the age of the universe). suddhatthaka are the building blocks of any "tangible thing" in this world.

- Any sañkhata in "this world" is subject to change. Each sañkhata (basically any material thing) has a lifetime that could be shorter than a second or as long as billions of years (for a star for example).

5. Many people confuse "udayavaya" or "formation and the breakup of a sañkhata" means anything, including suddhatthaka, is perpetually in flux. They try to tie this with "impermanence" which they incorrectly translate anicca to be. In the contrary, a suddhatthaka has a very long lifetimes.

- It is only those "composites" such as humans, animals, trees, etc, that undergo decay and death at time scales that are discernible to us; a gold bar, does not decay for a very long time; see, "Does any Object (Rūpa) Last only 17 Thought Moments?."
- For a discussion on udayavaya ñāna, see, "Udayavaya Ñān̄a."

6. The "result" of this udayavaya nature of all sankhata embedded in the Three Characteristics of "this world": anicca, dukkha, and anatta. But anicca is NOT impermanence, and anatta is NOT "no-self"; see, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta - Wrong Interpretations."

- Briefly, (i) it is not possible to find AND maintain happiness in anything in "this world." (ii) Because of that, we become distraught and suffer, and (iii) Thus, one becomes helpless (not in control). It is essential to realize that these are characteristics of not just this life, but our beginning-less rebirth process in "this wider world" of 31 realms described below.
- Even though gold bars are virtually permanent relative to our lifetimes, we still cannot "maintain it to our satisfaction." That is because we have to leave it (and anything else) behind when we die.
- And all this is due to "udayavaya" of sañkhata, all that we experience.

7. Therefore, there is NOTHING "in this world" that is permanent (except "nāma gotta"; see below). Everything is constantly changing. That is the fundamental reason why nothing in "this world" will meet one's expectations; see, "Second Law of Thermodynamics is Part of Anicca!."

- Some things can last longer than others, but nothing is permanent. Anything is CONDITIONAL, i.e., arises due to causes. It would not come to existence in the absence of root causes. Thus it is said that everything "in this world" is CONDITIONED.
- The only exception is "nāma gotta," which are the permanent records of a given "lifestream"; see, "Recent Evidence for Unbroken Memory Records (HSAM)." That is how one with abhiññā powers can go back and look at one's past lives; some children can recall their past lives too. That record is permanent.

8. This world made of citta, cetasika, and rūpa is very complicated. Living beings can be born in 31 realms out of which we can "see" only two realms: human and animal.

- Think about the fact that all biological matter arises from just four bases of DNA, and all computer codes based on two units, $\mathbf{0}$ and 1 . Thus, one could see how complex the mind is when there are 89 types of citt $\bar{a}$, and 52 types of cetasikas are involved!

9. Nibbāna, in contrast to citta, cetasika, and rūpa, is UNCONDITIONED. Nibbāna attained by removing all root causes. Thus Nibbāna itself does not arise due to root causes and therefore is permanent.

- Nibbāna is attained at four steps or stages: Stream Entry (Sotāpanna), Once-Returner (Sakadāgāmi), Non-Returner (Anāgām $\bar{\imath}$ ), Arahant.
- At each stage, bad character or "gathi" (pronounced "gathi") that could result in births in some realms are "removed"; see, "Gati, Bhava, and Jāti." For example, at the Sotāpanna stage, hateful gati suitable for beings in niraya, greedy gati suitable for pet $\bar{a}$ (hungry ghosts), etc. are removed.
- All causes (and all "gati") removed at the Arahant stage. However, an Arahant lives as a normal human being until death and is not reborn anywhere in "this world." Let us first examine what the Buddha meant by "this world" in the next section.


## Thirty-One Planes of Existence

Here is a video from Carl Sagan to get an idea of how vast our "detectable universe" is:

## WebLink: YOUTUBE: Carl Sagan "100 Billion Galaxies each W/100 Billion Stars"

The "worldview" of the Buddha is not merely about the living beings on this planet. Our Solar system is one of an infinite number of "world-systems" (planetary systems). In the EACH planetary system with life (scientists have not found even one yet, but they are out there!), there are 31 "planes of existence." As we find out below, we can "see" only two of these realms: our human realm and the animal realm. Thus our "world" is much more complicated than even present-day science believes.

As some of you may already know, science cannot account for $\mathbf{9 5 \%}$ of the mass of the universe, which they label "dark energy" and "dark matter"; see, "The 4 Percent Universe" by Richard Panek (2011), or do a Google search on "dark energy and dark matter." That is why I say that the Buddha transcended "this world"; see, "Power of the Human Mind - Introduction." He was able to "see" the whole of existence: see "Godel's Incompleteness Theorem" under "Dhamma and Science."

- A being in a given plane of existence is reborn in any of the 31 realms at death. That happens instantaneously, and evidence for such a mechanism is slowly emerging from quantum mechanics; see, "Quantum Entanglement - We are all Connected."

The Buddha has described these different realms of existence in many suttā, and a convenient summary is at: "The Thirty-one Planes of Existence." For a detailed discussion see, " 31 Realms Associated with the Earth" In the following, I will use a visual to simplify things a bit and to provide a simple description of Nibbāna with respect to this "wider world of existence."

- Imagine a sphere with 31 shells, with a small sphere in the middle. Thus the total volume of the big sphere is filled by the center sphere and surrounding shells. The 31 sections represent the 31 planes of existence. I emphasize that this is just a visual. The reality is different. For example, animal and human realms coexist. Also, both time and space are infinite.

1. The inner 11 shells represent the $k \bar{a} m a$ loka, where all five physical sense faculties are present.

- The innermost sphere represents the niraya (hell) where there is non-stop suffering; next is the animal realm. There are two more realms where suffering is higher than in the human plane.
- The human plane is the fifth shell. That is the last realm where greed, hate, and ignorance all prevail. However, this is unique in the sense that humans can also get rid of all those three and attain Nibbāna.
- The sixth through eleventh shells represent the realms of the $\operatorname{dev} \bar{a}$ (wrongly translated as gods by many). Devas do not have dense bodies with flesh and blood, and thus, they do not have the physical ailments. They do not generate greedy thoughts.

2. The next 16 shells represent realms where only two physical sense faculties (eye and ear) are active, in addition to mind. These beings have very fine bodies, even less dense than dev $\bar{a}$. These are called $r \bar{u} p a$ lokā.
3. The last four shells represent the arūpa lok $\bar{a}$, where beings have ultra-fine bodies and only the mind faculty; they do not have physical senses.
4. In $r \bar{u} p a$ and $a r \bar{u} p a ~ l o k \bar{a}$, living beings are in jhānic states, and those beings do not have either greed or hate; but they still have ignorance.

- Humans can attain these jhānic states, and thus humans can "temporarily live" in those lok $\bar{a}$; see, "Power of the Human Mind - Anāriya or Mundane Jhānā."
- The 16 realms in the rūpa loka correspond to the four lower $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$, and the four realms in the arūpa loka correspond to the four higher $j h a \bar{a} \bar{a}$.

5. Now, a lot of you may be thinking, "How do I know all this is true? Is there any evidence?." There are a lot of things we do not know about "this world." We cannot rely on our senses or even science to verify/confirm these; see, "Wrong Views (Micchā Ditthi) - A Simpler Analysis" and "Dhamma and Science."

- Only within the last 50 years or so that science has accepted that our universe has more than a few galaxies (now science has confirmed that there are billions of galaxies!).
- Furthermore, the newest findings (yet unconfirmed) in string theory indicate that we live in a 10dimensional world (of course we cannot see the other spatial dimensions), not a 3-dimensional world. For a fun look at different spatial dimensions, see, "Consciousness Dependence on Number of Dimensions."

6. Any living being (including each of us) has been in all realms in this beginning-less samisāra. We have been in the niraya (hell), and we have been at the highest (except the five pure abodes in rūpa loka which can be accessed only by $A n a \bar{a} g \bar{m} \bar{\imath}$ or Non-Returners).
7. Above the human realm, there is relatively less suffering (except at death, which is inevitable). However, unless one has achieved at least the Stream Entry (Sotāpanna) stage, even a living being in the highest plane can fall to any lower level. Therefore, a normal human is bound to end up in the niraya (hell) at some point; once there one will spend a long agonizing time there and eventually come out. Each of us has done this many times over. The cause of births in different realms is explained in terms of "kamma seeds"; see, "Sañkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka").
8. So, each living being moves from one realm to another, but spends the most time in the four lower worlds, mainly because once fallen there, it is hard to come out. This "samisāric wandering" is the critical point to think about and comprehend.
9. As one moves away from the center, the level of suffering decreases and the level of mundane pleasure increases up to the 11th realm. After that in the rūpa and arūpa lok $\bar{a}$ it is mainly the jhānic pleasures, not the sense pleasures; see, "Three Kinds of Happiness - What is Nirämisa Sukha?."
10. The human realm and the animal realm are the only ones where a being is born to parents. In all other realms, living beings are born instantaneously, formed fully, within an instant (cittakkhana) of dying in the previous life. That is an opapātika birth. That is why the Buddha said, "mano pubbañgama dhamma............" The mind is the root cause, not matter.

- As discussed in the Abhidhamma section, even the humans and animals start their "bhava" opapatically as gandhabbā; see, "Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya)." They begin building a "dense physical body" after getting into a womb.

11. A person who becomes an Arahant or attains Nibbāna, will not be reborn in any of these 31 realms. Thus, Nibbāna is not difficult to understand: see, "Nibbāna - Is it Difficult to Understand?", and "What are Rūpa? Relation to Nibbāna", and other posts (by the way, you can type a keyword in the "Search box" at top right to get a list of relevant posts).

- Nibbāna, in the present model, corresponds to getting out of all 31 shells, out of the big sphere; no more rebirth in any of the 31 realms. Nibbāna is where the permanent sukha or nirāmisa sukha, is.
- When one attains Nibbāna or Arahanthood, he/she looks just like any other human but has no attachments to any worldly things. Until death, an Arahant is subjected to kamma vipāka. When that
kammic power is used up, he dies and is not reborn because he/she will not "willingly grasp" (or "upādāna") any of the possible births.

12. Why are we trapped in the 31 realms? Because we perceive that there is happiness to be had in "this world." We are not aware that there is much suffering in the lower four realms. Many people look at their lives and say, "where is this suffering the Buddha was talking about?": It is the hidden suffering that is there not only in this world but mostly in the lowest four realms. The problem is that once fallen there, it is hard to come back up. In those realms - animal realm included - beings are more like robots. They do not have developed minds like humans.

- No one or no external force is keeping us in "this world" of 31 realms. Content with sense pleasures, do not see the suffering "in the long term" or even in this life as we get old. Thus we are clinging to everything in this world like an octopus grabbing its prey with all eight legs. And we are not aware that there is a better kind of pleasure in Nibbāna, in detaching from "this world"; see, "Three Kinds of Happiness - What is Nirāmisa Sukha?." (Also, unless a Buddha comes along, we do not know about the 31 realms and are not aware of the suffering in the lower four realms).

13. Can we taste Nibbānic "pleasure"?. Yes. We can feel it in increments, even below the Stream Entry (Sotāpanna) stage; see, "How to Taste Nibbāna." That is nirāmisa sukha, the "pleasure of giving up worldly things."

- This nirāmisa sukha has "quantum jumps" (substantial instantaneous changes) at the four stages of Nibbāna: Stream Entry, Once-Returner, Non-Returner, Arahant. Thus when one is on the Path, one can experience nirāmisa sukha at varying degrees, all the way to Nibbānic bliss, during this very lifetime; see, at the end of "The Four Stages in Attaining Nibbāna."

14. All these 31 realms are in our solar system (cakkavāla or Chakrawāta in Sinhala). They are associated with the Earth. There are billions of such cakkavāla (planetary systems) in existence at all times with living beings.

- These are in clusters of the small, medium, and large "world systems" (galaxies, galaxy clusters, and superclusters?). But none is permanent. They come into being and eventually perish. Within the past 100 years or so, scientists have confirmed the existence of billions of planetary systems within each galaxy. And there are billions of such galaxies in our universe!

We have been born in almost all of these realms in our samisāric journey that has no traceable beginning.
Continues the discussion in , "Our Two Worlds: Material and Mental", ........

### 2.7.2 Our Two Worlds: Material and Immaterial

May 14, 2016; Revised November 25, 2016; September 30, 2019; October 26, 2019; January 11, 2020; April 6, 2021; September 10, 2022

## Material World and Immaterial (Invisible) World

1. Our "human world" is made of two types of worlds:

- The material world ( $r \bar{u} p a$ loka) that we experience with the five physical senses. This is our familiar world with living beings and inert objects. This world has sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and body touches. For example, we experience sights via, "cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviñãānaì," where cakkhu viñ̃̃āna is "seeing." The other four sensory faculties have similar expressions; see, "Contact Between Āyatana Leads to Vipāka Viññāna." [Here, paṭicca [paṭi $+c a$ ] means cakkhu and rūpa "getting together" or "making contact."]
- We can also recall our memories from the past and any future hopes/expectations that we have. Those are in the "immaterial world" we experience with our minds. It is also called the "nāma loka" or "viññāna dhātu."
- Here we use the phrase "immaterial world" ("nāma loka") to describe those dhammā that can only be experienced with the mind VIA, "manañca patticca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviñnān̄am.". Those dhammā include concepts, memories, etc in addition to kamma büja with energy; see below. [Here, pațicca $[p a t ̣ i+c a]$ means mana and dhamma "getting together" or "making contact."]
- Note that there are six types of dhātu. Five dhātus (pathavi, āpo, tejo, vāyo, ākāsa) are associated with the rūpa loka. The sixth, viññanna dhātu, is associated with the nāma loka.

2. Those two worlds co-exist. We experience the immaterial (invisible) world or the nāma loka with the mind.

- There are many things that we cannot "see" but we know to exist. For example, we know that radio and television signals are all around us, but we cannot "see" them. We need special equipment like radios or TVs to detect those signals.
- Those dhammā in the immaterial world are just like that. An organ (mana indriya) in the brain detects those dhammā. Scientists are not aware of that yet. They think memories, for example, are stored in the brain. They are not.
- Those memories are in that immaterial world that co-exists with the material world. Just like a radio can detect those invisible radio waves, mana indriya detects those "unseen" memories (and kamma bïja that bring kamma vipāka.)
- You may ask how can the mana indriya sort out all those different memories and uncountable kamma bija from our past lives. Did you realize that there are numerous radio and TV signals in a major city? Just like a radio or a TV can sort out and detect those signals, mana indriya can detect various types of dhammā.


## What Are Dhammā?

3. Dhamm $\bar{a}$ are what we perceive with the mind with the help of the mana indriya in the brain. Dhamm $\bar{a}$ include our memories in addition to kamma bïja (kamma bhava) that can bring vipāka.

- Only those with iddhi (super-normal) powers can recall memories from past lives. However, some children can remember past lives; see "Evidence for Rebirth."
- But dhammā (plural) also includes numerous kamma bija due to our past kamma (not only from the present life but from past lives.) They are not mere memories but have energies.
- Those dhammā with energy (i.e., kamma bija) are CREATED by our minds. Specifically, they are created in javana citta. For deep analysis, see "The Origin of Matter - Suddhatthaka."
- Einstein's famous equation relates tangible matter and energy: $\mathrm{E}=\mathrm{m} * \mathrm{c}^{\wedge} 2$, where E is energy, c is the speed of light, and $m$ is mass (amount of matter.)
- Just like plant seeds can germinate and become trees, our kamma bija (kamma seeds; bija means "seeds") can germinate in our minds and bring kamma vipāka.


## Rūpa Can be Dense or Fine (Subtle)

4. Rūpa in Buddha Dhamma cannot be translated into English as "matter" or "solid objects." As we discussed above, our kammic energies are "stored" in the immaterial world (viññāna dhātu) as very fine rūpa called dhammā.

- Of course, the word "dhamma" (without the long "a") refers to a theory or teaching, like in Buddha Dhamma. Only when used in the plural, dhamm $\bar{a}$ refer to those fine $r \bar{u} p \bar{a}$ detected with the mind (with the help of mana indriya.)
- Therefore, those very fine $r \bar{u} p \bar{a}$ are called "dhamma"" They are "anidassanaim, appatighaim," meaning they cannot be seen or detected by our five physical senses; see, "What are Dhamma? - A Deeper Analysis." They include "kammic energies" that can bring vipāka at any time.
- They bring vipāka when the corresponding dhammā contact the mana indriya and get passed down to hadaya vatthu. Since viññāña dhātu pervades the universe, dhammā (or kamma bija) can bring vipāka anywhere in the universe.

5. The five physical senses detect "dense" $r \bar{u} p \bar{a}$ in the material world. Such dense $r \bar{u} p \bar{a}$ are ABOVE the smallest "unit of matter" in Buddha Dhamma, called suddhatthaka. (A suddhatṭhaka is a billion times smaller than an atom in present-day science). The 28 types of rūpa consist of these "dense types of $r \bar{u} p a^{\prime \prime}$; see "Rūpa (Material Form)."

- The fine $r \bar{u} p \bar{a}$ are normally not called $r \bar{u} p a$ but dhamma $\bar{a}$ to make the distinction. Dhammā are very fine $r \bar{u} p a$ which are at or below the suddhatṭhaka stage. They are the $r \bar{u} p a$ are grasped only by the mana indriya or dhammayatana: "anidassanam், appaṭighaim, dhammayatana pariyapanna rūpaí. " For a more in-depth analysis, see, "What are Rūpa? - Dhammā are Rūpa too!."


## All Thirty-One Realms Share the Immaterial World

6. The immaterial world is like a fine fabric that connects all living beings. We cannot experience the immaterial world with the five physical senses (that we use to experience the material world.) All 31 realms share the immaterial world.

- In the four realms of the Arūpa loka, "dense matter" formed by suddhatthaka is absent (except for the hadaya vatthu of the arūpa Brahmā). Beings in the arūpa loka (arūpāvacara Brahmā) experience only dhamm $\bar{a}$. They do not have any five physical senses and only have the mind (hadaya vatthu).


Click to open in pdf format: WebLink: PDF File: Two Types of Loka

- Thus the "material world" is accessible only to living beings in the kāma loka and rūpa loka.
- Arūpa loka means there are no "condensed rūpa" (like those in kāma loka and rūpa loka), but of course, dhamm $\bar{a}$ are there (those arūpa beings can think and recall past events just like us).
- Furthermore, even in the $r \bar{u} p a$ loka only fine and subtle matter exists. There are no "solid objects" like trees. If we visit a rūpa loka, we may not see anything with our eyes.


## The World in Terms of Dhātu

7. Let us briefly discuss the main points depicted in the above chart. Everything in this world is made of 6 dhātu: pathavi, āpo, tejo, vāyo, akāsa, and viññāṇa. Five of them constitute the "material world" and the viññāna dhātu represents the "immaterial world."

- By the way, $a k \bar{a} s a$ is not merely "empty space." We will discuss this later.
- The basic building block for the material world is suddhatthaka. Not long ago, scientists thought that atoms were the building blocks, but now they say that even those elementary particles have structure. A suddhatthaka is much finer than any elementary particle.
- In the immaterial world (or the mental plane), there are the mental precursors to suddhatthaka. They are dhammā, gati, and bhava. Based on our gati, we make suddhatthaka in our javana citta; see, "The Origin of Matter - Suddhatthaka."


## Five Physical Senses Detect Dense Rūpa and Mana Indriya Detects Dhammā

8. We have five sense faculties to experience the material world: eyes, ears, tongue, nose, and body. They pass down the sensory inputs to the five pasāda rūpa located in the gandhabba or the monomaya kāya, which overlaps our physical body); see "Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya)." By the way, gandhabba is not a Mahāyāna concept: "Gandhabba State - Evidence from Tipitaka."

- On the mental side, we have a mana indriya in the brain to sense the immaterial world; see, "Brain Interface between Mind and Body."
- Based on those five physical sense contacts with the material world and the contacts of the mana indriya with the immaterial world, our thoughts arise in the hadaya vatthu (also located in the gandhabba or the monomaya $k$ āya); see, "Does any Object (Rūpa) Last only 17 Thought Moments?."
- That is a very brief description of the chart above. One could gain more information by clicking on the links provided and using the "Search" button. Don't worry too much if all this does not make complete sense.

9. Thus it is important to understand that there are two types of $r \bar{u} p a$ in our human world:

- Tangible matter in the material world that we experience with the help of the five physical senses.
- Then there are unseen (anidassana), and intangible (appatigha) rūpa such as thoughts, perceptions, plans, and memories. They are dhamm $\bar{a}$, mano ru$p a, ~ g a t i, ~ b h a v a, ~ n a \overline{m a ~ g o t t a . ~ I t ~ i s ~ t h e ~ m a n a ~ i n d r i y a ~}$ in the brain that helps detect subtle rūpa.
- Both types of rūpa are eventually detected and experienced by the mind (hadaya vatthu). The hadaya $v a t t h u$ is not located in the brain but the body of gandhabba and overlaps the physical heart region of the body; see "Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya)."
- Comprehending this "wider picture" may need a little bit of effort. The world is complex and much of the complexity is associated with the mind. The seat of the mind is not in the brain but the fine body (manomaya kāya) of the gandhabba.


## The Dream World

10. Another part of our immaterial world is the dream world.

- When we dream, we "see" people and material objects. But we cannot say where those are located. They do not have a physical location; they are in the immaterial plane. And we do not "see" those dreams with our eyes, but with the mana indriya.
- When we sleep, our five physical senses do not function. But the mana indriya in the brain does. Scientists do confirm that parts of our brains are active during sleep.
- What is experienced in Arūpa Loka is somewhat similar to seeing dreams. Of course, one can contemplate in the arūpa loka. However, one is unable to read or listen. Therefore, one cannot learn Tilakkhana (anicca, dukkha, anatta) from a Noble Person. Thus, one is unable to attain the Sotāpanna stage of Nibbāna in the arūpa loka. But if one had attained the Sotāpanna stage before being born there, one can meditate and attain higher stages of Nibbāna.


## Dense Rūpa for "Rough" Sensory Contacts

11. There is another way to look at our sense experiences. Living beings are attached to this world because they expect to gain pleasure from this world. Such pleasures are obtained by making contact with rupa. Those $r \bar{u} p \bar{a}$ come at various densities.

- Bodily pleasures are achieved by the strongest contact (touch). Then come taste, smell, vision, and sounds, becoming less dense in that order.
- The soffest contact is via dhamma. This is our immaterial world; we think, plan for the future, remember things from the past, etc: We do this all the time, and we can do it anywhere. Another way to say this is to say that we engage in mano, vacī, and kāya sañkhāra.
- Thus, contacts by the mana indriya with dhammā in the mano loka constitute a significant portion of sense experience. That involves mano rūpa (dhamma, gati, bhava, nāma gotta) in the mind plane or the immaterial world.

12. The way a living being experiences and enjoys (or suffers) sense contacts is different in the three main categories of existence: kāma loka, rūpa loka, and arūpa loka.

- Most "rough" or "olārika" sense contacts are available only in the kāma loka. Even here, they are roughest in the niraya (the lowest realm) and generally reduce in "roughness" as moving up to the human realm, the fifth. The six deva realms are significantly "softer" than the human realm; deva bodies are much finer (like gandhabba) and a normal human cannot see them.
- The roughest sense contacts (touch, taste, and smell) are absent in the rūpa loka. Only visual and sound contacts are available for the Brahmā in the 16 rūpa loka realms, in addition to the mind.
- Those arūpi Brahmā in the four arūpa loka realms has only the mind, with which they experience only the finest rūpa (dhamma) that are below the suddhatt thaka stage.
- Those Brahmā in both rūpi and arūpi loka have seen the perils of "kāma assāda" that are available in the kāma loka. They had enjoyed jhānic pleasures as humans and valued those more than the "rough" sensory pleasures. They have given up the craving for those "rough" sense pleasures that are available via touch, taste, and smell.


## Stronger Cravings Match "Denser Sensory Contacts"

13. We can get an idea of such "soft" and "rough" sense contacts with the following example. Suppose someone (a grandmother is a good example) watches her grandchild laughing, dancing, and having a good time.

- At first, she may be watching from a distance and enjoying the sight of the baby having fun.
- Then she goes and hugs the child. It is not enough to just watch from a distance; she needs to touch the child.
- If the child keeps wiggling and having a good time, the grandmother may start kissing the child. In some cases, the grandmother may start tightening the hold on the child, even without realizing it and may make the child cry out in pain.
- This last scenario exemplifies how the craving for extreme sense pleasures can instead lead to suffering. Of course, the craving for olārika sense pleasures leads to most suffering.
- But suffering is there even in the $r \bar{u} p i$ and arūpi realms. Even at the level of arūpi Brahm $\bar{a}$ - where the attachment is only to pleasures of the softest of the rūpa (dhamma) -, there is inevitable suffering at the end when they have to give up that existence and come back down to the human realm.


## Less Suffering in "Less-Dense" Realms

14. Therefore, the level of inevitable suffering goes hand in hand with the "denseness" of the sensory contact.

- Pains, aches, and illnesses are there only in the lowest five realms (including the human realm) where there are dense physical bodies. In the higher realms, those are absent. This is the price even humans pay for being able to experience "rough contact pleasures" such as a body massage, sex, eating, and smelling.
- We humans in the kāma loka enjoy close and "rough" sense pleasures. In addition, most times, just enjoying sense pleasures is not enough; we like to "own" those things that provide sense pleasures. For example, people like to "own" vacation homes; it is not enough to rent a house in that location just for a visit.
- This tendency to "own" pleasurable things also goes down in higher realms. There are fewer material things to "own" in Brahma lokas, especially in the arūpi Brahma realms.


## Connection to Magga Phala

15. As one attains higher stages of Nibbāna, craving for "rough" sensory pleasures and the desire to "own" things go down.

- A Sotāpanna has only "seen" the perils of kāma assāda; he/she still enjoys them. Thus, he/she will still be born in the kāma loka realms, but not in the apāyā.
- A Sakadāgāmī may still enjoy "kāma assāda," but has no desire to "own" those things that provide pleasures. It is enough to live in a nice rented house, and there is no desire to own a nice house. A Sakadāgāmī can see the burden of "owning things." A Sakadāgāmī will be born only in realms above the human realm.
- An Anāgāmī has no special interest in enjoying kāma assāda. He/she eats to quench the hunger (but will eat delicious foods when offered.) An Anāgāmī will never prioritize sensory pleasure over the "pleasure of Dhamma" (of course, Dhamma here means Buddha Dhamma). He/she will be born in the rūpa realms reserved for the $A n \bar{a} g \bar{a} m \bar{s}$ upon death, and will not be reborn in kāma loka.
- An Arahant has no desire for even jhānic pleasures, and will not be born anywhere in the 31 realms upon death.

16. Each habitable planetary system (cakkavāla) has all 31 realms of existence, even though we can only see two realms (human and animal) in ours.

This is discussed next: " 31 Realms Associated with the Earth",

## 31 Realms Associated with the Earth

May 20, 2016; revised November 29, 2018; April 25, 2019; August 27, 2019; March 10, 2020; July 23, 2022

1. There are many things in "this world" that we cannot see, hear, etc. (i.e., perceive with our six senses). Scientists admit that they cannot account for $96 \%$ of the "stuff" that makes our universe. See "WebLink: PDF Download: The 4 Percent Universe: Dark Matter, Dark Energy, and the Race to Discover the Rest of Reality" by Richard Panek (2011). For more information, Google "dark energy, dark matter."

- Many forms of energy do not have significant mass (or weight) but exist in the universe.
- A good example is that we are unaware of the huge amounts of "information" surrounding us. Hundreds and thousands of radio and television signals pervade a major city. We cannot see or hear any of those programs (i.e., unaware of their existence) without having a radio or a television "tuned" to the correct frequency.
- In the same way, we are unaware of the existence of 29 of the 31 realms centered around the Earth. Living beings in some of those realms live side-by-side with us, but we are unaware of them. Most of these beings have bodies "more like energy forms" than solid bodies.
- With better detection technologies, we may be able to communicate with some of these living beings with subtle bodies in the future. Of course, those who develop abhiñ̃̃̄̄ powers can also see some of them. We will get back to this issue below, but let us first discuss the relative locations of the 31 realms.

2. Buddha Dhamma says there are 31 realms associated with each habitable planetary system (cakkavāla). And there are an infinite number of them in the universe (this latter fact has been confirmed by science).

- Modern science has gradually confirmed this broader worldview explained by the Buddha 2500 years ago; see "Dhamma and Science - Introduction." Only a few hundred years ago, the Western world accepted a universe centered around the Earth with stars "embedded in a celestial sphere"; see, "WebLink: WIKI: Celestial spheres."

3. In the post, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma - Introduction," we described a model that consisted of 31 concentric "shells." The actuality is close to that analogy, with some additional features. I have compiled a summary of the 31 realms in the " 31 Realms of Existence" post.

- The sphere with 31 concentric shells overlaps the Earth. The lowest realm, niraya (or hell), is deep inside the Earth.
- The next four realms (preta, asura, animal, and human) are closer to the Earth's surface. Some preta apāyā deep inside the Earth, but some pretās live on the surface. Asurās live on the surface, mostly in remote locations such as the ocean and isolated mountains. Humans can not see both pretās and asurās.
- Many suttā in the Tipitaka describe those three realms (niraya, preta, asura) in detail. The Peta Vatthu in the Khuddaka Nikāya of the Tipitaka describes pretās as well as gandhabbā.
- Most humans are born in the niraya, preta, asura, and animal realms at the end of the human bhava; see a series of suttas starting with "WebLink: suttacentral: Passing Away as Humans and Reborn in Hell (SN 56.102)."

4. Of course, humans and animals live on the surface of the Earth. Gandhabbā only belong to either the human or animal bhava. Those gandhabbā are waiting for a suitable womb to be born with human (or animal) bodies; see the Mental Body - Gandhabba section. There are many other posts as well.

- Thus we say that those gandhabbā are in para loka (nether world). Even though they live alongside us, we cannot see their subtle bodies: "Hidden World of the Gandhabba: Netherworld (Para Loka)."
- So, our world is much more complicated than we think.

5. Then come the six realms for the devas. The lowest of the six deva realms are on the surface of the Earth. Those devas are Bhummatta devas belonging to the Cātummahārājika deva realm; see " 31 Realms of Existence." They live mostly in their residences (deva vimāna) based on trees. Of course, we cannot see them or their "residences."

- The higher deva realms extend out from the Earth.
- The 16 rūpa realms extend even higher above the Earth.
- The four arūpa loka realms are located even further from the Earth.
- All these realms are concentric with Earth's center. As the Earth spins around its axis and rotates around the Sun, all 31 domains move along with the Earth, just like the human realm.
- Buddha has named these various realms in several key suttā, for example, in WebLink: suttacentral: Dhammacappavattana Sutta (SN 56.11) and WebLink: suttacentral: Mahā Samaya Sutta (DN 20).

6. In general, beings in higher realms can "see" those in the lower ones, but not the other way around (if they came "face-to-face"). For example, devas can see us but cannot see the rūpi or arūpi brahmā. Rūpi brahmā can see devas but cannot see the arūpi brahmā.

- From the previous post, "Our Two Worlds: Material and Immaterial," we know that there are only traces of "real" matter (suddhatthaka) in the arūpa realms. Thus beings in the other 27 realms cannot "see" arūpi brahmā.
- When one develops abhiññ̄ $\bar{a}$ powers, one is said to be able to "see" successively higher realms. Of course, one needs to be able to get into the fourth jhāna to develop such abhiñ̃n̄̄a powers. Eventually, when one develops the eighth jhāna (and can get into attha samāpatti), one could be able to see many of the 31 realms.

7. Now let us look at "things" in this world from a different perspective. A fundamental premise of Buddha Dhamma is the following. "Energy" is embedded in spin (bramana in Pāli; bramana or


- The smallest unit of matter, a suddhatthaka, does not stay still. Depending on its rotation or spin (bramana) and its rotation around something else (paribbramana), other "modes of energy" and "types of rūpa" arise.
- It is easy to visualize by considering the motions of the Earth. We all know that the Earth rotates (paribbhramana) around the Sun, and it takes a year to complete one revolution around the Sun.
- While doing that the Earth rotates around its North-South axis; this is the spinning (bramana). It takes a day for the Earth to complete one such spin.
- Here is an excellent video that discusses this universal feature:

WebLink: YOUTUBE: Rotation in Space - Professor Carolin Crawford
8. There are an infinite number of such cakkavāla (star systems or a collection of planets revolving around a star) in our universe. Each planet in a "star system" undergoes spin around its axis and rotates around the star. Science has confirmed this within the past hundred years.

- Each cakkavāla may have "Earth-like" planets with their own 31 realms.
- A cluster of thousand of such cakkavāla is called a "cūlanikā lokadhātu" or a "small world system." Thousand of such systems is a "majjhimikā lokadhātu" or a "medium world system." A cluster of thousand of such systems is a "mahāsahassī lokadhātu" or a "large world system"; see "WebLink: suttacentral: Cūlanikā Sutta (AN 3.80)."
- Also see "WebLink: suttacentral: Pathamakosala Sutta (AN 10.29)" and "Buddhism and Evolution Aggañ̃̃a Sutta (DN 27)."

9. Scientists have also confirmed that all elementary particles (the smallest particles scientists can detect) have spin. Furthermore, in an atom, the electrons can be said to "rotate" around the nucleus, in a crude analogy with the Earth rotating around the Sun.

- Then our Solar system rotates too. The next higher conglomerates (for example, galaxies) also undergo rotation. Because of these rotations, all these structures tend to flatten out. For instance, in our Solar system, all the planets are on a plane. In the same way, all galaxies in a galaxy cluster in a flattened disk.
- Therefore, even though we see a very calm starry night sky, things out there are in constant motion. Furthermore, violent explosions of stars (supernova) occur a billion times a year in the visible universe.
- That is why the realities out there are much more different than what we perceive with our crude sensory faculties. All the atoms and molecules in our bodies are in constant motion, not to mention the spins and rotations of uncountable suddhatṭhaka that constitute them.
- Thus everything around us is in constant flux. Our senses are just not capable of detecting them.

10. Modern science has also enabled us to see more and more living beings around us. For example, the Western world was unaware of microscopic living beings until the advent of the microscope by Leeuwenhoek in the late 17th century: WebLink: WIKI: Antonie van Leeuwenhoek.

- Now we know that billions of living beings are in the body of a human being. See, "There are as many creatures on your body as there are people on Earth!."
- Hopefully, new technologies will enable us to "see" many living beings belonging to the preta, asura, and deva realms and gandhabbā in the future.
- Even though some claims of detecting horrible sounds from the niraya deep inside the Earth have not been confirmed, see "Does the Hell (Niraya) Exist?."

11. As one moves up to higher realms, attachments to the material aspects decreases. That is why living beings in higher realms have less number of sense faculties.

- In the kāma loka, one has all six sense faculties. Even there, the higher deva realms have "less strong sense contacts" with less dense bodies that we cannot see.
- Rūpi brahmā have much more delicate "bodies" compared to kāma loka devas. They do not have touch, taste, and smell sensations.
- "Matter" is very subtle in higher rūpa loka and arūpa loka realms. Therefore, even in the final destruction of a cakkavāla (in a supernova explosion), the realms above the Abhassara realm (realm \#17) are not destroyed. That is why the lifetimes of those Brahma $\bar{a}$ are much longer than a single maha kappa (an eon or the age of the universe); see " 31 Realms of Existence."

12. Now we can understand why we cannot see the other 29 realms.

- In the higher realms around the Earth, living beings (and their environments) have very little solid matter. That is why we cannot see them or their habitats.
- The four arūpa realms are mostly devoid of even the smallest unit of matter (suddhatthaka). Realms in the rūpa loka and even in the deva realms of the kāma loka are made of fine matter that we cannot see.
- The beings in the niraya (hell) have very dense bodies subjected to various forms of torture; of course, that realm is located deep inside the Earth.

13. We are used to the perception of "solid tangible physical bodies" of humans and animals. That is called the "ghana sañ̃̄̄̄." However, those physical bodies are mostly "empty." That is because atoms, the basic building blocks, are mostly empty.

- Furthermore, our physical bodies start with a single cell (zygote) in a mother's womb. One needs a microscope to see a single cell. A gandhabba (even smaller than a cell) merges with that zygote formed by the union of a mother and a father. See "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception."
- Before entering the womb, gandhabba had a fine body similar to that of a rūpi Brahma. Then that cell grows by taking in food first from the mother and then eating once coming out of the womb. Our heavy physical bodies result from the accumulation of inert matter (by eating food).
- And as we discussed in "Bhava and Jāti - States of Existence and Births Therein," a human bhava may not end at the physical death of the solid body that lives about 100 years. A human bhava may last
thousands of years, and that lifestream continues its existence in many "physical bodies" with the gandhabba as the basis.

14. For example, in rebirth stories, the physical bodies in successive births are different, even though there may be some similarities; see "Evidence for Rebirth." In between consecutive lives, the lifestream continues in the form of its core, the gandhabba.

- The solid body of a few hundred pounds that we consider "me" is just a shell. When the gandhabba leaves the body - either at death or sometimes during a heart operation (see, "Manomaya Kāya and Out-of-Body Experience (OBE)"), it has no attributes of life.
- That is an excellent way to contemplate the "ghana sañ̃̄̄"" or realize that our physical bodies are mostly dead matter, an "inert shell" in which the gandhabba resides. If a person of 300 pounds loses 100 pounds of weight, really that person "loses" one-third of his/her identity? It is the same person because the gandhabba is the same.
- All beings in the 31 realms eventually have "mental bodies" that are very fine and comparable to that of a gandhabba. Even with our most excellent microscopes, we cannot see their ultra-fine "bodies."

15. The above picture gives us a perspective on how foolish we are to focus on material wealth, titles, etc., for at most 100 years in this life. By living a moral life and doing meritorious deeds, we can make a much bigger "investment" in the future. That is by accruing merits that could lead to rebirths in the Deva or Brahma worlds where there is much less suffering and no physical illnesses.

- But even in those higher realms, death is inevitable no matter how long the lifetimes are. Most of all, there is no escape from the possibility of future births in the lowest four realms. Thus Nibbāna is the only permanent solution.

16. Following is a fairly good video describing the general features of the 31 realms:

WebLink: youtube: Bhante Anandajoti: The Planes of Existence
Next in the series, "Gandhabba - Only in Human and Animal Realms."
2.7.4 Gandhabba - Only in Human and Animal Realms

June 4, 2016; revised October 3, 2019; October 17, 2022

## Difference Between Bhava (Existence) and Jäti (Births)

1. Many posts on the critical concept of gandhabba not in this series. More are scattered throughout the site, and especially in the "Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya)" section. These posts discuss how a living being goes through rebirth process without having an unchanging "soul." But they maintain (ever-changing) personal characteristics or gati (pronounced "gathi") between two adjacent lives.

- It all started with a post on this basic concept at the start of this website: "What Reincarnates? - Concept of a Lifestream."
- While it is good to get an idea of the nature of all living beings in the 31 realms, it is not necessary to learn those in detail. I want to provide a complete and inter-consistent picture compatible with the Buddha's original teachings in this section.
- However, the concept of the gandhabba is essential to understand how we are reborn with physically different bodies - multiple times - in a single human existence (human bhava.) That human bhava may last thousands of years; see, "Bhava and Jāti - States of Existence and Births Therein." Unlike devas and Brahmā (born just once,) we live and die to be reborn human multiple times before switching to another realm.


## This World Has Thirty-One Realms of Existence

2. We will first review two significant aspects of the 31 realms. Then we will discuss the concept of a gandhabba (which applies only to human and animal realms) in more detail.

- First is that the transition from one existence (bhava) to another is ALWAYS instantaneous; it happens at the cuti-patisandhi moment ("cuti" pronounced "chuthi'); see, "Patisandhi Citta - How the Next Life is Determined According to Gati" and "Cuti-Patisandhi - An Abhidhamma Description."
- The second aspect is that in the 20 higher-lying realms, those beings (Brahmā) weigh less than a billionth of an atom in modern science!
- All beings with dense bodies are in the 11 realms of the kāma loka. Even there, the six deva realms have less-dense bodies compared to humans.


## Death of Physical Body Different From the End of an Existence

3. The following chart shows the major features of what happens at the cuti-patisandhi moment. That is when a living being makes a transition from one bhava (existence) to another, e.g., from being a human to a Brahma.


Click to open the pdf file: WebLink: PDF File: Births in Different Realms

- Without exception, at each such cuti-pattisandhi moment, a new kammaja kāya is generated by the kammic energy fueling a new existence. That kammaja kāya ALWAYS has a hadaya vatthu. That is the seat of the mind (the quality of which depends on the realm).


## Types of "Bodies" In Different Realms

4. Thus it is essential to realize that the critical thing that happens at the cuti-patisandhi moment is the generation of the unbelievably small kammaja kāya, which contains the blueprint for the new existence. At that point, the mechanism of "birth" can be roughly divided into three categories, as shown in the chart.

- The Brahmā in the rūpi and arūpi realms (top 20 realms) are instantaneously born with very little else other than several suddhatthaka-size "material elements." Their body features are discussed below. The main feature here is that they are spontaneously born in those realms and live very long times there until death. Then another cuti-patisandhi moment takes that being to a new bhava.
- The only difference in the six deva realms (in kāma loka) compared to the Brahmā is that they do have well-defined physical bodies (karaja kāya) like us. However, those bodies are much less dense, and we cannot see them even if they stand right before us.
- A deva is born with the body equivalent of a 16 -year-old, and their food is a drink called amurtha. Devas have all five sense faculties like us and are said to the optimum sense pleasures available in $k \bar{a} m a$ loka. They also live that one life until death and then switch to a new existence (bhava) at the cutipatisandhi moment.
- That completes the discussion on the green box to the right.

5. What happens in the green box to the left is a bit more complicated. That is because each realm in the ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$ (lowest four realms) is somewhat different. We will discuss the animal realm together with the human realm (middlebox) below. Let us first discuss briefly the lowest three realms indicated by the green box on the left.

- The lowest is the niraya (hell), where beings are born with full dense bodies like ours instantaneously. They undergo ceaseless cutting, burning, and various other forms of torture. They die innumerable times, only to be reborn promptly. Only when the kammic energy for that existence is exhausted (usually after millions of years) that they encounter the next cuti-patisandhi moment.
- Beings in the preta (peta) realm also are born instantaneously and can have subtle or dense bodies. The distinguishing feature there is suffering due to hunger.
- Beings in the asura realm are beings with massive, very inactive bodies. They are also born instantaneously and live those miserable lives until the next cuti-patisandhi moment.


## Kammaja Kāya (Gandhabba) Can Last Thousands of Years With Many Human Rebirths

6. That brings us to the middle green box, representing the human and animal realms. A little bit more complicated process takes place here. Here also, a being with a subtle (energy) body is produced at the cutipațisandhi moment, just like in the rūpa loka realms. It is called a gandhabba.

- A gandhabba has the basic thrija kāya of a rūpi Brahma: kammaja kāya, cittaja kāya, and utuja $k \bar{a} y a$, which we will discuss in detail below. Besides, a gandhabba may acquire a very fine karaja kāya (physical body) by inhaling the aroma. Thus a gandhabba is denser than a rūpi Brahma. It has a "body" more like a deva in density.
- A gandhabba could be in that state for many years until a suitable womb becomes available. More precisely, the mother's mental state at that time must match the gati of the gandhabba. The evolution of the gandhabba in the womb is discussed in "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception." Then it is born as a new baby, grows, and eventually, that physical body also dies. If more kammic energy is left for the bhava, then the gandhabba leaves that dead body and waits for another womb. That process continues until the bhava energy is exhausted, and then it goes through the cuti-patisandhi moment to receive a new bhava; see the chart above.
- In addition to going into a womb, (in some animal species), gandhabba may enter an egg inside a female animal. At the death of an "egg-born" animal, gandhabba comes out and waits for another egg. It is the same procedure as above.


## Physical Body is Just a Temporary Shelter

7. One of the main benefits of learning about the gandhabba is helping remove the wrong view that "I am my physical body."

- On the contrary, a physical body is a temporary shelter that the gandhabba uses to experience the much-coveted "sense pleasures." In particular, smelling, eating, and touching (most of all, sex) require a
dense human body. Unfortunately, the human body can last only about 100 years. Even that body is in the "decay mode" after about 50 years. Thus, those sensory pleasures start diminishing, and eventually, that body dies.
- Then the gandhabba comes out of that dead body and waits for a suitable womb. If and when it gets into a womb, the new physical body is influenced by the new parents. Thus the new body can be very different from that in the previous birth. Even during this same "human bhava," our human bodies may look very different from one birth to another (as confirmed by rebirth stories).
- Of course, the gandhabba does not stay the same either. The only things that can be called "personal" to that gandhabba are its gati, which also evolve.
- That is a brief explanation of the above chart.


## Brahma "Bodies" Have Only a Trace of Matter

8. As mentioned in \#4 above, most lifeforms in the 31 realms have unbelievably tiny physical bodies. They are more like "energy bodies." Brahmā in the 16 rūpa loka realms and the four arūpa loka realms weigh less than a billionth of an atom! They may be thought more as energy packets.

- In case it was not clear from previous posts, we recall that an arūpa loka Brahma has a kammaja kāya consisting of just a vatthu dasaka.
- Rūpa loka Brahmā have vatthu dasaka (seat of the mind) and two pasāda rūpa for seeing and hearing. They also have kāya dasaka and bhava dasaka. Thus their kammaja kāya has five suddhatṭhaka-size elements. A rūpa loka Brahma also has a cittaja kāya (thought stream) and a utuja kāya (very fine).
- Thus any of the Brahmā cannot be seen with the most sophisticated microscope we have today.
- More details in, "Body Types in 31 Realms - Importance of Manomaya Kāya." A manomaya kāya, when referred to the human and animal realms, is the same as gandhabba.


## Kammaja Kāya of a Human Gandhabba

9. Let us again summarize the make up of a kammaja kāya of a human gandhabba. It has a hadaya vatthu (consisting of a vatthu dasaka), bhava dasaka, and kāya dasaka, and four pasāda rūpa (cakkhu dasaka, sota dasaka, gandha dasaka, jivhā dasaka).

- This kammaja kāya consists of 7 suddhattthaka in different bramana (spin) and paribramana (rotation) modes. That is how they become dasaka (units of ten or decads); see, " 31 Realms Associated with the Earth."
- Six of these define the sense faculties of the gandhabba: vatthu dasaka is the mind, and kāya, cakkhu, sota, gandha, and jivhā dasaka) are the "fine senses" that correspond to the body, eyes, ears, nose, and tongue in the physical body. Gandhabba can interact with the external world directly via them when outside the physical body. It can smell and inhale aroma giving rise to a very fine and subtle material body. However, that body is not solid enough to physically touch anything or to eat.
- The seventh dasaka is bhava dasaka, which - together with the kāya dasaka - defines what kind of a physical body it will start building once inside a womb. For example, bhava dasaka determines sex.

10. The mind becomes active as soon as the kammaja kāya forms at the cuti-patisandhi moment, the mind becomes active. The thought stream (cittaja kaya) starts, and the mind will be mainly in the bhavañga state. Simultaneously, an utuja kāya forms by the suddhatṭhaka generated by both the kammaja kāya and cittaja kāya.

- Thus immediately after the cuti-patisandhi moment, gandhabba has three "bodies" or thrija kāya. However, the cittaja kāya is all mental, and both the kammaja kāya and utuja kāya are very fine. They are more like "energy bodies."
- Soon after this "initial formation," the gandhabba can build a "subtle, misty" body (karaja kāya) by inhaling aroma (from fruits, trees, etc.). Still, an average human cannot see it, since it is not "dense enough." However, some people (especially those with abhiññā powers) can see "sufficiently solidified" gandhabbā.


## The desire for a Dense Human Body

11. But this gandhabba is continuously under stress because it cannot enjoy the most coveted sense pleasures of those with dense human bodies, i.e., eating and sex. It can see people enjoying these sense pleasures and is very much frustrated not being able to acquire a "real physical body." Some can stay in this state for many years if a suitable womb is unavailable.

- In some cases, they may spend the kammic energy for the human bhava and undergo another cutipatisandhi moment without inheriting a human body. That is why one is indebted to one's parents, no matter how bad they may be.

12. The story of the gandhabba gets more interesting (and complicated) after it goes through the first birth as an average human, and that human body dies. The gandhabba that comes out of that dead body is, of course, different from the original gandhabba. Its kammaja kāya has changed due to whatever abhisañkhāra that the humans cultivated. But the kammic energy for the human bhava does not change; if it had 1000 years worth of kammic energy at the cuti-patisandhi moment, that would deplete with time.

- Of course, there is no cuti-pattisandhi moment when a human dies with extra kammic energy for the human bhava. Death is the death of the physical body. The gandhabba comes out of that dead body and awaits a new womb; see the above chart. Thus all three components of the thrija kaya continue after the "death of the human."


## New Physical Body Incorporates Characteristics of New Parents Too

13. Let us consider some important features of this gandhabba that comes out of that dead body after its birth as a human.

- The kammaja kāya still has a copy of the previous physical body. However, when it starts a new physical body in the new womb, it also takes some physical features from the new parents. Thus the new physical body is a trade-off between those three influences. It may keep some distinguishing features (birthmarks or gunshot wounds, for example, as we have encountered in rebirth accounts. But it will acquire new features also from the new parents (skin color, size, etc.).
- The gandhabba that comes from the dead body is just a "misty, fine version" of the person at death. They often come out with imprints of the clothes they were wearing at death and may look just like that (in a ghostly, misty form) until going into a new womb. My teacher Thero has seen gandhabbā of people who died hundreds of years ago "wearing" those old costumes. Of course, they are not actual physical clothes.

14. Since the cittaja kāya also continues, their thought streams continue. So, if someone dies in an accident, he may not realize that he is dead for a while. If he died from a gunshot instantly, the gandhabba comes out and will look at the dead body trying to figure out what happened. He may wish to go home and finds himself instantly at home. And he will try to shout to others, but they don't hear. He may try to touch them, but he cannot. It takes seven days for a gandhabba to comprehend what happened entirely and to resign to his/her new life.

- That is also why children can recall their past life. But just like we start forgetting things from years ago, those children start forgetting about their previous life when they grow older. Furthermore, it is harder to remember from a past life compared than life.
- Another point is that most such rebirth accounts are from people who died while young in accidents. Those gandhabbā who come out of the bodies of people dying in old age are not likely to remember that life. That is because they might have lost their memories even during that life.

Next in the series, "Body Types in 31 Realms - Importance of Manomaya Kāya",

### 2.7.5 Body Types in 31 Realms - Importance of Manomaya Kāya

Published before October 23, 2015; revised May 31, 2016; Dec. 1, 2018; Dec. 8, 2020; August 7, 2022; October 17, 2022

## 31 Realms In 3 Loka

1. There are three main categories that the 31 realms can be divided into $\boldsymbol{k} \overline{\boldsymbol{a} m a}$ loka, rūpa loka, and arūpa loka.

- Living beings in the $k \bar{a} m a ~ l o k a$ are in 11 realms: four lowest realms (apāy $\bar{a} s$ ), the human realm, and six devā realms.
- Rūpa loka has 16 rūpāvacara brahma realms. A "rūpāvacara brahma" means a brahma in the rūpa loka.
- Arūpa loka has 4 arūpāvacara brahma realms.
- Different sets of sense faculties are associated with beings in those three types of "loka."


## Body Types in Arūpa Loka

2. Those in the arūpa loka have just the mind. Therefore, the only $r \bar{u} p a$ (or matter) associated with an arūpi Brahma is the hadaya vatthu, the smallest unit of matter in Buddha Dhamma is a suddhatthaka.

- An arūpāvacara brahma has a manomaya kāya that has only a hadaya vatthu.
- That suddhattthaka is unimaginably small; much smaller than an atom in modern science. So, we cannot see these beings.
- It is important to note that we cannot even see many microscopic beings that live among us, like those in drinking water. Just because we cannot see them, it does not mean they do not exist. Furthermore, a microscopic creature like an ameba is made of billions of suddhat!thaka! That should give an idea of a suddhatṭhaka.


## Body Types in Rūpa Loka

3. Those in the rūpa loka have just three sense faculties: eyes, ears, and mind.

- But the eyes and ears are not solid and tangible things like the physical eyes and ears that the animals or we have.
- Seeing and hearing for those rūpāvacara Brahmā happen with the aid of cakkhu and sota pasāda rūpa. Each of those two is also the size of a suddhatthaka.
- Therefore, even for a rūpāvacara Brahma, the whole "body" is just three suddhattthaka, unimaginably small. This collection of hadaya vatthu and the two pasāda rūpa is called the manomaya kāya of that Brahma.

Therefore, even with the aid of the most sophisticated microscope, it will be impossible to see any Brahm $\bar{a}$ in those 20 realms (rūpa and arūpa loka.) They all have a "subtle body" with just a few suddhatṭhaka or a "manomaya kāya."

## Manomaya Kāya in Kāma Loka

4. In fact, ALL BEINGS have such basic sense faculties of the size of a suddhatthaka each. The basic sensing unit for a $k \bar{a} m \bar{a} v a c a r a ~ b e i n g ~ h a s ~ s i x ~ u n i t s ~ f o r ~ s e e i n g, ~ h e a r i n g, ~ t a s t i n g, ~ s m e l l i n g, ~ t o u c h i n g, ~$ and thinking.

- Any kāmāvacara being (including humans, animals, and devās) has a "fine body" with those unseen five sense faculties called "pasāda rūpa": cakkhu pasāda rūpa for seeing, sota pasāda rūpa for hearing, ghana pasāda rūpa for tasting, jivhā pasāda rūpa for smelling, kāya pasāda rūpa for touching.
- In kāma loka, the manomaya kāya would have a hadaya vatthu (vatthu dasaka,) bhāva dasaka, and five pasāda rūpa (each of which is a dasaka.) A dasaka is a suddhätthaka (the smallest unit of matter with eight units) and two modes of vibration and rotation; "dasaka" means a "collection of ten." Thus, a manomaya kāya in kāma loka would have seven suddhāṭthaka-size units.


## Dense Physical Body in Kāma Loka

5. The above mentioned manomaya kāya of a being in kāma loka is "trapped inside" a dense body. It contacts the external world through the "windows" on the physical body: Eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body.

- Thus, the physical (solid) eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body of a kāmāvacara being (human or animal) act as "sensing equipment" to collect external signals.
- The brain processes those signals and sends them to the manomaya kāya inside this solid body. See "Brain - Interface between Mind and Body."
- This is why, even for humans, the essence is in the manomaya kāya. The solid body is just an inert shell "powered by" the manomaya kāya. When the manomaya kāya comes out at death, the physical body becomes inert, like a piece of wood.


## Manomaya Kāya Has the Blueprint for the Physical Body

6. This "manomaya kaya" is the one that takes hold of the zygote in a womb at conception. The union makes that zygote of the mother and father; see "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception."

- A gandhabba that descends to the womb originally has a bit denser body than this manomaya kāya. In addition to the "manomaya kāya," it has a "material body," too, but that is still too fine to be seen by us. When the gandhabba enters the womb, that "material body" is shed and only the "very fine manomaya $k a y a "$ combines with the zygote.
- As discussed in that post, the zygote is the cell formed by the mother and father's union and is well understood in modern science. Of course, modern science is unaware of the manomaya kāya of the gandhabba that merges with the zygote.
- Scientists do not know how that zygote becomes a "new life," a new living being.
- Gandhabba is discussed in "Mental Body - Gandhabba."

7. Now that zygote with the manomaya kāya starts diving into more and more new cells. The energy needed to make those new cells comes from the mother (i.e., from the mother's food). See "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception."

- That initial single cell grows to a baby of the size that comes out of the womb after nine months. Now, we can see that the critical manomaya kaya - with those basic sensing faculties - is negligibly small compared to that baby.
- Of course, once outside the womb, the baby grows by eating food and eventually grows into an adult. Virtually all solid matter in an adult is just lifeless matter. This is why a person can lose one-third or even half of the body mass and remain the "same person."
- "Life" is not in the physical body but in the manomaya kāya.


## Manomaya Kāya is Primary

## 8. Nothing in the heavy solid body defines that "person." All the key aspects are in the mental body or the manomaya kāya.

- That solid body is made alive by the manomaya kāya with the hadaya vatthu and the five pasāda rūpa. Hard to believe, but that is what happens.
- At the death of the physical body, that manomaya kāya comes out. When it comes out, it also has a very fine "physical type" body that resembles the body of the person that dies. That combined fine body is really "ghost-like" and can be seen by even some people. That is called gandhabba, which now waits for another suitable body to enter if more kammic energy for the "human bhava" is left.


## No Dense Bodies in Rūpa and Arūpa Loka

9. For Brahmā in the rūpa loka, three units of matter are formed by kammic energy at the moment of birth; because it has three units of matter, an initial "body" formed at the moment of patisandhi is called a "tija (or thrija) kāya." The three units are kammaja kāya, cittaja kāya, and the utuja kāya. The utuja kāya is a very subtle "physical body," and those "rūpi Brahma"" can "see" and "hear."

- Those rūpi Brahmā have a kammaja kāya consisting of kāya dasaka, vatthu dasaka, bhava dasaka, and two pasāda rūpa for seeing and hearing: cakkhu pasāda and sota pasāda. Each pasāda rūpa is essentially a suddhatthaka, with different modes of spin/rotation ("bramana"/"paribramana"); see " $\mathbf{3 1}$ Realms Associated with the Earth."
- Even though "kāya" is translated as "body," the only "physical body" of a rūpi Brahma is the "utuja $k \bar{a} y a$." Thus a " $k \bar{a} y a$ " does not necessarily mean a "physical body."

10. The physical bodies (utuja kāya) of those rūpi Brahmā are much finer than those of the devas, and thus devas cannot see those rūpi Brahmā just like we cannot see the devas.

- The Brahmā (and also devas) can "see" without the aid of light and "hear" without having air to transmit sound waves; their "physical bodies" do not have "eyes" and "ears" like ours. Thus they can "see" and "hear" over great distances. And they can be anywhere they wish within a short time.
- The closest analogy of how their "vision" works is how we "see" dreams; we don't need eyes to see dreams. The Brahmā can "see" with the cakkhu pasāda rūpa (perceive may be a better word). These things will become clear in the future as we get into details.


## "Denser" Bodies in Lower Realms

11. A basic rule of thumb is that those in lower realms generally cannot see the beings in the higher realms. Humans, of course, can develop abhiññ̄a powers and "see" those beings in higher realms.

- In the kāma loka, the highest realms are, of course, the deva realms. Devas are also born instantaneously (opapātika births), just like the two kinds of Brahmā. However, devas have a fourth type of body called the "karaja kāya," which is like our physical body. And just like us, they need to
consume food ("amurtha") regularly to sustain their "karaja kāya," which is also called the "āhāraja $k \bar{a} y a "$ since it requires food ("āhāra") for sustenance.
- Thus devas have "four bodies" or "catuja kāya," i.e., the four bodies of "kammaja kāya," cittaja kāya, utuja kāya, and the "karaja kāya." are collectively called a "catuja kāya."
- But devas (and Brahmā) do not get sick. They die and disappear when the kammic energy for that existence runs out.


## Beings in Kāma Loka Start With Manomaya Kāya

12. When humans and animals are first "born" into that existence, they are also instantly formed in a form close to Brahma. This is the manomaya kāya generated by kammic energy at the cuti-patisandhi moment.

- That manomaya kāya is condensed into the gandhabba state we discussed in previous essays; see "Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya) - Introduction" and follow-up posts.
- For example, if a man dies and still has kammic energy for the "human bhava" left, he will be reborn as a human. Otherwise, he will latch onto another "bhava" on his past strong kamma vipāka. For example, his next "bhava" could be a deer.
- If reborn as a human, a "human gandhabba" will emerge from the dead body; if he is born a deer, then a "deer gandhabba" will emerge from the dead body.


## Gandhabba Can See/Hear Without Physical Eyes/Ears

13. The body of a human or animal gandhabba is also a "catuja kāya" like a deva. But it is finer than the body of a deva. A gandhabba can only inhale odors ("gandha" + "abba") as food, and thus the name.

- Like Brahmā or devas, a gandhabba can "see" and "hear" over great distances. A gandhabba does not have a solid body to support physical eyes or ears. (Of course, we have a hard time imagining that. But it can be compared to what happens when we see a dream. There is no need for light to see dreams; we see dreams when pitch-black at night; we do not "see" dreams with our eyes).
- Even though one could think it would be nice to be a gandhabba, a human gandhabba is in perpetual stress (agony may be a better word). A gandhabba cannot enjoy any kind of "contact" sensory pleasure since the body is fine; it cannot taste the food or grasp anything.


## A Physical Body Is Needed for "Sensual Pleasures" or "Kāma Assāda"

14. A human or animal gandhabba must "build" a physical body to experience sensual pleasures with touch, smell, or taste. They received those "bhava" because they very much DESIRE "coarse sensory pleasures": "upādāna paccayā bhava."

- Thus we can see that we get these solid, dense bodies BECAUSE that is what we so eagerly desired. As long as we crave these "coarse sense pleasures," we will be born in the kāma loka. Even though the devas are in the kāma loka, their desires are not as "coarse." They do not need to "tightly grab things" to get enjoyment.
- Brahma $\bar{a}$ in rūpa loka is further removed from "coarse sensory pleasures"; they do not desire tastes, smells, or body touches. Seeing and hearing are enough for them.
- Brahmā in arūpa loka does not even have a desire for sights and sounds. Mind pleasures are enough for them, and the presence of matter is minimal in the arūpa loka.


## Those "Kāma Assāda" Come With Drawbacks (Ādīnava) [/Danger]

15. We do not realize that having a "dense body" also leads to various ailments. A dense body is also subject to decay as it gets old.

- Furthermore, now the ability to "see" and "hear" over great distances is gone. Now the gandhabba is trapped inside a heavy, solid body shell and has to "see" and "hear" through the "physical doors" that are attached to that body. That is the sacrifice made to be able to have the "grabbing experience," to be able to enjoy coarse foods and sexual pleasures, etc.
- The Buddha called the physical body ("karaja kāya" or "āhāraja kāya") a "cave" or a "shell" that a gandhabba uses temporarily. It has a certain lifetime: during that time, it grows, decays, and finally dies. Then the gandhabba needs to find another body. Especially in the kāma loka, we build a "new shell" when the old one dies and spend a lot of time as a frustrated gandhabba waiting for a suitable womb to start building a new body.
- "WebLink: suttacentral: Dhammapada Verse 37" states: "Dūrañgamaim ekacaraí, asarīraì guhāsayaim;" OR "The mind travels far, wandering alone; incorporeal, it hides in a cave."


## Physical Body a Temporary

16. Thus, it should be clear now that it is only the "physical body" that decays and finally dies. A human gandhabba will keep evolving and find a "new body" similar to the old one IF the kammic energy for that bhava is not exhausted. Otherwise, the human gandhabba will disappear (like a deva or Brahma does at death), and a new animal gandhabba will emerge if the new bhava is that of an animal; see, "Bhava and Jāti - States of Existence and Births Therein."

- Thus we can see now that even for humans and animals, "the basis" is a fine body of a gandhabba with a fine body like a rupi Brahma (and less dense than the body of a deva). The "solid body" starts growing inside the mother's womb and continues after the "birth" as a baby by eating food.

17. Nature also uses this physical body or the "shell" to impart kamma vipāka. We need to constantly clean this body all the time and also need to take care of vital body parts. These are part of the "physical suffering" we do not think twice about.

- And, of course, we can come down with not only minor colds and headaches but also major ailments like heart problems or cancer; this is also part of the "physical suffering." Both kinds of "physical suffering" arise due to the physical body.
- However, these hardships are "masked" by our sense of "anticipated future happiness" by acquiring such and such "pleasurable things."


## Human Body Is Special

18. The other point, even more important, is the special nature of the human body with a well-developed brain. See "Brain - Interface between Mind and Body." That is what makes human life special because that is what allows us to understand the message of the Buddha and get released from the suffering-filled round of rebirth.

- How the bodies of the hell beings are prepared by kammic energy just to impart kamma vipāka (they are unable to do abhisañkhāra, especially puñ̃̄̄̄bhisañkhāra) is discussed in "Does the Hell (Niraya) Exist?.

Next in the series: Gandhabba Sensing the World - With and Without a Physical Body

### 2.7.6 Gandhabba Sensing the World - With and Without a Physical Body

June 10, 2016; revised January 24, 2020

## Gandhabba Is The "Mental Body" of a Human

1. Physical bodies are just temporary shelters for the gandhabba.

- In a single "human bhava" or the "existence as a human," gandhabba could be using one to hundreds of different physical bodies; see, "Bhava and Jāti- States of Existence and Births Therein" and "Gandhabba - Only in Human and Animal Realms."
- Such "human births" could be anywhere on Earth. However, they normally take place in a specific region based on one's gati. Most rebirths occur within a given country, as seen from rebirth accounts. See, "Evidence for Rebirth."
- In between two consecutive "physical lives," the gandhabba is in the nether world or "para loka"; see, "Hidden World of the Gandhabba: Netherworld (Para Loka)."


## Racial and Cultural Differences Are Meaningless

2. Thus all racial and cultural divisions that people fight daily are meaningless; those identities change as the gandhabba "switches physical bodies" from life to life. In principle, a Chinese may be born as a "black person" in Africa or as a "white person" in Europe in the next life. However, adjacent lives are generally in similar geographic locations because of the condition for matching "gati." Still, in the following "human bhava" - which may come after billions of years - one's gati would have changed drastically.

- As more and more people start grasping the Buddha Dhamma, most of the violence in the world could reduce. Along that line, one who may be born into poverty in this life may be born a wealthy person in the very next life (if enough merits accrued), and vice versa. All these struggles we go through are only for an insignificantly short time in the scale of sainsāra (cycle of rebirths) or even compared to the duration of a single human bhava (which could last many hundreds of years). Thus it is wise to "invest in the long term."


## Sensory Faculties Are in Gandhabba

3. The physical body shields the gandhabba's sensory system, while the gandhabba is inside the physical body. The gandhabba has all sensory faculties. But now those "external sensory signals" need to come through the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mana indriya in the brain; see below.

- When outside a physical body (and waiting for a suitable womb), the gandhabba cannot eat or physically touch tangible things, because it does not have a "dense body." But it can see and hear. Furthermore, it uses a very sophisticated sensory system (not light or sound waves) to see and hear, which we will also discuss briefly below.


## Difference Between Indriya and Āyatana

4. The Buddha analyzed the world in many different ways. Here we present another such analysis since it can provide different insights about the gandhabba.

- We have six sense faculties (indriya or āyatana) to sense six different types of "matter" ( $r \bar{u} p a$ ) in our world. There is a subtle connection between our six sense faculties and the types of "matter" in our world. We will discuss this connection.
- By the way, indriya and āyatana have different meanings. For example, eyes are indriya when we happen to see things. Still, they BECOME āyatana when they are used for pleasure, i.e., to deliberately look at mind-pleasing things to enjoy them. Only an Arahant uses his/her sense faculties are indriya all the time.
- That is another way to define and analyze our world. Everything in our world belongs to the 12 ayatana. Sometimes they are called six ajjhatta āyatana (or internal āyatana or sense faculties) and six bahiddha àyatana (things in the external world that we sense).

5. These are listed in Pāli in \#6 of the post, "What are Dhamma? - A Deeper Analysis." A simpler account is at, "What are Rūpa? - Dhammā are Rūpa too!."

- We touch the densest material (phoṭthabba) out there with our bodies (kāya).
- Next, less dense are tasted (rasa) with our tongues (jivhā).
- We smell with the next less dense minute particles with smell (gandha) with our noses (ghāna).
- Hear uses vibrations propagating through the air (sadda) with our ears (sota).
- We see color/appearance (vaṇna) with the aid of photons propagating through space ( $\bar{a} k \bar{a} s a$ ) with our eyes (cakkhu).
- Our consciousness arises via dhammā in the mind plane with our minds (mano).


## Dhammā Are Just Energy

6. The last type of rupa (dhamma $\bar{a})$ is not solid matter, but just energy; see, "What are Dhamma? - A Deeper Analysis."

- Thus dhammā do not occupy space ( $\bar{a} k \bar{a} s a$ ) and are in the mind plane or the mental world.
- All other five types of $r \bar{u} p a$ occupy space and are in the material world.
- So rūpa cannot be translated as "matter." See, "Our Two Worlds: Material and Immaterial." That is why sometimes it is better use the Pāli words.


## How Does a Gandhabba "See" While Inside a Physical Body?

7. It is actually through a complicated process that a gandhabba sees, hears, etc while being inside a physical body (karaja kāya) such as ours. I have explained the basics in "Citta and Cetasika - How Viññān̄a (Consciousness) Arises," "Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya)- Introduction," and many other posts.

- However, it is much easier to grasp how a gandhabba sees and hears while being outside the physical body. Even though most of us may not have had such "out-of-body experiences," it can happen, especially during heart operations; see, "Manomaya Kāya and Out-of-Body Experience (OBE)." Some people have a natural ability to do that on their own, as discussed in that post.
- Thus, let us discuss how a stand-alone gandhabba sees and hears while being outside a physical body; this is not only simpler but provides us with some insights.


## The Sensory Faculties In Gandhabba

8. The real sense faculties produced by kammic energy at the cuti-patisandhi moment are in the kammaja $k \bar{a} y a$ of the gandhabba. The subtle body of the gandhabba has three components, as we have discussed and will again discuss below. The sense faculties are all in the kammaja kāya.

- The kammaja kāya of the gandhabba has seven essential elements called dasaka, meaning entities with ten items (decads). They arise from suddhattthaka, which is composed of eight "items," as we have discussed; see, "The Origin of Matter - Suddhatthaka." Different types of dasaka are formed just by incorporating one mode of spin (bramana) and one mode of rotation (paribramana); see, "31 Realms Associated with the Earth."
 from the spin (bramana) mode, but I cannot be sure. This $j \bar{\imath} v i t a ~ r u \bar{u} p a$ is in all these other types of dasaka because that is what "maintains life." Thus different types of dasaka (see below) arise due to different modes of rotation (paribramana). [jīvita: :[nt.] life; span of life.]

9. Now we can list the different types of 7 dasaka (or decads) that are in the kammaja kāya of the gandhabba.

- Vatthu dasaka (mind; also called hadaya vatthu): suddhaṭthaka + jīvita rūpa + hadaya rūpa
- Kāya dasaka (body plan): suddhaṭthaka + jīvita rūpa + kāya pasāda rūpa
- Cakkhu dasaka (eye indriya): suddhaṭthaka + jīvita rūpa + cakkhu pasāda rūpa
- Sota dasaka (ear indriya): suddhatthhaka + jīvita rūpa + sota pasāda rūpa
- Ghana dasaka (nose indriya): suddhaṭthaka + jīvita rūpa + ghāna pasāda rūpa
- Jivhā dasaka (ear indriya): suddhatṭhaka + jīvita rūpa + jivhā pasāda rūpa
- Bhava dasaka (bhava): suddhaṭthaka + jīvita rūpa + itthi or purisa rūpa (determines female/male nature of the body)

Again, it is to be noted that $j \bar{v} v i t a ~ r \bar{u} p a$, itthi and purisa rūpa, and the five pasāda rūpa are not "physical matter", but modes of energy in spin and vibration of suddhatthaka.

- That is analogous to different electron orbitals giving rise to different types of molecules in chemistry.


## Components of the Gandhabba or "Mental Body"

10. A gandhabba is born with those seven dasaka (i.e., kammaja kāya) and immediately the mind starts generating citta (thoughts), which are vipāka citta and for the most part in the bhavañga. Thus now the gandhabba has a cittaja kāya as well. Note that cittaja kāya is all MENTAL.

- Almost at the same time, both the kammaja kāya and the cittaja kāya start producing more suddhatthaka giving rise to the utuja kāya. This utuja kāya is similar to the "aura" that surrounds our bodies; in fact, that aura is part of our own (i.e., gandhabba's) utuja kāya. Some people claim to be able to see "body aura"; those with abhiññ̄̄ powers can see them. Also, see "Ghost 1990 Movie Good Depiction of Gandhabba Concept."
- Thus the best way to visualize a gandhabba is to imagine a human with just the "body aura" (without the physical body). Since kammaja kāya consists of only a few suddhatṭhaka, and the cittaja kāya is just thoughts, something like an "aura body" is all a gandhabba has.
- Right now, this subtle body of my gandhabba overlaps my own physical body. All parts of my physical body are in the subtle body of my gandhabba (which is a blueprint for my physical body).
- While waiting for a physical body, this gandhabba can inhale scents from fruits, vegetables, etc., and acquire a subtle physical body (karaja kāya) too. Then it expands to the grown size of a human. But of course, it is only an "energy body" that we cannot see.
- Thus a free-standing gandhabba may have four types of "bodies": kammaja kāya, cittaja kāya, utuja kāya, and karaja kāya.


## Gandhabba Outside the Physical Body

11. This gandhabba can see over vast distances and hear over large distances and travel instantly to remote destinations. Sight does not need light, and sound does not require vibrations in the air. It is equivalent to seeing and hearing with abhiñ̃̃̄̄ powers. That is how those with abhiñ $\tilde{n} \bar{a}$ skills can see through walls and hear over vast distances; they have control over their gandhabba kāya or the manomaya kāya.

- However, since it has only a very fine body (like air), it cannot taste food or touch solid things. The gandhabba needs to be inside a dense human body to be able to touch, taste, or smell. That is why it has to take possession of a zygote in a womb and build a physical body.
- See, "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception" and "Cloning and Gandhabba."

12. When a gandhabba builds a physical body (inside a womb), those seven dasaka - each of which are the "size of a suddhatthaka" - determine all critical functions. Furthermore, gandhabba has the blueprint for that physical body.

- The physical body (karaja kāya) of the human grows according to kāya dasaka and bhava dasaka but also takes into account the physical qualities of mother and father (eye and skin color, as well as size, are good examples).
- When inside a physical body, the external signals that come to the physical body via eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body touches, are converted in the brain into the form that can be sensed by the five pasäda rūpa (they are really the five dasaka with corresponding pasāda rūpa). This somewhat complicated process is discussed in "Citta and Cetasika - How Viñ̃nāna (Consciousness) Arises," "Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya)- Introduction," among others.


## Why Are Some Born With Deformed Body Parts?

13. The blueprint in the kammaja kāya of the gandhabba has all the details of physical organs as well. When the utuja kāya forms, it has this blueprint. Some people are born without limbs because past kamma vipāka is taken into account by the kammaja kāya.

- Some are born with physical eyes, but without the cakkhu pasāda in the kammaja kāya, so they will never be able to see; they are the ones who are born blind. Similarly, some are born deaf, and sometimes both. That is because the gandhabba in them does not have the cakkhu pasāda and sota pasāda.
- However, in some cases, the gandhabba may have the cakkhu pasäda, but during birth, the optical nerves in the brain may get damaged. In such cases, it may be possible to have vision restored.


## Gandhabba Is The Bluprint For the Physical Body

14. It is, in fact, the gandhabba that controls the otherwise inert physical body. There is a carbon copy of all parts of the physical body (including the nervous system) in the fine utuja kāya of the gandhabba.

- What is the mechanism used by the gandhabba to control the inert physical body? The easiest way to visualize this is to consider the following. If we put some iron dust on a piece of paper and move a magnet below the paper, we can see that those dust particles move along as one moves the magnet. If we move the magnet in a circle, dust particles move along that circle. In the same way, when the gandhabba moves its utuja kāya, the physical body follows that motion.
- Thus, what the gandhabba does is similar to what the magnet did in the above analogy. But it is a bit more complicated, because moving heavy body parts needs much more energy. That is where the physical nervous system comes into play. The brain, in synchronization with the mind (hadaya vatthu), sends signals to muscles to move. The energy to move those muscles comes from the food we eat.
- Both the "magnetic nervous system" or the "ray system" of the gandhabba AND the physical nervous system based on the brain are needed to move the physical body.


## Two Nervous Systems

15. Thus, there are two nervous systems in the body: one is the physical nervous system known to modern science. The other is the subtle nervous system (ray system) of the gandhabba.

- When they go "out-of-sync," our physical bodies start aching. Even in a perfectly healthy human, it is not possible to maintain a given posture for too long.
- Kamma vipāka can shift the nervous system (ray system) of the gandhabba away from that of the physical body. Then body muscles need to move to the new equilibrium position, causing us discomfort or even pain.
- We will discuss more important consequences that are experienced during meditation in future posts.


## Physical Body Comes With a Price

16. The physical body can impart various other forms of suffering as well. It can develop diseases such as cancer in various parts of the body; body parts can break or injured.

- The effects that we have discussed above may be the reason that we humans (and animals) have this complicated mechanism involving repeated births in a single bhava using a gandhabba and multiple physical bodies.
- The Brahmā and even Devā do not suffer physical ailments; their subtle bodies can also last longer times, and do not need to be "regenerated" via this mechanism, i.e., just one physical body for the gandhabba.
- Another important aspect is that our physical brain slows down the generation of javana citta in a given time. The "signal processing" in the brain is much slower than the high-speed generation of cittta in the hadaya vatthu; see, "Citta and Cetasika - How Viñ̃nāna (Consciousness) Arises."


### 2.7.7 Nibbāna in the Big Picture

## July 8, 2016

Here we will discuss how one can get an idea about Nibbāna within the Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma.

1. In the posts in this series I described the wider world of 31 realms according to the Buddha, and why ALL living beings have been just meandering through these 31 realms from beginning-less time. We can summarize the results succinctly as follows:

- The lowest four realms (apāy $\bar{a}$ ) are where all beings suffer the most during the beginning-less rebirth process. Unfortunately, this is where each and every living being spends the most time in the long run. This is the real suffering that the Buddha tried to convey.
- The fifth realm or the human realm is where one is most likely to be able to grasp Buddha Dhamma and become a Sotāpanna. This is the only realm where one can experience (or at least see) both suffering and sense enjoyments.
- A deva in the next six realms is also capable of becoming a Sotāpanna, but due to the absence of much visible suffering, incentive to strive for the Sotapanna stage is almost non-existent (think about a healthy, wealthy teenager!).
- The same is true for $r \bar{u} p i$ and $\operatorname{aru} \bar{p} i \operatorname{Brahm} \bar{a}$, who enjoy jhānic pleasures in the higher realms.

2. Thus one can clearly see that as one proceeds to higher realms, suffering is reduced in stages. The worst sufferings are in the lowest 4 realms ( $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$ ), and we can see animal suffering if we pay attention and think especially about the animals in the wild. There are no "old animals" in the wild. As soon as they get a bit slow due to old age they are killed for food by stronger animals.

- One could try to stay away from the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$ (in future births) by avoiding from immoral acts. But the problem with just that approach is that we have almost certainly done such immoral acts in our previous lives, and thus are likely to have accumulated enough kamma seeds to be born many times over in the apāyā.
- Thus the key is to cleanse our minds of the worst defilements, which will prevent apāyagām $\bar{\imath}$ citta from arising at the cuti-pațisandhi moment; see, "Akusala Citta - How a Sotāpanna Avoids Apayagami Citta." Such thoughts cannot just be suppressed; they arise in a billionth of a second. Thus the practical way to do that is to reduce cravings (āsavas) in STAGES; see, "The Way to Nibbāna Removal of Āsavas," and "Āsava, Anusaya, and Gati (Gathi)."
- As mentioned above, the first stage of the cleansing process is possible mainly in the human and deva realms, but the incentive to do that is virtually non-existent in the deva realms.

2. Another subtle reason for the uniqueness of the human realm is that one's future destiny is MOSTLY determined while in the human realm. Humans are the unique species who can access all 89 types of citta
that are present in all 31 realms. Moreover, they are the ones who can generate the all important javana citta that can produce kamma bïja (seeds) for future existences (bhava).

- Here is a simile that hopefully will convey this idea: Human realm can be compared to a training school, and the other realms can be compared to where one gets employment depending on one's qualifications upon completing the training.
- Those who did not make progress and caused problems for others are born in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$ and will have to suffer the consequences. Another way to say this is to say that they cultivated sañkhāra (or gati or habits) suitable for a being in the ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$ : cruel and hateful gati correspond to the lowest realm of niraya (hell); extreme greed correspond to the pretha realm; those who are lazy and depend on others are born in the asura realm; those with different combinations of those bad gati are born in the animal realm.
- Once born in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$, they are more like programmed machines. They just suffer their fate without having any way to even lessen the suffering (in contrast, humans are capable of devising ways to make their lives better).

3. This last point is worth discussing a bit more.

As we can see, animals just live their lives like robots. They are incapable of sorting out moral from immoral and also from being able to come up with ways to improve their lives. Birds have been building the same kind of nests for billions of years. Ants have been building the same types of anthills, and the dolphins (who are one of the animals with higher intelligence) have been the same way over billions of years.

- In the same way, $r \bar{u} p i$ or ar $\bar{u} p i \operatorname{Brahm} \bar{a}$ also just live their serene lives until the lifetime is exhausted. It is like a nice vacation. Then they come back to the human realm and start over.
- It is mostly humans and devas who are CAPABLE of forging their own future, but the devas enjoy so much sense pleasure, they have no incentive to think about Nibbāna.

4. Continuing that analogy, those who do well in the training school can go to one of the 27 higher realms. those who cultivate $r \bar{u} p a j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$ are born in the $16 r \bar{u} p a$ realms. Those who cultivate higher $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$ are born in the 4 arūpa realms. The Brahmā in those 20 realms are like beings who are on a nice, very long vacation. They just live happy lives in $j h a \overline{n i c}$ bliss.

- Of course there are some Brahmā who had attained a magga phala in either human or a deva realm previously and they can proceed to higher stages. And there are a few rūpa realms reserved for the Anāgāmīs only.
- But in general, the rūpi and arūpi Brahmā are the ones who graduated with high qualifications and thus get to enjoy the fruits of those efforts for long times. Yet, when they come back to the human realm, they may be born into environments where they could go in a wrong path and fail next time around and thus could be born in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$.

5. Those who want to enjoy sense pleasures without causing problems to others work on it by doing meritorious deeds and are qualified to be born in the 6 deva realms (according to the level of merits accrued). They may not have even known about Buddha Dhamma, but knew moral from immoral.

- Life in a deva realm is more like a vacations to a "pleasure island." Those who cultivate "deva gati" (high moral character, but with attachment to sense pleasures) are qualified for those realms. Devas are more like humans but with fine bodies that do not age (until close to death), and are not subject to diseases. Thus if one really wants to "enjoy sense pleasures" one should focus more on doing good deeds instead of just focusing on making a lot money in this life, because this human life is so short and the human body is subjected to diseases and old age problems.
- However, devas can build up extreme attachment to sense pleasures and are capable of tailoring their future lives down to the animal realm. After their "pleasurable vacation" they could even come back to the animal realm instead of the human realm.

6. Finally, those who cultivate "human gati" are born in the human realm. They are more like deva gati, but generally have more attachment to sense pleasures at close contact.

- However, those humans who may have cultivated high moral values AND had some inkling of the sansāric suffering (via exposure to Buddha Dhamma) are like to come back to the human realm to "complete their training." That is because that is what they desired (upādāna).
- That is a very simple outline of the existence in the 31 realms.

7. Now, if one has attained the Sotāpanna stage in the human realm, then his/her number of possible destinations become less and better. In \#7 and \#8, we will discuss how a Sotāpanna goes through higher realms as he/she approaches Arahanthood.

- Of course that person will never be born in the apāy $\bar{a}$, because those "apāya gati" have been permanently removed via Sammā Dittthi with a grasp of the anicca nature.
- A Sotāpanna starts to comprehend the futility and even dangers of sense pleasures (kāma rāga).
- Then one first loses the desire to "own" sense objects ("vatthu kāma") that provide sense pleasures; one is merely satisfied with enjoying them. Thus one has not given up all kāma rāga, just "vatthu $k \bar{a} m a$." Now one is at that Sakadāgāmī stage, and will not be born again below the deva realms. Thus one is freed from rebirth where diseases are possible (including the human realm) and one is said to be "healthy forever."

8. When a Sakadāgāmī contemplates on the anicca nature more (while in the human or deva realms) he/she can remove kilesa kāma and also patigha from their minds and become free of all kāma loka realms. Then one becomes an $A n \bar{a} g \bar{m} \bar{l}$, i.e., not coming back to the kāma loka ever again.

- But an Anāgāmi has not removed the liking for Dhamma, and thus will be born in one of the five rūpa realms reserved for the $A n \bar{a} g \bar{a} m \bar{s}$. He/she will attain Nibbāna from there.
- An Anāgāmī becomes an Arahant by removing rūpa rāga, arūpa rāga, māna, uddhacca, and remaining avijjā.
- Of course one can proceed all the way to the Arahanthood while in the human realm. An Arahant will not be born anywhere in the 31 realms at death. His/her mind becomes free of even a trace of matter that is subject to decay and destruction; see, "What Are Rūpa? (Relation to Nibbāna)."

9. This gives a brief summary of how a living being goes from realm to realm in the rebirth process, until the Arahanthood is attained. It is NOT a random process. Everything happens due to causes. The following are two (related) ways to analyze that process.

- The key point to comprehend is that a birth in a given realm occurs because one has developed gati suitable for that realm; see, "Patisandhi Citta - How the Next Life is Determined According to Gati."
- One develops any kind of gati by cultivating corresponding sañkhāra, i.e., one tends to think, speak, and act in ways suitable for that realm. This is what is described in detail in Pațicca Samuppāda; see, "Paticca Samuppāda - "Pati+ichcha"+"Sama+uppāda."

10. It is also clear why it is futile to seek happiness anywhere in the 31 realms.

- One could live for millions of years in deva realm with much higher sense pleasures than in the human realm (and without being subjected to diseases), but then one has to come back to human realm or even a lower realm.
- Even if one is born in the highest brahma world (31st realm) and lives 84,000 eons in jhānic bliss there (each eon is roughly 30 billion years!), one has to eventually come back to the human realm and start over. Then at some point after that, birth in the ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$ is unavoidable. This is why infinite time (or beginning-less time) is a concept that is hard to wrap one's mind around; see, "Infinity - How Big Is It?" and "Samsāric Time Scale, Buddhist Cosmology, and the Big Bang Theory."
- Thus one needs to contemplate whether it is worthwhile to seek happiness in a 100 -year human life! I know by experience that this is not easy to fully grasp, even when logically proven, because our minds are enamored and blinded with sense pleasures. That truth starts to sink in when the mind loses more and more defilements (greed, hate, and ignorance) and start seeing the perils of sense pleasures to some extent.


## 2.8

## Buddha Dhamma: Non-Perceivability and Self-Consistency

Revised November 9, 2018; March 13, 2020; September 8, 2021; August 6, 2022

## What We Perceive is Limited

1. Many people try to analyze and interpret Buddha Dhamma in terms of mundane concepts. However, there is much about this world we are unaware of, as science has shown in recent years; see below.

- The Buddha said that the world "had never known" his Dhamma. But many people try to explain the Buddha's core teachings using conventional/mundane concepts. Only a Buddha can truly perceive the true nature of this world with 31 realms; see "Wider Worldview of the Buddha." A Noble disciple of the Buddha (one who has attained a magga phala) can start perceiving some aspects of the wider world.
- This has happened ever since Nagarjuna, and other forefathers of "Mahāyāna Buddhism" tried to explain Nibbāna in terms of various concepts such as "suññata" or "emptiness"; see "Saddharma Pundarika Sutra (Lotus Sutra) - A Focused Analysis" and "What is Sunyata or Sunnata (Emptiness)?."
- The same thing happened to "Theravada Buddhism," too. Buddhaghosa, like Nagarjuna and others, was not even a Sotāpanna. Before converting to "Buddhism," he was a Vedic brahmin, he edited and twisted Buddha Dhamma to fit his Vedic concepts; see, "Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga - A Focused Analysis."
- Buddha's ānāpāna bhāvanā was replaced by the Vedic prañāyāma breath meditation, for example.


## Buddhaghosa and Nagarjuna Were Not Noble Disciples

2. It is quite possible that Buddhaghosa, Nagarjuna, and others did not intentionally distort Buddha Dhamma. They just described Buddha Dhamma as they understood it with their background in vedic concepts.

- Even today, there are many "scholars" who write books explaining what "Buddhism" is. They also explain it in terms of their mundane frames of reference.
- When you look at most of the books today about Buddha Dhamma, it seems that there is not much difference between Buddha Dhamma and any other religion. They all teach "how to live a moral life."
- There is minimal discussion, if at all, on the foundational concepts such as anicca, dukkha, anatta, Pațicca Samuppāda, Ānāpāna sati, Satipatṭhāna. Whatever is discussed is mostly incorrect.

3. I think that is the biggest obstacle for most people in figuring out the true teachings of the Buddha Dhamma.

- We need to contemplate what the Buddha meant when he said, "my Dhamma has never been known to the world before."
- It is not something one can grasp within the "conventional framework," what is readily perceivable to a normal human with a defiled mind. It involves a wider world with 31 realms (we see only the human and animal realms) and a rebirth process and is based on the Laws of Kamma; see, "Essence of Buddhism In the First Sutta." Details at "Origin of Life."


## What is Perceivable to an Average Human?

4. First, let me clarify what I mean by "perceivable" or "comprehensible" to us as normal humans. Our six senses can "detect" only a tiny sliver of the "world."

- At a base level, science today can account for only 4 percent of the mass of our universe; see "The 4 Percent Universe: Dark Matter, Dark Energy, and the Race to Discover the Rest of Reality" by Richard Panek (2011).
- Many things have not been "discovered" by science (or philosophy) yet. In particular, nothing significant about the MIND has been discovered yet. For example, scientists cannot explain how consciousness can arise in a brain of inert atoms and molecules.

5. Therefore, trying to gauge the validity of Buddha Dhamma using only the known facts from science is like a blind man trying to figure out what an elephant looks like by touching a leg of the elephant; see, "How do we Decide which View is Wrong View (Ditthi)?."

- A frog living in a well knows nothing about the wider world. Similarly, a normal human, including scientists, faces the problem of figuring out the "reality" by only using data available through our limited six senses. Thus a scientific theory can't ever be "complete," as proven by the mathematician Kurt Gödel; see "Gödel's Incompleteness Theorem."


## Science Is Still Far Behind the Buddha

6. Most people believe that the only way to confirm what the Buddha taught is to see whether those teachings are compatible with science. That is not different from believing that one can get an idea of what an elephant looks like by asking a blind man who has touched an elephant's leg. OR asking a frog what the world outside the well looks like.

- This may sound ridiculous to many, but let us think back a few hundred years. Just 400 years ago, "science" believed in the geocentric model of the universe. That the Earth was in the universe and that the stars were embedded in a celestial sphere far above; see: WebLink: wiki: Geocentric model
- Science and all other major religions tried to attune their religions to this model at that time. Most religions still adhere to those concepts; see the same Wikipedia article above.

7. But 2500 years ago, the Buddha described our Solar system as a "Cakkavāla" or a planetary system. Not only that, but he also said there are uncountable such systems in the universe. Trying to find such details about the universe is a waste of time.

- Through the years, and especially since the beginning of the 20th century, science has "re-discovered" some aspects of the Buddha's wider world, including billions of galaxies, each of which contains billions of planetary systems like our Solar system.
- But someone living in the 19th century was likely to ridicule the idea of innumerable planetary systems (Cakkavāla) and could have said, "where is the evidence from science?." That aspect of Buddha Dhamma was not amenable to "science" at that time.
- Just like that many aspects of Buddha Dhamma are not amenable to science at the current time. But scientific progress will show more to be correct as science advances.


## What the Buddha Taught

8. In Abhidhamma, it is described in detail how all types of energies in the universe are "stored" in orbital motions ("bramana" in Pāli or Sinhala); see " 31 Realms Associated with the Earth."

- For example, planetary systems are planets orbiting stars. Those planetary systems combine to make galaxies, and those galaxies also undergo circular motion in the shape of disks. See: WebLink: wiki: Retrograde and prograde motion - Formation of celestial systems
- Scientists discovered that atoms are electrons orbiting the tiny nucleus made of protons and neutrons.

9. If one is going to wait for the full confirmation of Buddha Dhamma by science, one is as foolish as those who lived five hundred years ago and embraced the geocentric model and dismissed Buddha Dhamma as "exotic" or "mystical."

- We are fortunate to live in a time where science has made impressive progress and has confirmed many aspects of the Buddha's world view.
- Just as the invention of the telescope led to the discovery of a much bigger cosmos, the microscope (and its sophisticated versions) led to a previously unknown "microscopic world" teeming with innumerable microscopic living beings. There are billions of such beings in a single human body. See, "There are as many creatures on your body as there are people on Earth!."


## Scientific Tools Are Still Primitive

10. Science can accept only those phenomena that can be observed and measured with scientific instruments. Such scientific instruments are basically "extensions" of our six senses; see, "Expanding "Consciousness" by Using Technology."

- For example, while we cannot see the moons of Jupiter with our naked eyes, we can see them with telescopes. While we cannot see those microscopic creatures in our bodies with our naked eyes, we can see them with sophisticated microscopes. These are just two examples of many.
- People looked around and laughed when the Buddha said there are innumerable beings in this world. The Mahayānists are still under the impression that one could wait to attain the Buddhahood itself (not merely Nibbāna) until "everyone" is ready to attain the Buddhahood! However, they did not realize that they needed to include all those billions of microscopic creatures on one's body in the category of "everyone."

11. This is just the tip of the iceberg. While science has confirmed that there are uncountable planetary systems, it has not been able to find life on another planetary system yet. When that happens, the "wait for the Buddhahood" for the Mahayānists will become much longer.

- Similarly, the job of any "Creator" who looks after every being (even if just humans) will also become unbearably burdensome. That is because there are uncountable world systems with human beings as well.
- I am not trying to make fun at the expense of others but merely trying to get the point across that, for those who can think for themselves, it is time to get rid of all such nonsensical beliefs and wrong views; these are all micchā dittthis.
- Getting rid of such wrong views is necessary before starting any fruitful meditation. Purification through "correct views" comes before "purification through formal meditation." Sammā Ditṭhi, or "correct views of this world," comes first in the Eightfold Path.

12. When we hear about something that we cannot explain with the CURRENT SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE, we categorize them as "esoteric" or "mystical." Of course, many such "made up theories" are out there without any substance. However, Buddha Dhamma can be SHOWN TO BE CONSISTENT with all our world knowledge.

- If we can bring back someone who died before the 20th century and tell him that we can "see" an event in a distant country in real-time, he will not believe it. If we turn on a television and show him the actual event, he will be flabbergasted; he will refuse to believe it, saying it is a magic trick.
- But now we know that the visuals and sounds of that event can be transformed and transmitted over long distances almost instantaneously and can retrieve those signals by "tuning a television set" to the correct frequency.
- Kamma vipāka (energy stored) or rebirth at a distant location works similarly. Even though we cannot "see" or perceive, that energy can materialize when the conditions become right; see, "Anantara and Samanantara Paccaya." It will take some time to sink in these concepts, but the more you read, the more you will understand.


## Self Consistency Is Critical

13. Two key methods are used in science to verify a given scientific theory. They have some basic axioms that appear to be inviolable. Then all other currently accepted scientific theories must be CONSISTENT with those axioms.

- If a currently accepted scientific theory is proven to be inconsistent with a newly discovered phenomenon, then that scientific theory is discarded, and a new theory is adopted.
- Scientific findings up-to-date are consistent with pure Buddha Dhamma as given in the Tipiṭaka.
- However, there are many things in Buddha Dhamma that have not been confirmed by science. More are being confirmed as new findings emerge.
- And Buddha Dhamma is self -consistent. Thus my obsession with making sure all my posts are interconsistent.

14. There are two ways to test the validity of the Buddha Dhamma. First is the self-consistency within the foundational concepts, such as Tilakkhana, Four Noble Truths, Noble Eightfold Path, Paṭicca Samuppāda, etc. Second is the compatibility with "new findings" by science.

- Here "new findings by science" do not necessarily mean the explanations given by science depict the "absolute truth." That is because scientific explanations can change with time (for example, the geocentric model had to be changed).
- If science finds evidence for life in outer space, that will be consistent with Buddha Dhamma. However, what science proposes about how life arose may not be correct.


## Power of a Purified Mind

15. One needs to contemplate the implications of these points (and there are many, as I will mention in other posts). How can a human being who lived 2500 years ago come up with such an elaborate way of describing our world? Those are just beginning to be "re-discovered" by the efforts of thousands of scientists over many generations.

- The Buddha could transcend all "normal human capabiilities" by purifying his mind. Thus Gödel's Incompleteness Theorem does not apply to Buddha Dhamma; see \#5 above.
- Thus his Dhamma may not be "amenable" to the basic frame of reference we all have as normal human beings. Concepts like rebirth and kamma vipāka may sound mysterious. The only way to see the truth in such concepts is to put them to the standard scientific method discussed above.

16. The Buddha could see those and much more just by purifying his mind. And science has not yet figured out the "Power of the Human Mind."

- Modern science is way behind Buddha Dhamma regarding the mind; see the "Abhidhamma" section.
- A human can purify the mind to the level of a Buddha only once in many eons on average. However, we can purify our minds enough to see many facts about nature that science is unaware of.
- The sense of relief and well-being one can achieve by purifying one's mind is beyond any sensory pleasure.


## Pleasures of "This World" Are Short-Lived

17. For example, one can enjoy even the best food on Earth only while eating that food. How long does that last? Jhānic experiences (Ariya or even anāriya jhānā) can last longer.

- However, the "base level" of "cooling down" or Nibbāna or "niveema" or "nivana" that comes at the Sotāpanna stage is forever. There is no comparison to any briefly-lived sensory pleasure or even "jhānic pleasures."


## Samsāric Time Scale, Buddhist Cosmology, and the Big Bang Theory

## Revised May 22, 2018; May 25, 2022

1. To understand the Buddha's message, one needs to grasp the unimaginable length of the sainsāra (the rebirth process). The Buddha said that there is no discernible beginning to conscious life. It always existed, and it will exist until one attains Nibbāna.

- Infinity is a mind-boggling concept; see "The Infinity Problem in Buddhism."

2. This is a bit difficult concept for many because many cultures/religions have the idea of a set time of Creation. If there is a First Cause (such as Creation), then there must be a time that everything got started. But if there is no Creation, then there cannot be a set time for a beginning.

- Even as recently as at the beginning of the 1900s, Lord Kelvin, one of the top scientists of the day, estimated that the age of the Sun was $<40$ million years based on gravitational contraction (scientists did not know the atomic structure at that time). Our knowledge of the universe was pretty much limited to the Solar system.

3. Vindication of the Buddha's teachings on the long saimsāra started at the beginning of the 1900s with the advent of quantum mechanics and relativity. The discovery of radioactivity in 1898 by Becquerel and Einstein's explanation of the photoelectric effect in 1905 led to the quantum theory of atomic structure. That, in turn, led to the correct picture of nuclear fusion as the source of solar energy.

- By 1956, scientists knew the age of the solar system to be $>4$ billion years. Yet, even billions of years are hardly the same as "beginning-less time!"

4. But there was more to be discovered. By 1929, Edwin Hubble showed that distant galaxies are moving away from each other and that our galaxy is just one of many galaxies. That was a vast understatement since now we know billions of galaxies exist in our observable universe! And they are flying away from each other, meaning the universe is expanding.

- The discovery of microwave background radiation in the 1960s led to the "Big Bang Theory" that our universe started with the "Big Bang" about 14 billion ago.
- However, it is just a theory.

5. The most accepted explanation for such "big bang origin of the universe" is the inflationary theory of Alan Guth; see the book, "The Inflationary Universe" by Alan Guth, 1997. In the inflation theory, if one "Big Bang" is possible, then it is a given that many other "Big Bangs" are possible. The total energy of our universe is entirely consistent with adding up to zero.

- If a universe requires zero energy to produce, then "the universe is the ultimate free lunch," as Guth explains in his book (pp. 247-248). Thus, implied in the inflation theory is the existence of multiple universes.
- According to the "cyclic theory" model, an alternate theory, the same universe comes to a "Big Crunch," which leads to another Big Bang, and the whole process keeps repeating. So, there is no beginning to time either, time is infinite.

6. There are several theories currently being explored in quantum mechanics related to cosmology. There is one theory that requires a universe being exist for each possible event! So, there may be an infinite number of parallel universes. For example, see "The Beginning of Infinity" by David Deutsch (2011). In all these theories, multiple universes always exist.

- If that is not enough to boggle one's mind, another theory in quantum mechanics is called the "Many Worlds Interpretation of Quantum Mechanics." It speculates that multiple universes arise each time a quantum event takes place!

7. Buddha's explanation of how the universe operates is detailed in the Aggañña Sutta (DN27). However, all English translations available today are not correct. A good translation of the sutta with details would need a good background in Buddha Dhamma.

- I summarized "Buddhist Cosmology" in a recent forum discussion at the discussion forum: "WebLink: Multiverse: Different Physical Laws and Different Dhamma?."
- Also see, "Infinity - How Big Is It?."

8. I would like to close this essay with a simile from the Buddha that he used to describe the unimaginable length of saimsāra, and to point out that our time in this life is less than a blink of an eye to the length of saìsāra. The Buddha used a great eon as the measurement unit to help his followers visualize the enormous length of samisāra.

- In Buddha Dhamma, the Earth goes through a cyclic process: it forms, stays in that state, starts being destroyed, and stays in that destroyed state. That whole process takes a great eon (mahā kappa), and then the entire process repeats, again and again.
- The Buddha gave a simile to describe the length of a great eon (mahā kappa). It is longer than the time it would take a man to wear away a mountain of solid granite one yojana (about 7 miles) around and one yojana $\bar{a}$ high by stroking it once every hundred years with a silk cloth.
- These days scientists use the word "eon" to denote the duration of a universe (from the "big bang" either to a "big crunch" or just fading away). That will be proven to be incorrect in the future. I hope I will live to that day!

9. For fun, I estimated the mass of the material that needs to be removed by the silk cloth each time (this happens every 100 years). Using a 7 -mile cube of stone with a density of 2515 kg per cubic meter, I calculate the mass of the mountain to be $3.5 \times 10^{\wedge} 6 \mathrm{~kg}$.

- Assuming the lifetime of our Solar system to be 10 billion years, I calculate the mass removed by each stroke is about 36 grams or about 1.2 ounces. That appears to be a reasonable number!
- When we try to visualize the wearing of a mountain, we can imagine how long a time period that is.

10. Yet, that is still nothing compared to the length of the samisara. Infinity is a concept that is hard to wrap one's mind around; see, "Infinity - How Big Is It?."

- One day the bhikkhus asked the Buddha how many great eons had already passed and gone by. The Buddha told them, "Suppose, bhikkhus, there were four disciples here, each with a lifespan of hundred years, and each day they were each to recollect a hundred thousand great eons. There would still be great eons not yet recollected by them when those four disciples pass away at the end of a hundred years. Because, bhikkhus, this saimsāra is without discoverable beginning."
- Another simile given by the Buddha to indicate the length of sainsāra is the following: Every living being has been one's mother, father, or a close relative in this unimaginably long samisāra.
- One could understand why infinity is so hard to fathom by reading about what scientists say about infinity; a very entertaining book is "The Beginning of Infinity" (2011) by the physicist David Deutsch.

January 24, 2019: Relevant post: "Buddhism and Evolution - Aggañña Sutta (DN 27)."
July 20, 2019: New series on "Origin of Life."

### 2.10 Evidence for Rebirth

## Revised January 18, 2020; September 3, 2020

## Introduction

Most people in Western societies are not familiar with the concept of rebirth. However, that is changing, because there is a lot of evidence emerging, and scientists and philosophers are beginning to take it seriously.

- One needs to look at the mounting evidence without any preconceived ideas. There is no plausible way to explain these accounts from a purely "materialistic" point of view, i.e., that consciousness arises from inert matter.
- Here is a video of a recent discussion on Western research on children's past lives, Near Death Experiences, etc:
WebLink: Youtube: Is There Life after Death? Fifty Years of Research at UVA


## Rebirth Accounts

The late Professor Ian Stevenson at the University of Virginia conducted over 20 years of research on the authenticity of rebirth accounts, which is being continued by Professor Jim Tucker.

- Several books about rebirth have been written by these two professors. A good book is "Twenty Cases Suggestive of Reincarnation" by Ian Stevenson. By the way, Professor Stevenson became a Buddhist later on in his life presumably because of his studies (see, "Rebirth as Doctrine and Experience" by Francis Story (2003); first edition 1975). He mentions this in the introduction he wrote to this book by Francis Story; I have scanned that introduction: "Introduction to "Rebirth by Francis Story - Ian Stevenson."

Here is a video that discusses the work of the late Dr. Ian Stevenson, Dr. Jim Tucker, and colleagues at the University of Virginia:

## WebLink: YOUTUBE: Evidence of Reincarnation

In their book, "Soul Survivor: The Reincarnation of a World War II Fighter Pilot", by Bruce and Andrea Leininger detail the amazing story of their son's recount of a past life, mentioned in the above video. Here is an ABC News report on the story:

## WebLink: YOUTUBE: Reincarnation - Airplane Boy

Here is another story of the rebirth of a Civil War General:

## WebLink: YOUTUBE: Reincarnation, BORN AGAIN?

Here is a three-year-old chanting Buddhist suttā (and doing a very good job). Can a three-year-old memorize such complex lines of suttā?

## WebLink: YOUTUBE: 3-year-old boy in Isan chants in Pāli

- Also see the post, "Boy Who Remembered Pāli Suttā for 1500 Years." This is a true story about a boy (Dhammaruwan) who recited complex and lengthy Pāli suttā at five years of age, which sounded very different from current chantings. Furthermore, he remembers accounts of his previous life 1500 years ago, when he accompanied the famous Buddhaghosa on his trip to Sri Lanka.


## Child Prodigies

Another piece of evidence comes from child prodigies. Here is a report on " 10 Mind-Blowing Chile Prodigies":

## Evidence for Rebirth Much Stronger Than Perceived

1. Many people say that direct "proof" for rebirth cannot be given; it is actually the other way around. If one's memories are in the brain (as science believes), then all those memories will be lost when one dies. There is no "physical connection" between the brains of those involved in the rebirth stories.

- Therefore, even if just one of those rebirth accounts can be proven to be true, then there is no way to explain that in any way other than rebirth. How can the brain in this life recall memories from the brain in a previous life?
- If there is a connection between two lives that lived in two geographical locations (also separated by time), there is no explanation for that in current science, i.e., no way to make a connection between the DNA of those two "persons." A purely materialistic view cannot explain it.
- Recent findings in science show that matter in different locations is entangled at a fundamental level; see, "Quantum Entanglement - We Are All Connected." Also, "a living being just goes from one physical body to another"; see, "What Reincarnates? - Concept of a Lifestream."

2. Also, it is by having this presumption of rebirth that all of the seeming anomalies and inequalities of life can be explained; see, "Vagaries of Life and the Way to Seek Good Rebirths."

- And how could we ever explain the birth of such prodigies as Jeremy Bentham, who already in his fourth year could read and write Latin and Greek? John Stuart Mill, who at the age of three read Greek and at the age of six wrote a history of Rome? Babington Macaulay, who in his sixth year wrote a compendium of world history? Beethoven, who gave public concerts when he was seven; or Mozart, who already before his sixth year had written musical compositions? Voltaire, who read the fables of Lafontaine when he was three years old?
- Does it not seem infinitely more probable that all these prodigies and geniuses, who in many cases came from illiterate parents, had already in previous births laid the foundations for their extraordinary faculties?

Here is a list of child prodigies from Wikipedia. You will recognize many of the names:

## List of Child Prodigies

Here is the link to the Wikipedia article on child prodigies:

## Child Prodigy

## Healing with Hypnosis

The late Dr. Richard Feynman was skeptical about the claims in hypnosis studies until he subjected himself to hypnosis in two different occasions. In both instances, he verified for himself that if done correctly hypnosis works. He describes these two cases in his book, "Surely You're Joking, Mr. Feynman!" (1985), pp. 6668.

- Therefore, hypnosis provides yet another set of "supporting material." There are many cases of people remembering past lives when hypnotized. It is hard to evaluate the validity of most such cases.
- However, there is a branch of hypnosis that uses it as therapy. Some people seem to have "phobias" based on a horrific event from a past life. They cannot figure out why they have these phobias, but when a hypnotist brings out that experience, they become cured. Here is a $20 / 20$ documentary of three such cases, where they vouch for the authenticity of the therapy sessions:

WebLink: YOUTUBE: Past Lives

There are hundreds of youtube videos on rebirth stories and also many on child prodigies and hypnosisbased curing of certain ailments.

## The following books are also good reads:

- "Many Lives, Many Masters", by Brian Weiss (1988).
- 'Many Mansions: The Edgar Cayce Story on Reincarnation", by Gina Cerminara (1988).
- "Children's Past Lives: How Past Life Memories Affect Your Child" by Carol Bowman (1998)
- "Return to Life: Extraordinary Cases of Children Who Remember Past Lives", Jim B. Tucker (2013).


## OBE and NDE Studies

There is an ever-growing number of reports of Out-of-Body Experiences (OBE) and Near-Death Experiences (NDE) that not only support rebirth, but also are consistent with the concept of a "manomaya $k \bar{a} y a "$ "; see, "Out-of-Body Experience (OBE) and Manomaya Kāya" and other related posts.
Here is a popular youtube video on the presentation of a physician on Near-Death Experiences:
WebLink: youtube: From life to death, beyond and back | Thomas Fleischmann | TEDxTUHHSalon

There are many youtube videos, but here are three recent books on these two subjects:

- "Consciousness Beyond Life", by Pim van Lommel (2010) gives detailed accounts of case studies by a renowned cardiologist.
- "Brain Wars" by Mario Beauregard (2012) is a book by a scientist on NDE, OBE, and the mind-body problem in general.
- "Dying to be Me: My Journey from Cancer, to Near Death, to True Healing", by Anita Moorjani (2012) is a personal story of a cancer survivor who had been diagnosed to die within a few weeks but had an "unexplainable recovery" within days during which time she had an "out-of-body experience."


## Discussion

1. Some of you may be wondering whether there is an inconsistency here. I have repeatedly mentioned that the Buddha clearly stated that it is extremely rare to be born a human. Yet, from the above rebirth case studies it appears that people have been born in the human realm in successive lives. If it is so hard to attain a human birth, how can this be?
2. There is nothing inconsistent. The key problem here is another misinterpretation. "Bhava" or existence is not the same as a " $j \bar{a} t i$ " or a birth; see, "Bhava and Jāti - States of Existence and Births Therein."

- A living being, upon exhausting the kammic energy for one existence, grabs hold of another strong kammic potential for the next existence. A human existence (bhava) can last thousands of years. Yet, each human birth ( $j \bar{a} t i)$ lasts only about 100 years. Therefore, there can be many births ( $j \bar{a} t i$ ) within human existence (bhava.)
- In between successive human births, that human lives in para loka with just the "mental body" or manomaya kāya. Another word for that entity is gandhabba. The concept of gandhabba is explained in simple terms in, "Ghost 1990 Movie - Good Depiction of Gandhabba Concept."
- The same is true for the animal realm. The life of a dog is less than 20 years, but a "dog bhava" can last thousands or more years.

3. Thus, if one has done a highly meritorious deed, and at some point in samisāra (rebirth process) latches on to that "kamma seed" (see, "Sañkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka"), that energy may be able to sustain that existence for many rebirths.

- In these cases, when physical death occurs BEFORE exhausting the energy of the kamma seed, the manomaya kāya (also called gandhabba) leaves the dead body and waits until a suitable womb is ready; see, "Manomaya Kāya (Gandhabba) and the Physical Body." In this case, the gandhabba may carry the physical resemblance to the next life, including scars of any significant wounds, birthmarks, etc.
- When rebirth takes place there, the new physical body could have many resemblances to the old body. In many rebirth cases, such physical resemblances have been confirmed (as in the case of the civil war general in one of the above videos).

4. In summary, it is important to remember that in Paṭicca Samuppāda, it is "upādāna paccayā bhavo," i.e., grasping or craving (upādāna) that leads to existence (bhava): for example, existence as a dog.

- That existence (bhava) may have enough kammic energy to support many repeated births as a dog. Therefore, once a given bhava or existence is grasped, the next step of "bhava paccayā jāti," will lead to repeated births as a dog until that kammic energy is exhausted; see, "Bhava and Jāti - States of Existence and Births Therein."

5. On the other hand, if the kammic energy for that "bhava" has run out by the time death occurs, then a new "bhava" will be grasped at the death moment.

- For example, a human may exhaust the kammic energy for that human existence (bhava) and grasp a kammic seed for a bhava (existence) of an elephant. In that case, an "elephant gandhabba" will come out of the dead body of the human. Then it will stay in that "mental body" until a matching "elephant womb" appears. That means the mother elephant needs to have gati similar to this new elephant.

6. It may be difficult to grasp these concepts initially. One needs to look up the links given and may need to go back several layers to grasp these ideas. It is not possible to explain everything in one post. Buddha Dhamma can be very deep if one wants to really comprehend how nature works.
You may want to read the posts in the section on "Origin of Life" and "Buddha Dhamma - A Scientific Approach."

### 2.11 Power of the Human Mind

- Power of the Human Mind - Introduction
- Difference Between Jhāna and Stages of Nibbāna
- Power of the Human Mind - Anariya or Mundane Jhānā
- Power of the Human Mind - Ariya Jhānā
- Are There Procedures for Attaining Magga Phala, Jhāna and Abhiññā?


### 2.11.1 Power of the Human Mind - Introduction

## Revised August 27, 2018

1. Most people know about Buddha Gotama as a very intelligent and compassionate human being. In "Dhamma and Science - Introduction," I pointed out the similarities and differences between a scientist and a Buddha. Here I want to discuss in detail the incomprehensible complexity of a human mind, and how a Buddha achieves the peak performance of that complex entity.

- As I pointed out in "Godel's Incompleteness Theorem," a normal human mind works within the sense sphere of a normal human and thus inherently incapable of providing a complete theory about our world; but the mind of a Buddha can transcend our sensory experience and see the whole of existence.
- Here I point out, in a systematic way in a series of posts, the progression of the human mind to higher levels achieved by purifying the mind (not by merely learning), and why a Buddha is at the very pinnacle. At the end of this series you will see why no other human being, no matter how intelligent, can even remotely approach the mind of a Buddha.

2. In the "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma," we discussed the 31 realms of existence as laid out by the Buddha.

- Out of these, the human realm is at the fifth level (and our knowledge base is limited to our sensory experience within it, and Godel's Incompleteness Theorem applies to any theory derived within it). There are four realms below the human realm, AND 26 realms above.
- Out of the 31 realms, we can see only the human realm and the animal realm (which is one of the four lower realms or the apa$y \bar{a}$ ). But we can access the thoughts enjoyed by the beings in the higher realms, AND we can access the transcendental (lokuttara) cittā too. Please do not put too much significance initially to the number of cittā in each realm, etc. Be patient with me as I need to lay out the "big picture" first.
- As we proceed systematically in a few posts, you will see various connections to other concepts discussed in other parts on the site, and eventually all fit together. This is why I keep saying that it is a complete and self-consistent world view on a scale unimaginable to a normal (unpurified) human mind.

3. The types of thoughts (citt $\bar{a}$ ) that can be experienced in the whole of existence ( 31 realms) is 89 (or 121 depending on the scheme); see, "The 89 (or 121) Types of Cittas." In the three main lokas (or planes) of $k \bar{a} m a l o k a, ~ r \bar{u} p a l o k a$, and arūpaloka, different types of cittā are of common occurrence. While most of the $\mathbf{8 9}$ citt $\bar{a}$ are possible in all three lokas, normally a subset of cittā operate mostly in a given realm.

- For example, in the $k \bar{a} m a l o k a$, only 54 cittā are mainly experienced. The kāmaloka consists of the lower eleven realms, with sixth through eleventh shells representing the realms of the devas. Beings in these 11 realms have all six sense bases, and in the deva realms the sense pleasures are higher than in the human realm.

4. Out of all 89 types of thoughts, only 12 are immoral or akusala cittā and these are experienced only in $k a \overline{m a l o k a}$; see, "Akusala Citta and Akusala Vipāka Citta."

- In the higher 20 realms belonging to the $r \bar{u} p a l o k a$ and arūpaloka, only $j h a \bar{a} i c ~ c i t t \bar{a}$ are mostly present, and akusala cittā normally do not arise.
- So, as one can imagine, the beings in the lower realms entertain more immoral cittā, and with higher frequency too. Human realm is kind of in the middle, with both moral and immoral cittā.
- Mostly vipāka citta arise in the lowest four realms; they basically "pay for their previous kamma." It is said that the beings in the lowest realm, niraya (hell) experience basically two immoral cittā based on hate, because of the high degree of suffering there.

5. The human realm is unique in that the human mind can access not only the cittā in the rūpa and arūpa lokas, but also the eight types of cittā that transcend the $\mathbf{3 1}$ realms. These cittō are the four path (magga) cittā for the four levels of Nibbāna (Sotāpanna, Sakadāgāmī, Anāgāmī, Arahant), and the corresponding resultant (phala) cittā. Thus all 89 types of citta are possible for a human.

- Beings in the higher realms can also attain the 8 magga/phala citta, but do not normally experience the citt $\bar{a}$ that are typical of the lower realms.
- Furthermore, the most potent cittā, those with highest javana (impulse) power in "mahā kusala citta." They are accessible mostly by humans and those in higher realms; see, "Javana of a Citta - Root of Mental Power." More posts will follow in the future.
- This is the basis of the power of the human mind. It is possible for a human to attain the mindset of a being in the lowest realm (niraya) and it is possible also to go all the way up to the mindset of a Buddha.

6. The citt $\bar{a}$ in the $r \bar{u} p a l o k a$ and arūpaloka are easily categorized according to the $j h \bar{a} n i c$ states. These are the same jhānic states attained by human via meditation.

- A human can attain all eight jhānic states, and the lower four correspond to the rūpaloka and the higher four to the arūpaloka.
- By the way, the Buddha never referred to the arupāvacara states as jhānā. Rather they are referred to in the suttā by their names: $\bar{k} k \bar{a} s a ̄ n a n c a \bar{a} a t a n a, ~ v i n ̃ n ̃ a ̄ n a n c a ̄ y a t a n a, ~ e t c . ~$
- Each jhānic state correspond to three types of cittā: wholesome (kusala) citta and the corresponding vipāka (resultant) citta are two; when the same jhānic kusala citta experienced by an Arahant it is called a kriya (functional) citta, because it does not lead to a vipāka citta.

7. In the 16 realms belong to the $r \bar{u} p a l o k a$, where only two physical sense faculties (eye and ear) are active. These beings have very fine (less dense) bodies.

- In rūpaloka 15 types of thoughts ( citta) are mostly experienced corresponding to the five $j h a \overline{n i c}$ factors: vitakka, vicara, pīti, sukha, ekaggatā; see, "Power of the Human Mind - Anāriya or Mundane Jhānā." These are the lower five jhānic kusala cittā, corresponding five vipāka cittā and five kriy $\bar{a}$ citt $\bar{a}$ (the last five are effective only for the Arahants who get into these jhānic states).
- The highest four realms represent the arūpa lokas, where beings have ultra fine bodies and only the mind faculty; no physical senses. Here there are only 12 types of jhānic citta mainly present. These are the higher four (fifth through eighth) jhānic kusala cittā, corresponding four vipāka citta, and corresponding four kriyā citta (which are effective only for the Arahants who get into these jhānic states, which do not have corresponding vipāka citta).

8. The rūpaloka and arūpaloka are collectively known as Brahma realms, which comprise the higher 20 realms. In the Brahma realms, beings are mostly devoid of both greed and hate, but they have dormant ignorance (moha) in their kamma seeds; see, "Sañkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka." In the deva worlds (which belong to kāmaloka), those beings are mostly devoid of hate-rooted citt $\bar{a}$, but have greed-rooted citt $\bar{a}$ since they enjoy sensual pleasures.

- It is possible for a human to attain any of those jhānic states via samatha meditation, and one does not have to be a Buddhist to attain those mundane or anāriya jhānic states.
- Those anāriya jhānic states are temporary; a yogi in a jhānic state can be "taken out" of the jhāna; see the next post. They may be lost if one does not keep practicing, and the ability to enter such jhān $\bar{a}$ is lost when one dies, i.e., he/she may not have the ability to get into $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$ in the next life, even if they are born human.
- However, if one dies while in even an anāriya jhānic state, he/she will be born in the corresponding rūpaloka or arūpaloka. Yet, a being who gets into even the highest arūpaloka via anāriya jhānā will end up eventually in the four lower realms (apāyā).
- However, Ariya jhānā are permanent. Once one gets into an Ariya jhāna, it will hold through future lives.

More information with references to suttā at: "Samādhi, Jhāna (Dhyāna), Magga Phala."

### 2.11.2 Difference Between Jhāna and Stages of Nibbāna

March 24, 2017; revised April 28, 2018; July 11, 2021

1. There are many misconceptions about the relationship between jhāna and magga phala (the four stages of Nibbāna). Some view that jhāna are necessary to attain magga phala, and others believe that being able to get into jhāna means one has attained magga phala.

- The first assumption is wrong, and the second is true if one has attained an Ariya jhāna.
- We can resolve these issues by looking into what are meant by jhāna and magga phala, and also the difference between anāriya and Ariya jhāna.

2. One attains magga phala (various stages of Nibbāna) by permanently removing greed, hate, and ignorance (about the nature of this world or Tilakkhaña): "Ragakkhayo Nibbanan, Dosakkhayo Nibbanan, Mohakkhayo Nibbanan."

- This can also be stated as "one needs to remove 7 anusaya" or equivalently "10 samyojana" to attain Nibbāna. At the Sotāpanna stage one removes 2 anusaya and 3 samyojana; see, "Conditions for the Four Stages of Nibbāna."
- The most commonly used evaluation is that a Sotāpanna has removed the three samyojana of sakkaya ditthi, vicikicchā, and silabbata paramasa.
- Therefore, a critical first step for attaining magga phala is to be exposed to the correct interpretations of anicca, dukkha, anatta; see, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta - Wrong Interpretations."
- The second step is, of course, to grasp the anicca (and dukkha and anatta) saññā to some extent; see, "What is Sañ̃̃̃a (Perception)?."

3. Jhāna (sometimes written as "dyāna") can provide blissful bodily sensations. These arise due to the "cleansing of the physical body and the nervous system" induced by "defilement-free" thoughts; see, "Jhānic Experience in Detail - Sāmaññaphala Sutta (DN 2)."

- Jhäna are mental states corresponding to rupavacara and arupavacara realms; they still belong to "this world" of 31 realms. Just like the human realm is "more peaceful in general" than the animal realm, jhānic states are "more peaceful in general" than the human realm.
- We all have been born in most of the 31 realms (except for the realms reserved for the Anāgāmis) uncountable times, and thus had attained those $j h a \bar{n} i c$ states uncountable times in previous lives.
- Even this second phenomenon of $j h a \overline{n a}$ is completely outside the realm of modern science. Scientists cannot explain jhānic phenomena, but soon they will not be able to ignore these as "hallucinations" because more and more people are attaining jhāna.

4. There are two main factors that come into play in cultivating jhān $\bar{a}$.

- Some people have cultivated jhānā in their recent previous lives and are able to get into anāriya jhānā very quickly. For a few it comes without any effort, just lying on the bed (by the way this can be any person who lives a moral life, whether exposed to Buddha Dhamma or not).
- The second factor involves the "cleansing of the physical body", as we discuss below. This means the actual physical body with its nervous system, in addition to cleansing the mind.

5. My late Noble teacher, Waharaka Thero, has given the following simile to explain this "cleansing process" as well as to describe the main difference between a jhāna and magga phala.

- I hope you have at least heard about - preferably seen - an old oil lantern with a glass enclosure where the wick is soaked in oil or gasoline that comes up through the wick from a built-in reservoir.
- If gasoline is contaminated, the glass enclosure gets dirty quickly. In the same way, our defiled thoughts lead to a "contamination effect" in our physical bodies.
- Many body ailments, including bodily pains and even some diseases, COULD BE reduced by cleansing one's mind. Of course, those initially arise due to kamma vipāka, and the stronger ones may not be overcome by this process; see, "What is Kamma? - Is Everything Determined by Kamma?."

6. Our thoughts can be compared to the burning wick and the physical body to the glass enclosure, in the above simile. When the thoughts become defiled, the body will be "contaminated" giving rise to discomforts and even diseases. We will discuss the causes below.

- The glass enclosure of the lamp needs to be taken out and cleaned in order to get the lamp to shine bright again, i.e., to make the "body of the lamp" clean again.
- In contrast, there is a built-in mechanism for our bodies to be cleansed.
- This built-in mechanism is our cittaja kaya or our thoughts. We can state the basic mechanism this way: The javana citta in our thoughts (cittaja kaya) produce good or bad energy fields called utuja kaya. These are actually rūpa below the suddhatthaka stage (very fine), which are analogous to electromagnetic waves in physics.
- Bad thoughts associated with dasa akusala lead to the contamination of the body, and good thoughts generate utuja kaya that can clean up such contamination.
- The "Search box" on the top right can be used to find more relevant posts, if one needs more information on these terms.

7. This utuja kaya (which is really an energy field) can and does affect our physical body. This is why people who are depressed, or have high levels of anger or greed, are more likely to be subjected to ailments and diseases, and people with joyful mindsets have relatively healthy bodies.

- This effect can be enhanced via nirāmisa sukha that arises due to "moral living." The more one stays away from the dasa akusala, the happier one becomes, and starts feeling "sukha" in the body itself. It may not be fast, but it definitely happens over time.
- It can be much more enhanced by comprehending Tilakkhaṇa. The difference here is that one will then stay away from dasa akusala mainly because one would have realized the fruitlessness and danger of seeking sensual pleasures by committing dasa akusala.

8. I have discussed - starting with basics - how our thoughts can affect our well-being in the "Living Dhamma" section. Understanding those basic concepts is crucial in order to understand deeper concepts and to do Ānāpāna and Satipatt $\mathrm{th} \bar{n} n a$ Bhāvanā effectively as discussed later in that section.

- When defiled thoughts are suppressed at least for short times (during a desanā or while reading Dhamma), one's mind becomes joyful and one will be able to get to samädhi for a short time (tadañga pahāna).
[pahāna : (nt.) removal; giving up; abandoning; avoidance.
pahāna : 'overcoming', abandoning. There are 5 kinds of overcoming:
(1) overcoming by repression (vikkhambhana-pahāna), i.e. the temporary suspension of the 5 hindrances (nīvarana, q.v.) during the absorptions, [vikkhambhana : [nt.] arrest; elimination; discarding; suppression.]
(2) overcoming by the opposite (tadañga-pahāna),
(3) overcoming by destruction (samuccheda-pahāna),
(4) overcoming by tranquillization (patipassaddhi-pahāna),
(5) overcoming by escape (nissaraṇa-pahāna).
(1) 'Among these, 'overcoming by repression' is the pushing back of adverse things, such as the 5 mental hindrances (n̄̄varana q.v), etc., through this or that mental concentration (samādhi, q.v.), just as a pot thrown into moss-clad water pushes the moss aside....
(2) " 'Overcoming by the opposite' is the overcoming by opposing this or that thing that is to be overcome, by this or that factor of knowledge belonging to insight (vipassanā q.v.), just as a lighted lamp dispels the darkness of the night. In this way, the personality-belief (sakkāyadittthi, s. ditthi) is overcome by determining the mental and corporeal phenomena ... the view of uncausedness of existence by investigation into the conditions... the idea of eternity by contemplation of impermanency ... the idea of happiness by contemplation of misery....
(3) 'If through the knowledge of the noble path (s. ariyapuggala) the fetters and other evil things cannot continue any longer, just like a tree destroyed by lightning, then such an overcoming is called 'overcoming by destruction’ " (Vis.M. XXII, 110f.).
(4) When, after the disappearing of the fetters at the entrance into the paths, the fetters, from the moment of fruition (phala) onwards, are forever extinct and stilled, such overcoming is called the 'overcoming by tranquillization'.
(5) 'The 'overcoming by escape' is identical with the extinction and Nibbāna" (Pts.M. I. 27). (App.).]
- If one spends more and more time doing such activities, the length of this calm mindset (samādhi) can be lengthened, even up to weeks (vikkhambhana pahāna). Three types of pahāna are discussed in "Suffering in This Life - Role of Mental Impurities."
- That may not be jhāna yet, but it is possible to get into jhāna by increasing one's efforts by either samatha or vipassana meditation.
- For some people, it is easier to get jhāna, because they had cultivated jhānā in recent previous births as we mentioned above.

9. The power of the javana citta are increased when one is in samādhi and is even more when one gets to a jhāna. The "body cleansing effect" is enhanced and one starts feeling joy in the face, sukha in the body.

- This can be compared to the wick in the oil lamp generating a "high-power laser light" that automatically cleans the dirty glass enclosure.
- That bright "utuja kāya," which are also called "kirana" (or electromagnetic waves in physics), can burn those long-accumulated "bad deposits" in our bodies and also "straighten out" the nervous system.
- This is the first confirmation of the effect of the mind on the body for someone starting on the Path. One can actually convince oneself that the body CAN BE affected by one's thoughts.

10. All this can be done by just SUPPRESSING the pañcanīvaraṇa for long times, see, "Key to Calming the Mind - The Five Hindrances."

- Even before the Buddha, ancient yogis were able to get to jhāna by SUPPRESSING defiled thoughts or pañcañ̄varaṇa. They did this mainly by staying away from sensual objects (usually in a forest or in an isolated place).
- In fact, they were able to cultivate powerful abhiñ̃ñ̄and even travel through the air. Therefore, it is possible that those who get into the fourth anāriya jhāna will also experience the "white light" surrounding them.
- As long as one's mind can be kept away from greedy and hateful thoughts, such states of samādhi and $j h a ̄ n a$ can be maintained for a long time (vikkhambhana pahāna).
- This is related to the fact that how people can go to even anāriya meditation retreats (breath meditation) and attain a sense of peace for many days at a stretch. However, when they come back and get back into the regular lifestyle, it slowly fades.

11. The problem is that those effects, no matter how powerful, are only temporary with anāriya jhāna. They have not removed the root cause for getting attached to greed and hate. They remain hidden deep down as anusaya/samyojana.

- This is discussed in detail in "Power of the Human Mind - Anāriya or Mundane Jhāna."
- Jhāna belong to the 31 realms: "Sila, Samādhi, Paññā to Paññā, Sīla, Samādhi."

12. Now we are getting closer to see the difference between anāriya and Ariya jhāna.

- The main difference between them is that Ariya jhāna are permanent since they are attained via REMOVING and not just SUPPRESSING some of those anusaya/samiyojana.
- Once removed via wisdom (pañña) when attaining the Sotāpanna stage of Nibbāna, some of those anusaya/samiyojana are permanently removed from one's mind (ucceda pahāna).
- After that, no matter how strong an attractive/hateful sense input comes in, strong defiled thoughts CANNOT arise in a Sotāpanna; see, "Akusala Citta - How a Sotāpanna Avoids Apayagami Citta," and other relevant posts in the "Sotāpanna Stage of Nibbāna."

13. The remaining key to the puzzle is that it is possible to attain magga phala just by getting into samādhi and not necessarily to jhāna.

- There are many types of people based on their gati (personalities) and capabilities: saddhā, viriya, samādhi, sati, paññā. In fact, the suttā in the Tipitaka are separated into five Nikāyas based on that so that each individual can study appropriate suttā for him/her, see, "Nikāya in the Sutta Pitaka."
- Without getting into details, people with predominantly pañña indriya can attain magga phala without going through jhāna.
- Others can go through jhānā to attain magga phala. This is not clear-cut, but just to get an idea.

14. The bottom line is that $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$ can be quite helpful in getting to magga phala. Furthermore, one may attain both within reasonably short times. But magga phala (at least the Sotāpanna stage) comes before Ariya jhāna are attained.

- The reason is that uccheda pahāna mentioned in \#12 that is necessary for the Ariya jhāna, cannot take place unless one has comprehended the Tilakkhaṇa and attained the Sotāpanna stage.
- One normally attains Ariya jhāna by recalling the (stage of) Nibbāna that one has seen, and the "cooling down" that one has thus experienced; see, "Power of the Human Mind - Ariya Jhānā."

15. For people with high levels of pañ̃̄̄a, even a brief state of samādhi, called tadañga pahāna (see \#8 above) is enough to attain the Sotāpanna stage. A famous example is Bahiya Daruchiriya who attained the Arahantship upon hearing just a single verse.

- Then there are accounts of many people who attained the Sotāpanna stage via vikkhambhana pahāna (see \#8 and \#10 above), mainly while listening to a desanā by the Buddha.
- For example, Alavaka yaksa (not a niraya yaksa but a deva yaksa) threatened the Buddha just before sitting down to listen to a desanā and attained the Sotāpanna stage during the desanā. Angulimāla
chased the Buddha with the intention of killing him but attained the Sotāpanna stage immediately afterward.
- More information on the three kinds of pahāna can be found in, "What Are Kilesa (Mental Impurities)? - Connection to Cetasika."

16. Therefore, there can be people with magga phala without any anāriya or Ariya jhāna.

- If there are people with magga phala without jhāna, they cannot experience the "jhānic sukha" in the body. Even though they do not generate "bad thoughts" to further contaminate their bodies, they have not cleansed the old contaminants. Jhānic javana citta (that can run continuously for long times, compared to just 7 javana citta in a normal citta vithi) are like laser beams that can clean contaminants in the body even in an anāriya jhāna; see \#4 of "Citta Vīhhi - Processing of Sense Inputs."
- In the simile of $\# 5$ above, this is like a wick not emitting any more smoke, but the glass enclosure is not yet cleaned.
- Of course, it would be easier for a person with magga phala to attain Ariya jhāna, and they will not attain anāriya jhāna.

17. Finally, from the above discussion it appears that the only way to confirm the attainment of the Sotāpanna stage is to see whether one has removed the three saimyojana (sanyojana) of sakkāya diṭthi, vicikicchā, and sīlabbata parāmāsa; see, "Sakk $\bar{a} y a$ Ditthi is Personality (Me) View?."

- And that cannot be determined by anyone else, but oneself.

18. April 28, 2018: I found a desanā by Waharaka Thero where he presents clear evidence that jhāna are not necessary to attain magga phala:

## WebLink: Download "Are Jhāna Required for Magga-Phala"

- The main point Thero makes is that we know that there are jāti Sotāpannas born in the human realm. But if a jhāna was REQUIRED to attain the Sotāpanna stage, then that person WOULD NOT be born in the human realm, but in a Brahma realm corresponding to that $j h a \bar{n} a$.

More information with references to suttā at: "Samādhi, Jhāna (Dhyāna), Magga Phala."

### 2.11.3 Power of the Human Mind - Anāriya or Mundane Jhānā

1. The 54 types of $\operatorname{citt} \bar{a}$ (thoughts) belonging to the kāmaloka (called kāmāvacara citt $\bar{a}$ ) are not very strong; they can just have enough power to grasp the thought object (ārammaña in Pāli or aramuna in Sinhala).

- The power of a thought comes from javana; see, "Javana of a Citta - The Root of Mental Power" for an analysis based on Abhidhamma.
- But the jhānic citta $\bar{a}$ belonging to the rūpaloka and arūpaloka have much more power and have a firm grasp of the object. This is why it is possible for someone who can get to the fourth jhānic state to acquire some capabilities that exceed the "normal" human potential, like telekinetic (move things with the mind) or the ability to see or hear from long distances; see below.
- The Pāli word "jhāna" has two roots: "to concentrate" and also "to burn up."

2. The Anariya or mundane $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$ are attained simply by SUPPRESSING the five hindrances. One simply focuses the mind forcefully onto one thought object, not letting those five hindrances come to surface.

- Since there is only one citta at a time (even though there are billions of citt $\bar{a}$ a second), when one forces the mind to one thought object, the five hindrances are kept at bay, and one feels the serenity of a mind unpolluted by the hindrances. This is called samatha meditation.

3. Thus attaining mundane $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$ is purely a mechanistic process. While some Buddhists use them to calm the mind before getting into insight (vipassana) meditation, it is used widely by the Hindus. Even before the Buddha, there were many Hindu yogis who could attain the highest $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$.

- There are many reports of people of other faiths also attaining such jhānic states (see, for example, "Interior Castle" by the Christian nun St. Teresa of Avila; edited by E. Allison Peers, 1946, for a fascinating description of "seven mansions" which seem to correspond to these jhänic states).
- But such jhānic states are not permanent; one could lose them in an instant, if the moral conduct is broken and defiled thoughts come to the surface (anusaya).

4. There are many techniques for conducting such samatha meditation. The popular ones are breath (whether focusing the mind on the breath at the nostrils or on the rising/falling of the stomach) and kasina meditation (where a certain object, for example a colored disk is used to focus the attention on). As one's mind gets absorbed in that object, the five hindrances are suppressed, and the mind advances to higher and higher calm states.

- Obviously, it is easier to attain jhānic states via samatha meditation if one follows at least the five precepts (not killing, stealing, sexually misbehaving, lying, or taking drugs or alcohol). This is because the greedy and hateful thoughts are at a lower baseline state for a person observing the five precepts.
- If one abstains from all ten immoral acts (dasa akusala), then it is even easier to calm the mind and to attain these jhānic states; see, "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)."

5. The five jhānic states corresponding to the cittt $\bar{a}$ in the ru$p a l o k a$ themselves are related to the five hindrances. To get to the first jhānic state, one needs to suppress the five hindrances; this is done by developing five sobhana [beautiful qualities of consciousness] mental factors (sobhana cetasika) to counter the five hindrances:

- Vitakka inhibits the hindrance of sloth and torpor (thina middha). This is how one trains to direct the mind to one thought object, say the breath. Vitakka is normally translated as "initial application", but it comes from "tharka" or going back and forth among many ārammana (thought objects); when this is stopped one has "vitharka" or vitakka, i.e., staying on one thought object, for example, breath or a kasina object.
- Sustained application (vicara; pronounced "vichāra") is the continued presence of the mind on that object, i.e., maintaining concentration on that object; vicara comes from stopping "chara" or moving around. Vitakka and vicara are compared to a bee flying towards a flower and then buzzing and hanging around the flower while extracting honey from it. Vicara serves to temporarily inhibit the hindrance of vicikicch $\bar{a}$.
- As the mind gets absorbed in the object, thoughts of ill will are suppressed and zest or mental happiness ( $\bar{\imath} t i$ or "preethi") arises in the mind. This is the jhānic factor of $p \bar{u} t i$, and it suppresses the hindrance of ill will (vyāpāda). This happiness is felt mainly on the face.
- The body becomes light due to physical happiness (sukha). This jhānic factor counters the hindrance of restlessness and worry (uddhacca kukkucca).
- Thus the mind now becomes totally absorbed in the thought object, and one has one-pointedness (ekaggat $\bar{a}$ ). This is the primary jhānic factor in all rūpaloka jhānic states and the essence of concentration (samādhi). This one-pointedness temporarily inhibits sensual desire (kāmacchanda).

When all five jhānic factors are present, the five hindrances are temporarily suppressed, and one is in the first $j h a ̄ n i c$ state.
6. The higher $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$ are attained by successively eliminating the grosser $j h \bar{a} n a$ factors and by refining the subtler jhāna factors through sustained concentration.

- Thus in the Abhidhamma it is stated that there are five jhānic states, where the last four are attained by the elimination of a jhāna factor at each stage; thus in that method, the second jhāna is attained by
removing vitakka. But in the sutt $\bar{a}$, the Buddha expounds the $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$ as fourfold, where both vitakka and vicara are removed to get to the second jhāna. Therefore the difference comes in at the second jhāna.
- For someone cultivating $j h \bar{a} n a$, this is not of any practical concern. In practice, it is not easy to distinguish between two steps of removing vittakka, vicara; they seem to go away together. That is probably why the Buddha just combine them into one jhāna in the sutta .


## Possible Perils of Mundane Jhānā

First of all, the anāriya (mundane) jhānā are not stable as Ariya jhānā. A yogi can be taken out of the jhāna by the anusaya (temptations) triggered by an external stimulus, for example seeing an attractive woman or hearing a seductive voice; see, "Āsava, Anusaya, and Gati (Gathi)."

- There is this story about a yogi who was travelling by air with abhiññ̄ powers and saw a flower in the shape of a woman (called "nārilathā") and lost the jhānic state and came down; there is another such story where the yogi heard the singing of a woman and had to face the same fate.
- In contrast, when someone gets into an Ariya jhāna, that jhāna cannot be broken by any such influence even though the yogi may see or hear such external stimuli; see, "Power of the Human Mind - Ariya Jhānā."
- Thus even though the yogi may have not removed some $\bar{a} s a v \bar{a}$, the anusaya are PREVENTED from arising in an Ariya jhāna; this is because the object of concentration (ārammana) in an Ariya jhāna is not a mundane object, but Nibbāna.
- June 8, 2018: The critical differences between Ariya and anāriya jhāna discussed in "Pathama Mettā Sutta."

1. There are many people even today, who can get into these mundane $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$. But it is not a good idea to attain such mundane $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$ at or above the fifth $j h \bar{a} n a$.

- This is because, if someone dies while in such an arūpa jhānic state, he/she will be born in the arūpa loka: it is not possible to attain the Sotāpanna stage in the arūpa loka because the eye and ear faculties are not present (so one could not learn Dhamma), and thus cannot become a Sotāpanna. Thus one would spend a very long time there, and has to start all over when one returns to the human world. Once in the human world, it is possible that one could accumulate bad kamma vipāka and be destined to the apāyā.
- Thus it is better to make the effort to become a Sotāpanna, rather than seeking any jhāna. A Sotāpanna will never be born in the ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$ (lowest four realms).

2. There is yet another danger in attaining these mundane $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$. Even before the $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$, one could start seeing objects of one's liking (such as religious figures of any religion, religious symbols, colorful lights, etc).

- Thus many people tend to believe that they have attained some of sort of advancement in meditation or in their belief system; some Buddhists may believe they have attained Nibbāna or something close to it. It could be dangerous to play with such illusions. When such lights or other images appear, one should completely ignore them. I used to see them too, but luckily I found my teachers before getting heavily involved with these illusions.

3. It is said that in some rare instances, lowly spirits try to convince meditators that they are devas or Brahm $\bar{a}$ (beings in the realms higher than the human realm). It is dangerous to get involved with them too. It is possible that some of the horror stories we hear from time to time about people killing their own families were committed under such influences.

## Extrasensory Perceptions and Powers (Abhiñña $\overline{\text { ) }}$

1. When one attains and perfects the fourth jhāna, one could start developing several extra sensory perceptions and powers, which could take considerable effort. No reports are available on anyone with ALL these abilities at the present time. However, when one attains the Arahant stage, certain extra sensory powers can be attained if cultivated, including the last one on the following list, the ability to "see" the past lives:

- Psychokinesis (iddhividha) or various manifestations of the "power of will."
- Clairaudience (dibbasota), the faculty of perceiving sounds even at long distances, far beyond the range of ordinary auditory faculties.
- Clairvoyance (dibbacakkhu), which enables one to see far events as well as heavenly worlds (i.e., other beings that are not visible to normal human eye).
- Telepathy (cetopariya ñāna), which enables one to comprehend the general state as well as the functioning of another's mind.
- Ability to recollect one's own past lives (pubbenivasanussatinana).

2. It is possible for a yogi to develop the abhiñ̃̃ā to the extent that he/she can see past lives through half of a Mahā Kappa (which can be taken to be roughly 15 billion years). The ancient yogis with such power saw that the Mahā Brahma has been there all through that time period. Therefore, they came to the wrong conclusion that the Maha Brahma was the one who created the world at that time in the past.

- Those yogis who are born in the asañña realm spend 500 Mahā Kappas there like a lifeless log (no thinking, that is what asañña means). When they exhaust that lifetime, they normally are reborn in the human realm, and because of this past "gati" to cultivate jhānā, they may again develop abhiñ̃̄̄̄ powers. Now they look back at past lives, but do not see any because they can look back only half of a Mahā Kappa, which is only a thousandth of the duration of the past life. Thus, they also conclude erroneously that they are "new" beings, who did not have any past lives. [asañña : [adj.] unconscious.]
- The Buddha, upon his Enlightenment, could see thousands of Mahā Kappas in the blink of eye. This is why he said there is no discernible beginning to life.
- An Arahant with abhiññ̄ powers can see back through numerous Mahā Kappas since Ariya jhānā are much more powerful.

3. Further details can be found in:

- "The Manuals of Dhamma", by Ven. Ledi Sayadaw (2006), p. 105.
- "Abhidhammattha Sangaha - Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma" by Bhikkhu Bodhi (1999), p. 344.

4. These kinds of direct knowledge are all mundane and are dependent on the mastery of the fourth jhāna and focusing attention on these tasks. The Buddha discouraged bhikkhus from pursuing these mundane powers, and also prohibited bhikkhus from public display of such powers, calling them "childish." That is because all these powers are temporary. Since one has not removed avijja (ignorance) and has only suppressed greed (lobha) and hate or ill will (dosa), they can resurface any time and remove all those achievements.

- One good example from the Buddha's time was Devadatta, who was a brother of princess Yasodhara. Devadatta became a monk and developed the mundane $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$ and attained those direct knowledges described above. He could perform many "miracles", and one time he appeared in the bedroom of Prince Ajasattu to impress him. But when Devadatta went against the Buddha and at one time injured the Buddha, he lost all his mundane powers and ended up in the lowest realm (avici niraya) because of those offenses.

By now one should be able to get a sense of the potential of the mind. With even these mundane jhān $\bar{a}$, a human can access the higher realms of existence and also attain super normal powers, but these mundane $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$ are at a much lower level than Ariya jhānā.

Next, "Power of the Human Mind - Ariya Jhānā", ...........
In depth discussions at: "Samādhi, Jhāna (Dhyāna), Magga Phala."

### 2.11.4 Power of the Human Mind - Ariya Jhānā

## Revised Februrary 12, 2018; December 3, 2019

1. We saw in the previous post that Anāriya jhānā are attained via focusing the mind (vitakka) on ANY thought object (ārammana).

- That ārammaṇa could be breath, a kasiña object, or any other religious symbol of any religion. Then keeping the mind there (vicāra or sustained application) helps one to get to a jhāna.

2. Therefore, anāriya or mundane $j h a \bar{n} \bar{a}$ are attained by SUPPRESSING the five hindrances via concentrating on mundane objects (breath, a kasiṇa object, etc.) On the other hand, Ariya jhānā are attained via using Nibbāna as the ārammaṇa (thought object.) However, Nibbāna is not "an object" in this world, so what is meant here is to recall some "cooling down" that one has experienced.

- One can start "cooling down" first by living a moral life and by staying away from dasa akusala; see, "Living Dhamma."
- When one comprehends the Three Characteristics (Tilakkhaña) of anicca, dukkha, anatta at least to some extent, there is definitely more permanent "cooling down" over time. One can look back and notice such a "cooling down." For example, one may not "flare-up" at the slightest provocation as one used to, or one may have lost cravings to some extent, etc. That is what needs to be recalled while cultivating Ariya jhāna; see \#4 below for the kammaṭthāna.

3. Thus the key is to first experience some "cooling down" by comprehending the Three Characteristics of "this world" of 31 realms. One examines the real-life situations and understands that no lasting happiness is possible, either in this life or anywhere in these 31 realms; see. "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta," and "Why is Correct Interpretation of Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta so Important?."

- This gives rise to nirāmisa sukha (see, "Three Kinds of Happiness - What is Nirāmisa Sukha?") of Nibbāna, i.e., some sort of a "cooling down", over time. How long it takes to experience some "cooling down" will depend on the person.

4. When one has experienced some "cooling down" that one can recall, then one can use it in a kammatthāna to cultivate jhāna. This procedure is more effective for those who have attained the Sotāpanna stage. One can sit in a quiet place and recite the following kammatthāna:

- "etain santain etaim pañittain, yadidam sabbasañkhārasamatho sabbūpadhipatinissaggo taṇhākkhayo virāgo nirodho nibbānan'ti," which means, "It is the only peace, the only happiness: prevent sañkhāra from arising (via) eliminating tanh $\bar{a}$ and excess greed, and thus stopping the arising of defilements, which is Nibbāna." This needs to be done while recalling an instance of one's own "cooling down"; see \#3 above.
- However, the above procedure is not effective unless one has at least some understanding of anicca, $d u k k h a$, anatta, and has experienced some "cooling down." It can be used to quickly enter a jhāna that had been cultivated.

5. Thus the difference between the mundane and Ariya versions of Samatha meditation is the meditation object, and this is the reason that asañ$\tilde{n} a j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$ are avoided in the Ariya meditation. In the former, one can
focus on ANY object; in the latter one focuses on Nibbāna. Thus, vitakka, vicāra for Anariya samatha meditation becomes savitakka, savicāra, emphasizing the focus on Nibbāna, with the prefix "sa."

- "etaín santaí etaí paṇìtaín, ......." cannot be used just as a chanting without understanding what is meant by heart. Thus the chant will become more and more effective as one starts feeling the nirāmisa sukha at least to a certain extent. (One does not chant out loud; one could just say it in the mind to oneself or say it very quietly meaningfully).
- One could also start with any Anāriya Samatha meditation (the breath meditation is easy to do), and once starts feeling the calmness and early stages of nirāmisa sukha, one could permanently switch over to the Ariya version, by contemplating on anicca, dukkha, anatta and recalling one's own "cooling down."

6. Another thing to remember is that nirāmisa sukha has no equivalent sensation in any type of $\bar{a} m i s a$ sukha or sense pleasures that are available with the five physical senses. It is more like a relief sensation. When one has a headache and it goes away, one feels a relief, a calmness, a peace of mind. The nirāmisa sukha is something like that. The more nirāmisa sukha one feels one becomes calm inwardly AND outwardly.

- When one gets into $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}, j h a ̄ n i c ~ p l e a s u r e ~ c a n ~ b e ~ f e l t ~ i n ~ t h e ~ b o d y . ~$
- In the post, "Akusala Citta - How a Sotāpanna Avoids Apayagami Citta," I have explained how a Sotāpanna automatically removes the five types of citta that are responsible for rebirth in the apāyā (the lowest four realms). In that discussion, it was also shown how vicikicch $\bar{a}$ is responsible for such bad $k a m m a$, and how contemplation on Tilakkhaṇa (anicca, dukkha, anatta) can remove vicikicchā, and also four other greed-rooted cittō that arise because of the wrong views.

7. Thus as one contemplates on anicca, dukkha, anatta, one automatically starts reducing, not just suppressing the hindrances.

Jhānic states are mental states of the Brahma realms lying above the realms in the kāma loka. In any realm in kāma loka, including the human and deva realms, kāma rāga and patigha are present. Both kāma rāga and patigha are absent in Brahma realms, as in jhānic states.

One gets to anāriya jhāna by SUPPRESSING kāma rāga and patigha. One gets to Ariya jhāna by REMOVING kāma rāga and paṭigha.

- The two hindrances of kāmacchanda and vyāpāda were reduced to kāma rāga and patigha levels at the Sotāpanna stage. Kāma rāga and patigha are reduced further at the Sakadāgāmī stage, are removed at the Anāgāmī stage. Thus it is only an Anāgāmī who has REMOVED kāma rāga and patigha.
- As one moves to higher stages of Nibbāna, it should become easier to attain jhānā.

8. In summary, Ariya jhānā are permanent in nature compared to Anāriya jhānā. By that, I do not mean that one will be permanently in a jhānic state. What I mean is that it will be possible for one to attain the $j h a \overline{n a}$ at will.

- On the other hand, anāriya jhāna can be "lost." By that I mean one who has cultivated anāriya jhāna may lose the ability to get to that $j h \bar{a} n a$. The best example is Devadatta who attained the highest anāriya jhanas AND also cultivated supernormal (iddhi) powers. He lost all that and ended up in an apāya.
- The clearest distinction of an Ariya jhāna is that once in the jhāna, the jhāna cannot be interrupted by anusaya or a lustful or a hateful thought. Even if one forcefully tries to think about such a thought, it does not "stick"; the mind rejects it; see, "11. Magga Phala via Cultivation of Saptha Bojihañga."
- One can contemplate Dhamma concepts (savitakka, savicāra) while in a jhāna. Only vitakka and $v i c a ̄ r a$ are reduced at the first Ariya jhāna, and completely eliminated at higher jhānā. Doing insight meditation (contemplating anicca, dukkha, anatta or any Dhamma concept) can be done with a clear, bright mind.
- All $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$ are mundane in the sense that they provide the jhānic experience in the rūpaloka and arūpaloka, which still belong to the 31 realms of existence. The Nibbānic bliss is the ultimate bliss.
- The nirodha samāpatti that can be attained by an Arahant is incomparably better compared to any $j h a ̄ n a$. An Arahant can enjoy the sensation of Nibbānic bliss continually for up to seven days in nirodha samāpatti.
- Thus ultimately what is most important is the purification of one's own mind; see, "The Importance of Purifying the Mind."

9. One gets to the first Ariya jhāna by removing (uccheda pahāna) kāma rāga, whereas one can get to the first anāriya jhāna by suppressing (vikkhambana pahāna) kāma rāga. Therefore, one will be an Anāgāmū by the time one gets to the first Ariya jhāna.

- This is discussed in detail and evidence from the Tipitaka provided in the post: "Mundane versus Supramundane Jhāna."
- Even some followers of Waharaka Thero in Sri Lanka do not seem to understand this point. However, Waharaka Thero has clearly explained this in the following short desana (in Sinhala): "WebLink: Ariya and Anariya Jhāna (Audio)."
More information with references to suttā at: "Samādhi, Jhāna (Dhyāna), Magga Phala."


### 2.11.5 Are There Procedures for Attaining Magga Phala, Jhāna and Abhiññā?

## April 23, 2017; revised July 15, 2020

1. Learning Dhamma (or following the Path) is very different from learning mundane subjects like history, economics, or even science and mathematics.

- Ariya jhāna and subsequent abhiñ̃n̄a powers are realized as "by products" after one attains the Sotāpanna stage. Of course, only some of those can cultivate $j h \bar{a} n a$ and subsequent abhiññā powers.
- Even attaining magga phala does not have set procedures, other than following the Eightfold Path. However, kammat!thāna based on one's personality can be helpful.
- The most important thing is to cleanse one's mind. Things just become clear with a purified mind.

2. There is an excellent example described in the Tipitaka. There were two bhikkhus at the time of the Buddha called Mahāpanthaka and Cūlapanthaka. They were brothers and Ven. Mahāpanthaka was the elder. Ven. Mahāpanthaka had been trying to teach a certain verse ( $g \bar{a} t h \bar{a}$ ) to Ven. Cūlapanthaka for six months, but Ven. Cūlapanthaka was unable to memorize it.

- Ven. Mahāpanthaka got frustrated and asked Ven. Cūlapanthaka to disrobe and he left crying. The Buddha saw this incident and realized that Ven. Cūlapanthaka had very unique hidden capabilities.
- He gave proper instructions to Ven. Cūlapanthaka, and Ven. Cūlapanthaka was able to attain not only the Arahantship but also attain vast super-normal (abhiñ̃̃̄a) powers within the same day. The trick for Ven. Cūlapanthaka was to go beyond a certain sticking point that had been blocking his mind.
- He recited not one but 500 gāthā that day. There are many reports of his $a b h i \tilde{n} \tilde{n} \bar{a}$ powers. One time he made 999 copies of himself and they were all engaged in various activities at the temple.
- The point is that none of that was gained via "book knowledge." Once the breakthrough came with the instructions from the Buddha, the rest of it came gushing through immediately.
- No one taught him how to memorize all those 500 verses or how to cultivate abhiññā powers. A decent version of this story can be found at WebLink: Dhammapada Verse 25 - Cūlapanthaka Vatthu.

3. Another example is how Ven. Ānanda attained the Arahanthood and many abhiñ $\tilde{n} \bar{a}$ powers overnight. Three months after the Parinibbāna of the Buddha, the first Buddhist Council (Sangāyana) was set to take
place, and the day before that Ven. Ānanda had not attained the Arahantship. He had been a Sotāpanna while the Buddha was alive.

- Since only "sivpilisimbiya" Arahants (those with patisambhida ñāna ['analytical knowledge' or 'discrimination']) were allowed to attend the Sangāyanā, Ven. Ānanda was under pressure to attain the Arahanthood. Despite his efforts, he had not attained the Arahantood the night before, and he decided to lie down to take a rest. As he was getting into bed while thinking about a Dhamma concept, he attained the Arahantship while not in any of the four postures (was not on the bed yet, but was off the ground).
- Simultaneous with that he acquired many abhiññ̄a powers too. The next day, when he went to the Sangāyanā hall, everyone was inside. He stood by the door and announced that he had attained the Arahantship and requested the door to be opened. One of the Arahant asked Ven. Ānanda to remove doubts of everyone present about his attainment.
- So, Ven. Ānanda went inside through the closed door, traveled through air and took his seat. Then it was clear to everyone that he had not only attained the Arahantship, but also had cultivated abhiññā powers overnight; see, "WebLink: Ānanda -The Guardian of the Dhamma."

4. Waharaka Thero has given the following simile to understand what happens when one attains the Sotāpanna stage, and WHY it takes only a fraction of second.

- Suppose person X is running back and forth past a sign that has written on it some information in small letters. It is not possible to read the sign while running, no matter how many times you run past it.
- But suppose X stops for a few seconds to read the sign, then resumes running back and forth again. Now that he has read the message that is on the post, he KNOWS what is written on the post, even though he again cannot read it while running.
- In the same way, it takes only a fraction of a second to the mind to grasp the true nature of this world (anicca, dukkha, anatta) when the mind is calm AND if one has learned enough background material (in the simile, he must know the language the sign was written in).
- While one is gathering this supporting material one is a Sotāpanna Anugami. Then the Sotāpanna phala moment can come at any time. It comes and goes even without one realizing it. Only weeks or months later, one will start realizing the permanent change in oneself.

5. This is why I said in \#1 above, that there are no set procedures for making progress on the Path or developing abhiñ̃̄̄a powers (of course anāriya techniques are different). As one makes progress, one will AUTOMATICALLY receive the results based on one's progress.

- One will automatically attain magga phala.
- One may also attain Ariya jhānic states subsequently, if one had cultivated them in recent previous lives. For others, it may take some time to cultivate Ariya jhāna. As I described in a previous post, jhāna are very different from magga phala and it may not be easy to verify whether one has attained Ariya or anāriya jhāna; see, "Difference Between Jhāna and Stages of Nibbāna."
- While certain meditation techniques COULD be helpful, the two main factors are kusala sila (moral living) and comprehending the real nature of this world, i.e., Tilakkhana.

6. Our goal should be to eliminate future suffering by cultivating wisdom (pañña), and thereby getting rid of micch $\bar{a}$ ditṭhi.

- Of course, learning correct Dhamma is a joyful experience which can motivate one to learn further and thereby help comprehending the true message of the Buddha.
- The key is to not confuse "learning" with just "memorization." One needs to get the key idea or saññā of a given concept. When one gets the saññ $\bar{a}$ of a concept, one will never lose it: "What is Saññã (Perception)?."

7. This website with hundreds of posts could discourage people, thinking that one needs to memorize all these different things to learn Dhamma.

- It is not necessary to MEMORIZE ANYTHING. Most of the material on the website is for REFERENCE. If one forgets some details about a concept it is easy to use the menu system, "Search" button on the top right, or the Pure Dhamma - Sitemap to locate relevant posts.
- However, listening to desanā or reading Dhamma (and then grasping concepts, not memorizing) is an essential part of learning (grasping concepts).
- Getting into jhānā or attaining magga phala do not have set procedures. They will AUTOMATICALLY be realized as one follows the Path and one's wisdom grows.
- The key is to stay away from dasa akusala, live a moral life, and comprehend the key message embedded in anicca, dukkha, anatta by learning Dhamma and contemplating.
- By the way, there is a connection between dasa akusala and anatta as we discussed last week; see, "Dasa Akusala and Anatta - The Critical Link." So, anicca, dukkha, anatta are related to dasa akusala.

8. Memory and wisdom are two different things, even though somewhat related. In order to comprehend the message of the Buddha, one should cultivate wisdom (paññ̄ $\bar{a}$ ) instead of memorizing verses. Let us take a simple example to explain this.

- A child can learn addition by just memorizing. Then he/she would be able to give the right answer to the addition of two numbers that has been memorized, but will not be able to add two randomly chosen numbers.
- However, if the child is taught HOW TO add two numbers, using a technique like using the fingers in the hand to represent numbers. it will be possible to "see" WHY two plus three equal to five. Then the child will be able to add any two numbers.
- Once that is grasped, it would easy for the child to then learn subtraction, multiplication, and division.
- However, it will be an impossible task to MEMORIZE the addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division of ANY two numbers.


## 9. There is a basic difference between "real learning" (grasping concepts) and memorization (just blindly following rules/instructions).

- This is a concept that is hard to grasp for many these days because we are so much used to "book learning." There are many people who can repeat certain tasks mechanically without even bothering to think through. And then when the situation changes somewhat they do not know how to handle the "new situation."

10. The message of the Buddha is unique. It goes far beyond moral living. Some people think that by living a moral life one would be able to get an afterlife in heaven forever.

- On the other end of the spectrum, another set of people believe that killing those who are unfaithful to their God can also lead to a heavenly life, which should be beyond belief for any reasonable person.
- However, if a mind is contaminated from an early age, such dangerous ideas sink into the mind and are very hard to change.
- Both extremes are faith-based.
- Hopefully, one would be able to see that there is a key element of reasoning, not faith, involved in Buddha Dhamma. It can be grasped by a reasonably moral person. It can be followed to a very deep level if desired.

11. Buddha Dhamma cannot be learned by books or with this website. But they can help by providing (correct) information; if it is incorrect information, then it would be just a waste of time.

- Since Buddha Dhamma is really different from any other religion or philosophy, one first needs to get that basic information from someone who really knows the fundamentals (kamma/vipāka, dasa akusala, Pațicca Samuppāda, etc) and then the deeper aspects like anicca, dukkha, anatta once the basics are absorbed.
- It is not possible to even absorb the fundamentals unless one is already living a moral life. It may sound hard to believe, but a defiled mind CANNOT absorb Buddha Dhamma.
- A defiled mind is like a dirty cloth, which cannot be made colorful by soaking in a dye. The cloth needs to be cleaned in order to absorb the dye and to become bright.
- Therefore, the first step is to stay away from the worst of the dasa akusala, which are also called "panca dushcharitha" or "five immoral qualities": killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, and alcoholism/drug use.

12. What is discussed in the Kalama Sutta is this very first step: Understanding that what one does not like to be done to oneself, another wouldn't like either. No one likes to be hurt and to put to misery. Any normal human should be able to comprehend that simple concept.

- That step needs to happen before one starts on the five precepts or moral conduct (panca sìla) which are deeper; see "The Five Precepts - What the Buddha Meant by Them."
- Only then one can start comprehending the deeper concepts like anicca, dukkha, anatta, the Four Noble Truths, and start on the Noble Eightfold Path; see, "What is Unique in Buddha Dhamma?."
- The ability to understand deeper concepts gets easier as one purifies one's mind.

13. Even though this website will be a useful resource, one should not start memorizing key concepts. First of all, it is not possible to do that. There is so much material that it is impossible to remember everything. But it is essential to read various aspects and try to "fill in gaps" in the "big picture."

- Of course, I myself do not remember all the details. But I do know where to refer to get any needed information. It is all in the Tipitaka, and the late Waharaka Thero has clarified the key terms for us, so that we can find our own way gradually.
- It becomes easier to analyze a given concept as one progresses. The more one grasps about a concept (not merely memorize the wording), the meanings (and how to use them in other situations) start to come flowing through.
- At some point, when one starts comprehending key concepts, one will be able to see connections among different aspects and start seeing the big picture or to make that big picture even more clear. That is when a Sotāpanna Anugami becomes a Sotāpanna.

More information with references to suttā at: "Samādhi, Jhāna (Dhyāna), Magga Phala."

### 2.12 Transfer of Merits (Pattidāna) - How Does it Happen?

## Revised July 7, 2018; August 16, 2019; February 12, 2020; August 9, 2022

## Introduction - Unseen Mental Energy

1. Even some Buddhists are skeptical that merits can be "transferred" to other beings: It does not appear "scientific." However, Buddha Dhamma is far ahead of science, and this is another example. Even though the vocabulary is different, mechanisms of "energy transfer" (mental energy) are also explained in Dhamma.

- It is possible to transfer the merits of a good deed and many other versions of "mental energy."
- The basic idea can be thought of as follows. Suppose one has a lighted oil lamp, and many others have oil lamps but don't have access to a flame to light them. Wouldn't it be good to let others use one's lamp's flame to light their lamps?
- Of course, it is not possible to "create" many lighted oil lamps starting with one. But it is possible to light a thousand other lamps by sharing the flame of one oil lamp. In the same way, the receiving person needs to have essential ingredients to reap the benefits, as explained below. But since all those lamps will be useless without a way to light them, the person providing the light is doing an excellent service.
- One "giving merits" is doing pattidāna or "conditions" for good kamma bija (or bīja) to germinate. The receiver must have good kamma bīja or "root causes" and receive those pattidāna willingly, which is called "puñ̃̃a anumodanā," which rhymes as "puññānumodanā." [pattidāna :[nt.] transference of merit or share.]


## What Is Anumodanā?

2. Anumodana $\bar{a}$ means the receiving mind is becoming joyful with the merits it received ("anu" + "odanā"," which rhymes as "anumodana"). The giver is giving ("danna") the "paccay $\vec{a}$ " or the auxiliary causes. (The commonly-used word is "pratyaya" but that is the incorrect Sanskrit word; the correct Pāli word is paccayā). It is paccayā that represents "patti" in "pattidāna" (pronounced, "paththidāna").

- Only in direct giving of material things can a giver ensure that the receiver receives what is given.
- Giving merits (pattidāna) is different. The giver cannot ensure that the receiving party "received what is intended" unless the person receiving was attuned to receiving.
- It is the receiving person that is doing the "puñña anumodanā," i.e., gladly receiving the pattidāna of the giver and becoming joyful with the merits received. That is also called "pattānumodanā." [pattānumodanā :[f.] transference of merit.]


## Giving Can Be Mental Too - Dāna and Pattidāna

3. Giving and receiving can be done in many ways:

- The direct method of giving/receiving is when one gives money or something material. It is deducted from the giver's ledger and added to the receiver's: Transfer is complete.
- When a teacher teaches a classroom full of kids, he/she gives instructions the same way to all the kids. But how much a particular kid "receives" or comprehends depends on that specific kid's ability to receive. That is similar to pattidāna.
- A radio/television station is broadcasting a program. But the reception of the program by a radio/TV depends on the quality of that receiving device. Furthermore, it has to be "tuned" to the correct station.
- This transfer can happen instantaneously or with a time lag because that mental energy is in the "nāma loka" and is accessible at any time; see "Memory, Brain, Mind, Nāma Loka, Kamma Bhava, Kamma Vipāka," "What are Dhamma? - A Deeper Analysis," and "Our Two Worlds: Material and Immaterial."

4. Therefore, only in "direct giving" is the amount received the same. The amount received in "indirect giving" methods depends on the receiver. That latter mechanism works when "transfering merits" to another person who may be far away.

- All intentions have kammic energy. You may remember that the Buddha said, "Cetanā ahaim bhikkave kammaì vadāmi," or "Bhikkhus, I say that intention is kamma." And kamma is the vital potential energy for everything in this world. [Cetanāhaì, bhikkhave, kammaì vadāmi. Cetayitvā kammaì karoti- kāyena vācāya manasā. AN 63. Nibbedhikasutta]
- People very much underestimate the power of the human mind. Those who have experienced at least anāriya jhānā can sense at least a little about the power of the mind; see "Power of the Human Mind Introduction" and the two follow-up posts.
- Direct giving is "dāna"; indirect giving is "pattidāna." These are two of the ten meritorious deeds (puñña kamma); see, "Puñña Kamma - Dāna, Sīla, Bhāvanā."


## Giving Merits - Pattidāna

5. One such mechanism is the anantara-samanantara paccayā; see "Anantara and Samanantara Paccaya." It is one of the universal laws governing how kamma and kamma vipāka operate (kamma niyāma). Many people pronounce "niyama" as "niyāma," but "niyāma" is the Pāli or Sinhala word for "principle."

- Thus kamma niyāma are the universal laws of kamma (like the law of gravitation).

6. Suppose one is "transferring merits" by sincerely saying, "May so and so receive merits from this good deed that I have done." One could do Metta bhāvanā by saying, "May all beings be free from the suffering in the $a p \bar{a} y \vec{a} "$ or some version of it. In both cases, one is BROADCASTING one's intention.

- However, just because one is doing such a "giving," the intended recipient may not receive the benefits UNLESS the recipient has a matching mindset. It is just like the case of radio/TV, where the receiving device needs to be set to the "right frequency" to receive the signal.
- That is explained in the post, "Anantara and Samanantara Paccaya." Don't be discouraged by those Pāli words. Sometimes, as in the case of Patticca Samuppāda, it is best to use the Pāli words and understand their meanings.

7. Transfer of merits is efficient when the giver and the receiver are together, and each is aware of the other's intention. For example, in Asian countries, it is customary to transfer merits to deceased relatives. Almsgiving to the Sañgha and pattidāna offered to the deceased relative belong to this category.

- The deceased party can receive merits if it is in a state where it can receive such merits, for example, if it is in a gandhabba state.
- But if the deceased is reborn as an animal or human, it cannot receive full benefits, even though it may benefit to some extent.


## Dhamma Dāna Is The Ultimate Giving

8. It is possible to "give Dhamma" or to "give kusala" too. The Buddha said, "sabba dānaim Dhamma dānaì jinātic" or, "from all kinds of giving, Dhamma giving is the most meritorious."

- When the Buddha gave a discourse, those listening "received" Dhamma in varying degrees. Some became Arahants, and some attained the Sotāpanna stage during the discourse itself. But others did not achieve any stage but possibly still accumulated merits or kusala. Kusala ("ku" or "kunu" or "dirty"+"sala" or "remove," and thus shedding defiled thoughts from the mind). That means gaining wisdom, non-greed, non-hate AND discarding greed, hate, and delusion.
- During such a discourse, one mainly cultivates wisdom. That, in turn, results in discarding greed and hate.


## Importance of State of Mind

9. How much merit a given person receives depends on the state of mind of that person. It also depends on the intellectual level of that person. But it is impossible to quantify the intellectual level using modern standards of "book knowledge." It is not directly related to one's formal education. It is easier to give some examples.

- Ven. Ānanda was highly literate, a former prince, and had fantastic memory power. He had the whole Sutta Pitaka in his memory. And he was with the Buddha for many years but attained Arahanthood only after the Buddha's Parinibbāna (passing away).
- Sunita was of low caste and carried buckets of feces when the Buddha met him. With his supernormal powers, the Buddha saw that Sunita could comprehend Dhamma and asked Sunita to become a bhikkhu. Ven. Sunita became an Arahant within seven days.

10. A given person may be receptive to "receiving Dhamma" when his mind is calm. But the same person may not comprehend anything when his mind is excited or distracted. That is the same as saying that the five hindrances are active; see "Key to Calming the Mind - Five Hindrances." Therefore, it is IMPORTANT to have a correct mindset when learning Dhamma, whether by listening or reading.

- Therefore, try to read these posts at quiet times, when the mind is receptive, and NOT during the brief breaks at work when the mind is occupied or agitated.
- In Asian countries, that is a significant reason for going to the temple. At the temple, people offer flowers to the Buddha or the Bodhi tree. Such activities get the mind into a calm, peaceful state suitable for listening to a Dhamma discourse afterward; see "Buddhist Chanting" and "Tisarana Vandana and Its Effects on One's Gati."


## Both Anantara and Samanantara Must be Optimized

11. Therefore, both anantara and samanantara must be optimized to make all these activities efficient.

- Of course, if one is not learning the true Dhamma, there is nothing substantial in anantara. Thus, one would be wasting one's time.
- On the other hand, even with an excellent Dhamma delivery, the receiver's mind needs to be receptive to get full benefits. In other words, samanantara must be good too.

12. The following example may help clarify this concept: Having "good kamma bïja" is like having "good seeds." Suppose person X has potent seeds but does not have water and nutrients for those seeds to germinate and grow. If person Y can provide X with water and nutrients, X can plant those seeds and get them to germinate and grow.

- Some people may have "good kamma seeds" but do not have the necessary conditions to bring the corresponding good kamma vipāka. When another person does pattidāna, that is like donating water and nutrients to that person.

13. A seed is the anantara or the cause (kamma bïja), and the receiving party must have that. However, like a seed cannot grow unless it is exposed to moist soil, has nutrients, and sunlight, that kamma bïja cannot bear fruit without suitable conditions; i.e., the samanantara (or suitable conditions) must be there too.

- Therefore, the receiver can accept those conditions from the giver and get those existing good kamma $b \bar{\jmath} a$ to bring their good vipāka.
- It is only when both anantara and samanantara are optimized and matched that full benefits result. i.e., the optimum transfer takes place. This phenomenon is quite similar to the "resonance effect" in physics. Only when the energy of a photon matches an energy gap of an atom that the absorption of that photon by the atom is optimum.


## Different Types of Anumodanā

14. A type of "anumodana"" also happens in day-to-day life. Suppose X starts a project to feed the hungry. Many poor people benefit from it. Another person (Y) sees that and may become joyful seeing the hungry getting fed and may thank X for doing it. This joy of heart, even if Y did not contribute, counts as "merits"; it becomes a good kamma vipāka for Y. That does not take any merits away from X.

- Something can come out of nothing. So, where do those kinds of benefits come from? It comes from the mental energy of $Y$, who became joyful upon seeing the kind act. That is part of a human's mental energy (javana); see "Power of the Human Mind - Introduction."
- That is true of immoral acts too. Suppose X is beating up Y. Person Z may be glad to see that and may encourage X to beat up Y. Now, suppose Y dies due to the beating. Then not only X but Z also gets bad kamma vipāka for that immoral act.
- In our societies also, the same principle applies. Suppose the police are investigating the death of Y. They have evidence that $Z$ encouraged the killing; they can prosecute both $Z$ and $X$.
- Thus our feelings (good or bad) play an important role in accumulating good and bad kamma vipāka.


### 2.13 First Noble Truth is Suffering? Myths about Suffering

Most people believe that the First Noble Truth just says there is suffering. Some also think that it is possible to "remove" this existing suffering IN THIS LIFE by following extensive and elaborate meditation techniques.

1. The Buddha said, "My Dhamma has not been known in this world. It is something people have never heard of previously." So we should carefully examine to see what is really new about the suffering that he talked about.

- What is new about knowing that there is suffering around us? Everybody knows that there is suffering with old age, diseases, poverty, etc.
- And it is possible to REMOVE existing suffering by doing meditation? For example, if one has come down with a disease, can one overcome that by doing meditation? If someone is getting old and is feeling the pains and aches of old age, can that be PERMANENTLY removed by doing meditation? Even though some issues can be handled due to special reasons, in most cases we CANNOT change such EFFECTS or end results.

2. Let us discuss these two points one at a time.
3. Let us first see whether it is possible to REMOVE the existing suffering.

- For example, if someone has aches and pains due to old age, it is not possible to get rid of them other than to use medications or therapy to lessen the pain and manage it. If someone gets cancer, it is normally not possible to get rid of it by meditation. It may be handled by medication. Even the Buddha had pains and aches due to old age, and had a severe stomach ache at the end.
- In the context of that last sentence, It must be noted that there are two types of vedan $\bar{a}$ (feelings): those due to kamma vipāka and those due to sañkhāra (attachment to sensual pleasures), and an Arahant gets rid of only the second kind until the Parinibbāna (death); see, "Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways."
- In fact, it may not even be possible to do meditation under any of such conditions. Even someone who has developed jhānā, may not be able to get into jhān̄a if the pains are too distracting.
- The purpose behind Buddhist meditation is to contemplate on the true nature of the world and find the CAUSES of such suffering, so that those causes can be stopped and FUTURE suffering can be stopped.
- It is true that one can get a relief from day-to-day stresses by doing different kinds of meditation. And it is good to do them. But such practices were there even before the Buddha. There was no need for a Buddha to reveal to the world that one could get some "calming down" by doing breath meditation or kasiña meditation.
- In a way, such "samatha" meditations are comparable to taking an aspirin for a headache. One can get relief in the short term but it is temporary. But the problem that the Buddha addressed involved a much longer time scale, and will lead to a nirāmisa sukha that is permanent.

4. So, what was the "never heard truth about suffering" that the Buddha revealed to the world? In short it is the "suffering that is hidden in sense pleasures; the suffering that WILL ARISE in future lives."

- Let us take an example to get a simple version of this "new idea."
- When a fish bites the bait, it does not see the suffering hidden in that action. Looking from the ground we can see the whole picture and we know what is going to happen to the fish if it bites the bait. But the fish is unable to see that whole picture, and thus does not see the hidden suffering. It only sees a delicious bit of food.
- In the same way, if we do not know about the wider world of 31 realms (with the suffering-laden four lowest realms), and that we have gone through unimaginable suffering in those realms in the past, we only focus on what is easily accessible to our six senses.
- In order to really comprehend suffering through repeated rebirths, one needs to comprehend that most suffering is encountered in the 4 lowest realms (ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$ ); see, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma."
- Thus, stopping suffering requires one to first stop the causes for rebirths in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$ by attaining the Sotāpanna stage of Nibbāna; see, "Nibbāna in the Big Picture."

5. Seeing this hidden suffering is indeed difficult. It is not possible to convey the whole message in one essay, but I will try to get across the main idea. One really needs to spend some time thinking through these issues. When the Buddha attained the Buddhahood, it said that he was worried whether he could convey this deep ideas to most people.

- Everything happens due to one or (usually) many causes. The famous Third Law of motion in physics says that every action has a reaction; and the First Law says that an object will not change its status unless a force acts on it. It is easy to see these "cause and effect" principles at work in mechanical objects. If something needs to be moved, it needs to be pushed or pulled. If a stone is thrown up, it must come down if there is gravity pulling it down.
- We seek pleasures that are highly visible. But if we gain such pleasures with immoral acts, the consequences of such immoral acts are not apparent. We can see a stone thrown up coming down, but we cannot see any bad consequences to the drug dealer who seems to be enjoying life.

6. The main problem in clearly seeing the "cause and effect of mind actions" is that the results of those actions have a time delay and that time delay itself is not predictable. In contrast, it is easy to predict what is going to happen with material things (moving an object, a vehicle, a rocket, etc). The success of physical sciences is due to this reason. Once the underlying laws are found (laws of gravity, laws of motion, electromagnetism, nuclear forces, quantum mechanics, etc), one has complete control.

- But the mind is very different. To begin with, no two minds work the same way. Under a given set of conditions, each mind will chose to act differently. With physical objects, that is not so; under a given set of conditions, what will happen can be predicted accurately.
- Effects of some actions (kamma) may not materialize in this life and sometimes it may come to fruition only in many lives down the road (but with accumulated interest).
- Even in this life, mind phenomena are complex: This is why economics is not a "real science." It involves how people act sometimes "irrationally" for perceived gains. No economic theory can precisely predict how a given stock market will perform.

7. When mechanical systems have time lags, those are predictable. We can set off a device to work in a certain way AT A CERTAIN TIME, and we know that it will happen at that time if all mechanical components work properly. Not so with the mind. When we act in a certain way, the RESULTS of those actions may not be manifested for many lives. This is a key point to contemplate on.

- But cause and effect is a nature's basic principle. When something is done, it will lead to one or more effects. In mind-related causes, the effects may take time, sometime a long time over many lives, to trigger the "corresponding effect."
- Thus it should be clear that "action and reaction" associated with mind effects REQUIRE the rebirth process. It is not readily apparent and is an essential part of the "previously unheard Dhamma" that the Buddha revealed to the world.
- This "cause and effect" that involves the mind is the principle of kamma and kamma vipāka in Buddha Dhamma.
- But unlike in Hinduism, Kamma is not deterministic, i.e., not all kamma vipāka have to come to fruition; see, "What is Kamma? Is Everything Determined by Kamma?." All unspent kamma vipāka become null and void when an Arahant passes away.

8. The life we have as a human is a RESULT of a past good deed. The life of a dog or an ant is the result of a past deed by that sentient being.

- And what happens to us in this life is a COMBINATION of what we have done in the past (kamma vipāka) AND what we do in this life.
- What happens to an animal is MOSTLY due to kamma vipāka from the past.
- The difference between a human and an animal is that the animal does not have much control over what is going to happen to it. But human birth is a special one: We have a higher level mind that CAN change the future to some extent, and with possible enormous consequences.

9. What can we change and what cannot be changed?

- We are born with a certain kamma vipāka built in. Our body features, major illnesses (such as cancer) are mostly, not completely, built-in. We can avoid many kamma vipāka by acting with mindfulness, i.e., by planning well, taking precautions, etc.
- But we CANNOT change the fact that we are going to get old and eventually die, no matter what we do. Our life a RESULT.
- What we CAN change are the CAUSES for future lives.
- Even though meditation cannot relieve us of most of the pre-determined suffering, proper meditation CAN provide temporary relief, as well as PERMANENTLY removing future suffering.

10. The second Noble Truth is describes those CAUSES that we need to work on. The root causes are greed, hate, and ignorance, but they need to be removed mainly via understanding the Three Characteristics (see \#12 below) and also via removing our bad sansäric habits; see a series of posts starting with, "Habits, Goals, Character (Gati)" to "The Way to Nibbāna - Removal of Āsavas."
11. The Third Noble Truth is about what can be achieved by systematically removing those causes. Nirämisa sukha increases from the point of embarking on the Path, and has four levels of PERMANENT increases starting at the Sotäpanna stage and culminating at the Arahant stage; there are several posts starting with, "Three Kinds of Happiness - What is Nirāmisa Sukha?."
12. And then Fourth Noble Truth is the way to attain nirāmisa sukha and then various stages of Nibbāna. Nirämisa sukha starts when one lives a moral life (see, "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)" and followup posts). The root causes of immoral behavior are greed, hate, and ignorance. Ignorance can be reduced to the extent of attaining the Sotāpanna stage just via comprehending the Three Characteristics of "this world of 31 realms," i.e., anicca, dukkha, anatta; see, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta - Wrong Interpretations," and the follow-up posts. It is that powerful.

- Once one attains the Sotāpanna stage, one can find the rest of the way by oneself.

13. There are many different ways to describe and analyze what I summarized above. Different people can grasp Dhamma by looking at it from different angles. That is what I try to cover with sections like "Dhamma and Science", "Dhamma and Philosophy", and for those who like to dig deeper into Dhamma, the section on "Abhidhamma" which means "Higher or Deeper Dhamma."

- My goal is to provide a "wide view" that accommodates most people. Even though I cannot even begin to cover even a significant fraction of Buddha Dhamma, one does not need to understand "everything" even to attain the Arahanthood. The Buddha has said that one could attain all four stages of Nibbāna just via comprehending anicca, dukkha, anatta at deeper and deeper levels. This is because with deeper understanding, one's mind automatically directs one in the right direction.
- Another reason that I try to cover many topics is to illustrate the point that Buddha Dhamma is a complete description of nature.


### 2.14 Vinaya - The Nature Likes to be in Equilibrium

## Pre-2016 post; revised July 18, 2022

Our lives and existence are based on constantly getting into debt and then paying off debts. This latter is done by Nature whether we like it or not. When we steal, kill, lie, or do any of the dasa akusala, we get into debt, and nature keeps track of that via kammic energy.

- We are reborn to pay debts. This is another way of looking at the cycle of rebirth. Nature will automatically ensure that the largest debts are paid off first; this is how the next existence (bhava) is determined.
- During a given lifetime, debts are paid off when suitable conditions appear; see "Anantara and Samanantara Paccaya."
- Nature is the final arbitrator. A criminal may get away with a crime by hiring a good lawyer but must pay for the crimes in nature's court. Similarly, when we do something good, we will get the rewards regardless of whether we wish for anything in return or not. Most people do not realize this because of the delay between the act (kamma) and its result (kamma vipāka).

1. When we do either a moral or an immoral act, it is done with an intention and has associated energy. That is the kammic energy produced in javana citta. That energy resides in the universe until spent or otherwise reduced by some means (this is related to quantum entanglement; see, "Quantum Entanglement - We are All Connected "). It is really the principle of energy conservation in physics.

- We can become indebted to a living being or the "world as a whole."
- There were no Vinaya rules in Buddha sāsana for about 20 years after the Buddha attained Enlightenment. When Buddha Dhamma started flourishing, unscrupulous people started becoming monks to live a comfortable lives depending on the devotees' kindness. The Buddha admonished them about the consequences of becoming indebted and started setting up the Vinaya ("vi" + "naya", where "naya" in Pāli or Sinhala means debt) rules to rein in those people.

2. When there is an energy imbalance, nature tries to bring it to balance. For a given individual (in the conventional sense), i.e., a life stream (absolute sense), the biggest imbalances are settled first.

- Thus at the death when patisandhi takes place, the biggest kamma seed with the highest imbalance comes into play and releases that energy by initiating the next birth in the corresponding "bhava"; see, "Bhava and Jāti - States of Existence and Births Therein." Thus the next "bhava" is determined by the biggest kammic seed at the end of the current "bhava" (this is a simple interpretation of a complex process).
- During a lifetime (pavutti vipāka), in addition to the energy content, the prevailing conditions also come into play for delivering kamma vipāka or releasing kamma seeds. This is why we can prevent many bad kamma vipāka from coming to fruition by acting with yoniso manasikara or "being mindful"; see, "What is Kamma? Is Everything Determined by Kamma?."
- In both cases (pattisandhi and pavutti vipāka), "matching conditions" plays a big role; see "Anantara and Samanantara Paccaya." For example, a seed does not germinate if it is in a dry place; it needs to be in the ground with water and sunlight to germinate.

3. Getting back to the issue of coming to equilibrium, a stone is in equilibrium when it stays on the ground. If we pick it up and throw it up it goes up because we gave it some energy. But now, it is not in equilibrium and will fall to find its equilibrium position on the ground. The only difference with kammic energy is that the kammic energy could be released much later; it has to find suitable conditions to release that energy; see "Sañkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka," and "Paticca Samuppāda - Overview"; Thus the release of kammic energy is more akin to the process of germination of a seed; there is a time lag until suitable conditions appear.

- When placed in the ground, a seed germinates and becomes a tree according to the "blueprint" in the seed. The energy for the tree's growth comes from the soil (through the roots) and the Sun (through the leaves.) But the tree, like any other sañkhata, has a finite lifetime.
- Unless the tree made more seeds during its lifetime, that tree is the only "result" of that original seed.

4. Through numerous lives in the past, we have accumulated innumerable numbers of both good and bad kammic energy packets, or kamma bïja, or kamma seeds and we keep producing them in this lifetime, too; some are big, and some are small (actually, those done beyond 91 mah $\bar{a}$ kapp $\bar{a}$ have lost their energy; like everything else in this world, kammic energy is not permanent either). The small kammic seeds bring in results (vipāka) during any lifetime, and the really big ones (kamma patha) are the ones that determine "bhava" for a new life at the cuti-patisandhi moment.

- Does that mean we must remove all kamma seeds to stop rebirth, i.e., to attain Nibbāna? No. A new "bhava" is grasped at the "upādāna paccayā bhavo" step in the Pațicca Samuppāda cycle; see "Akusala-Mūla Paticca Samuppāda." If one has removed ignorance (avijjā) and understood the true nature of the world, then there is no "taṇh $\bar{a}$ " and thus there is no upa$d \bar{a} n a$ at the "taṇh $\bar{a}$ paccay $\bar{a}$ upādāna" step, and thus no "bhava," and no "jāti" or rebirth.
- However, to remove ignorance (avijjā), we must purify our minds. For that we need to understand the true nature of "this world," i.e., anicca, dukkha, and anatta. We need to eliminate the five hindrances (pañca nīvarana) that cover our minds and not let the mind comprehend anicca, dukkha, and anatta. That is where the removal of bad kamma seeds and the accumulation of good kamma seeds (i.e., doing good deeds and avoiding bad deeds) become important; of course, "deeds" include actions, speech, and thoughts.

5. The point is that every time we do a moral or an immoral act, we generate a kamma seed that embeds the "javana power" of the thought that led to the act; see, "Javana of a Citta - The Root of Mental Power." The kammic power associated with a moral act can be considered surplus in one's "account" that can be used to enjoy things in life; an immoral act leads to debt, i.e., it appears on the negative side of the ledger. If one acts immoral against another living being, one is in debt to that being until it is paid off, see "Kamma, Debt, and Meditation."
6. Nature tries to keep things in balance: the good kamma brings good results, and bad kamma brings bad results when nature implements this balancing act. We can take advantage of both by arranging conditions for good kamma seeds to germinate and not letting bad kamma seeds germinate; see, "What is Kamma? Is Everything Determined by Kamma?." The development of good habits and getting rid of bad habits go along with this process; see "Habits and Goals" and "Sansaric Habits and Āsavas." Please review these links carefully. All these tie up together.
7. Thus we are bound to this samsāra or the cycle of rebirths because we do things to make an "imbalance" either via moral or immoral deeds: good deeds lead to good rebirths and bad ones to bad rebirths. They both extend the sansāric journey. However, it is essential to engage in moral deeds to avoid birth in the four lowest realms (ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$ ), where the suffering is great, AND there is no opportunity for moral deeds. Thus one MUST do moral deeds until one attains Nibbāna.

- Moral deeds WILL have consequences (they add up in the "plus side of the ledger"), whether or not one wishes for anything in return, i.e., nature will pay back. However, if one does a moral deed AND wishes for something other than Nibbāna, then that is done with greed, and thus one is simultaneously doing an immoral act.
- Only Arahant does not do any moral or immoral deeds with kammic consequences that are potent enough to bring rebirth. All an Arahant does is low-level sañkhāra or "kiriya" (like walking and talking) and is "in equilibrium" with nature.

8. When one goes "off the equilibrium," greed and hate intensify and one is likely to do immoral acts to become indebted. On the other hand, when one is in some kind of samādhi, the mind is close to equilibrium,
and thus greed and hate are under control. If one attains $r \bar{u} p \bar{v} v a c a r a$ and then arūpāvacara jhān $\bar{a}$, the mind gets even closer to equilibrium. Samādhi attains perfection when one becomes an Arahant.

- This is why one needs to avoid doing immoral acts if one wants to get results in meditation. A purified mind can easily get to samādhi; see "The Basics in Meditation."
- One becomes indebted via greed, hate, or ignorance (here, ignorance means not knowing the true nature of the world or anicca, dukkha, anatta); thus, there is lobha Vinaya, dosa Vinaya, and moha Vinaya.


## III Key Dhamma Concepts

Within thousand years of the Buddha's Parinibbāna (passing away), certain key concepts became distorted. For many years, I had nagging questions on the compatibility of certain concepts that are widely published in "Buddhist literature", including Theravāda literature. For example, explanations of anicca, anatta, sunyata, did not make sense to me. Furthermore, I got lost in a myriad of explanations for terms like sañkhāra; there are three different meanings for that word in standard Theravāda texts.

When I started listening to the desanās by Waharaka Thero in Sri Lanka, it became immediately apparent to me that "this was the true Dhamma"; see, "Parinibbāna of Waharaka Thero." Furthermore, concepts like samisāra, sammā, sañkhāra became crystal clear while I was just listening. I hope I will be able to convey this information as clearly below.

This main section has the following sub-sections:

- Subsection: Basic Framework of Buddha Dhamma
- Buddha Dhamma - Noble Truths, Paticca Samuppāda, Tilakkhana
- Noble Truths, Paticca Samuppāda, Tilakkhana - Key Relationships
- Anicca Nature, the First Noble Truth, and Paticca Samuppāda

Tilakkhana - Introduction

- Anicca and Anatta - Two Characteristics of the World
- Anuloma Khanti and Sammattaniyāma - Pre-requisites for a Sotāpanna
- Anicca Nature - Not Possible to Overcome Suffering in This World
- Dukkha in Tilakkhana Is a Characteristic - Not Dukkha Vedanā
- Attachment to Things with Dukkha Lakkhana Leads to Dukkha
- How Does Anicca Nature Lead to Dukkha?
- Anatta is a Characteristic of the World, not About a "Self"
- Anatta in Anattalakkhana Sutta - Part 1
- Anatta in Anattalakkhana Sutta - Part 2


## Critically-Relevant Posts in Other Sections:

- Sañkhāra - What It Really Means
- Correct Meaning of Vacī Sañkhāra
- Subsection: San (Explanation of many key Pāli words)
- What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Samisāra)
- Sañkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka
- Sañkhāra - Life is a Bundle of Sañkhāra
- Difference Between Dhamma and Sañkhāra
- Kamma are Done with Sañkhāra - Types of Sañkhāra
- Subsection: Nibbāna
- How to Taste Nibbāna
- Nirāmisa Sukha
- Nibbāna - Is it Difficult to Understand?
- The Four Stages in Attaining Nibbāna
- What Are Rūpa? (Relation to Nibbāna)
- Does the First Noble Truth Describe only Suffering?
- Nirodha and Vaya - Two Different Concepts
- Nibbāna "Exists", but Not in This World
- Subsection: Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta
- Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta - Wrong Interpretations
- The Way to Nibbāna - Transcription of a Discourse by Waharaka Thero
- Anicca - True Meaning
- Anicca - Inability to Keep What We Like
- Anicca - Repeated Arising/Destruction
- Anicca - Worthlessness of Worldly Things
- Anicca - The Incessant Distress ("Pīlana")
- How to Cultivate the Anicca Saññā
- How to Cultivate the Anicca Saññā - II
- If Everything is Anicca Should We Just give up Everything?
- Anattā - A Systematic Analysis
- Anattā in Anattalakkahana Sutta - No Soul or an Ātma
- Anatta - No Refuge in This World
- Dasa Akusala and Anatta - The Critical Link
- Anatta - the Opposite of Which Atta?
- Anattā (Mundane Interpretation) - No "Unchanging Self"
- Anatta and Dukkha - True Meanings
- Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta - According to Some Key Suttā
- Tilakkhana - English Discourses
- Sotāpanna Stage and Tilakkhana
- Sakkāya Ditthi and Tilakkhana
- Sakkāya Ditthi - Getting Rid of Deeper Wrong Views
- Associations (Sevana) - A Root Cause of Wrong Views
- Why are Tilakkhana not Included in 37 Factors of Enlightenment?
- Two Versions of 37 Factors of Enlightenment
- Types of Bodies in 31 Realms - Connection to Jhāna
- Finest Manomaya Kāya of an Arūpāvacara Brahma
$\cdot$
- Subsection: Gati, Bhava, and Jāti
- Nāmagotta, Bhava, Kamma Bija, and Mano Loka (Mind Plane)
- Gati and Bhava - Many Varieties
- Gati to Bhava to Jāti- Ours to Control
- Memory, Brain, Mind, Nāma Loka, Kamma Bhava, Kamma Vipāka
- Bhava and Jāti- States of Existence and Births Therein
- Cuti and Marana - Related to Bhava and Jāti
- Anusaya, Gati, Bhava - Connection to Manomaya Kāya (Gandhabba)
- Difference Between Tanhā and Upādāna
- Pāpa Kamma Versus Akusala Kamma
- Subsection: Sorting out Some Key Pāli Terms (Tanhhā, Lobha, Dosa, Moha, etc)
- Kāma Tanhā, Bhava Tanhā, Vibhava Tanhā
- Tanhā - How We Attach Via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance
- Lobha, Raga and Kamaccanda, Kamaraga
- Lobha, Dosa, Moha Versus Raga, Patigha, Avijjā
- Ditthi (Wrong Views), Sammā Ditthi (Good/Correct Views)
- Anantara and Samanantara Paccaya
- What is Avijiā (Ignorance)?
- Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways
- Indriya and Āyatana - Big Difference
- Hetu-Phala, Paccuppanna, and Paticca Samuppāda
- Correct Meaning of Vacī Sañkhāra
- Kāmaccandha and Icca - Being Blinded by Cravings
- Subsection: The Five Aggregates (Pañcakkhandha)
- Five Aggregates - Introduction
- Difference Between Physical Rūpa and Rūpakkhandha
- Rūpakkhandha and Rūpa Upādānakkhandha
- Arising of Five Aggregates Based on an Ārammana
- Memory Records - Critical Part of Five Aggregates
- Pañca Upādānakkhandhā - Introduction
- Five Aggregates - Connection to Tilakkhana
- Five Aggregates and Tilakkhana - Introduction
- Icca, Nicca, Anicca - Important Connections
- "Me" and "Mine" - The Root Cause of Suffering
- Difference Between "Me and Mine" and Sakkāya Ditthi
- Sakkāya Ditthi - "Me and Mine" View
- Atta - Two Very Different Meanings
- Sañ̃̃ā (Perception)
- Vedanā (Feelings)
- Sañkhāra is discussed at, "Sañkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka."
- Viññāna (Consciousness)
- Rūpa (Material Form)
- Subsection: Nāma \& Rūpa to Nāmarūpa
- Mental Aggregates
- What is Saññā (Perception)?
* Sañ̃ña - What It Really Means
* Future Suffering - Why It Arises
* Vipallāsa (Ditthi, Saññ̄a, Citta) Affect Sañkhāra
- What Is Vedanā (Feelings)? * Vedanā - What It Really Means
* Does Bodily Pain Arise Only Due to Kamma Vipāka?
- What is Sañkhāra (Mental Formations)?
* Sañkhāra - What It Really Means
- Rūpa Aggregate
- Bhūta and Yathābhūta - What Do They Really Mean
- What are rūpa? - Dhamma are rūpa too!
- Viññāna Aggregate
- Viññāna - What It Really Means
- Kamma Viññāna - Link Between Mind and Matter
- Anidassana Viññāna - What It Really Means
- Nāmarūpa Formation
- Kamma Viññāna and Nāmarūpa Paricceda Ñāna


## Deeper Analyses:

- Pañcakkhandha or Five Aggregates - A Misinterpreted Concept
- Pañcaupādānakkhandha - It is All Mental


### 3.1 Basic Framework of Buddha Dhamma

July 2, 2021
Buddha Dhamma - Noble Truths, Paticca Samuppāda, Tilakkhana
Noble Truths, Paticca Samuppāda, Tilakkhana - Key Relationships
Anicca Nature, the First Noble Truth, and Paticca Samuppāda
Tilakkhana - Introduction

- Anicca and Anatta - Two Characteristics of the World
- Anuloma Khanti and Sammattaniyāma - Pre-requisites for a Sotāpanna

Anicca Nature - Not Possible to Overcome Suffering in This World
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- How Does Anicca Nature Lead to Dukkha?
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- Anatta in Anattalakkhana Sutta - Part 1
- Anatta in Anattalakkhana Sutta - Part 2


## Critically-Relevant Posts in Other Sections:

Sañkhāra - What It Really Means
Correct Meaning of Vacī Sañkhāra

### 3.1.1 Buddha Dhamma - Noble Truths, Paṭicca Samuppāda, Tilakkhaṇa

July 2, 2021; revised \#8 on March 24, 2022

## Noble Truths, Paṭicca Samuppāda, Tilakkhaṇa - Interrelated

1. Buddha Dhamma is about eliminating suffering associated with the rebirth process. Before following the Noble Eightfold Path, one must understand the First Noble Truth. The First Noble Truth says that EACH AND EVERY birth ( $j \bar{a} t i$ ) in the rebirth process only perpetuates samisāric suffering, i.e., unimaginable suffering associated with the rebirth process.

- That critical step of "seeing AND fully comprehending" the First Noble Truth REQUIRES the following steps:
a. "Worldly things" are of unsatisfactory nature, meaning that we will NEVER be able to keep any worldly thing to our satisfaction IN THE LONG RUN. [Anicca]
b. All our efforts to pursue such "lasting happiness" only lead to more suffering. [Dukkha]
c. Therefore, all such efforts are in vain; they are unfruitful. [Anattta and Asubha]

Those three characteristics of our world of 31 realms are summarized as Tilakkhana: anicca, dukkha, and anatta.

- Paticca Samuppāda describes how we create our future births among the 31 realms. Moral actions (puñña abhisañkhāra) lead to "good births," and immoral actions (apuñña abhisañkhāra) lead to "bad births" in the apāyās. See, "Six Root Causes - Loka Samudaya (Arising of Suffering) and Loka Nirodhaya (Nibbāna)."
- Just living a "moral life" is not enough to stop suffering. It is necessary to realize that we MUST see the dangers in remaining in the rebirth process. That means we must see that our tendency to value and crave "mind-pleasing things" in this world keeps us trapped in the rebirth process.

Need to "See" Nibbāna Before Following the Path to Attain Nibbāna
2. When one comprehends the dangers of remaining in the rebirth process (i.e., the First Noble Truth) by grasping the concepts of Tilakkhaṇa and Paticca Samuppāda, one would also "see" how to stop the rebirth process and be completely free of suffering, i.e., one would comprehend the other three Noble Truths as well. It is ONLY THEN one can follow the Noble Eightfold Path and attain Nibbāna, i.e., Arahanthood.

- Therefore, there are two major steps. The first is to "see" this new worldview and become a Sotāpanna/ Sotāpanna Anugāmi. With this step, one will be free of future births in the apāyās (where suffering is worst). This step is "dassanena pahātabbä" or "remove defilements with clear vision."
- Once one understands the broad picture, one will realize how to Follow the Noble Eightfold Path (which is the Fourth Noble Truth.) That path is covered in three more steps Sakadāgāmi, Anāgāmi, and Arahant. That removes the remaining defilements via Bhāvanā (loosely translated as meditation.) This second step is "bhāvanāya pahātabbā."
- Those two categories are discussed in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Sabbāsava Sutta (MN 2)." We will discuss that sutta and a few more key suttas in the upcoming posts.


## The First Noble Truth

3. The foundation of Buddha Dhamma was laid out in the first discourse of the Buddha, "WebLink: suttacentral: Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta (SN 56.11)" The First Noble Truth stated there succinctly:
"Idamं kho pana, bhikkhave, dukkhaì ariya saccaim:
jātipi dukkhā, jarāpi dukkhā, byādhipi dukkho, maraṇampi dukkhā̀ं, appiyehi sampayogo dukkho, piyehi vippayogo dukkho, yampicchaì na labhati tampi dukkhā்̀-sañkhittena pañcupādānakkhandhā dukkhā."

Translated: Bhikkhus, What is the Noble Truth of Suffering?
"Birth is suffering, getting old is suffering, getting sick is suffering, dying is suffering. Having to associate with things that one does not like is suffering, and so is separation from those things one likes. If one does not get what one likes, that is suffering - in brief, the origin of suffering is the craving (upādāna) for the five aggregates of $r \bar{u} p a$, vedan $\bar{a}$, sañ̃̄̄ $\bar{a}, ~ s a n ̃ k h \bar{a} r a$, viññāna (pañcakkhandha).

- As we have discussed, pañcakkhandha means "the world of 31 realms." Thus the origin of samisāric suffering is craving for (and attachment to) this world.
- This is the "deep Dhamma" that the Buddha said is difficult for most people to understand!


## Connection to Tilakkhana

4. Why did the Buddha say that we should not crave any rūpa or any mental aggregate (vedan $\bar{a}$, sañ $\tilde{n} \bar{a}$, sañkhāra, viñ̃̄̄̄na)? This is what we will be discussing over several posts initially.

- One of the remaining original Commentaries, Patisambhidāmagga, explains this. It starts with the following succinct verse in Section "WebLink: suttacentral: 3.1. Mahāpañn̄ākathā (KN Ps 3.1)"
"Rūpaì at̄̄tānāgatapaccuppannaì aniccaì khayatṭhena dukkhaì bhayatṭhena anatt $\bar{a}$ asārakaṭthenāti tulayitvā tīrayitvā vibhāvayitva vibhūtaì katva rūpanirodhe nibbāne khippaì javatīti-javanapañ̃̄̄̄. Vedanā ...pe... sañ̃n̄a ... sañkhārā ... viññānaì ... cakkhu ...pe... jarāmaranaì atītānāgatapaccuppannaì aniccai் khayaṭthena dukkhai் bhayaṭthena anatt $\bar{a}$ asārakaṭthenāti tulayitvā tīrayitvō vibhāvayitvā vibhūtaì katvā jarāmaraṇanirodhe nibbāne khippaì javatīti-javanapaññā."
Translation: "Any $r \bar{u} p a$ that ever existed will exist in the future, or that is being experienced now has the following 3 characteristics: Any such rūpa is of anicca nature because one's hopes for enjoying rūpa
will only lead to one's demise ("aniccam khayatthena.") It will eventually lead to sufferings that one should be afraid of ("dukkham bhayatthena.") Therefore, such cravings are unfruitful and will make one helpless in the rebirth process ("anattā asārakatṭhenāti.")
- (Note that "khaya" is commonly translated as "destruction." It is really the "destruction of moral values" in Buddha Dhamma, especially in the lokuttara sense.)
- Then the verse is repeated for vedanā, saññā, sañkhārā, viññāna (i.e., that statement holds for the five aggregates. As we have discussed, the five aggregates encompass "the whole world."
- Then it is repeated for cakkhu, sota, ghāna, jivhā, kāya, mano, and the 6 types of rūpa (rūpa, sadda, gandha, rasa, photthabba, dhamma) we experience using them. These are the $12 \bar{a} y a t a n \bar{a}$ that also encompass the "whole world."
- Finally, it is repeated for the 11 terms in Paticca Samuppāda (avijjā, sañkhāra, viññāna, nāmarūpa, saḷāyatana, samphassa, vedanā, taṇhā, upādāna, bhava, jāti.) These 11 terms also define our world.
- Therefore, those three characteristics are associated with ANYTHING to do with this world of 31 realms.

5. The same summary is stated a bit differently in another section of Pattisambhidāmagga. Section "WebLink: suttacentral: 1.1. Nānakathā (KN Ps 1.1)" has the following verse:

Kathaì "sabbe sañkhārā anicca, sabbe saǹkhārā dukkha, sabbe dhammā anattā"ti

 "Vedanā ... saññā ... sañkhārā ... viññạnaì ... cakkhu ...pe... jarāmaraṇam aniccamं khayaṭthena, dukkhamं bhayatṭhena, anattā asārakaṭ!henā"ti sotāvadhānaì, tamipajānanā pañn̄ā sutamaye ñānaì. Taì ñātatṭhena ñānam̀, pajānanaṭthena paññā. Tena vuccati-"sabbe sañkhārā aniccā, sabbe sañkhārā dukkhā, sabbe dhammā anattā"ti sotāvadhānaí, tampajānanā paññā sutamaye ñānà̀.

- It says the same little bit differently. We will discuss this also in future posts. All these are interrelated and self-consistent.


## Connection to Paṭicca Samuppāda

6. It basically says that our tendency to value and thus have upädāna for the five aggregates (i.e., pañcupādānakkhandha) leads to various types of $j \bar{a} t i$. All $j \bar{a} t i$, WITHOUT EXCEPTION, end up in old age, decay, and death.

- Pațicca Samuppāda describes the mechanism by which that takes place, i.e., starting with "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" that cycle ALWAYS ends up with "bhava paccayā jāti, jāti paccayā jarā, marana, soka-parideva-dukkha-domanassupāyasā sambhavan'ti."
- To expand that a bit more: Average humans (puthujjana) who have not comprehended the Noble Truths (and thus have avijj $\bar{a}$ ) engage in deeds that lead to future bhava and jāti, perpetuating/lengthening the suffering-filled rebirth process.
- Mano, vacī, and kāya (abhi)sañkhārā generated with avijjā lead to such pāpa/akusala kamma. Most apāyagāmi pāpa kamma are induced by a strong attachment to a worldly entity. Many of them are done on impulse, without thinking about the consequences of such actions. The whole idea of engaging
 gradually by contemplating the consequences of actions on a regular basis.
- It is necessary to understand what is meant by sañkhāra. See, "Sañkhāra - What It Really Means" and "Correct Meaning of Vacī Sañkhāra."


## Summary

7. It is a good idea to understand the key message of the Buddha before start reading deep suttas and getting confused. In most discussion forums on Buddha Dhamma (Buddhism), people keep discussing the same questions they asked many years ago. The reason is the lack of clarity of basic concepts.

- Some people question the validity of some suttas in the Tipitaka because those suttas don't fit into their narrative. Some people question the validity of Abhidhamma for the same reason, and also because Abhidhamma is not easy to understand. However, the Tipitaka is fully self-consistent. I discussed these issues in the post, "Preservation of the Buddha Dhamma."
- This is why it is good to see how the three major concepts - Four Noble Truths, Pațicca Samuppāda, Tilakkhana - relate to each other. They clarify and strengthen each other. Abhidhamma is not necessary to grasp those concepts, but it can help clarify "knotty issues."

8. The Four Noble Truths are discussed in many suttas, but many of the key suttas are in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Sacca Sainyutta (SN 56)," where there are 131 suttas. The latter part of that section is devoted to many analogies on the high rate of rebirths in apāyās. See, "Introduction - What is Suffering?"

- There are about 250 suttas concentrated in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Vedanā Samiyutta (SN 35)" on Tilakkhaṇa (anicca, dukkha, anatta.)
- The "WebLink: suttacentral: Nidāna Saminyutta (SN 12)" has about 90 suttas related to Paṭicca Samuppāda. However, Pațicca Samuppāda is analyzed in great detail only in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Paticcasamuppāda Vibhañga (Abhidhamma Vb 6 [Book of Analysis]]" in the Vibhañgapakaraṇa of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka.
- Of course, many other key suttas and sections spread over the whole Tipitaka on all three of those topics because they are the essence of Buddha Dhamma. For example, "WebLink: suttacentral: Mahānidāna Sutta (DN 15)" is a key sutta on Paṭicca Samuppāda. A new series of posts based on that at "Paticca Samuppāda During a Lifetime."


## Noble Truths, Paṭicca Samuppāda, Tilakkhaṇa - Key Relationships

July 14, 2021

## Noble Truths - Deeper Aspect of Buddha Dhamma

1. Most Buddhists today follow the "superficial" or "mundane" version of the Buddha Dhamma, which is to live a moral life. "Secular Buddhists" -who don't believe in rebirth - fall into this category.

- However, Buddha Dhamma is better rationalized within the rebirth process. As I have emphasized many times, Buddha Dhamma is about stopping future suffering in the rebirth process. Of course, one can live a moral life by following the basic precepts in Buddha Dhamma.
- Any suffering that we may experience now results from previous actions (kamma.) They may only be managed by seeking medical advice and managing the diet, exercise, etc. The "suffering" that the Buddha emphasized was that in the rebirth process, which can extend billions of years to the future.
- "Living a moral life" is certainly a good thing to do. But this human life (and access to Buddha Dhamma) is a rare occurrence. It would be a huge mistake not to try at least to understand the key message of the Buddha that there is unimaginable suffering in this rebirth process. See, "Introduction - What is Suffering?"


## Three "Pillars" of Buddha Dhamma

2. As we discussed in the previous post, Buddha Dhamma stands on "three legs or pillars": Four Noble Truths, Tilakkhaṇa, and Paṭicca Samuppāda. See, "Buddha Dhamma - Noble Truths, Paticca Samuppāda, Tilakkhana."

- In this post, I will try to provide further clarification of the interconnections among those three pillars.
- It is critical to understand those inter-relationships to understand the meanings of keywords like anicca and anatta and understand what is meant by Nibbāna.
- Before we start discussing the "three pillars," we need to get the pronunciations right.


## Pronunciation of Pāli Words - "Tipiṭaka English"

3. When the early Europeans started writing the Pāli Tipitaka using the English alphabet (which originated from the Latin alphabet), they realized the necessity to represent the original sounds in an "unambiguous and efficient" way.

- We will call the convention they adopted "Tipiṭaka English."
- That "Tipiṭaka English" convention is DIFFERENT from "Standard English." See, "Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars - Part 1."
- The following audio file provides pronunciation of Paticca Samuppāda, Tilakkhaṇa, icca, iccha, nicca, niccha, anicca, aniccha, anatta, and anattha in that order.

WebLink: Listen to the Pronunciation of Paticca Samuppāda, Tilakkhana, icca, iccha, nicca, niccha, anicca, aniccha, anatta, and anattha

- More pronunciations/definitions at "Pāli Glossary - (A-K)" and "Pāli Glossary - (L-Z)."


## The First Noble Truth

4. With the famous verse - samkhittena pañca upādāna khandhā dukkhā - in the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta (DN 56.11), Buddha stated that future suffering arises due to our tendency to try to keep certain entities "close to us" (upād $\bar{a} n a$.) Those "entities" are rūpa and any mental entity associated with those rūpā, i.e., vedanā, saññ̄a, sañkhāra, viñ̃ñanna.

- Why do we have "upādāna" for certain $r \bar{u} p a$ and associated mental entities? We do that because we like them and think that they will provide us with happiness. That liking/craving is "icca"/ "iccha."
- Those 5 aggregates (pañcakkhandha) encompass "the whole world" as experienced by a given person. However, any person attaches (upādāna) only to a tiny fraction of It (pañca upādāna khandhā.)
- All three "pillars" explain that all our future suffering arises due to pañca upādāna khandhā. In the same verse, Buddha explained the connection to "icca": "yam pi iccham na labhati tampi dukkhā̀ंㅎ" OR "If one does not get what one likes/craves, that is suffering."


## Connection to Tilakkhana

5. Anicca is the first of the Three Characteristics of Nature (Tilakkhana.) "The world is of anicca nature" means that "it is not possible to maintain those things that we like in the rebirth process. We may hold onto certain things all our lives, but we definitely will have to give them up when we die. The worst, and the deeper aspect, is that our efforts to "keep those things close to us" will lead to much more suffering in future lives.

- Of course, the things that we most like are the parts of our physical body. We take great care of the body and would like it to function well. However, as we get old, the body degrades, and the performance of all body parts, including the brain, will diminish. Eventually, we lose the whole physical body at death. That is why even any thought of death brings sadness and despair. This type of suffering comes under the category of "viparin̄āma dukkha."
- Let us discuss a simple extreme case that is easy to understand. A King in the old days was able to keep any woman that he desired in his harem. But as he got old, no matter how many women he had, he would not be able to "enjoy them." Of course, he would have to leave them when he died. That is
another example of "viparin̄āma dukkha." But the worst is that because of those actions, he would be reborn as an animal and would suffer for millions of years. That comes under "dukkha dukkha."
- Think about anything that brings you happiness now. You would make every effort to keep them in good shape, whether a person or an inert material thing like a house or a car. The suffering associated with such efforts falls under the category of "sañkhāra dukkha."

6. Those three types of suffering are discussed in "Introduction - 2 - The Three Categories of Suffering."

- The point is that the root cause for all three types of suffering is our inability to maintain things to our liking. That is anicca nature. That is stated as "yam pi icchaí na labhati tampi dukkhā̀m" ( If one does not get what one likes, that is suffering.) in the First Noble Truth.
- The above verses are discussed in detail in "Essence of Buddhism - In the First Sutta."


## Iccha, Nicca, Anicca - Connection to the First Noble Truth

7. Note that the Pāli word for "like" is "icca" (sometimes written as "iccha" to emphasize "strong liking or craving.")
"WebLink: suttacentral: Icchā Sutta (SN 1.69)" states "Icchāya bajjhat̄̄ loko, icchāvinayāya muccati; Icchāya vippahānena, sabbaì chindati bandhanan"ti.

Translated: "Desire is what binds the world. By the removal of desire, one is freed from this world. With the giving up of craving, all bonds to this world are severed." (Note that most translations don't say it is to this world that one is bound!)

- Of course, that "desire/craving" cannot be removed just by willpower. It HAPPENS through the understanding of the broader worldview discerned by the Buddha. That worldview (and the associated logical analysis) is embedded in the Four Noble Truths, Tilakkhana, and Paṭicca Samuppäda.
- We desire worldly things because we think (or perceive) that worldly things are beneficial to us and will bring us everlasting happiness. If that is the case (i.e., if those things can be maintained to one's satisfaction), that is expressed by "nicca" (or "niccha" to emphasize.)
- While it may be possible to keep such things to our satisfaction over short times, or even until we die, such cravings lead to suffering in the rebirth process. The key here is to understand what is involved in acquiring such things and in maintaining them. This is the hardest to understand.
- But the consequences are clear in cases where one needs to act with greed or anger. Such actions involve immoral deeds, and everyone should know that such immoral actions can lead to "bad rebirths." But we will discuss this in more detail soon.

8. On the other hand, if it is NOT possible to maintain something to one's satisfaction (i.e., it will eventually bring more suffering), then it is of "anicca" nature, the opposite of "nicca nature."

- I hope now you can see why "anicca nature" expresses the same underlying fact as the First Noble Truth. This world of 31 realms is of anicca nature. Whatever things that we perceive to lead to happiness (and thus, we "upādāna" or "attach/keep close") will only lead to long-term suffering, that suffering arises because "anicca nature" is a universal truth.

9. The ultimate goal of anyone is to stop any possibility of future suffering completely. In Pāli, "nicchāto" denotes that attainment, and that is Parinibbāna (even an Arahant will be subjected to physical suffering until the death of the physical body; that is Parinibbāna.)

- The verse "nicchāto parinibbuto" appears in many suttas; see, "WebLink: suttacentral:search with 31 results for nicchāto."
- That verse means "an Arahant attains the status of niccha upon the death of the physical body."
- Until then, any living being can be subjected to various types of suffering.
- Summary: This world of 31 realms is of anicca nature. Nibbāna is of nicca (or niccha) nature.


## Connection to Paṭicca Samuppāda

10. Next, let us see how the same idea is embedded in Paticca Samuppāda.

- If we like something, we would like to "get possession of it." Then we think about it, plan accordingly, and do bodily work as well. Those efforts are based on mano, vacī, and kāya sañkhāra.
- It is critical to understand the meaning of "sañkhāra" and not just say they are "mental formations." See, "Sañkhāra - What It Really Means" and "Correct Meaning of Vacī Sañkhāra."
- The point is that our minds generate sañkhāra based on things that we crave/like. This is the connection of the First Noble Truth and Tilakkhana to Paṭicca Samuppāda.
- That is why the first step in Paticca Samuppāda is "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra." Until the Noble Truths/TilakkhanalPaticca Samuppāda are understood fully, there is the possibility to generate sañkhāra with avijjā. Thus avijija is the ignorance of Noble Truths/Tilakkhana/Paṭicca Samuppāda.
- Once we start generating sañkhāra, a corresponding viñnāṇa is established. That viññạ̄a is a kamma viññāna and is MORE THAN just consciousness. That viññāṇa in PS has a "built-in expectation" or an "expected outcome" based on something that one craves!

11. It is easier to explain that with an example. Let us say person $X$ meets a beautiful woman and likes her very much; this is "iccha," and that leads to tanhhā and upādāna.

- He would keep thinking about her, talk about her, and tries to meet her as much as possible. All those involve the three types of sañkhāra. A kamma viññāna then takes root in his mind to "have a relationship with her."
- The more he engages in generating such sañkhāra, the stronger that viñ̃āạa grows: "sañkhāra paccayā viññāna."
- Furthermore, because of that viñ̃ān̄a that has now taken root in X's mind, he would often think about her, generating more sañkhāra. Here PS steps go backward too, "viñ̃n̄ạa paccayā sañkhāra."
- We have discussed such examples in more detail in the Paṭicca Samuppāda section. See, "Paticca Samuppāda in Plain English."
- Now, if X finds out that the woman has a boyfriend, he would suffer immediately. If he tries to break them up, he will take "bad actions" based on "bad sañkhāra." Those would be akusala kamma, and thus, can lead to future suffering.
- Even if he can get his wish fulfilled and marry her, that will also lead to future suffering. This needs more discussion, but the following is clear. Both of them would be subjected to mental suffering at the death of the other.


## Summary

12. There are "mind-pleasing things" in this world. When we get attached to them, with liking/craving (iccaliccha), we will make every effort to "own them" or at least to "enjoy them."

- If such efforts involve harming others, they will lead to "bad kamma vipāka," including "bad rebirths." Even if those efforts (based on sañkhāra) don't harm others, they will still bound one to "this world of 31 realms." We will discuss this in detail.
- What is wrong with "continue to live in this world of 31 realms"? The short answer is that most rebirths are in the suffering-filled flour lowest realms (apāyās.) See, "Introduction - What is Suffering?" This message is embedded in the First Noble Truth.
- The root cause of that suffering, its removal, and the way to remove those root causes are described in the remaining three Noble Truths.
- A systematic analysis of how that suffering arises via the generation of sañkhāra is described by Paṭicca Samuppāda.
- This underlying message (unsatisfactory and dangerous nature of this world) is expressed by the Three Characteristics of Nature (anicca, dukkha, anatta.) Here we briefly discussed anicca. Next, we will discuss how anicca nature leads to dukkha and anatta.


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### 3.1.3 Anicca Nature, the First Noble Truth, and Paṭicca Samuppāda

July 19, 2021

## Anicca Nature - Connection to the First Noble Truth

1. In the previous post we started a discussion to look into the inter-relationships among the "three pillars of Buddha Dhamma," i.e., the Four Noble Truths, Tilakkhaṇa, and Paṭicca Samuppāda. If you do not recall the pronunciation of the words paṭicca Samuppāda, Tilakkhaṇa, icca, iccha, nicca, niccha, anicca, aniccha, anatta, and anattha go back and listen to the audio file in the previous post "Noble Truths, Paticca Samuppāda, Tilakkhana - Key Relationships."

- The key verses on suffering in the First Noble Truths are, "yam pi iccham na labhati tampi dukkhā$\dot{m}$ " and "samkhittena pañca upādāna khandhā dukkhā" both say that future suffering arises because of our attachment/craving (iccha) for things in this world.
- As we discussed, IF IT IS POSSIBLE to tailor our future to be free of the suffering that would be our liking (icca or iccha,) then we can say that our world is of "nicca" or "niccha" nature, where there would be no suffering.

2. The Buddha pointed out that this world is of "anicca nature," i.e., the opposite of the "nicca nature"

- That means craving/striving for ANYTHING in this world WILL NOT lead to a future absent of suffering. Instead, the more attachment we have for anything in this world WILL lead to more suffering.
- The fundamental reason for this is that ANY sañkhata (rūpa, vedanā, sañnā, sañkhāra, $v i \tilde{n} \tilde{a} n a)$ in this world is inherently subject to unexpected changes and destruction. We will discuss that in the next post.
- It is only in Nibbāna that there is no suffering. Therefore, it is Nibbāna that is of nicca nature. See \#9 of the previous post.

3. Craving/striving (icca/iccha) for ANYTHING in this world leads to suffering in two ways.

- When one struggles to get possession of things in this world, that effort itself is suffering and the end result is suffering. Even if one gets it, one will lose it at death.
- The more serious second type of suffering is due to "bad rebirths" that will arise due to any immoral deeds done while trying to get possession of worldly things that one craves. Let us discuss that now.
- (However, this craving CANNOT be removed without comprehending the "core" of Buddha's teachings: the Four Noble Truths, Tilakkhaṇa, and Paṭicca Samuppāda.)


## Anicca Nature - Connection to Paṭicca Samuppāda

4. Our efforts to "own and enjoy" things in this world ALWAYS lead to more suffering than any short period of happiness. That explanation comes via Paticca Samuppāda, the "third pillar" of Buddha Dhamma. We got started on that in the previous post. Let us continue that discussion.

- Humans do morally acceptable deeds with puñña abhisañkhāra and morally corrupt deeds with apuñña abhisañkhāra. The former leads to births in the human, Deva, and rūpāvacara Brahma realms and the latter type leads to births in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a} s$.
- Some humans cultivate arūpa jhāna. Those involve $\bar{a} n e n ̃ j a \bar{a}$ abhisañkhāra and lead to births in the arupāvacara Brahma realms. More on the types of puñña abhisañkhāra below.
- In the absence of a Buddha, that is all humans can do. None of those lead to a "state without suffering." All those births end up in death. The worst aspect is that due to the craving for sensual pleasures humans frequently engage in immoral deeds with apuñ̃na abhisañkhāra and end up in suffering-filled apāyās.
- The reason becomes clear when we examine what is meant by "avijja paccay $\bar{a} \operatorname{san} k \boldsymbol{a} \bar{a} r \vec{a} "$ " in the akusala-mūla Paticca Samuppāda.


## Births That End With Suffering Are Initiated by "Avijjā Paccayā Saǹkhārā"

5. WebLink: suttacentral: Paticcasamuppāda Vibhañga (Abhidhamma Vb 6), explains the term "avijjā paccayā sañkhārä" in akusala-mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda (that leads to suffering) as follows: "Tattha katame avijjā paccayā sañkhārā? Puññābhisañkhāro, apuñn̄ābhisañkhāro, āneñjābhisan்khāro, kāyasañkhāro, vacīsañkhāro, cittasañkhāro."

Translated: "What is avijjā paccaȳ̄ saǹkhārā? Apuññābhisañkhāra, puñ̃̄̄̄bhisañkhāra, äneñjäbhisañkhāra, kāyasañkhāra, vacīsañkhāra, cittasañkhāra." It is quite clear that apuñn̄ābhisañkhāra are due to avijj $\bar{a}$. But why are the other two are said to be done due to avijj $\bar{a}$ ?

- Puñnāabhisañkhāra are, of course, Moral and good deeds AND also the cultivation of rūpāvacara jhāna.
- Āneñjābhisañkhāra involve cultivating arūpāvacara jhāna.
- When a person who has NOT comprehended anicca, dukkha, anatta engage in those two types of "good sañkhāra," they are still done with avijjā! That is because one has not yet grasped the dangers in remaining in the rebirth process. Thus, avijjä is the ignorance of the Four Noble Truths, Tilakkhana, and Paticca Samuppāda.
- Some examples are discussed in "Vacī Sañkhāra - Sańkappa (Conscious Thoughts) and Vācā (Speech)." It is a good idea to read that post to really understand this point.

6. We can summarize the above analysis in simple words as follows.

- ANYTHING that we do without understanding the concepts of the Four Noble Truths, Tilakkhaṇa, and Paticca Samuppāda involves three types of sañkhāra: apuñnābhisañkhāra, puññābhisañkhāra, āneñjäbhisañkhāra.
- Immoral deeds or pāpa kamma done with apuññābhisañkhāra lead to rebirths in the apāyās. Moral deeds or puñña kamma done with puññābhisañkhāra give rise to births in human, Deva, and rūpāvacara Brahma realms (good births.) Those who cultivate arupāvacara jhāna with $\bar{a} n e n ̃ j a ̄ b h i s a n ̃ k h a ̄ r a ~ a r e ~ r e b o r n ~ i n ~ a r u p a ̄ v a c a r a ~ B r a h m a ~ r e a l m s . ~$
- All those births end up in death. None of those will lead to a cessation of suffering.
- That is why all those three types of sañkhāra are done with avijjā!
- So, what type of sañkhārā lead to Nibbāna?


## Difference Between Puñña Kamma and Kusala Kamma

7. Puñña kamma are "good deeds" done with puññābhisañkhāra with a mundane version of alobha, adosa, amoha. Those SAME DEEDS would be kusala kamma if done with the comprehension of the Four Noble Truths, Tilakkhaña, and Pațicca Samuppāda.

- While puñ̃na kamma leads to rebirths in the "good realms," kusala kamma leads to Nibbāna.
- Thus, while puñña kamma are done with "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" in the akusala-mūla Pațicca Samuppāda process, kusala kamma are done with "kusala-mūla paccayā sañkhāra" in the kusalamūla Paticca Samuppāda process.
- For details wee, "Akusala-Mūla Uppatti Paticca Samuppāda" and "Kusala-Mūla Paticca Samuppāda."
- That is a brief explanation of the difference between puñ̃a kamma and kusala kamma. Those who don't understand that difference should read the post "Kilesa - Relationship To Akusala, Kusala, And Puñña Kamma." It is critical to see the difference.


## Puñ̃̃a Kamma Result With the Wrong View of a "Nicca Nature" [ $\rightarrow$ Vipallāsa]

8. This is the CRITICAL point to understand. In the absence of a Buddha, humans have the innate idea that happiness can be attained by owning things that one likes. As a child grows he/she would strive to keep friends and "things" that he/she likes. As an adult, he/she would strive to learn skills, get a good job, marry the person of his/her choice and live a "good life." In the absence of a Buddha, not many people would even think beyond that.

- Some people do worry about what would happen after death, especially when they get old. The world's major religions teach that this world was created by an everlasting Creator and that one can "go to him" or "merge with him" at death to have a permanent existence of happiness.
- Of course, there is no way to prove or disprove the existence of such a Creator. One would pledge allegiance to that Creator and promise to live a moral life. But there are many problems with this hypothesis. For example, any immoral deed, no matter how grave, can be forgiven by just praying!
- In comparison, Buddha Dhamma is a complete worldview. It is not a faith-based religion. In fact, it is not a religion! One cannot get to Nibbāna by just praying or pledging to be a faithful follower of the Buddha. One needs to comprehend the worldview of the Buddha on how suffering arises, and then it would become clear how to be free of any future suffering.


## It Takes a Paradigm Shift to Understand the Anicca Nature

9. We went off in a tangent there, but the point is that most people today fall into two categories. Atheists believe that life ends at death and one should try to "enjoy life" while it lasts. Those who belong to major religions believe in a Creator and expect that Creator will secure them a happy, permanent existence after death.

- Thus, either way, there is a sense of a "nicca nature." That is why most people don't even bother to examine the teachings of the Buddha in detail. That takes a considerable effort. Who would want to spend that much time while there is much fun to be had by watching a movie, going to a party, or just having a day out with the family/friends?
- But if one makes an effort to study the deep teachings of the Buddha, one would be able to see that it is a fully self-consistent worldview that is based on the Principle of Causality. It is deeper than modern
science because science only deals with material phenomena. That is why science is unable to make any progress on the issue of consciousness. I have discussed this in detail in the series on "Origin of Life."
- By the way, from the discussion so far, it should be quite clear that translating "anicca" as "impermanence" is way off the mark! As explained, "anicca" is intrinsically connected to "icca/iccha" and "upādāna."


## "Nicca" Worldview Leads to the Generation of Sainkhāra with Avijjā̆!

10. We don't just start acting with avijjā and initiate Pațicca Samuppāda (PS) processes with "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra." Instead, PS processes start with an ārammaṇa that comes to the mind via one of the six sensory inputs or (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, mind.)

- If that ārammana is "mind-pleasing" we attach to it and start thinking about enjoying it more. Thus, the PS processes start at "salāyatana paccayā phasso." For example, if we see a mind-pleasing rūpa via eyes, then it is the cakkhāyatana that is "activated" and this step is really "salāyatana paccay $\bar{a}$ samphassa (san + phassa)." Of course, it is essential to read the post, "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Samisāra)."
- Immediately the mind goes through the "samphassa paccaya $\bar{a}$ samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedan $\bar{a} "$ step, which is normally stated as "phassa paccay $\bar{a}$ vedana $\bar{a}$." This "samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedan $\bar{a} "$ is a MIND-MADE vedanā that arises due to attachment with liking/craving (icca/iccha.)
- More information in "Difference between Phassa and Samphassa."
- The key point here is that PS cycles start when we attach to an ārammana with liking/craving (icca/iccha) based on greed, anger, and ignorance of the Four Noble Truths, Tilakkhaṇa, and Paṭicca Samuppāda.


## Suffering - Not Getting the Desired (and Getting the Undesired)

11. As we have discussed many times, a passage in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta (SN 56.11)" is "yampicchain na labhati tampi dukkhām" meaning "If one does not get what one likes, that is suffering."

- Even in the mundane sense, there is more to it than people perceive. For example, you work very hard to at your job and get a promotion. So, the ultimate outcome is a happy one. But you WORKED HARD to get there. That is "sañkhāra-dukkha" as we discussed in "Introduction-2 - The Three Categories of Suffering." That "sañkhāra-dukkha" is present in ALL our activities, including breathing. We don't feel breathing is difficult because we are used to it. An asthma patient knows how difficult it can be.
- The above succinct statement is true at a deeper level in the rebirth process, as we briefly mentioned in \#3 above.

12. Our desire is to have a "good birth." Some want to be reborn humans with good health and wealth. Others want to be born Devas so that they can enjoy higher levels of sensual pleasures. There are also those who cultivate jhāna so that they can be born in Brahma realms with "jhānic pleasures."

- However, our future rebirths do not work out according to our wishes (iccaliccha). The world is of "anicca nature."
- Anicca nature naturally - and inevitably - leads to dukkha. This is stated as "yad aniccaim taín dukkham." We will discuss that in the next post.


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### 3.1.4 Tilakkhaṇa - Introduction

July 27, 2021
Anicca and Anatta - Two Characteristics of the World
Anuloma Khanti and Sammattaniyāma - Pre-requisites for a Sotāpanna
Anicca Nature - Not Possible to Overcome Suffering in This World
Dukkha in Tilakkhana Is a Characteristic - Not Dukkha Vedanā
Attachment to Things with Dukkha Lakkhana Leads to Dukkha
How Does Anicca Nature Lead to Dukkha?
Anatta is a Characteristic of the World, not About a "Self"
Anatta in Anattalakkhana Sutta - Part 1
Anatta in Anattalakkhana Sutta - Part 2

### 3.1.4.1 Anicca and Anatta - Two Characteristics of the World

## August 2, 2021

Anatta is a characteristic of this world and not about a "self." While impermanence is a part of anicca nature, it does not describe the full meaning of anicca.

## It is Time to Settle the Issue of Mistranslations of Anicca and Anatta

1. Incorrect translations of"anicca" as "impermanence" and "anatta" as "no-self" have been engraved in the minds of many people. This is a serious issue that needs to be discussed and settled.

- We need to realize that mistranslations of anicca and anatta are two serious issues. It is not possible to understand the message of the Buddha with those incorrect translations. By the way, my analysis below CANNOT be categorized as just an "interpretation." There could be several interpretations if the definition of a word is not clear. In this case, there is no room for ambiguity.
- In addition, this clarification will help easily understand the meanings of several other key Pāli words as well. These include sakkāya diṭthi and "māna samiyojana." As we know, sakkāya diṭthi is a key samyojana that needs to be dispelled to attain the Sotāpanna stage, while "māna samyojana" is removed at the Arahant stage.


## Tilakkhana - Three Characteristic of the World

2. A "lakkhaṇa" means an intrinsic "characteristic" or a "quality." For example, the "WebLink: suttacentral: Lakkhana Sutta (DN 30)" describes the 31 unique qualities/characteristics of a Buddha.

- Anicca, dukkha, and anatta are collectively called Tilakkhaṇa or "three characteristics" of this world.
- Sometimes "asubha" is shown to be another characteristic of the world, among a few more. In fact, I have not seen the word "Tilakkhana" specifically mentioned in the Tipitaka. Those who compiled commentaries may have introduced the term. The reason could be that anicca, dukkha, anatta are closely related to each other. Many suttas in the Tipiṭaka describe those relationships.
- Therefore, it is logical to reserve the word Tilakkhaṇa for anicca, dukkha, anatta. We will discuss the relationships among them in the next few posts.


## What Does Anicca Apply to?

3. What entities have the anicca characteristic? The "WebLink: suttacentral: Kalattayaanicca Sutta (SN 22.9)" says: "Rūpaì, bhikkhave, aniccaì atīt̄̄nāgataì; ko pana vādo paccuppannassa."

- Translated: "Bhikkhus, rūpa of the past (atīta) are of anicca nature, rūpa of the future (anāgata) are of anicca nature. Rūpa that we experience at present (paccuppanna) are also of anicca nature."
- Then the statement is repeated for vedanā, saññā, sañkhāra, viññāna.

4. Those are profound statements. The translators at the Sutta Central site translate them without taking time to reflect on their meanings.

- For example, if anicca really means impermanence, what is the need to specifically say, "rūpa of the past are impermanent"?
- That is like saying, "all those people who lived at the time of the Buddha are now dead." That would be a trivia/foolish statement to make!
- It is even worse to emphasize that any vedanā, sañ̃̄̃a, sañkhāra, viñ $\tilde{n} \bar{a} n a$ that one experienced in the past were impermanent." That would be a childish statement. All of them would have perished just after arising!
- Rather, those statements express a profound idea: "Any rūpa, vedanā, saññ̄, sañkhāra, viññäna of the past, future, or present are of $\operatorname{ANICCA}$ NATURE. I have discussed that in many posts, but we will discuss that in detail in upcoming posts.


## Characteristic of Dukkha Applies to What?

5. The "WebLink: suttacentral: Kalattayadukkha Sutta (SN 22.10)" says: "Rūpaim, bhikkhave, dukkhain atītānāgataim; ko pana vādo paccuppannassa."

- Translated: "Bhikkhus, rūpa of the past are of dukkha nature, rūpa of the future are of dukkha nature. Rūpa that we experience at present are also of dukkha nature."
- Then the statement is repeated for vedanā, sañ $\tilde{n} \bar{a}, \operatorname{san} k h a \bar{r} a, ~ v i n ̃ \tilde{n} \bar{a} n a$.
- Those statements express a profound idea: "Any rūpa, vedanā, sañ̃̄̄a, sañkhāra, viññāna of the past, future, or present are of DUKKHA NATURE.


## Characteristic of Anatta Applies to What?

6. The "WebLink: suttacentral: Kalattayaanatta Sutta (SN 22.11)" says: "Rūpaim, bhikkhave, anatt $\bar{a}$ atītānāgataì; ko pana vādo paccuppannassa."

- Translated: "Bhikkhus, rūpa of the past are of anatta nature, rūpa of the future are of anatta nature. Ruppa that we experience at present are also of anatta nature."
- Then the statement is repeated for vedanā, saññā, sañkhāra, viññāna.
- Those statements express a profound idea: "Any rūpa, vedanā, saññā, sañkhāra, viññāña of the past, future, or present are of ANATTA NATURE.
- Therefore, the characteristics of anicca, dukkha, anatta apply to the five aggregates (pañcakkhandha.)


## Many More References

7. For simplicity I picked the above three suttas. They are short suttas with direct verses.

- But there are many more conveying the same meanings. For example, the following references in the Tipiṭaka state that the five aggregates (pañcakkhandha) have the anicca nature: "WebLink: suttacentral: 17 results for pañcakkhandha AND anicca."
- Another relevant set of references in "WebLink: suttacentral: 13 results for rūpakkhandha AND anicca."


## Characteristics of Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta Applies to the Five Aggregates!

8. We need to understand that when the Buddha refers to "rūpa" (unless specifically mentioned, as in some cases) it refers to "rupakkhandha," the aggregate. In the same way, vedanā, saññā, sañkhāra, viññāna refer, in many cases, to vedanākkhandha, saññākkandha, sañkhārakkhandha, viññānakkhandha.

- Altogether there are $\mathbf{1 1}$ types of rūpa included in rūpakkhandha. The WebLink: suttacentral: Khandha Sutta (SN 22.48) (among many other sutt $\bar{a}$ ) summarizes what is included in rūpakkhandha. "Yaì kiñci, bhikkhave, rūpaì atīt̄āāgatapaccuppannaì (atīta, anāgata, paccuppanna)
 $v \bar{a}$, ayam vuccati rūpakkhandho."
- You may want to refresh your memory by reading the post, "Difference Between Physical Rūpa and Rūpakkhandha."
- A crude translation of the 11 types: past, future, current, internal, external, coarse, subtle, good, bad, far, and near.
- However, all 11 types are included in the rūpa of past, future, current. Therefore, what is meant by " $\overline{u p} a$ " in the above 3 suttas is really the "rūpakkhandha." R $\bar{u} p a k k h a n d h a$ are "mental impressions of physical rūpa."
- Then there are "physical rūpa" made of suddhatthaka, like our physical bodies.
- We need to be able to differentiate between a "rūpa made of suddhāṭthaka" and "rūpakkhandha."

9. In the same way, the above 3 suttas refer to vedanākkhandha, saññäkkandha, sañkhārakkhandha, viññānakkhandha. Thus all 3 suttas refer to the five aggregates or pañcakkhandha.

- Now, we know that the five aggregates of rūpakkhandha, vedanākkhandha, sañ̃̄ākkandha, sañkhārakkhandha, viññāṇakkhandha include (mental impressions of ) EVERYTHING in this world for a given person. It includes all past, present, and future experiences in this world!
- That means those 3 characteristics apply to everything in this world!
- That is why they are called " 3 characteristics of nature."
- It is necessary to understand these critical concepts. It is not possible to understand the true message of the Buddha without understanding these fundamental and critical concepts.
- As you can see, these are not "interpretations." The suttas specifically say that ru$p a$, vedan $\bar{a}$, sañ̃̄̄̄, sañkhāra, viññāna of the past, present, and future ALL have the characteristics of anicca, dukkha, anatta!

10. Another short sutta, "WebLink: suttacentral: Ānanda Sutta (SN 22.21)" states: "Rūpaì kho, ānanda, aniccaì sañkhataì paticcasamuppannaì khayadhammaì vayadhammaì virāgadhammaì nirodhadhammaì. Tassa nirodho 'nirodho'ti vuccati."

Translated: "Ānanda, rūpa are of anicca nature, originated with sañkhāra (sañkhataì) via Paṭicca Samuppāda (paṭiccasamuppannaì), leading to the decay of moral qualities (khayadhammaì) and thus to one's future suffering (vayadhammaim.) But that can be overcome by losing attachment for them ( virāgadhammaim.) Thus, they can be stopped from arising (nirodhadhammaí), leading to their cessation. (that is Nibbāna!)

- Then the statement is repeated for vedanā, saññā, sañkhāra, viññāna.
- This sutta also refers to the five aggregates or pañcakkhandha or the "whole world."
- As you can see, this sutta — with those succinct verses — packs even deeper concepts.
- Simply put, the sutta says that we prepare our own future births via our own sañkhāra generated via $a v i j j \bar{a}$. But we can stop that process by cultivating pañ $\tilde{n} \bar{a}$ (i.e., comprehending the Four Noble Truths, Tilakkhaña, and Paṭicca Samuppāda)!
- This is what we will be discussing in this series of posts. We have recently discussed the essential concepts in Pațicca Samuppāda. You may want to review that section, "Paticca Samuppāda - Essential Concepts" and "Paticca Samuppāda in Plain English."
- Another brief point needs to be made so that some of you can make the connections and understand the above fourth sutta.


## Connection to Pañcupādānakkhandhā

11. We crave not only $r \bar{u} p a$ that we see at this moment (that is the meaning of paccuppanna rūpa.) Even a rūpa that we saw a minute ago has gone to the past (atīta rūpa.) Furthermore, we wish for a certain rūpa in the future (anāgata rūpa.) We may form attachments to all three types!

- Therefore even though rūpakkhandha is infinite, we attach only to a small part of it, and that is rūpupādānakkhandha.
- Rūpakkhandha is infinite because it includes all rūpa that we have seen in our past lives. In contrast, we mostly crave rūpa that we have seen in this life! Thus, rūpupādānakkhandha (or rūpa upādāna $k h a n d h a$ ) is a tiny part of $r \bar{u} p a k k h a n d h a$. See, "Rūpakkhandha and Rūpa Upādānakkhandha."
- Thus, even though all rūpa are of anicca nature, we only need to overcome our attachment to those we crave!
- That is why the Buddha said, "sam்khittena pañcupādānakkhandhā dukkhā." [sañkhittena means being overthrown by defilements]


## Carrying the "Burden" or "Pañcupādānakkhandha"

12. Therefore, even though all of pañcakkhandhā has the characteristics of anicca, dukkha, anatta, we get into trouble only if we get attached to parts of it.

- The next sutta, "WebLink: suttacentral: Bhara Sutta (SN 22.22)" specifically says that pañcupādānakkhandha is a "load" or "burden" carried by each person. One can put down that "load" by losing attachment (taṇhā/upādāna) for worldly things.
- The sutta ends with the following verses:
"Bhārā have pañcakkhandhā, bhārahāro ca puggalo; Bhārādānaì dukhaì loke, bhāranikkhepanaì sukhaì.
Nikkhipitvā garumं bhāraì, aññaì bhāraì anādiya; Samūlaiं taṇhamabbuyha, nicchāto parinibbuto" $t i$.
- That ties up what we have discussed so far in this series about Nibbāna being the only nicca (niccha) state.


## Translation of those verses:

"The five aggregates are truly burdens; burden-carrier is the person. Taking up the burden is suffering in the world; laying the burden down is happiness.
Having laid the heavy burden down, without taking up another burden, having rooted out tanhh $\bar{a}$ with its roots, one is free from suffering, and reaches the niccha state (Nibbāna.)."

- As we discussed before, "nicca/niccha" is the opposite of "anicca."


## No Excuse Anymore to Translate Anicca/Anatta as Impermanence/"NoSelf"

13. If you read the English translations at Sutta Central you can see how badly they have translated all of the above suttas. However, if you re-read them with the correct meanings, those suttas WILL make sense.

- It is no wonder why many people have not made ANY significant progress over many years by reading those incorrect translations. In discussion forums, people keep posting those incorrect translations and point out certain inconsistencies among deeper suttas. Of course, there WILL BE inconsistencies IF keywords are translated incorrectly!
- The fourth sutta (Ānanda Sutta (SN 22.21)) has deeper meanings and requires more discussion, even though I am sure some of you can grasp those meanings.
- However, ANYONE should be able to see that anicca and anatta DO NOT mean impermanence and "no-self."
- If there are still people who cannot comprehend at least that, it is doubtful that they will be able to understand future posts.
- In future posts, I will expand this analysis. Hopefully, this will settle the issue of mistranslations of the key Pāli words starting with anicca and anatta.


### 3.14.2 Anuloma Khanti and Sammattaniyāma - Pre-requisites for a Sotāpanna

## August 9, 2021

To attain the Sotāpanna stage, two conditions must be met. One must get to Anuloma Khanti, i.e., one must see that suffering hugely dominates the rebirth process. One must also get to Sammattaniyāma, i.e., realize that the ultimate bliss is in Nibbāna (reached via stopping the rebirth process.) [Here, "anu" means "through the understanding of Tilakkhana," "lo" means "craving for worldly things," and "ma" means "removal," and thus "anuloma" means "removal of craving for worldly things to some extent via the comprehension of Tilakkhana."]

## Anuloma Khanti and Sammattaniyāma

1. If you have been reading my posts for a while, you know the points listed below. Here I will introduce two new terms - Anuloma Khanti and Sammattaniyāma - but the same concepts. These two terms are used in Tipitaka references that point out the necessity of comprehending the meanings of anicca, dukkha, and anatta nature to attain magga phala, as we discuss below.

- Complete cessation of suffering cannot be achieved while in the rebirth process. While some births may have less suffering than others, death is inevitable for ANY birth.
- Understanding Tilakkhana or the Three Characteristics of Nature is essential to reach that conclusion. That understanding comes with the simultaneous comprehension of Paticca Samuppāda (the process that leads to new births.) That is the Noble Truth ABOUT suffering. That realization gets one to Anuloma Khanti.
- Closely related to that issue of the dangers of remaining in the rebirths process is another critical issue. That is to realize that Nibbāna is the only refuge. That conclusion comes with understanding the Four Noble Truths, i.e., liberating from the rebirth process via the Noble Eightfold Path. That is when one gets to Sammattaniyāma and gets to the Sotāpanna stage.

2. Thus, it is CRITICAL to start with understanding Tilakkhaṇa and Paṭicca Samuppāda, i.e., understanding why craving for worldly pleasures will INEVITABLY lead to suffering.

- However, as I have mentioned many times before, it is impossible to give up cravings for worldly pleasures with just willpower. It has to come through understanding WHY and HOW cravings for worldly pleasures lead to future suffering.
- Here is an analogy. An alcoholic CANNOT get rid of his addiction just by willpower. He has to investigate the bad consequences of drinking and comprehend - without any doubts - that drinking is bad for health and can lead to death!
- In the same way, one needs to realize the dangers in the rebirth process first. With that understanding, the generation of the worst types of sañkhāra (leading to rebirth in the apāyās) will stop. But a Sotāpanna's mind will still crave sensual pleasures. Those cravings will be gradually lost in three more stages and will disappear at the Arahant stage.
- Thus, a Sotāpanna has the "roadmap" (same as Sammā Ditthi) to reach the Arahant stage. Therefore, only a Sotāpanna can truly start cultivating Satipatthāna/Ānāpāna/Satta Bojjhañga/Noble Eightfold Path to get to the Arahant stage via the intermediate Sakadāgāmi and Anāgāmi stages.


## Getting to Anuloma Khanti Requires Comprehending Anicca/Dukkha Nature of Sañkhāra

3. The "WebLink: suttacentral: Anicca Sutta (AN 6.98)" states: "..sañkhārain niccato samanupassanto anulomikāya khantiyā samannāgato bhavissatī'ti netaì ṭhānaí vijjati. 'Anulomikāya khantiyā asamannāgato sammattaniyāmaì okkamissatī'ti netaì ṭānaì vijjati. 'Sammattaniyāmaì anokkamamāno sotāpattiphalamं $v \bar{a}$ sakadāgāmiphalaì $v \bar{a}$ anāgāmiphalaiं $v \bar{a}$ arahattaim $v \bar{a}$ sacchikarissatī'ti netaì ṭhānamं vijjati."

Translated: " ..anyone who regards sañkhāra are of nicca nature cannot get to Anuloma Khanti. Without getting to Anuloma Khanti, it's impossible to get to Sammattaniyāma. Without getting to Sammattaniyāma, it's impossible to realize ANY magga phala (sotāpatti, sakadāgāmi, anāgāmi, arahatta.)

- The next sutta, "WebLink: suttacentral: Dukkha Sutta (AN 6.99)," makes a similar statement, "..anyone who regards sañkhāra are of sukha nature cannot get to Anuloma Khanti." The rest of that verse is the same, i.e., unless one gets to Anuloma Khanti, it's impossible to get to Sammattaniyāma and magga phala.


## Getting to Anuloma Khanti Also Requires Comprehending Anatta Nature of Dhammā (Created via Sañkhāra)


#### Abstract

4. Then the next sutta "WebLink: suttacentral: Anatta Sutta (AN 6.100)" states: ".. dhammain attato samanupassanto anulomikāya khantiyā samannāgato bhavissatīti netaì thānaì vijjati. Anulomikāya khantiyā asamannāgato sammattaniyāmaí okkamissatīti netaì thānaí vijjati. 'Sammattaniyāmaí anokkamamāno sotāpattiphalaín vā sakadāgāmiphalaín vā anāgāmiphalaí vā arahattaì vā sacchikarissatī'ti netaì thānaì vijjati."


Translated: "..anyone who regards dhammā are of atta nature can not get to Anuloma Khanti. Without getting to Anuloma Khanti, it's impossible to get to Sammattaniyāma. Without getting to Sammattaniyāma, it's impossible to realize ANY magga phala (sotāpatti, sakadāgāmi, anāgāmi, arahatta.)

## Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta Are Characteristics of Anything in the World But We Need to Focus on Sañkhāra and Dhammā

5. Before discussing the critical implications of grasping the anicca, dukkha, anatta nature to make any progress on the Noble Path, let us clarify something that stands out in the above verses.

- You may have noticed that the first two suttas in \#3 explicitly refer to the anicca, dukkha nature of sañkhāra. On the other hand, the third sutta in \#4 refers to the anatta nature of dhammā.
- As we have discussed, anicca, dukkha, anatta characteristics apply to ANYTHING in the world. See, "Anicca and Anatta - Two Characteristics of the World."
- So, why be specific about the anicca, dukkha nature of sañkhāra, and the anatta nature of dhammā?

6. The reasons will become clear when we realize that the sañkhāra generation initiates the Paticca Saтиррāda process and is the starting point for all future suffering.

- Pațicca Samuppāda process starts with "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" specifically due to the expectation of a nicca outcome, i.e., not realizing that anicca nature is a "built-in" feature of the world!
- Dhammā (with a long-a) are the seeds that result when sañkhāra are cultivated. "Dhammä" means to "bear things in this world." But anything thus generated will not lead to a "nicca outcome," and all those efforts are fruitless. Thus, all "dhamma" generated are of "anatta nature."

7. That is a summary. We will discuss that in detail. However, it is to be noted that those 3 suttas state the same as the following famous verses in Dhammapada verses 277 through 279:
"Sabbe sañkhārā aniccā"ti, yadā paññāya passati; Atha nibbindati dukkhe, esa maggo visuddhiyā."
"Sabbe sañkhārā dukkhā"ti, yadā paññāya passati; Atha nibbindati dukkhe, esa maggo visuddhiyā."
"Sabbe dhammā anattā"ti, yadā paññ̄aya passati; Atha nibbindati dukkhe, esa maggo visuddhiyā."

- Those 3 verses state that to reach ultimate release from suffering (nibbindati dukkhe) via the purification of mind (visuddhi), one must see the futility and dangers in (abhi)sañkhāra generation (because that only leads to accumulation of dhamma $\bar{a}$ bearing more future existences.)!


## Only Nibbāna Has the Characteristics of Nicca, Sukha, Atta!

8. The "WebLink: suttacentral: Nibbāna Sutta (AN 6.101)" completes the description. The following is the first verse in the sutta:
"'So vata, bhikkhave, bhikkhu nibbānain dukkhato samanupassanto anulomikāya khantiyā samannāgato bhavissatī'ti netaì thānami vijjati. 'Anulomikāya khantiyā asamannāgato sammattaniyāmaì okkamissatī’ti netaì thānaì vijjati. 'Sammattaniyāmaì anokkamamāno sotāpattiphalaì v $\bar{a}$ sakadāgāmiphalaì $v \bar{a}$ anāgāmiphalaì $v \bar{a}$ arahattaì $v \bar{a}$ sacchikarissatī'ti netaì thānaì vijjati.

## Translated:

"Bhikkhus, it is impossible for anyone who regards Nibbāna to be suffering to get to Anuloma Khanti. Without getting to Anuloma Khanti, it's impossible to get to Sammattaniyāma. Without getting to Sammattaniyāma, it's impossible to realize ANY magga phala (sotāpatti, sakadāgāmi, anāgāmi, arahatta.)

- Most people think that to attain Nibbāna would be to "give up all the pleasures in this world." They cannot even imagine why anyone would want to stop the rebirth process. They think, "Life is good; how can anyone even think about not living in this world?"
- That is because they equate "living" to live the life of a human. But the Buddha explained that all animals were humans in the past, and MOST present-day humans will end up with animal births. Furthermore, there are even worse births than those in the animal realm.
- When one comprehends Tilakkhaṇa/Paṭicca Samuppāda/Four Noble Truths, one will logically conclude that the rebirth process is filled with suffering.

9. Then the second verse of the sutta says: "'So vata, bhikkhave, bhikkhu nibbānain sukhato samanupassanto anulomikāya khantiyā samannāgato bhavissatīti thānametaín vijjati. 'Anulomikāya khantiyā samannāgato sammattaniyāmaì okkamissatī'ti thānametaì vijjati. 'Sammattaniyāmaì okkamamāno sotāpattiphalaì vā sakadāgāmiphalaì vā anāgāmiphalaì v $\bar{a}$ arahattaì vā sacchikarissatī'ti ṭhānametaì vijjatī"ti.

## Translated:

"Bhikkhus, it is possible for anyone who regards Nibbāna to be blissful to get to Anuloma Khanti. After getting to Anuloma Khanti, it's possible to get to Sammattaniyāma. After getting to Sammattaniyāma, it's possible to realize ANY magga phala (sotāpatti, sakadāgāmi, anāgāmi, arahatta.)

- Thus, here one will realize that ultimate bliss is not in sporadic sensual pleasures. Rather it is to stop any possibility of future suffering by stopping the rebirth process and merging with Nibbāna.


## Summary

10. It is necessary to understand TilakkhanalPaṭicca Samuppāda/Four Noble Truths to become a Sotāpanna and start on the Noble Eightfold Path to attain the Arahanthood (if one understands one of them, one will simultaneously understand the other two).

- That understanding comes in two parts: (i) One will realize the dangers in remaining in the rebirth process, and (ii) One would see that ending the rebirth process and attaining Nibbāna is the ultimate bliss.
- Thus it is critical to understand what is meant by anicca, dukkha, anatta.
- Before discussing anicca, dukkha, anatta further, I wanted to point out the importance of those 3 words. Dukkha does not mean just any suffering that we experience now. Anicca and anatta cannot be just translated into two English words as impermanence and "no-self."
- There are deeper meanings in all three terms, AND they are related to each other.

11. Another point is that the translation of anicca as impermanence and anatta as "no-self" does not lead to a sensible translation of the suttas in \#3 and \#4 above.

- Sañkhāra are obviously impermanent. They arise and disappear. If the requirement to attain the Sotāpanna stage is to see the "impermanent nature of sańkhāra", then anyone would be a Sotāpanna!
- Can anyone still believe that "anicca" means "impermanence"? As the Buddha advised in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Kälām $\bar{a}$ (Kesamutti) Sutta (AN 3.65)" we should not blindly follow others.
- As I pointed out many times, impermanence is just a small part of "anicca nature." To understand the "anicca nature" one MUST understand Patticca Samuppāda, i.e., how those things that we perceive to bring us happiness eventually lead to suffering!
- In other words, all actions started with "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" will ALWAYS end up with "jāti paccay $\bar{a}$ jarā, maraṇa, soka-parideva-dukkha-domanassupāyasā sambhavan'ti" See, "Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda."


## Reference

12. A complete analysis of Anuloma Khanti and Sammattaniyāma concerning Tilakkhaṇa is in one of the original commentaries (Pațisambhidāmagga) included in the Tipitaka. See, "WebLink: suttacentral: Patisambhidāmagga - 3.9. Vipassanākathā (KN Ps 3.9)." There is no English translation at Sutta Central, but there is a Sinhala translation: "WebLink: suttacentral: 3.9 B̨6P

### 3.1.4.3 Anicca Nature - Not Possible to Overcome Suffering in This World

July 27, 2021; revised August 2, 2022
This world is of "anicca nature," meaning there is no refuge from suffering anywhere in this world. The translation of "anicca" as "impermanent" is wrong.

## Difference Between "Living a Moral Life" and "Pursuing Nibbāna"

1. When I hear the common statement, "all religions are the same; they teach you how to live a MORAL LIFE," I cringe. I think about all those people unaware of the Buddha's actual message. In particular, this is the mindset of those who follow "secular Buddhism."

- Most religions indeed teach how to live a moral life. And there is also evidence that atheists may be as moral as religious people are; see, "WebLink: PDF Download: Morality in everyday life-Science-2014Hofmann."
- However, Buddha Dhamma goes beyond that. The Buddha said that would not help in the LONG TERM no matter how well we live this life.
- Yet, to understand the deep message of the Buddha, living a moral life is necessary.


## The Perfect Mind of a Buddha

2. When a human mind loses greed (lobha) and anger (dosa), it gains wisdom (pañ̃̃̄. ) In other words, a mind not burdened with greed, anger, and ignorance can "see" things more clearly.

- We can verify that for ourselves. People do foolish/immoral things when greed takes over (think bribes, rapes, etc.) Anger can lead to even harsher offenses like bodily injuries or even murder.
- The tendency to be "triggered" by greed or anger will reduce with the cultivation of wisdom. Here wisdom (pañña $\bar{a}$ is to see the harsh consequences of such actions in this life and in the rebirth process.
- That wisdom is in the Four Noble Truths, Tilakkhaṇa, and Paṭicca Samuppāda.

3. Even without a Buddha appearing in the world, some people can SUPPRESS greed/anger and attain "higher mental states" or "jhānic states. As one gets to higher jhānic states, one may be able to perform supernormal tasks. One of such capabilities is to be able to "look back" at SOME of one's previous lives. But since they had not removed greed/anger permanently, those ancient yogis had only limited capabilities.

- But a true disciple of a Buddha would attain the same jhāna while PERMANENTLY removing defilements. Some would be able to attain many more supernormal powers as well. This is described in detail in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Samaññaphala Sutta (DN 2)." See "Whānic Experience in Detail Samaññaphala Sutta (DN 2)."
- It is also a good idea to read the following English translation of the whole sutta: "WebLink: suttacentral: The Fruits of Recluseship (DN 2)." It describes in detail the process of attaining Ariya jhānās via gradually getting rid of greed and anger by understanding the Four Noble Truths, Tilakkhana, and Paṭicca Samuppāda.

4. A Buddha is unique because he has cultivated pañña to the maximum possible and thus figured out how to REMOVE lobha and dosa completely without a trace. He gained that knowledge the night he attained Enlightenment or Buddhahood.

- With that perfect mind, a Buddha gained the highest supernormal powers that allowed him to personally verify the existence of 31 realms. He is able not only to see selected previous lives but as many as he wishes. Thus, he has provided detailed accounts of his past lives. Not only that, but he can also see HOW any given past life arose due to causes and conditions. That is how he figured out the Paticca Samuppāda process.
- That is a brief account of how a Buddha discovers that "this world" is very complex with 31 realms. Of course, we can see only two of them, the human and the animal realm.


## Buddha Was Able to Verify the "Anicca Nature"

5. There are many accounts in the Tipitaka where the Buddha visited various realms. There are also many accounts where Devas and Brahmas came to the Buddha to ask questions.

- For example, we all know about the account of Brahma Sahampati requesting the Buddha to teach his new-found Dhamma to the world. There is an account of how the king of a Deva realm, Sakka Deva, attained the Sotäpanna stage during one of his visits.
- An interesting account in the WebLink: suttacentral: Brahmanimantanika Sutta (Majjhima Nikaya 49) provides a good background on the "anicca nature" of the Brahma realms. Let us briefly discuss that account.


## Brahmanimantanika Sutta (MN 49)

6. The sutta describes that one day the Buddha, with his abhiññā powers, could see the following wrong idea came to Baka Brahma's mind. Now, all Brahmas in the Mahā Brahma realm consider Baka Brahma to be their leader and their "Creator."

- The wrong view of Baka Brahmā was the following: "My existence is of nicca nature, it is permanent, it is eternal, it is whole, it is imperishable. Here there's no more birth, growing old, dying, passing away, or being reborn. And there's no other higher release beyond this."
 acavanadhammà̇, idañhi na jāyati na jīyati na mīyati na cavati na upapajjati, ito ca panañnaì uttari nissaranam natthī'ti."
- Note that "dhuva" is the Pāli word for "permanent." The word "nicca" (as well as the opposite "anicca") CANNOT be translated to ANY language as a single word.
- As we have briefly discussed, "nicca nature" guarantees a suffering-free future. That means the recurring cyclic process of "birth, old age, death, birth, old age, death..." would be absent.

7. To correct the wrong view of the Baka Brahmā, vanishing from near the great sāl-tree in the Subhaga Grove at Ukkatṭhā, the Buddha appeared in that Brahma-world.

Baka Brahmā saw the Buddha coming, welcomed him, and told him: "Idañhi, mārisa, niccaím, idamं
 na cavati na upapajjāti. Ito ca panaññà் uttari nissaranam̀ natthī'ti."

Translated: "This existence, good sir, can be maintained to my liking; it is stable, it is eternal. It encompasses all, not liable to passing away; it is not born, nor does it age or die or pass away. No further release is necessary from this existence."

The Buddha replied: "You are ignorant. You say your existence can be to your liking, but that is not so. It is not permanent as you say..." (yatra hi nāma aniccamyeva samānaím niccanti vakkhati, addhuvaìyeva samānai் dhuvanti vakkhati).

- Again, it is important to note that the Pāli word for "impermanent" is "addhuva" (or opposite of "dhuva") and not "anicca."
- The Buddha added, "..although you say there is no need for a further release, there is indeed a permanent release you are not aware of" ("santañca panaññam uttari nissaraṇamं "natthaññam uttari nissaraṇan" ti vakkhatī'ti."

8. Baka Brahmā then replied: 'But, good sir, I say "nicca" because it is so, I say "stable" because it is stable, I say "eternal" because it is eternal. There is no more suffering,...I have escaped from the cravings for pathavi, āpo, tejo, vāyo dhātu..". (Meaning he has overcome taṇhā for sensual pleasures available in the kāma loka comprised of the four mahā bhūta).

- The Buddha told the Baka Brahma that he knew that Baka Brahma had transcended the kāma loka and was fully aware of his powers.
- The Buddha added that there were things in this world that Baka Brahma was not aware of. (1) There are higher Brahma realms, (2) Baka Brahma himself was in the higher Abhassara Brahma realm, died there, and was now reborn in this lower Brahma realm. The Buddha told the Baka Brahma: "you neither know nor see those higher realms, but I know and see them."

Here is the relevant part of the Sutta where the Buddha tells Baka Brahma: "Pathavim kho ahaim, brahme, pathavito abhiññāya yāvatā pathaviyā pathavattena ananubhūtaì tadabhiññāya pathavim nāpahosim, pathaviyā nāpahosim, pathavito nāpahosim, pathavim meti nāpahosim, pathavim nābhivadim...."
Translated: "Brahma, knowing pathavi to be just pathavi (devoid of life), knowing the true nature of pathavi, I do not take pathavi to be me either. (No attachment to things in the kāma loka made from the four mahā bhūta)."

- Then he repeated the same verse for the other three mahā bhūta of which the bodies of beings in $k \bar{a} m a$ loka are made of, i.e., āpo, tejo, vāyo.
- But that itself is not enough to be free from suffering. One has to cleanse the "defiled consciousness" or "kamma viññāna." (That requires comprehension of the Four Noble Truths, Tilakkhana, and Paṭicca Samuppāda.)

9. The Buddha summarized it all in the following verse, which we discussed in the post "Pabhassara Citta, Radiant Mind, and Bhavañga": "Viññāạamim anidassanaì anantaì sabbato pabhaì, taì pathaviyā pathavattenaananubhūtam், āpassa āpattena ananubhūtaì, tejassa tejattena ananubhūtam், vāyassavāyattena ananubhūtamं, bhūtānaì bhūtattena ananubhūtaím, devānaì devattenaananubhūtaì, pajāpatissa pajāpatittena ananubhūtaì, brahmānaì brahmattenaananubhūtaì, ābhassarānaì ābhassarattena ananubhūtaì, subhakiṇhānaì subhakiṇhānaì subhakinhhattena ananubhūtaì, vehapphalānaì vehapphalattena ananubhūtaì, abhibhussa abhibhuttena ananubhūtà̀, sabbassa sabbattena ananubhūtaì.."

Translated: "Viññāna is unseen, infinite, and leads to the rebirth process for all. With viññāna (defiled consciousness), one cannot comprehend the real nature of pathavi, āpo, tejo, vāyo, bhūta, deva, pajapati brahma, abhassara brahma, subhakinha brahma, vehapphala brahma, etc., i.e., everything in this world (sabba)."

- Also, see "Bhūta and Yathābhūta - What Do They Really Mean."

10. Then, the Buddha concluded: 'Thus, Brahmā, I am not equal with you. I am indeed higher in knowledge."

- The Baka Brahma then challenged the Buddha, saying that he would disappear, and If the Buddha is of higher knowledge, try to find him. But he was unable to hide from the Buddha.
- Then the Buddha said, "Now I am vanishing from you, Brahmā. Find me if you can." Of course, Baka Brahma could not find the Buddha and thus had to concede defeat.

That is the essence of that long sutta relevant to this discussion.

## Summary

11. Baka Brahma thought he had overcome all suffering when he transcended the kāma loka.

- But he was unaware that his existence - even though very long - was not permanent. There are higher Brahma realms with even longer lifetimes and still not permanent. Even more importantly, he could still be born in an apaya in the future.
- Thus, any existence in the 31 realms is of anicca nature. Anicca nature inevitably leads to dukkha (suffering.) Thus any efforts seeking release from suffering WITHIN this world of 31 realms are useless, which is the third characteristic, anatta nature. There is no refuge from suffering anywhere in this world!
- Therefore, those three characteristics of this world (anicca, dukkha, anatta) are interrelated. We will discuss those connections in the next few posts.


### 3.1.4.4 Dukkha in Tilakkhaṇa Is a Characteristic - Not Dukkha Vedanā

August 16, 2021

## Dukkha - An Inherent Characteristic of This World and Not the Dukkha Vedanā

1. The most misunderstood aspect about Tilakkhana (anicca, dukkha, anatta) is the idea that dukkha means the "suffering that we experience." Most meditation programs focus on the physical discomforts during a session. That is a complete misunderstanding. We need to focus on the "dukkha nature" of this world.

- A "lakkhana" means an intrinsic "characteristic" or a "quality." For example, the "WebLink: suttacentral: Lakkhana Sutta (DN 30)" describes the 31 unique qualities/characteristics of a Buddha.
- Someone may live a happy life for many years. Yet, old age and eventual death is an intrinsic lakkhaṇa of any life. Even though that person may not be suffering right now, they WILL face suffering without any doubt.
- Therefore, the "dukkha lakkhana" refers to one of the 3 intrinsic characteristics (Tilakkhana) of Nature, i.e., of this world.
- Before you get all pessimistic about Buddha Dhamma, the Buddha also explained how to get out of that cycle of suffering. But we need first to understand the "dukkha nature" of this world. To solve a problem, one first needs to realize that there is a problem and then find its root causes. Only then will one be able to remove those root causes and eliminate the problem!


## Anything In This World Has Those Three Characteristics!

2. In recent previous posts, we discussed the fact EVERYTHING in this world (i.e., not only living beings) has those 3 characteristics. HOWEVER, we will be subjected to suffering ONLY IF we attach to those things. In other words, pañcakkhandha has the dukkha lakkhaṇa, but we will be subjected to suffering ONLY DUE TO pañcupādānakkhandhā, a tiny fraction of pañcakkhandha that we attach to. See "Anicca and Anatta - Two Characteristics of the World" for discussion and sutta references.

- Many more suttas state the same in different ways; see Ref. 1 and Ref. 2 below.

3. Think about that carefully. Anything in this world has the dukkha (and anicca and anatta) characteristics "built-in."

- There is no way to avoid future suffering as long as one uses those 6 internal sensory faculties to "enjoy" the 6 types of external entities with greed, hate, and ignorance of the Noble Truths!
- However, giving up cravings for worldly things is hard to do. It would be impossible without knowing HOW and WHY suffering would be the result.
- That is why it is essential to understand the Four Noble Truths, Tilakkhana, and Paṭicca Samuppäda. They are interrelated and explain HOW and WHY such attachments lead to future suffering.
- Here is an analogy. An alcoholic will not be able to give up drinking without fully comprehending HOW and WHY alcohol consumption leads to suffering.


## This World Is "Anchored on Suffering"

4. The primary message of the Buddha is that there is unimaginable suffering in the rebirth process among the 31 realms. Most births are in the four lowest realms (ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a} s$ ), where suffering dominates any temporary relief.

- As long as there is existence in this world of 31 realms, that existence WILL encounter both sukha and dukkha.
- However, since living beings are tempted to engage in akusala/pāpa kamma, most rebirths are in the apāyās. We have discussed this "vast imbalance" as pointed out by the Buddha in many suttas. We discussed a few of them in the post "Introduction - What is Suffering?"

5. That is why the Buddha said, "Мaccunā pihito loko,dukkhe loko patittthito; Taṇhāya uddito loko,jarāya parivārito" "ti. See, "WebLink: suttacentral: Pihita Sutta (SN 1.68)."

Translated: "The world is inhabited by death, the world is anchored on suffering; Craving/attachment has trapped the world, it is enveloped by decay and old age."

- A series of short suttas (SN 1.61 through SN 1.81) provides the basis for deeper suttas in Samyutta Nikāya. Just read through those starting with the "WebLink: suttacentral: Nāma Sutta (SN 1. 61)."
- We can end that "long-term suffering" by understanding the root causes for births among the 31 realms. In particular, births in the apāyās are caused by immoral deeds (akusala kamma) done while seeking sensory pleasures.


## Not Possible to Reach a State with "No Suffering" in This World

6. Understanding the Three Characteristics (Tilakkhaṇa) helps to understand the Four Noble Truths.

- The Nature of this world is such that no matter how hard we try, it is not possible to get to a place free of suffering.
- Let us start with the assumption that there is no rebirth process. Some people have made enough money not only to sustain their families but to even fund the economy of a small country for a year! But would they not be subjected to suffering? We all get old and die one day!
- No matter how successful one becomes, that cannot be said to have led to a "state free of suffering."
- Those people who commit suicide hope that their suffering will end at death! Unfortunately, that is not the case either. Rebirth is inevitable for anyone below the Arahant stage, and births in the apāy $\bar{a} s$ are possible for anyone who has not at least started to understand the Four Noble Truths, Tilakkhana, and Pațicca Samuppāda. That is why one should not waste any time and try to understand them!


## Understanding "True Suffering" - It Is in the Rebirth Process

7. in the post "Rebirth - Connection to Suffering in the First Noble Truth"" we discussed references in the Tipiṭaka that MOST rebirths are in the four lowest realms (apāyās.) We can only see the suffering in one of them, the animal realm.

- The Buddha has discussed, in detail, the types of suffering in the other three apāyās. For example, in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Bālapandita Sutta (MN 129)" and "WebLink: suttacentral: Devadūta Sutta (MN 130)" the Buddha explains, in detail, the kind of suffering encountered in various lower realms.
- English translation of the first one: "WebLink: suttacentral: The Foolish and the Astute (MN 129)." That sutta explains that a person who engages in immoral activities ("bālo" or a "fool") can expect the consequences (kamma vipāka) both in this life and in future existences in the apāyās. The account of the experiences in the niraya (lowest realm) is terrifying.

8. A related sutta is the "WebLink: suttacentral: Pāyāsi Sutta (DN 23)." It is about the wrong views that there is no rebirth process, etc. See the English translation there: "WebLink: suttacentral: With Pāyāsi (DN 23)." For those who have doubts about the validity of the rebirth process or the existence of apāyās, it is a good idea to read the above suttās.

- As mentioned in the first post, "Buddha Dhamma - Noble Truths, Paticca Samuppāda, Tilakkhana," in this series of posts we discuss anicca, dukkha, anatta with the focus on the summary statement, "aniccam khayatṭhena dukkham bhayatthena anattā asārakat!̣henäti." It can be stated as follows:
- "Anything in this world (rūpa, vedanā, sañña, sañkhāra, viññāna) is of anicca nature because one's hopes for enjoying them will only lead to one's demise ("aniccam khayatthena.") It will eventually lead to sufferings that one should be afraid of ("dukkham bhayatthena.") Therefore, such cravings/efforts are unfruitful and will make one helpless in the rebirth process ("anatt $\bar{a}$ asārakatthenāti. ")
- One would not become serious about learning Buddha Dhamma until realizing the unimaginable suffering associated with the rebirth process!


## What Is Nibbāna?

9. A key point here is that there are many instances where one can experience "periods of happiness" even for long times. Life is mostly of "sensual pleasures" in the 6 Deva realms. In the 20 Brahma realms, it is mostly "jhānic pleasures" that they experience. Even some humans experience high levels of "sensual pleasures" for most of their lives.

- However, all those "periods of happiness" or "pleasures" are VERY SHORT in the time scale of the rebirth process, which is effectively infinite. See, "Infinity - How Big Is It?"
- Furthermore, all humans, Devas, Brahmas will end up in the 4 lowest realms unless they get to the Sotāpanna stage!
- Without a Buddha, we would be totally unaware of this issue of the rebirth process AND the fact that births in the apāyās are much more frequent than births in the "good realms."


## Nibbāna Is About Cessation of Suffering

10. This is why the First Noble Truth is about the CESSATION of suffering and NOT about a kind of happiness or even jhānic experiences. Since NOTHING in this world exists in Nibbāna, all vedan $\bar{a}$ (dukkha or sukha, AS WE KNOW) are absent in Nibbāna.

- Even though suttas discuss Nibbāna as "Nibbānic bliss," the term "bliss" indicates the bliss associated with the TOTAL absence of suffering. It is indeed bliss to be free of suffering forever!
- The closest analogy is the following. Suppose someone has had a migraine headache for years. If it goes away one day, they would be free of that horrible suffering. That would be a great relief to get rid of all that suffering.
- We should think of Nibbāna the same way, not as a paradise with sensual or jhānic pleasures. We can only say for certain that there is not even a trace of suffering in Nibbāna. See, "Nibbāna "Exists," but Not in This World."


## References

1. 12 suttas are beginning with the "WebLink: suttacentral: Ajihattānicca Sutta (SN 35.1)" and ending with the "WebLink: suttacentral: Bāhirānattātītānāgata Sutta (SN 35.12)" state that our 6 internal sensory faculties (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, mind) AND the 6 types of $r \bar{u} p a$ experienced by those faculties all have the Three Characteristics (Tilakkhaṇa.)

- For example, they say, "cakkhu, sota, ghāna, jivhā, kāya, mano" all have the anicca, dukkha, anatta qualities or characteristics. That means all six sensory faculties have "built-in" anicca, dukkha, anatta nature.
- The same is true for the 6 types of external rūpa that we experience: rūpa, sadda, gandha, rasa, photṭhabba, dhammā.
- But we will be subjected to suffering only if we attach to them!

2. There are 9 suttas "WebLink: suttacentral: Aniccādisuttanavaka (SN 43-51)" that state "everything (all) in this world is of anicca, dukkha, anatta nature."

- MANY other suttas state the same in different ways: 138 suttas say the five aggregates all have anicca, dukkha, anatta nature: " 138 results for vedanā AND viñ̃n̄̄nain AND aniccā̄." Of course, the five aggregates encompass everything in this world.
- To state the same differently, five aggregates (pañcakkhandha) are all "subject to suffering." Even an Arahant is subject to suffering until the death of the physical body (Parinibbāna.) The Buddha himself had bodily ailments.
- However, all that suffering ends at Parinibbāna.

3. Each person creates their own future suffering from their own actions based on (abhi)sañkhāra that arise due to the ignorance of this "big picture."

- When a mind grasps this "big picture," one attains the Sotāpanna stage. No matter how strong temptation is, it will NEVER trigger the mind to commit "apāyagāmi actions" (those lead to rebirth in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a} s)$. That is the meaning of "dassanena pahātabba"" or "remove defilements with clear vision" that we briefly mentioned in the first post in this series: "Buddha Dhamma - Noble Truths, Paticca Samuppāda, Tilakkhana."
- That is the same as getting to the first step in the Noble Eightfold Path, Sammā Ditthi.


### 3.1.4.5 Attachment to Things with Dukkha Lakkhaṇa Leads to Dukkha

## August 23, 2021

Dukkha usually means suffering. That is dukkha vedan $\bar{a}$. But things that appear to bring happiness have the "dukkha lakkhana." The Buddha explained that in the First Noble Truth, Dukkha Sacca (the Truth about suffering.)

## Dukkha Sacca (Truth About Suffering)

1. We encounter the word "dukkha" in different contexts:
(i) Dukkha vedanā (a feeling that can range from unpleasantness to painful feelings such as being burned or cut by a knife.
(ii) Dukkha lakkhana is a characteristic of suffering) in Tilakkhaṇa and NOT dukkha vedanā.
(iii) Dukkha Sacca (First Noble Truth), which is again not dukkha vedanā but to point out that dukkha lakkhaña is inherent in this world, i.e., suffering CANNOT be avoided (in the long run) if one attaches to things in this world. Since we tend to attach to "mind-pleasing things," Dukkha Sacca says that "suffering is hidden in those "mind-pleasing things." This is not easy to understand unless one spends time to understand.
(iv) Dukkhakkhandha (which includes all types of suffering that can result from acting with avijjā due to the ignorance of Dukkha Sacca. Patticca Samuppāda describes how that happens. The Paticca Samuppäda sequence ends with the statement, "Evametassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa samudayo hoti" or "that is how the whole mass of suffering arises." As we know, "khandha" means "aggregate."

## Different Types of Dukkha Vedanā

2. Vedan $\bar{a}$ is what one feels: happy/pleasant, sad/unpleasant, or neutral feelings (sukha, dukkha, or adukkhamasukha vedanā).

- Dukkha vedanā can be of several different types. Some are felt by the physical body (like injuries or sicknesses.) Some others are mind-made (like depression), and these are "samphassa $j \bar{a}$ vedanā" (vedanā generated by "sañ"). As we know "sañ" means "greed, anger, ignorance." An Arahant feels the first kind but not the second. See, "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Samsāra)."
- That second category can arise due to our personal biases. For example, unpleasant feelings may arise when we see someone we dislike (say person X.) But X could be a friend of a third person (Y), and pleasant feelings may arise in Y upon seeing X. Therefore, such "mind-made feelings" depend on the situation. If we ever become friendly with X , then after that, when we see X , pleasant feelings may arise in us too.


## Dukkha Lakkhaṇa (characteristic of suffering) in Tilakkhaṇa

3. Dukkha lakkhana is not a feeling. It is an intrinsic characteristic or quality that is "hidden" in worldly things. It is a bit difficult to understand at first.

- Let us look at a couple of simple examples to get an idea.
- Glass has the "characteristic of breaking," i.e., it can break if dropped on a hard surface. But until it breaks, a glass only has the "characteristic of breaking."
- A drink with a bit of poison in it has the "characteristic of inducing sickness or even death." But one will be subjected to sickness/death only if one drinks it.
- In the same way, worldly things (especially those mind-pleasing things") have the "characteristic of suffering." But one will be subjected to such suffering only if one attaches to them. Let us take a simple example. Suppose we hear that person X has died. We will become sad and suffer only if X is someone close to us, say a parent. If we don't even know who X is, we will not suffer hearing that X has died. The stronger the attachment to X , the stronger the distress/sadness (dukkha vedana $\bar{a}$ ) that we feel.
- Everything in this world has dukkha lakkhaṇa, as we have discussed. There are two aspects to this:
(i) We are born with a body that has dukkha lakkhaṇa. We have to live with whatever dukkha that comes to it, for example, getting injured or sick),
(ii) People (friends, relatives, etc.) and things (houses, cars, etc.) have dukkha lakkhaṇa too. We can limit suffering due to that by having attachment to fewer people and things. However, losing attachment comes naturally with understanding and should not be forced. One MUST pay attention to one's responsibilities too. We will discuss this later.
- We started discussing dukkha lakkhaṇa in the previous post, "Dukkha in Tilakkhana Is a Characteristic - Not Dukkha Vedanā." We will go into details in upcoming posts.


## Dukkha Sacca (First Noble Truth)

4. Dukkha Sacca (First Noble Truth) points out unimaginable suffering in the rebirth process. Rebirth can happen among 31 realms (including the human and animal realms.) We can see the suffering of animals and also in humans. But the suffering is much harsher in the other 3 lower realms.

- Dukkha Sacca also explains that the root cause of suffering is greed for (or attachment to) worldly pleasures. There is suffering hidden in sensory pleasures. Only a Buddha can discover that hidden suffering and can explain how such suffering takes place via Paṭicca Samuppāda.. In simple terms, that can be stated as follows:

We tend to do immoral deeds to acquire such pleasures, and their consequences will bear fruit mostly at later times, in many cases in future lives.

- Only a Buddha with a highly cleansed mind can figure out hidden dangers (suffering) in sensory pleasures. Like a fish can not see the hidden suffering in a bait, we cannot see the suffering hidden in sensory pleasures unless explained by a Buddha.


## Physical Suffering and Death - Hard to Understand?

5. Some people seem to pretend they don't understand suffering. Others seem to think they are not going to die. To quote from a discussion forum: "Birth and death are only a view of self." Are these people hallucinating? This kind of thing happens when people "bury their heads in the sand," i.e., try to avoid a particular situation by pretending that it does not exist.

- Suffering is real. Try pinching yourself. Does not that hurt? Imagine the suffering when someone dies of a bullet wound or a knife attack.
- Even though animal videos like the following are viral and are made for entertainment, they provide vivid examples of unimaginable suffering experienced by animals in the wild. They are not killed and eaten; rather, they are eaten while still alive. Imagine being subjected to that kind of suffering!
WebLink: youtube: 15 Wild Animals Hunting Mercilessly!!
- All those animals had been humans in the past. Furthermore, most people living today will be born in the animal realm in the future.
- Even though we cannot see the unimaginable suffering in the other 3 lower realms, we can at least see the harsh suffering in the animal realm. Of course, there is suffering in the human realm too, but animals in the wild undergo much more suffering.
- There are no "old animals" in the wild; as soon as they start slowing down, they are eaten by stronger animals.


## Discovery of Paṭicca Samuppāda Sequence

6. The above video explains what dukkha vedanā (specifically, bodily suffering) is.

- But such dukkha vedanā do not arise without causes. If the past lives of such an animal are traced back, it would be possible to see that there was a corresponding "bad kamma" committed, which resulted in such a bad outcome.
- In fact, that is how the Buddha figured out the steps in Pațicca Samuppāda. Bad actions (based on abhisañkhāra) are done with avijja and lead to future existence (bhava) and births (jāti). He figured that out by tracing back previous lives. That discovery happened during the night of his Enlightenment. Let us briefly discuss that.
- He first attained the "pubbe nivāsānussati ñanna" to look back at previous human births. Here, "pubbe" means "previous," "nivasa" means "house," and "anussati" means "recall", i.e., the knowledge to recall successive residences of a given gandhabba. In a given human bhava, a gandhabba could have many different "houses," i.e., physical bodies. Thus with this $\tilde{n} \bar{a} n a$, one could look at human births in the past, in multiple human bhava going back to very long times.

7. The second ñāṇa, cutupapāda ñanna, extended Buddha's capability to see all previous rebirths in any realm for any living being. Here cutupapāda (cuti means the end of a bhava and upapāda means birth) refers to all types of rebirths in various realms (niraya, animal, deva, etc.) in the past.

- That allowed him to clearly see how different types of kamma lead corresponding existences (bhava) and births ( $j \bar{a} t i$ ) within them, i.e., how "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" lead to "bhava" and "jāti" ending with "jāti paccayā jarā, marana, soka-parideva-dukkha-domanassupāyasā sambhavan'ti."
- With that knowledge, he then attained the third and final "āsavakkhaya ñāna." That clarifies how cravings ("āsava," another word for attachment) lead to future rebirths. We generate sañkhāra with avijjā because of tanhā/āsava.
- It is the āsavakkhaya ñāṇa that led to the Buddhahood; see, "The Way to Nibbāna - Removal of Āsavā" and "Antarābhava and Gandhabba" for further details.
- The Buddha himself described that process in various suttas; for example, AN 8.11, MN 4, MN 85, and MN36. The "WebLink: suttacentral: Verañja Sutta (AN 8.11)" is a short one. The English translation at Sutta Central: "WebLink: suttacentral: At Verañja (AN 8.11)."


## The essence of Buddha Dhamma - Suffering Is Hidden in Sensory Pleasures

8. Average humans are astonished to hear that the root cause of suffering is attachment to all those mindpleasing things they value so much.

- It is hard to "see" this because there is a time lag between causes and their results (effects). While some kamma bring their vipāka during the same life, most kamma vipāka materialize later in life or even in future births.
- However, if one spends time and carefully examines the teachings of the Buddha, one will be able to "see" the truth of that statement: 'there is unimaginable suffering hidden in sensory pleasures." That is a bit easier to see for immoral actions based on such attachments (e.g., killing, stealing, taking bribes, etc.)
- In fact, for those engaging in such immoral deeds (and those who do not believe in the rebirth process), it is much harder to grasp this deep Dhamma. Of course, if one has done such "bad kamma" in the past it does not matter. We know that Angulimāla killed almost 1000 people and still was able to attain Arahanthood within weeks of meeting the Buddha.


### 3.1.4.6 <br> How Does Anicca Nature Lead to Dukkha?

August 30, 2021
Both physical rupa (objects we see, sounds, particulates that lead to odors, physical food, objects we touch), AND our memories/hopes based on past, present, and future physical rūpa (i.e., rūpakkhandha) have the anicca nature. Craving/attachment for either kind will eventually lead to suffering (dukkha.) However, giving up such attachments must come through naturally via comprehension of Noble Truths/Tilakkhaṇa/Paṭicca Samuppāda.

## Rūpakkhandha and Physical Rūpa

1. As we have discussed, rūpakkhandha consists of our MENTAL IMPRESSIONS of such physical rūpa.

- But suttas may refer to "rūpa" for either kind. But depending on the context, it is not hard to figure out which kind it is or whether the reference is to both kinds.
- Both physical rūpa and rūpakkhandha have anicca, dukkha, anatta characteristics.
- But rūpakkhandha originates due to physical rūpa.
- Note that most English translations (including Sutta Central translations) do not make this distinction. They simply don't understand the difference!


## How Did the Buddha Characterize Physical Rūpa?

2. Any "physical $r \bar{u} p a$ " has a finite lifetime AND undergoes deformation/stress during existence!

The word rūpa is DEFINED in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Khajjanīya Sutta (SN 22.79)" as follows: "Kiñca, bhikkhave, rūpaì vadetha? Ruppatīti kho, bhikkhave, tasmā 'rūpan'ti vuccati. Kena ruppati? Sìtenapi ruppati, uṇhenapi ruppati, jighacchāyapi ruppati, pipāsāyapi ruppati, ḍamsamakasavātātapasarīsapasamphassenapi ruppati. Ruppatīti kho, bhikkhave, tasmā 'rūpan'ti vuccati."

Translated: "Bhikkhus, why do we call it 'form'? 'It is subject to deformation/stress,' bhikkhus, therefore it is called form. Deformed by what? Deformed/stressed by cold, deformed/stressed by heat, deformed/stressed by hunger, deformed/stressed by thirst, deformed/stressed by flies, mosquitoes, wind, Sunlight, serpents, etc. 'It is deformed/stressed,' bhikkhus, therefore it is called form (rūpa)."

- Of course, the above verse specifically refers to our physical bodies. But characteristics of unexpected deformation or change hold for any $r \bar{u} p a$.
- Therefore, the "bodies" of Devas and Brahmas are also subjected to the same principle. Even inert rūpa like a house or a car is subject to the same principle. They all can undergo unexpected change during existence, and then death is inevitable!
- Rūpakkhandha also has an anicca nature. For example, craving memories of past experiences with rūpa also leads to dukkha.


## "Yad Aniccaì taì Dukkhaì" - Anicca Nature Leads to Dukkha

3. The following verse embeds many foundational aspects of Buddha Dhamma: "Rūpaín aniccaim. Yadaniccaì tain dukkhain; yaì dukkhaì tadanattā; yadanattā taì 'netaì mama, nesohamasmi, na meso attā'ti evametaỉ yathābhūtaì sammappaññāya datṭhabbaí" This verse appears in many suttas. See " 20 results for "yadaniccam AND tam AND dukkham.""

- We will be focusing on that whole verse in this series of posts: "Basic Framework of Buddha Dhamma."
- This post is on the part of that verse: "Yadaniccain tain dukkhaỉ" or "Yad aniccain taim dukkhamं" or "whatever is of anicca nature will lead suffering."

4. Our minds get attached to "mind-pleasing $r \bar{u} p a$ " in this world with a "nicca view." We think that by accumulating "material wealth," we can become happy. We have both wrong ditṭhi and saññā that such rūpa can keep us away from suffering. See, "Vipallāsa (Ditthi, Saññ̄a, Citta) Affect Sañkhāra." We will discuss more on that in this series.

- But as mentioned above, the Buddha pointed out that this whole world is of anicca nature. All rūpa change unexpectedly during existence, and they all end up in destruction. For example, we cannot keep our body parts in good condition as we age. Eventually, the whole body dies.
- Science has confirmed that too for inert things as well. Science agrees that NOTHING in this world is eternal. Furthermore, the Second Law of Thermodynamics says that things tend to become "disorderly even during existence."


## A Simple Analogy

5. Little children take immense satisfaction and joy building sandcastles. They spend hours building them and enjoy looking at the finished product.

- However, their joy turns to sadness if a strong wave or a running dog destroys that sandcastle. They may even go home happily but would be sad to see their sandcastle destroyed when they come back the next day.
- This is why adults don't build sandcastles. As that same child grows, understanding slowly takes place that "building sandcastles is a waste of time" even though a "pleasurable activity."
- Yet, fully grown and intelligent adults do the same all their lives. They work tirelessly in hopes of a better life. But only at the moment of death do they realize that all those efforts have gone to waste. Furthermore, if they had cultivated an "immoral mindset" by engaging in immoral thoughts and activities, they are not only going to be disappointed but could be subjected to much suffering in future lives.
- A sandcastle is of anicca nature. Getting attached to it is inevitably going to lead to disappointment (dukkha). Thus engaging in that activity is unfruitful and non-beneficial to anyone (anatta.) We will discuss "anatta" in detail soon.


## Connection to the Second Law of Thermodynamics

6. The Second Law of Thermodynamics confirms the unstable/unpredictable (not only impermanent) nature of $r \bar{u} p a$. You may skip this part. But it is about the tendency of worldly things towards disorder. So, it is not hard to understand.

- The second law of thermodynamics says that the disorder of any isolated system always increases. In simple terms, that means "disorder increases," and we need to make an effort to maintain order.
- That, in essence, is a manifestation of the anicca nature! See, "Second Law of Thermodynamics is Part of Anicca!"
- A simple way to think of the second law of thermodynamics is that a room will invariably become messy and disorderly with time if not cleaned and tidied regularly. You have to make an effort to clean the room, and that is part of "sañkhāra dukkha." See, "Introduction -2 - The Three Categories of Suffering."
- Those who only focus on the "impermanent" nature miss this critical part. Furthermore, such sañkhāra often become abhisañkhāra and lead to much more suffering with "bad births." This is why anicca means much more than "impermanent nature."


## Mental Aggregates Are Also of Anicca Nature!

7. All those suttas referred to in \#3, and MANY more, state that all five aggregates (r $\bar{u} p a$, vedan $\bar{a}$, sañña $\bar{a}$, sañkhāra, viñ̃̃āna) are of anicca nature. We cannot maintain any of those to our expectations OVER LONG TIMES.

- For example, the "WebLink: suttacentral: Yadanicca Sutta (SN 22.15)" states (in addition to rūpa), "Vedanā aniccā. Yadaniccaì taì dukkhaì; yaì dukkhaì tadanattā; yadanattā taì 'netaì mama, nesohamasmi, na meso attā'ti evametaì yathābhūtaì sammappaññāya daṭthabbaì. Saññā aniccā ...pe...saṅkhārā aniccā ...viññāṇamं aniccàm.."
- It is foolish to translate "Vedanā aniccā, saññā aniccā, saṅkhārā aniccā, viñnāạaain aniccaỉ" as "Feeling is impermanent ...Perception is impermanent ...Choices are impermanent ...Consciousness is impermanent."
- Does a Buddha need to arise in the world to teach people that all those are not permanent? Even the dumbest person would see that none of those are permanent!
- They are not only impermanent, but attachment to them WILL lead to suffering! Of course, part of that suffering is when something of liking is destroyed. But the DEEPER POINT is that our actions to keep them the way we like lead to kamma generation and, eventually, bad births.
- This is why it is important to understand how (abhi)sañkhāra generation leads to (undesired) births starting with "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra." We will discuss that in \#10 below.


## Obvious Contradictions in SuttaCentral Translations

8. When we include the next part of the verse, it reads, "Vedana aniccā. Yad aniccain taim dukkhaim" According to the incorrect translations, that means, "Feeling is impermanent. What's impermanent is suffering." See the translations at Sutta Central in the above link. Not only at Sutta Central, but many translations have those obvious contradictions.

- While the ending of sukha vedanā may lead to suffering, the ending of dukkha vedanā, rather, leads to happiness, like in the case of getting rid of a bad headache. To put it another way, the impermanence of a dukkha vedanā WILL NOT lead to suffering.
- Just because vedanā are impermanent, that DOES NOT necessarily lead to suffering! In some cases, it leads to happiness.

9. Again, that should be obvious to any person! So, why do these translators make such huge mistakes?

- I guess that they don't really try to understand the suttas. They just mechanically translate using the "standard incorrect English translations" for key Pāli words like anicca and anatta (as impermanent and no-self) without even bothering to see whether they make any sense!
- Those same people complain about "Waharaka's interpretations." But simple and obvious issues like these do not need any "interpretation." They should be self-evident (at least once explained)!
- I have pointed out several such obvious issues. When are these SERIOUS issues going to be corrected? At some point, enough people will hopefuilly start asking questions; they will have to correct these glaring inconsistencies.


## Paṭicca Samuppāda Explains How Anicca Nature Leads to Dukkha

10. ALL types of abhisañkhāra (that can have kammic consequences, especially rebirth) belong to 3 categories: apuññäbhisañkhāra, puññābhisañkhāra, āneñjäbhisañkhāra. All those are sañkhāra generated via "avijjā paccayā sañkhārā" as we discussed in the previous post "Anicca Nature, the First Noble Truth, and Paticca Samuppāda" and "Sañkhāra - What It Really Means."

- In other words, the akusala-mūla Pațicca Samuppāda (that leads to suffering) process is operational for ALL humans who have not comprehended the Four Nobel Truths, Tilakkhana, and Paṭicca Samuppāda.
- Kamma generation takes place starting with "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra." Thus the need to fully understand the two posts mentioned above.
- Therefore, no matter how moral a person is, they will not stop future suffering until comprehending the Four Nobel Truths, Tilakkhaṇa, and Paṭicca Samuppāda.
- Furthermore, the generation of those types of abhisañkhāra is due to an innate view/perception of a "nicca nature." That is avijjā!
- It is impossible to make any more progress until one understands these critical aspects. Please feel free to ask questions because this is critically important!

11. Let me try to make the point in another way. The akusala-mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda (that leads to suffering) will be operational for anyone who does not comprehend the Four Nobel Truths, Tilakkhana, and Paticca Samuppāda.

- To put it another way, until one understands that the true nature of this world is anicca nature (and NOT nicca nature), the rebirth process among the realms in the kāma loka, rūpa loka, and arūpa loka will continue.
- As we have discussed many times, the problem is that MOST of those rebirths will not be higher realms (at or above the human realm) but will be in the apāyās (the 4 lowest realms.)

12. This is why the Buddha explained, "aniccain khayat!thena dukkhain bhayatthena anatta asārakaṭ! henāti."

- As we discussed, that means (attachment to) anything of anicca nature will only lead to the demise of one's moral qualities ("aniccam khayat!thena.")
- It will eventually lead to sufferings that one should be afraid of ("dukkham bhayatthena.") Therefore, such cravings are unfruitful and will make one helpless in the rebirth process ("anatt $\bar{a}$ asārakaṭ!henāti.")
- Please read the discussion of two posts back in "Buddha Dhamma - Noble Truths, Paticca Samuppāda, Tilakkhana" I suggest printing these posts and keeping them ready to be consulted.
- We will discuss the third aspect of the anatta nature ("anattā asārakatthena") in upcoming posts. That means "craving things of anicca nature leads to dukkha, thus such cravings (and efforts based on such cravings) are in vain/not beneficial."


## Nibbāna - The Absence of Suffering

13. Most people don't even think in terms of such "long-term" happiness or the "absence of suffering." They get into the "rat race" and keep working hard to "earn money to enjoy life and have a happy retirement."

- That is especially true for those who believe that the physical body defines a person, i.e., mental phenomena arise in the brain. So, when the brain dies together with the physical body, that is the end of "me." There is nothing to worry about an "afterlife."
- The other extreme is the wrong view of an eternal soul or àtman. There is a permanent state of happiness (or misery in hell.)
- The Buddha taught the "middle way." A living being exists based on the causes and conditions that led to it. The arising of existence due to causes and conditions is explained in detail in Pațicca Samuppāda (conventionally translated as "Conditional Arising." That translation leaves out the relevance of causes, and thus it is better to use the Pāli term.)
- How can someone decide which of those 3 views is correct? It is always up to each individual to decide that. But it is wise to spend time examining the basis of each of those "theories carefully."
- The Buddha never asked anyone to accept his teachings based on "blind faith." He asked the bhikkhus to raise questions about any doubts or knotty issues. For example, see "WebLink: suttacentral: Kālāma Sutta or Kesamutti Sutta (AN 3.65)."


## Proposed Draconian Laws in Sri Lanka

14. In this series of posts, I will try to provide a systematic analysis based solely on the Tipitaka. As far as I have examined, there are no contradictions with anything in the Tipitaka. I would be happy to discuss any logical objections if one is willing to discuss them rationally and logically.

- As I have pointed out, there is no point discussing Sanskrit texts or later commentaries such as Buddhaghosa's. See "Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga - A Focused Analysis" and "Preservation of the Buddha Dhamma."
- The second post, "Preservation of the Buddha Dhamma," discusses Buddha's admonition not to translate his teachings to Sanskrit.
- Unfortunately, now there is an effort within the Sri Lankan government to enforce such "Sanskrit-based" interpretations and to ban any other interpretation. They may ban printed publications in Sri Lanka but cannot shut down websites like this one.
- The main issue I have is the following: How do we know those on the "committee" overseeing this enforcement have a true understanding of Buddha Dhamma? Have they attained magga phala? If not, they have no real "authority."
- In the "WebLink: suttacentral: Mahāparinibbāna Sutta (DN 16)" the Buddha allowed anyone to declare magga phala if there is a need. If they do have such attainments, they need to publish that to build public confidence. However, if you ask them, they will admit that they do not have such attainments. Instead, it may turn out that they may be banning publications by people with magga phala!
- I hope that level-headed people in the government will stop this short-sighted process. See, "WebLink: PureDhamma: Proposed Tipitaka Conservation Bill in Sri Lanka."


### 3.1.4.7 Anatta is a Characteristic of the World, not About a "Self"

September 13, 2021
Anatta is a characteristic of this world, not about a "self." The translation of anatta as "no-self" is a serious error. Instead, it is Sakkāya Ditṭhi that deals with the issue of whether anything in this world can be/should be considered to be "mine."

## The Sense of a "Me" Is There Even Though There is no "Soul"

1. It is difficult to decide whether the word "self" means just a "sense of me" or a deeper "soul."

- That is why it is best to avoid using "self" in discussing "anatta/anattā."
- The Buddha denied a "soul" in Abrahamic religions or an "ātman" as in Hinduism. But he taught that the sense of a"me" is real and WILL BE THERE until one attains the Arahanthood.
- To avoid confusion, let us not use the word "self." We will use "me" for the "temporary self" and "soul" for an "everlasting self." The Buddha accepted the use of a temporary "me" but denied the existence of a permanent "soul/ātman."
- Now we all understand that "me" is DIFFERENT from a "soul." If someone thinks that "self" is the same as "soul," then the Buddha denied the existence of such a "self."
- I hope this point is crystal clear. Otherwise, we can get into many arguments wasting precious time.


## Even the Buddha Used the Word "Me"

2. As long as one lives in this world, it will be impossible not to use the words "me" and "I."

- Even the Buddha freely used the words "me" and "I" daily and even referred to previous births. He has given accounts of "his" previous lives. Such usage is not possible to avoid.
- Furthermore, even a living Arahant, for example, would have their own habits. Of course, they would not have any habits even remotely related to lobha, dosa, moha.
- For example, Ven. Mahā Monggallāna was a bit strict. One time he dragged a bhikkhu out of a gathering. Ven. Pilindavaccha addressed others with words like "vasala" ("one of low birth"), which was not due to anger but because of the way he was used to speaking. As long as one lives in this world, there are unique characteristics regarding physical appearance and how one speaks and thinks.
- This is why the Buddha rejected both extreme views:
(i) It is not correct to say that someone does not exist, since obviously a person is living and doing things in their own way.
(ii) It is also not correct to associate a "permanent soul" with any person. A "living-being" exists due to causes and conditions (Paṭicca Samuppäda) and will cease to be reborn in this suffering-filled world when avijj $\bar{a}$ is removed.
- However, the concept of anatta is not about a temporary or permanent "self." It is a characteristic of anything in this world (rūpa, vedanā, sañn̄̄a, sañkhārā, viññāna.)


## Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta - Three Characteristics

3. In recent posts, I cited many Tipiṭaka references that clearly state anicca, dukkha, anatta are 3 CHARACTERISTICS of this world. See, "Tilakkhana - Introduction."

- Furthermore, those 3 characteristics are related to each other via, "Yad aniccaím taim dukkhaí; yam dukkhaì tad anattā."
- The above verse says that anything that belongs to this world (rūpa, vedanā, sañ̃̄̄a, sañkhārā, viññāna) are ALL of anicca nature, and thus has dukkha nature; whatever is of dukkha nature has anatta nature.
- If one attaches to things of anicca nature, one will be subjected to dukkha. Because of that, ALL worldly things are not fruitful (anattā.)
- It should be quite clear that anatta/anattā is NOT about a "self" or "me."

4. That is succinctly stated in the verse, "Rūpaim (vedanā, sañ $\tilde{n} \bar{a}$, sañkhārā, viñnāna) atīt̄̄̄āgatapaccuppannam்aniccamं khayaṭthena dukkham bhayatṭhena anattā asārakatthenāti."

Translation: "Any rūpa ( or vedanā, sañ̃̄ā, sañkhārā, viññạ̄a) that ever existed will exist in the future, or that is being experienced now has the following 3 characteristics: Any such rūpa is of anicca nature because one's hopes for enjoying rūpa will only lead to one's demise ("aniccamं khayaṭthena.") It will eventually lead to sufferings that one should be afraid of ("dukkhamं bhayatthena.") Therefore, such cravings are unfruitful and will make one helpless in the rebirth process ("anattā asārakatṭthenāti.")

- We discussed that in a recent post: "Buddha Dhamma - Noble Truths, Paticca Samuppāda, Tilakkhana."

5. From the above verse, it is quite clear that anatta is a characteristic of not only our physical body, but ANY rūpa existing now, ever existed, or will exist in the future! That means anatta is a characteristic of the rūpa aggregate (rūpakkhandha.)

- Furthermore, as explained in that post, the anatta characteristic applies to all 5 five aggregates. As we have discussed, the five aggregates encompass "the whole world."
- Thus, anything in this world has the anatta characteristic!
- How can these translators say "anatta" means "no-self"?
- It is alarming to see the efforts in Sri Lanka to ban any interpretation of "anatta" other than "no-self." See, "Proposed Tipitaka Conservation Bill in Sri Lanka."


## Simple Examples

6. Little children take immense satisfaction and joy building sandcastles. They spend hours building them and enjoy looking at the finished product.

- However, their joy turns to sadness if a strong wave or a running dog destroys that sandcastle. They may even go home happily but would be sad to see their sandcastle destroyed when they come back the next day.
- This is why adults don't build sandcastles. As that same child grows, understanding slowly takes place that "building sandcastles is a waste of time" even though a "pleasurable activity."
- Yet, fully grown and intelligent adults do the same all their lives. They work tirelessly in hopes of a better life. But only at the moment of death do they realize that all those efforts have gone to waste. Furthermore, if they had cultivated an "immoral mindset" by engaging in immoral thoughts and activities, they are not only going to be disappointed but could be subjected to much suffering in future lives.
- A sandcastle is of anicca nature. Getting attached to it is inevitably going to lead to disappointment (dukkha). Thus engaging in that activity is unfruitful and non-beneficial to anyone (anatta.)

7. However, anatta nature means unfruitful (as in the above example) and dangerous.

- An alcoholic consumes alcohol because it gives him pleasure. But he has not comprehended that heavy drinking can lead to sicknesses and even death.
- Therefore, heavy consumption of alcohol is of anicca nature. It will lead to dukkha (suffering). Therefore, that activity is of an anatta nature.


## The Same Principle Applies to All Sense-Pleasing Activities

8. It is hard to believe first, but craving sensory pleasures is not unlike craving alcohol!

- The truth of the above statement can be seen only within the long-term rebirth process. This is why it is difficult for many people to understand the deeper aspects of Buddha Dhamma about suffering. In particular immoral activities seeking short-term pleasures WILL lead to much suffering in future rebirths.
- We discussed the example of \#6 above in "How Does Anicca Nature Lead to Dukkha?" As explained there, all five aggregates (rūpa, vedanā, saññā, sañkhāra, viññāna) are of anicca nature. Therefore, per \#3 above, all five aggregates are of the anatta nature too!
- That is specifically stated in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Yadanatt $\bar{a}$ Sutta (SN 22.17)": "Rūpaì, bhikkhave, anattā ...Vedanā anattā ...sañ̃̃̄a anattā ...sañkhārā anattā ...viññānaỉ anattā."
- That is why NONE of the things in this world (rūpa, vedanā, sañ̃n̄a, sañkhārā, viññāna) can be considered beneficial.

9. Here, it is important to realize that we accumulate kamm $\bar{a}$ (more correctly kammic energies) not only by our actions but also with speech and even thoughts (via $k \bar{a} y a, ~ v a c \bar{c}$, and mano sañkhāra.) See, "Sañkhāra What It Really Means."

- Furthermore, such kamma accumulation can be based on recalling past events or thinking about future events.
- And all those involve not only rūpa but associated vedanā, saññā, sañkhārā, viññāna. For example, one may recall a good time with friends in the past. That means he would recall who was present and what types of activities he enjoyed, and associated mental aspects.
- That is why the Buddha always referred to aggregates. For example, as we discussed, rūpakkhandha includes physical rūpa and our mental impressions of past and future rūpa. Similarly for vedanākkhandha, sañ̃n̄̄kkhandha, sañkhārakkhandha, viññānakkhandha.
- Therefore, in \#8 above, "R̄̄upaì, bhikkhave, anatt $\vec{a} "$ means any rūpa experienced in the past, experiencing now, or expected to experience in the future are ALL of anatta nature.


## Summary

10. The concept of anatta is not about personality, a self, or a "me."

- Anicca, dukkha, anatta are characteristics of anything belonging to this world. Thus, anatta nature applies to anything of this world!


### 3.1.4.s Anatta in Anattalakkhaṇa Sutta - Part 1

September 19, 2021; revised August 25, 2022

## Introduction

1. "WebLink: suttacentral: Anattalakkhana Sutta (SN 22.59)" was the second sutta delivered by the Buddha after his Enlightenment (attaining the Buddhahood.) He taught the first two suttas to the famous five ascetics. The first one, Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta (SN 56.11) - delivered and discussed over several days - led to all five ascetics attaining the Sotāpanna stage.

- Then the Buddha delivered the Anattalakkhaṇa Sutta to the same five ascetics who reached Arahanthood.
- In the previous post, I explained that anatta is a characteristic of the world of 31 realms and not about a "self." See, "Anatta is a Characteristic of the World, not About a "Self."
- Here we will discuss the Anattalakkhana Sutta, specifically about that "characteristic of anatta" or "anatta lakkhaṇa." As we know, lakkhaṇa means "a characteristic."


## Outline of the Sutta

2. If you look at the first half of the sutta, it points out the anatta nature of rupa, vedan $\bar{a}$, sañ $\tilde{n} \bar{a}$, sañkhāra, viññāna, or the five aggregates (pañcakkhandha.)

- The Buddha points out that those aggregates CANNOT be under one's control in that first part. They evolve according to pațicca Samuppāda.
- The second part of the sutta starts with the verse, "Taï kimं mañ̃atha, bhikkhave, rūpaim niccaín $v \bar{a}$ aniccaim $v \bar{a} ' t i$ ?" Here, he points out why they cannot be under one's control. The key reason is that all five aggregates have the anicca nature, i.e., they evolve according to nature's laws and NOT according to one's wishes or hopes. As we have discussed, anicca nature leads to dukkha, and that is why all efforts to "get control" will not be successfiul, and one will lose control and become helpless (anattā): "Yad aniccamं taì dukkhaì; yaì dukkhamं tad anattā."
- The final third part of the sutta, starting with the verse, "Evaiं passam, bhikkhave, sutava ariyasāvako rūpasmimpi nibbindati, .." states the conclusion: A Noble Person (Ariya Sāvaka) who comprehends the above two facts about the nature of this world would not crave those five aggregates (nibbindati). Once that wisdom (pañña $\bar{a}$ takes hold in mind, that mind liberates from this world. That mind will NOT grasp (upādäna) anything in this world; thus, the rebirth process will cease, and one will get to Parinibbāna at the death of the physical body.
- To get the full impact of the sutta, we need to fully understand what those five aggregates mean (pañcakkhandha.)


## What Is an Aggregate (Khandha)?

3. Anattalakkhana Sutta (SN 22.59) is one of 159 suttas in the Khandha Samyutta (SN 22.) All those suttas are related to the five aggregates or collections (pañca khandha which rhymes as pañcakkhandha.)

- What is a khandha or a collection/aggregate? One of those 159 suttas in the Khandha Samyutta, the "WebLink: suttacentral: Khandha Sutta (SN 22. 48)," clarifies that.
- "Katame ca, bhikkhave, pañcakkhandhā?" OR "Bhikkhus, what are the five aggregates?"
- "Yaì kiñci, bhikkhave, rūpaì at̄̄t̄ānāgatapaccuppannamं ajjhattaì vā bahiddhā vā oḷārikami vā sukhumaiं vā hīnaì vā panītaì vā yaí dūre santike vā, ayaì vuccati rūpakkhandho" OR "Bhikkhus, the rüpa aggregate consists of the following 11 types of rūpa: past, future, or present, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near. This is called the rūpa aggregate.
- The other four aggregates have the same 11 types. For example, the viññāna aggregate has the same 11 types: past, future, or present, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near.


## Five Aggregates Encompass the Whole World!

4. As we can see from the definition of the $r \bar{u} p a$ aggregate, it includes any $r \bar{u} p a$ that one has ever seen, one is seeing now, and expects to see in the future. Those are the three main categories.

- For example, suppose I saw the World Center Towers before their destruction in the terrorist attack in 2001. Those towers are in my rūpakkhandha. Of course, those towers physically do not exist now. But my rūpakkhandha has its "mental impressions." I can recall how they looked before the terrorists destroyed them.
- But if another person had not seen those towers before their destruction, they are not in that person's rūpakkhandha. One's pañcakkhandha is one's own!
- Furthermore, any type of vedanā that I experienced looking at those towers is in my vedanākkhandha. I recognize them as "World Center Towers" in my saññäkkhandha. Any sañkhāra that my mind generated while looking at the Towers are in my sañkhārakkhandha. Any types of viñ̃ñạ̄a that arose are in my viññānakkhandha.
- Therefore, most of the five aggregates consist of one's past experiences. As we know, there is no traceable beginning to each of our "lifestreams." We have been going through an infinite number of rebirths in our past. The present moment goes into the past within a blink of an eye. Future rūpa, vedana $\bar{a}$, etc., are associated with our expectations/hopes.
- Please take time and think about the above. There is a lot of information there. It is critical to understand these fundamentals.
- I have discussed these concepts in "The Five Aggregates (Pañcakkhandha)."


## Role of Pañcakkhandha in a Sensory Event

5. When we are attracted to a sensory event that involves not only the ruppa one is experiencing at that moment but also one's memories about similar rūpa experienced in the past and one's hopes for experiencing similar $r \bar{u} p a$ in the future as well.

- That is better explained with an example. Suppose person X meets person Y on the street. Suppose X is an enemy of $Y$, and the moment $X$ sees $Y$, thoughts of anger arise in his mind.
- But to trigger anger in $X$, he must first realize that $Y$ is his enemy. For that to happen, his mind must have instantly recalled past events involving Y. Therefore, that sensory event of "seeing Y" involved recalling past events with not only Y's figure (rūpa) but also types of mental factors (vedanā, saññ̄a, sañkhāra, viññāna) associated with some "bad encounters with Y " in the past.
- That is why capturing a "snapshot" of Y (like with a camera) is not enough. The mind MUST recall previous encounters with Y , which are in pañcakkhandha! In other words, those cittas not only "see" Y but also incorporate past sights of Y AND associated vedanā, saññ̄a, sañkhāra, viññāṇa.
- Now, based on the sight of Y, X has generated anger and has "gotten attached" to that sight of Y. Therefore, sensory information associated with 'seeing Y " is now in X's pañcupādānakkhandhā!


## Khandha Sutta Also Defines Pañcupādānakkhandhā ("Five Grasping Aggregates")

6. At the latter part of the Khandha Sutta defines pañcupādānakkhandhā, conventionally translated as "the five grasping (or clinging) aggregates."

- "Katame ca, bhikkhave, pañcupādānakkhandhā?" OR "bhikkhus, what are the five grasping aggregates?
- "Yaí kiñci, bhikkhave, rūpaì atītānāgatapaccuppannaì ...pe... yaín dūre santike vā sāsavamं upādāniyaì, ayaì vuccati rūpupādānakkhandho" OR "Whatever kind of rūpa there is, whether past, future or present ... far or near, that can induce āsava (sāsavaì), that can induce attachment (upādāniyain): this is called the rūpupādānakkhandha.


## How Do We Attach to Past and Future Rūpa (Vedanā, Saññā, Sañkhāra, Viñ̃āạa)?

7. Now, someone may ask: "How do we attach to past and future $r \bar{u} p a$ ? I thought we attach to the $r \bar{u} p a$ that we are seeing, hearing, etc., now."

- That is a CRITICAL point to understand. We do attach to a given rūpa that we are experiencing at present. However, that attachment is based on the past rīpa and future rūpa of a similar type (that we had thought about).
- For example, seeing a friend cannot be compared to just taking a snapshot of him. We not only "see" but also recognize who it is and generate certain feelings about him. All that happens in a split second. That rapid process involves all five aggregates (pañcakkhandha.)

8. Let us take another example. Suppose person X meets a person Y on the street. Suppose Y is an enemy of $X$ and the moment $X$ sees $Y$, thoughts of anger arise in his mind.

- But to trigger anger in $X$, he must frrst realize that $Y$ is his enemy. But for that to happen, his mind must have recalled past events involving Y. Therefore, that sensory event of "seeing Y" involved recalling past events with not only Y's figure (rūpa) but also types of mental factors (vedanā, saññā, sañkhāra, viññanal associated with some "bad encounters with Y " in the past.
- That is why capturing a "snapshot" of Y (like with a camera) is not enough. The mind MUST recall previous encounters with Y , which are in pañcakkhandha! In other words, those cittas not only "see" Y, but also incorporate previous sights of Y AND associated vedanā, sañ̃n̄a, sañkhāra, viññāṇa.
- The "past component" of pañcakkhandha is the same as nāmagotta or our memories. Even though we cannot recall nāmagotta from the distant past, we can easily recall nāmagotta of significant events from this life.
- I have discussed this issue with examples in the post, "The Amazing Mind - Critical Role of Nāmagotta (Memories)."


## Our Attachments Are Based on Our Habits/Character (Gati)

9. There is another way to understand the above point. Each person has a set of cravings/attachments. The Pāli word to represent this idea is "gati" (pronounced "gathi.") Gati are also related to āsava and anusaya.

- For example, X may be attracted to a type of woman that Y may not be attracted to. X may like to eat chocolates, but Y may not. Each of us has a set of gati that have evolved, most times going back to
recent previous lives. There are neutral gati (like being left-handed) and also bad gati (like the tendency to become angry), and moral gati (like being kind).
- I have discussed this issue in many posts, including how gati are related to āsava/anusaya. See "WebLink: puredhamma.net: Search Results for gati gathi āsava."
- It is essential to read and understand some of those posts. Then you will see why the Buddha explained rūpupādānakkhandha in terms of āsava and upādāna:, "Yaí kiñci, bhikkhave, rūpai̇ atītānāgatapaccuppannaím ...pe... yaím dūre santike vā sāsavaì upādāniyaì, ayaín vuccati rūpupādānakkhandho"
- As I keep emphasizing, one must spend time understanding these fundamental issues. Just reading mindless word-by-word translations is of no benefit.
- Just reading these posts will also not be good enough. These posts will provide the necessary material to make progress. However, it will take a significant effort even for those interested. I am willing to answer questions to the best of my ability.


## Summary

10. In this post, we have discussed two critical concepts needed to understand the content of the Anattalakkhaṇa Sutta.

- Pañcakkhandha (five aggregates) includes records of our deep past even if we remember mostly the significant events in this life. However, it is possible to cultivate $j h a \overline{n a}$ and recall past lives. Some small children can recall their previous life (if it was a human life).
- Pañcupādānakkhandhā (five "grasping" aggregates) represents our gati/anusaya/āsava that have evolved over our past lives. We can change our pañcupādānakkhandhā or the types of attachments (that arise out of greed, anger, and most importantly, ignorance of TilakkhanalPaṭica Samuppāda/Noble Truths.)
- Now we have sufficient background to understand the Anattalakkhaṇa Sutta. We will finish the discussion in the next post.
- The sutta says that our struggles to seek a permanent solution to suffering within this world are vain. That is the anatta nature. Once one starts understanding that, one will begin to lose big chunks of upādāna in pañcupādānakkhandhā. After the Arahant stage, there will be no trace of pañcupādānakkhandhā. Thus, only a living Arahant will be free of all defilements. They have fully understood the anatta (and, of course, anicca and dukkha) nature.

The discussion continues in "Anatta in Anattalakkhana Sutta - Part 2."

### 3.1.4.9 Anatta in Anattalakkhaṇa Sutta - Part 2

September 26, 2021; revised August 25, 2022

## Summary of the Previous Post

1. In the previous post "Anatta in Anattalakkhana Sutta - Part 1," we reached the following conclusions:

- Anattalakkhaṇa Sutta describes the NATURE of the five aggregates: rūpa, vedanā, sañ̃̄ $\bar{a}$, sañkhāra, and viññāna. It specifically addresses the anatta nature. To make it easier, we divided the sutta into three parts. You may want to print the previous post for reference.
- In the middle of the sutta (second part), the Buddha makes the connection to the anicca and dukkha nature, as we will discuss below.
- In the third part of the sutta, the Buddha explains that a Noble Person who understood the world's real nature to be anicca, dukkha, and anatta would not attach to the five aggregates. Thus an Arahant, who has completed the Path, does not have pañcupādānakkhandha.
- That is because a Noble Person would have understood the verse, "samkhittena pañcupādānakkhandh $\bar{a} d u k k h \bar{a}$ " OR "in brief, the origin of suffering is the craving for the five aggregates of rūpa, vedanā, saññ̄a, sañkhāra, and viñ̃n̄ạa. See "Essence of Buddhism - In the First Sutta." That is the post where we discussed the essence of the Dhammacappavattana Sutta, the first sutta delivered to the five ascetics. As we have seen icch $\bar{a}$ (craving/liking) is related to anicca; see "Icca, Nicca, Anicca - Important Connections."
- Therefore, in this second sutta to the five ascetics, the Buddha wraps up the discussion on Tilakkhaṇa. Attachment to things of anicca nature leads to dukkha. Thus, one should refrain from taking worldly things as "mine" because they do not have any essence or substance, i.e., worldly entities (pañcakkhandhā) are without essence or of anatta nature.


## First Part of the Anattalakkhaña Sutta

2. At the beginning of the sutta, regarding rūpakkhandha, the Buddha says:
"Rūpaì, bhikkhave, anattā. Rūpañca hidamं, bhikkhave, attā abhavissa, nayidamं rūpaì ābādhāya saìvatteyya, labbhetha ca rūpe: 'evaì me rūpaì hotu, evaì me rūpaì mā ahosī'ti. Yasmā ca kho, bhikkhave, rūpaì anattā, tasmā rūpaì ābādhāya saìvattati, na ca labbhati rūpe: 'evaím me rūpaì hotu, evaì me rūpaì mā ahosītti."

- First, as discussed in the previous post, "Rūpaì" refers to rūpakkhandha (the rūpa aggregate and NOT just one's body) as some people perceive.
"Rūpaim, bhikkhave, anatt $\bar{a} "$ means "rūpa aggregate is no use because it has no essence." See "Anattā A Systematic Analysis."
- The rest of the above verse explains WHY the $r \bar{u} p a$ aggregate is of no essence: 'If $r \bar{u} p a$ aggregate is of essence (and is under one's control), my body (which is a part of the rupakkhandha) would not have ailments, and it would be possible to have: 'Let my body (or any other rupa) be the way I like; let it not be the way I don't like.' But because the rūpa is not under my control, it can face unexpected changes, and it is impossible to have: 'Let my rūpa be thus; let my rūpa not be thus."

Here the verse seems to focus on one's physical body. But it could also mean any rūpa that one likes/dislikes. As we will see, whether it is one's own body or any other external rūpa, they evolve according to Paṭicca Samuppāda (PS.) A rūpa does not evolve according to anyone's wishes, but ONLY according to PS. That has been true for any rūpa that ever existed, any rūpa existing now, and any rūpa that will ever exist i.e., it is true for rūpakkhandha!

- Then that verse is repeated for the other four aggregates: vedanākkhandha, sañ̃̃ākkhandha, sañkhārakkhandha, and viññānakkhandha.
- Here the words "anatta/anatta"" refer to the unfruitful nature of any rūpa, vedanā, sañña, sañkhāra, viñãāṇa (i.e., one's world).


## Second Part of the Anattalakkhana Sutta

3. The second part of the sutta starts with the verse, "Taím kim maññatha, bhikkhave, rūpaim niccaì $v \bar{a}$ aniccaì $v \bar{a} t i$ ?" Here, the Buddha points out why they cannot be under one's control.

- The key reason is that all five aggregates have the anicca nature, i.e., they evolve according to nature's laws and NOT according to one's wishes or hopes. As we have discussed, anicca nature leads to dukkha, and that is why all efforts to "get control" will not be successful and one will lose control and become helpless (anattā): "Yad aniccaì taì dukkhaín; yaím dukkhaì tad anattä."
- Then the Buddha asks the CRITICAL question: "Yain pana aniccain dukkhain viparināmadhammamं, kallà் nu taì samanupassituì: 'etaì mama, esohamasmi, eso me $a t t a \bar{a} " t i$ ? OR
- "If something evolves according to its intrinsic nature (and not according to my wishes) and can lead to suffering should one regard it thus: 'This is mine, this I am, this can be of benefit/refuge to me'?" The answer is no. [intrinsic : belonging to a thing by its very nature; situated within or belonging solely to the organ or body part on which it acts]
- To look at the verse 'etain mama, esohamasmi, eso me attā' a bit more closely, esohamasmi is shortened form of "eso ahaì asmi." And "mama" means "mine," "ahaì asmi" is "I am," and "me" means "to me." That is how we get the translation above.

4. That last verse is of critical importance. It helps clarify the current misconceptions about a "self." As I have pointed out previously, it is better to talk about "me" rather than a "self" because some people may interpret "self" to mean a "permanent entity" like a soul.

- As we can see, the Buddha freely used the word "me." That is because, AS LONG AS a living being is in the rebirth process it has the perception of a "me." That could be called a "self," too, if one understands that such a "self" is not associated with a permanent "soul."
"On the other hand, the words "atta/att $\vec{a}$ " do not refer to a "me" or a "self" in this sutta. As we saw, this sutta is about the five aggregates (pañcakkhandhā), which encompass everything in this world.
- Those who have not understood the Four Noble Truths consider the world (pañcakkhandhā) to be of nicca/sukha/atta nature. Therefore, they attach to certain worldly things or pañcupādānakkhandhā, and that is the origin of future suffering: "saṃkhittena pañcupādānakkhandhā dukkhā." See, "Essence of Buddhism - In the First Sutta."

5. The Buddha explained what is meant by a "satta" or a "living being" to Rādha in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Satta Sutta (SN 23.2)." "Rūpe kho, Rādha, yo chando yo rāgo yā nandī yā tanhhā, tatra satto, tatra visatto, tasmā sattoti vuccati. Vedanāya ... saññāya ... sañkhāresu ... viññāne yo chando yo rāgo yā nandī yā taṇhā, tatra satto, tatra visatto, tasmā sattoti vuccati"

- Translated (just the meaning): "Rādha, when there is desire (chanda), rāga, and a perception of high value (nandī) of material form ( $r \bar{u} p a$ ), there is clinging (satto), strong clinging (visatto) for form, and then an ignorant living-being (satto) is spoken of. Similarly, when there is desire (chanda), rāga, and a perception of high value (nandī) of vedan̄ $\ldots$... saññ̄̄ $\ldots$.. sañkhāra ... viññānana, then a living-being is spoken of."
- We discussed that in the introductory post, "Five Aggregates and Tilakkhana - Introduction."
- This is why any living being in any of the 31 realms (except those who have attained magga phala) is a "satta" ("satva" in Sanskrit.) Even the Buddha before Enlightenment is a "Bodhisatta" or a "satta destined to attain the Buddhahood."
- The present body of even a living Arahant arose due to past kamma done with the perception of a "me." That body results from that past kamma and will be there even after attaining Arahanthood. A new life/body will not arise at the death of an Arahant. Until that time, Arahant will use the words "I" and "me" but with the understanding that those words need to be used as long as one lives in this world. That is what the Buddha did too.


## Third Part of the Anattalakkhaṇa Sutta

## 6. The final third part of the sutta states:

"Evaì passaì, bhikkhave, sutavā ariyasāvako rūpasmimpi nibbindati, vedanāyapi nibbindati, saññāyapi nibbindati, sañkhāresupi nibbindati, viññānasmimpi nibbindati. Nibbindaí virajjati; virāgā vimuccati. Vimuttasmimं vimuttamiti ñānaà hoti." OR

- "Seeing thus, Bhikkhus, a noble disciple (who has understood the above truths) would not attach to rūpa, vedanā, saññā, sañkhāra, and viññāna. The mind sees that those mind-pleasing things have no value and becomes liberated (from this world.) Once liberated, he realizes that he is liberated:


## 

- He understands: 'Destroyed is rebirth, the holy life has been lived, what had to be done has been done, there is no more for this state of existence ( n the suffering-filled world)."


## Summary

7. The above is a summary of the Anattalakkhana Sutta. Let us summarize the conclusions.

- The first thing to note is that the analysis is on the five aggregates (pañcakkhandhā.) Since pañcakkhandh $\bar{a}$ represents one's world, the sutta is about the anatta nature of the world of 31 realms.
- In the second part, the Buddha states that the anatta nature results from anicca nature. In simple terms, that means any rupa (whether internal or external) or mental impressions due to rūpa (i.e., vedana $\bar{a}$, sañ̃n̄a, sañkhāra, viññ̄ạa) arise NOT due to the way one wants/wishes. Rather they arise due to a natural process that takes place because of one's ignorance of that natural process. That process is Paṭicca Samuppāda. We can easily see that vedanā, sañkhāra, and viññāna arise in Paṭicca Samuppāda starting with "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra." The "bhava paccayā jāti" step describes the arising of the internal rūpa. We will get to those details soon.
- Finally, the Buddha says that the world is unfruitfiul, and there is nothing that can be considered to be valuable. However, an average human thinks highly of the "pleasures" to be had in this world! That is why the Buddha said his Dhamma had never been known to the world. Only a Noble Person who has understood the anicca, dukkha, and anatta nature of this world can cultivate the Eightfold Noble Path and be "fully liberated" from this suffering-filled world, i.e., attain the Arahanthood.
- As you can see, this sutta is highly condensed. Translating the sutta word-by-word makes it impossible to understand its embedded message. Deep suttas like this need to be explained in detail; see "Sutta Interpretation - Uddesa, Niddesa, Patiniddesa."
- We will look deeper into the sutta in the upcoming posts, especially to make the connection between anicca and Paṭicca Samuppāda.


## 3.2 <br> San

- What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Samisāra)
- Sañkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka
- Sañkhāra - Life is a Bundle of Sañkhāra
- Difference Between Dhamma and Sañkhāra
- Kamma are Done with Sañkhāra - Types of Sañkhāra


### 3.2.1 What is "Saŋ"? Meaning of Saysāra (or Samsāra)

## Revised May 17, 2018; revised December 18, 2018; February 16, 2020; July 19, 2021

[This article is not found in the Pure Dhamma post. It is meant for the understanding of why san is written in difference form $(s a \dot{n}=s a \tilde{n}=s a n=s a n=s a \eta=s a m=s a \dot{n})$ for those with san words. Niggahīta is the name for the symbol " $\eta$." The reason is to suit the consonants for the particular row as shown below. \{niggahīta : (nt.) the nasal consonant ' $\dot{m}$ ' or ' $\eta$ ' or ' $m$ '.\}

Consonants Words formed with the consonants after $\operatorname{sax}(x=\dot{n}, \tilde{n}, n, n, m, \dot{m}$ [ $\boldsymbol{\eta}]$ )

| k | kh | g | gh | ñ | sañkara, sañkhāra, sañgara, sañgha |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :--- |
| c | ch | j | jh | $\tilde{n}$ | sañcara, sañchindati, sañjāyati, sañjhā, saññā |
| t | ṭh | ḍ | dh | ṇ | sanṭhapesi, saṇ̣āso |
| t | th | d | dh | n | santoso, santhāra, sandita, sandhana, sannata |
| p | ph | b | bh | m | sampāda, samphassa, sambala, sambhava, sammā |
| y, r, | l, v, | s, h, | l, | min (y) | samiyutta, samirāga, sallahuko (san + lahuko) samivega, samsāra, <br> samihata |

]
"San" is a keyword in Buddha Dhamma, the meaning of which has been hidden for thousands of years. It is closely related to dasa akusala.

1. A key Pāli word, which has been hidden for thousands of years, is "say" (pronounced like son). "Say" is the term for "good and bad things we acquire" through our moral/immoral deeds.

- Understanding this root allow one to easily see the meanings of many important Pāli words without looking for roots in Sanskrit.

2. There is a reason for calling what we "acquire or add" to be "saŋ." In Pāli and Sinhala, the word for numbers is "sañkhy $\bar{a}$," and sañkhy $\bar{a}=$ "san" + "khy $\bar{a}$," meaning add and subtract. Addition and subtraction involve sañkhy $\bar{a}$. [ $\boldsymbol{s a n} \boldsymbol{k} \boldsymbol{h} \boldsymbol{y} \overline{\boldsymbol{a}}$ : [f.] enumeration; calculation; a number; definition.]

- From this, "say" suggests "acquiring or adding (to this world, or to stay in the rebirth process)."
- In the same way, "khya"" implies "removal or subtraction."

3. Therefore, "say" indicates things we do to lengthen our samisāric (or saysāric) journey. See below for examples.

- These "san" are nothing else but dasa akusala (that lead to rebirth in the apāyă) and also puñña kamma (that lead to rebirths in the "good realms"); see, "Kilesa - Relationship To Akusala, Kusala, And Puñña Kamma."
- One may wonder why "say" includes moral deeds or puñ̃a kamma. That is because they also lead to rebirths ("add" to the samināric journey).
- However, one MUST do puñña kamma to avoid rebirth in the apāyā.

4. Similarly, "khya" or "khaya" indicate the shortening of the samsāric journey.

- Removal of defilements (rāga, dosa, moha) leads to Nibbāna. Thus Nibbāna is "rāgakkhaya,"
"dosakkhaya," and "mohakkhaya."
- Those three words have roots in "khaya" or "subtraction or removal." For example, rāgakkhaya comes from "rāga" + "khaya," which combines to pronounce as rāgakkhaya.
- Thus it is quite clear that rāgakkhaya means "removing rāga." Same for "dosakkhaya," and "mohakkhaya." Removal of rāga, dosa, and moha leads to Nibbāna.

5. Just by grasping these key ideas, it is possible to understand the roots of many common words, such as sañkhāra, sainsāra, sañ̃n̄a, sammā, etc. Let us analyze some of these words.

- We "add to" our rebirth process when we do "say." The Pali word for "doing" is "khāra" (the Sinhala word is "kāra" or $\mathbf{\infty}$ ) 6 ). That is the origin of the word "sañkhāra" ("say" + "khāra"); the Sinhala word


6. From Pațicca Samuppāda, all sufferings start with, "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra." Thus, when one gets rid of avijjā completely, all sañkhāra are stopped and one attains Nibbāna. That is accomplished at the Arahant stage.

- From the WebLink: suttacentral: Manasikāra Sutta (AN 11.8): " 'etaì santaì etaì paṇìtaìm, yadidamं sabbasañkhārasamatho sabbūpadhipaṭinissaggo taṇhākkhayo virāgo nirodho nibbānan'ti." ["It is peaceful, it is serene, the expelling of all sañkhāra, breaking of bonds, removing greed and hate; Nibbāna.'"]
- Translated: "It is peaceful, it is serene, the expelling of all sañkhāra, breaking of bonds, removing greed and hate; Nibbāna." So, it is quite clear that by stopping all sañkhāra, one attains Nibbāna.

7. However, a distinction needs to be made between sainkhāra and abhisañkhāra. The prefix "abhi" means "stronger" or "coarse."

- Sañkhāra involves EVERYTHING that we do to live in "this world" of 31 realms; these include breathing, walking, eating, and pretty much everything. Even an Arahant has to be engaged in sañkhāra until Parinibbāna or death.
- Sañkhāra becomes abhisañkhāra by engaging in the "wheeling process"; see, "Nibbāna - Is it Difficult to Understand?." The samiā̈ric process or the rebirth process is fueled by abhisañkhära.

8. The bad things we acquire - with lobha (greed), dosa (hate), moha (delusion) - contribute to rebirth in the lower four realms; these are apuñãābhisaṅkhāra (or apuñ̃a abhisaǹkhāra). Here "apuñña" means "immoral."

- Good things we acquire via the mundane version of alobha, adosa, and amoha help us gain rebirth in the human realm and above; these are puñnābhisañkhāra (or puñ̃̃a abhisañkhāra). Here "puñña" means "moral."
- Thus, both kinds contribute to lengthening the rebirth process. Still, we DO need to do puññābhisañkhāra for two reasons: (i) it prevents us from doing bad things, (ii) done with the right intention, puññābhisañkhāra will help purify our minds, i.e., puñ̃̃a kamma can become kusala kamma; see \#18 below.
- To attain Nibbāna, one must comprehend the deeper version of alobha, adosa, and amoha. See "Kilesa - Relationship to Akusala, Kusala, and Puñña Kamma."

9. Another important term is "sammä" which comes from "say" + "mā," which means "to become free of say." Here "m $\bar{a}$ " means "becomes free of." For example:

- "Mā hoti jāti, jāti" means "may I be free of repeated birth."
- "mā me bāla samāgamo" means "may I be free of association with those who are ignorant of Dhammā."

10. The keyword sanditṭhiko comes from say + ditthi (meaning vision), i.e., the ability to see "san" or defilements.

- One becomes sandittthiko (one who can see "saŋ" clearly) at the Sotāpanna Anugāmi stage.
- Most texts define sanditthiko with inconsistent words like self-evident, immediately apparent, visible here and now, etc.

11. Another critical word is sañ $\tilde{n} \bar{a}$, which comes from $\operatorname{sa\eta }+\tilde{n} \bar{a}$ (meaning knowing) $=$ knowing or understanding "say." This happens when one attains Nibbāna. Until then, one has a distorted perception (saññā) of this world. See "Saññā - What It Really Means."

- For example, when we see people, we identify them according to our familiarity with them or based on our perceptions of them. We do not "see" the true nature of anything until Nibbāna is attained. Thus it is said that until we attain Nibbāna, we have distorted (vipallāsa, Sinhala is vipareetha) saññ̄a.
- Don’t worry about some of these deeper meanings if you are unfamiliar with them. At least one can see a connection to the root word "say."

12. Saimvara (or saŋvara) $=$ say + vara, where vara means "remove." Therefore, samivara means removing "say" via moral behavior, also called "sīla."

- "Yaín samādānaì taín vataim. Saìvaraṭthena sīlaï" means just trying to live by set precepts would not work. Moral behavior comes automatically upon one becoming a Sandiṭthiko (a Sotāpanna Anugāmi or a Sotāpanna.)
- Saimvara sila will be automatically enforced 24 hours daily, not just on specific days. That is because it comes naturally, with understanding.
- On the other hand, "Yam samādanaí taí vatamं" means observing the five precepts or eight precepts on specific days is just a ritual, or "vata." Such rituals are good starting points but will be "upgraded to" Saìvara sīla when one gains wisdom (pañña $\overline{)}$.

13. Another keyword is samisāra or saysāra which means "rebirth process."

- That, of course, comes from say + sāra, where "sāra" means fruitful. We do "say" willingly because we perceive them to be good ("sāra"). Then we get trapped in the rebirth process.
- Note that sometimes it is natural to pronounce with the " m " sound; that is why writing it as "samisāra." See more examples in \#15 below.
- We have the wrong perception that "say" is good and fruitful. Thus one continues in the long rebirth process by doing sañkhāra (and especially abhisañkhāra) with the wrong perception that those are fruitful.

14. A nice example to illustrate the significance of "san" is to examine the verse that Ven. Assaji uttered to Upatissa (the lay name of Ven. Sariputta, who was a chief disciple of the Buddha):
"Ye dhammā hetupabbavā, Tesaì (te sam்) hetum Tathāgato āha; Tesañca (te say ca) yo nirodho, Evaì vādī mahāsamaṇo"

Te $=$ those, hetu $=$ cause, pabbava $=p a+$ bhava or "repeated birth" (see, "Pabhassāra Citta, Radiant Mind, and Bhavangga," nirodha $=$ nir $+u d \bar{a}=$ stop from arising.

- The translation is now crystal clear:
"All dhamma that give rise to the rebirth process arise due to causes arising from the "say"s: rāga, dosa, moha. The Buddha has shown how to eliminate those "san"s and thus stop such dhamma $\bar{a}$ from arising"
- "Dhamma" here does not mean Buddha Dhammā, but dhammā in general; see, "What are Dhammā? A Deeper Analysis."

15. Knowing the correct meaning of such terms leads to a clear understanding of many terms:

- Sangāyana $=\operatorname{sa\eta }+$ gāyana (meaning recite) $=$ recite and categorize "say" (and ways to remove them) in organizing Dhammā for passing down to future generations. The first Sangāyanā took place just three months after the Parinibbāna of the Buddha.
- Saimyutta Nikāya of the Tipitaka contains suttā that explain "say": "saך" + "yutta", with "yutta" meaning "connected with" (it rhymes as "samyutta"). Most English translations refer to Samimutta Nikāya as "Connected Discourses, but do not say connected to what.
- Sanvega (or "samvega") $=$ say + vega $($ meaning speed $)=$ forcefil, strong impulses arising due to "say."
- Sanyoga (or "samyoga") = say + yoga (meaning bond) = bound together via "say."
- Sansindheema $=$ say + sindheema (meaning evaporate, remove) = removing say, for example, via the seven steps described in the Sabbāsava Sutta. This leads to nirāmisa sukha or Nibbānic bliss.
- Sansun = say + sun (meaning destroy) = with the removal of "say" ("sun" rhymes like soup), one's mind becomes calm and serene.
- Sancetan $\bar{a}=\operatorname{sa\eta }+\operatorname{cetan} \bar{a}=$ defiled intentions.
- Samphassa $=\operatorname{sa\eta }+$ phass $a=$ defiled sense contact.


## Over 70 Pāli words with the "saŋ" root are given in "List of "San" Words and Other Pāli Roots."

16. We will encounter many such instances, where just by knowing what "say" is, one could immediately grasp the meaning of a certain verse. Most of these terms are easily understood in the Sinhala language.

- Contrary to popular belief, Sanskrit is not closely related to the māgadhi language that the Buddha spoke. It is Sinhala (or Sinhalese) that is closely related to māgadhi (māgadhi= "maga" + "adhi" = Noble path).

17. The Tipituaka is in Pāli with Sinhala script (Pāli does not have its alphabet). Pāli is a version of māgadhi suitable for writing down oral discourses in a summary form suitable for transmission; see, "Preservation of the Dhamma." More posts on that at "Historical Background."

- Many Pāli words have complex meanings and need to be explained in detail. That is the reason for many commentaries. However, most early commentaries no longer exist, and those recent ones have many errors; see "Misinterpretation of Anicca and Anatta by Early European Scholars."
- A good example is the key Pāli word "anicca." That word got confused with "anitya," a Sanskrit word. That Sanskrit word does mean "impermanence," but the Pāli word "anicca" has a very different meaning.
- The actual meaning of anicca becomes clear when one realizes that the Pāli word "icca" (pronounced "ichcha") means "this is what I like." Thus anicca has the opposite meaning ("na" + "icca") or "cannot keep it the way I like"; see, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta."
- Pāli words are written not with "Standard English" but with "Tipitaka English." See, "TTipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars - Part 1" and "Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars - Part 2."

18. One's tendency (i.e., gati) to do dasa akusala gets one bound to this world of 31 realms. Until one removes such "bad gati," one will have the following characteristics: āsava, anusaya, samyojana, etc; see , "Conditions for the Four Stages of Nibbāna."

- As long as one has any type of gati, āsava, anusaya, or samyojana, one can pile up more "say" or do dasa akusala.
- Once one removes the strongest of the dasa akusala (and especially the 10 types of micchā dittthi), one will be able to grasp the Tilakkhaṇa.
- Then one's puñña kamma will become kusala kamma, leading to the four stages of Nibbāna. This is a subtle point but is explained in simple terms in the post, "Is It Necessary for a Buddhist to Eliminate Sensual Desires?."

3.2.2 Sañkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka

## Revised May 12, 2016; February 23, 2019; May 27, 2022; August 27, 2022

There is much confusion about these words. These are key Dhamma concepts, and one needs to sort them out to understand other key concepts like rebirth and Paticca Samuppāda. Please read the post, "What is "San"? - Meaning of Sansāra (or Samsāra)" before reading this post.

## Sañkhāra (what we accumulate)

1. "Puññābhi sañkhāra, apuñn̄ābhi sañkhāra, āneñjābhi sañkhāra ayaí vuccathi avijjā paccayā sañkhāra." This is how the short verse of "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" in akusala-mūla paticca samuppāda is explained in detail.

- Thus only abhisañkhāra ("abhi" means higher or stronger), such sañkhāra with avijjā, leads to the rebirth process.
- Note that puññabhi sañkhāra is puñña+abhisañkhāra, and similarly, the other two are also abhisañkhāra. Also, "apuñ̃ñ" means immoral"" puñña" means moral, and "āneñja" means "higher jhānic." All three modes lead to rebirth in one of the 31 realms (lowest 4 realms with apuññābhi sañkhāra, realms 5 through 27 with puññābhi sañkhāra, and realms 28 through 31 with āneñjäbhi sañkhāra, respectively).
- Thus any kind of abhisaǹkh $\overline{\boldsymbol{a}} \boldsymbol{r} \boldsymbol{a}$ is done with ignorance (avijj $\bar{a}$ or not knowing the real characteristics of this world of 31 realms: anicca, dukkha, anatta).
- However, we will see below that we do need to accumulate puññābhi sañkhāra strategically, mainly to avoid rebirth in the apāya (lowest four realms) until we attain Nibbāna.

2. As we saw above, "san" is what one acquires when one does anything with sañcetana ("san" + "cetanā"). Sañkhāra (san+kāra) is simply actions that lead to acquiring "san." However, it is only
"abhisañkhāra" or sànkhāra that arises through avijjä that can lead to rebirth. There is a difference between sañkhāra and abhisañkhāra: [kāra, (m. ), deed; service; act of homage]

- When deeds are done to live in this world, one has to do sañkhāra. They become abhisañkhāra when they are done with greed, hate, and/or ignorance. Sañkhāra becomes abhisañkhāra when one starts generating further thoughts ("wheeling process") about the sense experiences (pictures, sounds, tastes, etc.) ; see \#9 on "Nibbāna - Is It Difficult to Understand?."
- Thus an Arahant does sañkhāra to live; even breathing is kāya sañkhāra. But Arahant has stopped the "wheeling process" or formed an attachment to what is seen, heard, etc. It is that "wheeling process," which is detailed in the Paticca Samuppāda section, that leads to abhisañkhāra.
- When those sañkhāra become strong, they are called "abhisañkhāra" or "strong sañkhāra" that can lead to rebirths.

3. Abhisañkhāra are three kinds, as mentioned above:

- Some actions lead to bad consequences during life and also to bad rebirths in the four lowest realms (apāyā). These are "apuññābhi sañkhāra" or immoral deeds: apuññā abhi sañ khāra..
- Actions that lead to good consequences in life and also to good rebirths are called "puññābhi sañkhāra" or meritorious deeds; these lead to birth in good realms (human, deva, and the rūpa lokas), thus avoiding rebirth in bad realms where one could get trapped for many eons. Thus it is important to accumulate puñ̃̄ābhi sañkhāra: puñña abhi sañ khāra.
- When one cultivates "lokiya jhāna" or mundane higher meditative states (arūpa jhāna leading to rebirth in the highest four arūpa loka realms), via breath meditation, for example, one can be reborn in the four higher Brahma worlds. These also prolong saìssāra, and are called "āneñjābhi sañkhāra": āneñja abhi sañ khāra.
- It is interesting to note that "āneñja" means "no more rebirths" and thus "permanent": the ancient yogis (including Ālāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta) thought these realms have infinite lifetimes and equated the births there to the "ultimate release." Of course, the Buddha discovered that those also have finite lifetimes, even though extremely long, lasting eons (billions of years).
- Here those yogis can temporarily suppress all desires for kāma loka or rūpa loka existences. However, since they had not comprehended the anicca nature, they still have "hidden avijja" or "avijja anusaya."

4. Therefore, it is easy to remember abhisañkhāra as those actions that lead to prolonging sam̈sāra (or sainsāra), the cycle of rebirths. There is a "latent energy" produced by each such action (abhisañkhāra) that will give fruits later.

- Such "actions" can be done via the mind, speech, or the body; these lead to mano sañkhāra, vacī sañkhāra, and kāya sañkhāra, respectively. The "defiled actions" are abhisañkhāra.

5. Does this mean one should not do meritorious deeds (with puññābhisañkhāra) because those also prolong sainsāra? No. The Buddha emphasized that one should not shy away from doing meritorious deeds.

- There is a way to do meritorious deeds without prolonging samisāra, and that is detailed in the "KusalaMūla Paticca Samuppāda," an important part of the Buddha's Paṭicca samuppāda doctrine that has been hidden for thousands of years. But one must avoid wishing for "things in return" for such meritorious deeds as much as possible because such thoughts are based on greed.
- In the Abhidhamma language, one should generate "ñāna sampayutta, somanassa sahagata citta" (thoughts generated with wisdom and joy), which is the highest moral (sobhana) citta. Here wisdom means comprehension of the true nature; it starts with getting rid of 10 miccha dittthi and then grows as one understands anicca, dukkha, and anatta to higher levels. Wisdom culminates at the Arahant stage.
- Any good deed will have good consequences whether one wishes it or not. By wishing for "material things" or "jhānic pleasures," one turns a meritorious action into either a less potent "ñaña vippayutta" (devoid of wisdom) moral citta or even an apuññābhi sañkhāra. We will discuss that below.


## Kamma (Actions to Prolong Sainsāra)

Kammic energy is generated when one turns sañkhāra to abhisañkhāra by the "wheeling process"; see above. For example, when one sees an object that is just sañkhāra due to a kamma vipāka. However, if one then starts thinking about how good it is, or thinks about how to acquire it, then it becomes abhisañkhāra; here one now has INTENTIONS about that object, one is hoping to get something.

- That is why the Buddha said, "cetanā ham Bhikkhave kammaí vadāmi," i.e., "I say that intention is kamma."
- So it is important to remember that kamma is the intention, and even though it can be done by the mind, speech, or the body, all those have their root in mind. We cannot say anything or do anything without a thought in our mind to do so (see the Abhidhamma section for details).
- For example, the intention to go for a walk is a kamma that does not have any power to generate a good or bad vipāka in the future. That kamma will only get that task done.
Thus the key to Nibbāna is to stop valuing and thinking about kāma assāda (sense pleasures; āsvāda in Sinhala). This cannot happen until one sees the fruitlessness of sense pleasures in the long run (anicca, dukkha, anatta); see the section "Assāda, Ādinava, Nissarana". [assāda:[m] "mind-made pleasures"; taste; enjoyment; satisfaction.]


## Kamma Bīja (Kamma Seeds) or Kamma Bhava

When a kamma (abhisañkhāra) is committed, the kammic potential of that kamma is deposited in a kamma bïja (kamma seed); kamma seed is NOT a physical entity, it is an "energy" or "potential" to bring about an effect in the future. It can also be called a "kamma bhava."

- A kamma seed can be compared to a normal seed, say, for example, a seed of an apple tree. The potential to bring about a fully grown apple tree is in the apple seed. However, if the seed is kept in a dry place with no contact with soil, it does not get to germinate. It will germinate if placed under the soil and fed with water and nutrients. Then it can grow into an apple tree which can yield thousand more seeds.
- Similarly, a kamma seed has the POTENTIAL to germinate or come to fruition if suitable conditions appear; but a kamma seed is an energy lying below the suddhatthaka stage. It can then yield results with an impact corresponding to the original deed (this holds for both good and bad.) Results are the kamma vipāka; see, "What is Kamma? - Is Everything Determined by Kamma?."
- It is also possible to remove many of one's bad kamma seeds. When we acquire a "bad kamma seed" we get indebted to another being. Just like one can be debt-free by paying off existing loans, one can "pay back" old debts that have been accumulated in the cycle of rebirths by "transferring merits" when one does good deeds and also by doing the Ariya Metta Bhāvanā; see, "Transfer of Merits (Pattidāna)- How Does that Happen?" and "5. Ariya Metta Bhāvanā (Loving Kindness Meditation)."

Nothing in this world is permanent (but that impermanence is not anicca); kammic energy in a kamma seed also eventually loses its power, and the "staying power" depends on the strength of the particular kamma. For example, those seeds corresponding to "änantariya akusala kamma" such as killing one's parents or an Arahant, will bring fruits without delay (i.e., in the very next birth) before they lose their power.

## Kamma Vipāka (Results of a Kamma Seed or Kamma Bhava)

So it is important to distinguish between kamma and kamma vipāka: the first is the action, second is the consequence. When someone laments "this is my kamma" when he/she faces a bad situation, what is meant is that this happens "because of what I had done in the past." It is a kamma vipāka.

When one does something good or bad, kammic energy is deposited as a kamma bīa (seed), also called a kamma bhava. Then that kammic energy can give rise to kamma vipāka in the future when suitable conditions materialize. There are two ways to avoid kamma vipāka:

- Just like a seed will not germinate until the right conditions appear (soil, water, sunlight), kamma vipāka cannot materialize until suitable conditions appear. Thus by acting mindfully (not getting into "bad situations"), one can avoid them; see, "Anantara and Samanantara Paccaya."
- Most importantly, we can remove many kamma seeds by doing Metta Bhāvanā. When we acquire a bad kamma seed, we become indebted to another being; we can get rid of that kamma seed by paying off that debt. The best way to do that is to ask for forgiveness and transfer the merits of one's good deeds to all beings (since we have become indebted to an uncountable number of beings); see, "Kamma, Debt, and Meditation."

Kamma vipāka (from the germination of seeds) leads to two main consequences:

- They can lead to consequences during a lifetime (either the present or a future life). These are called "pavutti kamma bhava."
- Some strong kamma vipāka give rise to new existence (in the rebirth process). These are called "uppatti kamma bhava."

In either case, kamma vipāka is NOT deterministic. Both types can be reduced in strength or even be made ineffective. This can be done in several ways:

- When one becomes an Arahant since there is no more rebirth, all kamma seeds that do not get to come to fruition before the death of an Arahant become ineffective in producing a rebirth: Because an Arahant has removed avijjā, the "akusala-mūla paticca samuppāda cycle" becomes ineffective and thus "bhava paccayā jāti" does not get to initiate a new birth.
- However, even an Arahant is subjected to any kamma vipāka that gets a chance to emerge during the current life, especially the strong ones. Even the Buddha suffered from physical pains during the last years of his life. Even if one transfers merits to other beings (as Arahants do) if the other being cannot accept those merits, then those debts do not get paid off; see "Transfer of Merits (Pattidāna) How Does it Happen?." Thus even the Buddha had a few "unpaid debts" left.
- We all have done innumerable kamma in this long sainsāra. Thus many kamma seeds are waiting to "bear fruit" under the right conditions. This is a key point one needs to digest. Just like a seed can lay dormant for long times, and germinate only under the right conditions (soil, water), a kamma vipāka bears fruit only when the conditions are right.
- Thus most kamma vipāka can be suppressed and avoided (not letting them germinate) by acting with mindfulness (yoniso manasikāra). This is where a calm mind helps. An agitated mind is not able to make rational decisions. See "Key to Calming the Mind." Working on the Five Hindrances (pañca nīvaraṇa) that cover the mind is important.


## How to do Meritorious Deeds without Accumulating Abhisañkhāra

Most people, even born Buddhists, do not get this right. They think Nibbāna can be attained by just doing meritorious deeds. Here are some key points to consider:

1. One needs to avoid apuñ̃̄ābhi sañkhāra (unmeritorious deeds) that will lead to bad life events and/or rebirths, i.e., the four lower realms; see, "The Grand Unified Theory of the Dhamma." They are "akusala" by definition, but ones of the worst kind; these are called " $p \overline{a p a "}$ in Pāli and Sinhala and "paw" (rhymes like "cow") in Sinhala. One needs to avoid this in leading a moral life; see "Moral Living and Fundamentals."
2. Puñ̃ābhi sañkhāra (meritorious deeds) may be accompanied by apuññābhi sañkhāra if one's intention is not good. If one does a good deed AND wishes for something in return, that wishing is done with greed. Any good deed WILL produce good results whether one wishes it or not. They lead to good life events and good rebirths (at or above the human realm). Thus puñn̄ābhi sañkhāra can help in pursuing Nibbāna and should be done without greedy intentions. A Sotäpanna automatically does meritorious deeds with such understanding; we will discuss this in the "Kusala-Mūla Paticca Samuppāda." Thus the

Aryan way is to do a good deed and share the merits of that deed with all beings, instead of wishing for something in return.

- Thus one needs to be careful here because one may be acquiring apuñ̃̃ābhi sañkhāra at the same time. This is a bit complex and is best illustrated with an example. Suppose one donates a meal to a hungry person. That act is inherently one that will produce a good outcome. However, if the person "makes a wish" such as "may I get delicious foods in the future because of this good deed", that is a greedy thought, a greedy intention (cetana $\bar{a}$. Thus while this does not negate the good deed, it also could produce ANOTHER kamma vipāka leading to bad life events.
- This pitfall can be avoided by doing the good deed with a pure intention that is not associated with greed, hate, or ignorance. One gives a meal to a hungry person out of compassion, to quench the hunger. That is all. Here one does not lose any possible benefits of the act.
- When one starts comprehending anicca (that one cannot maintain anything to one's satisfaction over the long run), one AUTOMATICALLY stops wishing for "good things."
- Furthermore, one can reap more benefits by additionally doing a mental act to quench the potential of previous bad kamma seeds. This is called "giving of merits" or "pattidāna" which is mislabelled as "puñña anumodana" frequently; see, "Puñ̃̃a Kamma - Dāna, Sīla, Bhāvanā." One could wish that the merits of this good deed be shared with all other beings. We have built-up debts with all the beings in this long sainsāra, that needs to be paid off (see "Kamma, Debt, and Meditation"). Thus, sharing the merits becomes a "visañkhāra" or "unwinding the power of the previous sañkhāra." This is thus one way to lessen the impact of previous bad kamma vipāka.
- The Buddha said that one always needs to do good, meritorious deeds. Giving is especially encouraged. One could turn these deeds to visañkhāra by sharing the merits. By the way, sharing merits does not remove any possible good outcomes for oneself. Those were already acquired in the original act itself. The key here is not to wish for "profits in return" because such thoughts are associated with greed (of course, this cannot be stopped by sheer willpower until one comprehends anicca).

3. The third kind of abhisañkhāra, "āneñjābhi sañkhāra" is associated with higher (arūpāvacara) jhānic states attained via Samatha Bhāvanā, such as breathing meditation or kasiṇa meditation. They are pursued to achieve higher meditative states and thus are pursued with a greedy thought (pleasure).

- These meditation techniques do not help with the cleansing of the $\bar{a} s a v \bar{a}$; see "Sansaric Habits, Character (Gati) and Cravings (Āsava)" and "The Way to Nibbāna - Removal of Āsavas."

4. Jhānic states may be attained automatically when pursuing Nibbāna (not anāriya jhānā but Ariya $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a})$. The goal here was to achieve Nibbāna, and thus no sañkhāra are accumulated in this process. This raises another question: Is seeking Nibbāna another type of craving ( $\bar{a} s a v a$ )?

- Nibbāna is attained via removing craving for everything in this world: "rāgakkhayo Nibbānan, Dosakkhayo Nibbānan, Mohakkhayo Nibbānan."
- "Craving" for Nibbāna is called chanda (one of The Four Bases of Mental Power (Cattāro Iddhipāda). This "liking for Nibbāna" is the key factor that fuels the other three: viriya (effort), citta (thoughts), and vīmaìsā (investigations).
- Thus in seeking Nibbāna, one is not craving for anything in this world. One is thinking and working diligently to comprehend the true nature of the world (vīmaimsā), and with that wisdom gained, the mind automatically gives up craving for anything.

Kāya, Vac̄̄, and Mano Saǹkhāra

1. Sañkhāra can lead to body movements, speech, and thoughts; they are respectively called Kāya, Vacī, and Mano Sañkhāra. If those are not done with greed, hate, or ignorance, they are merely sañkhāra. But if they are done with greed, hate, or ignorance, they become abhisañkhāra.

- The recent post, "Sañkhāra - What It Really Means," for a detailed description.

2. Briefly, mano sañkhāra are automatically generated based on our gati. All our thoughts that make body parts move (except speech) are kāya sañkhāra. Vacī sañkhāra are generated when we move our mouth, lips, tongue, etc. to speak.

- When we think about doing something, we "play it out" in our mind (for example, reciting something silently in mind). That is also vacī sankkhāra and are called vitakka and vicāra; when we think and contemplate Dhamma concepts, they are savitakka and savicāra, with the prefix "sa" denoting "good."
- Thus 'talking to oneself' is done with $v a c \bar{\imath}$ sañkhāra; see "Correct Meaning of Vacī Sañkhāra."
- Mano sañkhāra are feelings (vedanā) and perceptions (sañ̃̃ $\bar{a}$ ) that arise automatically due to a sensory input that comes via a kamma vipāka.

3. Thus, it is clear that most enjoyments that we experience come through vacī sañkhāra. We can be sitting in one place quietly and generating enormous amounts of vacī sañkhāra, thoroughly enjoying the experience. Most people do this when they go to bed at night while waiting to fall asleep.

- It is a good idea to try to keep the mind away from defiled thoughts while falling asleep; this can be done by getting into the habit of thinking about a Dhamma concept, or listening to the chanting of sutta (pirith), keeping the volume low (like playing background music); see, "Sutta Chanting (with Pāli Text)." It will be easier to fall asleep and have a restfil sleep too.
For more details, see "Kamma are Done with Sañkhāra - Types of Sañkhāra."


### 3.2.3 Sañkhāra - Life is a Bundle of Sañkhāra

## Revised November 26, 2017

In the previous introductory post, "What is "San"?", we introduced the term "sañkhāra", and in the next post sañkhāra was discussed in somewhat technical terms. Since it is such an important term, in this post I will discuss it in a bit more detail.

1. Buddha Dhamma is based on the fact that all "sañkhāra" are done in vain: "sabbe sañkhāra aniccā."
 (thought, speech, bodily actions) done while living in "this world" of 31 realms. This includes breathing, walking, or thinking about the chores for the day.

- All sañkhāra arise in the mind. We cannot utter a word or lift a finger without generating sañkhāra in the mind. It happens very fast, so it feels like we just speak or do things; see, "Sañkhāra - What It Really Means" and "Difference Between Dhammā and Sañkhāra."

2. So, all sañkhāra involve thinking (some could be manifested as speech or bodily actions), but some actions like breathing happens without CONSCIOUS thinking. Those are just sañkhāra that do not have kammic consequences.

- However, sañkhāra become abhisañkhāra when they involve conscious thinking with lobha, dosa, moha (or alobha, adosa, amoha) coming to play roles. Those abhisañkhāra have bad (or good) kammic consequences.
- Thus even an Arahant keeps doing sañkhāra until death. But an Arahant does not do abhisañkhāra, a "stronger version" of sañkhāra that will lead to accumulating mental energy (kamma) for future repercussions (kamma vipāka) until that kammic energy is exhausted.
- In order for a sañkhāra to become an abhisañkhāra, one of the six root causes (greed, hate, ignorance, generosity, kindness, wisdom) need to be involved.

3. If the "bad roots" of greed, hate, and ignorance are involved, then those thoughts, speech, actions will create kamma bïja (or energy seeds) that either lead to bad outcomes during a life or to rebirth in the lowest four realms (apāyā). These are apuññābhisañkhāra ("apuñña" + "abhisañkhāra" where "apuñña" means non-meritorious).

- On the other hand, abhisañkhāra done with the "good roots" of generosity, kindness, wisdom either lead to good outcomes during a life or to rebirth in the realms at or above the human realm. These are puññābhisañkhāra ("puñña" + "abhisañkhāra" where "puñña" means meritorious).
- If no roots are involved, they are just sañkhāra, and their kamma seeds are duds; there is no energy in them. Basically one can say, sañkhāra (that are not abhisañkhāra) do not generate kamma seeds.

4. Let us take some examples. When we see someone is walking with a knife in hand, we cannot come to a conclusion about what kind of sankkhāra is that person is generating.

- He may be just taking the knife from one place to another, in which case, it is just sañkhāra.
- If he is planning to stab someone, then he is generating apuññābhisañkhāra.
- If he is planning to rescue an animal who got entangled in a trap, then he is generating puññābhisañkhāra.
- In any type of speech or bodily action, what really matters is the INTENTION behind the speech or action.

5. In another example, we may see two people have built and donated two hospitals for the poor. Even though both seem to be "good actions", we cannot say both had puññābhisañkhāra. One could have had an ulterior motive of getting elected in an upcoming election, rather than thoughts of loving kindness for poor people. In that case, he would be generating mostly apuñ̃̄ābhisañkhāra, even though there may be some puñ̃̄ābhisañkhāra involved too.

- This is why sorting out kamma is impossible for anyone but a Buddha. Some of our actions could involve both kinds of abhisañkhāra. For example, if we see a bird digging up a worm and chase the bird away, we would have done both kinds of abhisañkhāra: Saving the life of the worm is a puññābhisañkhāra, but we also did an apuññabhisaṅkhāra because we denied the bird of its meal. Both types of abhisañkhāra can bear fruits (vipāka) in the future.

6. There is this famous "trolley problem" in ethics, where one could save five people from death by sacrificing the life of a single person; see, WebLink: WIKI: Trolley problem

This "thought experiment" has been debated for many years. We can make the following observations based on Buddha Dhamma:

- If one decides to take action (i.e., save five by sacrificing one), then one will acquire "good kamma" for saving the five lives, and "bad kamma" for killing the other person. Both types can bear fruits in the future.
- But it goes even deeper. What if the person that we sacrificed was an Arahant or at least a Sotāpanna, and the other five were normal people or even criminals? Then we would have acquired much more bad kamma than good kamma.

7. When someone is talking or doing some bodily action, we can at least try to guess what kind of sañkhāra are involved. But if a person is just sitting down quietly, he/she could be generating any kind of sañkhāra ranging from just thinking about whether or not to go out for a walk (just sañkhāra) to planning a murder (worst kind of apuñ̃̄ābhisañkhāra).

- We generate more abhisañkhāra via thinking than via speech or actions.
- When we have disagreement with other people, we normally do not hit the person or even refrain from saying anything. But depending on the purity of our minds, we may be generating a little to unimaginable amounts of apuñ̃̄̄abhisañkhāra. This is a key factors that most people tend to disregard.
- If someone's outward actions/speech seem to be "disciplined", we automatically assume that he/she is a good person; and the person may be trying to fool himselfherself by displaying that outward appearance. But if the mind is impure, there could be a lot of hateful/greedy thoughts in that mind. Whether or not any verbal or bodily actions are committed, those thoughts still accumulate kamma seeds.

8. Therefore, it is utterly useless to judge other people. Each person has true awareness AND control only over one's own thoughts, speech, actions, which are ultimately based on the intentions.

- But we know exactly what our own intentions are. And that is what really matters. We may be able to fool a court of law by hiring a good lawyer, but we will have to reap the results of what we sow in the future at some point.

9. This is the basis of ānāpāna meditation, to be aware of the types of sañkhāra involved in a given action; see, "7. What is Ānāpāna?." If someone asks us to join in fishing trip, we need to think what kind of kamma will be associated with killing fish for our pleasure; this is the basic form of "k $\bar{a} y \bar{a} n u p a s s a n \bar{a}$." Contemplate on any bodily action one is about to do and abstain from doing it if it involves apuñnābhisañkhāra (in this case taking the lives of several fish for our pleasure).

- Bodily actions are easier to prevent, because they take time and we have time to contemplate.
- Speech is a bit more tricky, because speech comes out faster than carrying out bodily action. Still one can stop oneself even after uttering a few sentences.
- Thoughts are the hardest, and that is why "cittānupassana" comes after one has practiced "kāyānupassanā."

10. If one wants to start doing ānāpāna meditation, one should first control one's bodily actions, and the more one does it, the easier it becomes. And then it also becomes easier to control one speech. When both actions and speech are brought under control, one's thoughts will be easier to control too.

- Furthermore, willfully engaging in puññābhisañkhāra also helps to keep apuññābhisañkhāra at bay. By concentrating on meritorious deeds, one's mind is automatically turned away from thinking about unmeritorious deeds.
- This is why real Buddhist meditation is much more than just formal sitting meditation. The key is to purify the mind, and avoid defiling the mind at anytime. One could be doing the breath meditation for a lifetime, but may not get anywhere in purifying the mind.
- This is explained in detail and how to start practice in the "Living Dhamma" section. One does not even need to believe in rebirth in the beginning.

11. Nibbāna is attained not by abstaining from both puñ̃n̄abhisañkhāra and apuñ̃ābhisañkhāra as some suggest. On the way to Nibbāna, one needs to do puññābhisañkhāra AND also engage in learning Dhamma so that one could comprehend the true nature of all types of sañkhāra, i.e., that all sañkhāra are
 enough to purify the mind.

- Ultimately, just by doing puññābhisañkhāra is not enough to purify the mind. However, one MUST start there before being able to comprehend anicca, dukkha, anatta; see, "Living Dhamma."

Next, "Difference Between Dhamma and Sañkhāra",

### 3.2.4 Difference Between Dhammā and Sañkhāra

Revised March 22, 2017; April 17, 2017; November 5, 2017; July 19, 2018; August 9, 2019; January 11, 2020; June 7, 2022 (\#8)

## Introduction

We will discuss the difference between sañkhāra, sañkhata, and dhamm $\bar{a}$. Some of the descriptions given here are not compatible with meanings given in many current Theravāda texts. However, they are fully compatible with the Tipitaka. Please send me a comment (lal@puredhamma.net) if you find evidence to the contrary.

- First, it is essential to remember that the word "dhamma" can mean somewhat different things in different contexts. In "Buddha Dhamma", it means the "Buddha's teachings."
- Dhamma (with a long "a" at the end) is mostly used to indicate energy created by the mind. It is also called a kamma bïja.
- But "sabbe dhamm $\bar{a}$ " in "sabbe dhamm $\bar{a}$ anatt $\bar{a}$ " includes everything, all phenomena belonging to this world of 31 realms. Nibbāna is not in this world, as discussed below.
- I always give links to other posts. If one needs more information or clarification, one should read them. That will make the concept "really sink in."


## Famous Dhammapada verses

1. There is confusion about the terms sañkhāra and dhammā in the Dhammapada verses 277, 278, and 279; the first lines in those three verses are:

- "Sabbe sañkhāra anicca" or "all sañkhāra are anicca (they give rise to sañkhata that we cannot maintain to our satisfaction in the long run)." A better way to say it is that it is futile to seek a "permanent happy existence in the rebirth process. Of course, we must make necessary plans to live this life.
- "Sabbe sañkhāra dukkhä" or "all sañkhāra eventually lead to dukkha (suffering)."
- "Sabbe dhammā anattā" or "all dhammā are without substance (not fruitful) at the end."


## Sañkhārā̄ Are Our Thoughts

2. Sañkhāra are involved in thinking, speaking, and acting based on our intentions, hopes, and dreams. It is essential to realize that sañkhāra are our current thoughts.

- "Sañkhāra" include all three types (kāya sañkhāra, vacī sañkhāra, mano sañkhāra) that lead to any action, speech, or just thought (in that order). They all arise in citta (our thoughts).
- We say "Hello" to someone with vacī sañkhāra. If we walk from the living room to the kitchen to get a drink, that is done with kāya sañkhāra. But those do not initiate kamma vipāka and are kammically neutral. But if we verbally abuse someone, that is done with strong vacī sañkhāra (abhisañkhāra), and that will have kamma vipāka.
- More on sañkhāra at, "Sańkhāra - What It Really Means."


## Sañkhāra Give Rise to Sañkhata

3. Strong sañkhāra (or abhisañkhāra) that we generate may lead to the arising of an inert object or a living form. It leads to the arising of a sanikhata (sankata in Sinhala).

- If someone comes up with the idea of building a house, then the following steps may happen. He will carefully think about it (mano sañkhāra, vacī sañkhāra), and may talk about it with others (vacī sañkhāra). If he decides to do it, then he may take action (kāya sañkhāra) to make it happen. In this case, our sañkhāra gave rise to a house, and that house is a sañkhata (sankata in Sinhala).

4. When we do something with the body (i.e., body movement), that is controlled by kāya sañkhāra that arises in our minds.

- We are not robots (most lower animals are like robots). We can control our thoughts, speech, and actions. Sometimes we may do things automatically. But if we want to, we can change our speech or actions. Just try it out.
- When we speak or talk to ourselves, that involves vacī sañkhāra; those also arise in our minds; see, "Correct Meaning of Vacī Sañkhāra."
- Mano sañkhāra are thoughts that arise automatically (due to kamma vipāka and our "gati").

5. Building a house in \#3 above may not involve moral/immoral intentions. One may not generate strong sañkhāra (called abhisañkhāra) that can create kamma bïja (dhammā), that can bring kamma vipāka in the future. Building a house is just a kammically-neutral action.

- However, planning to kill a human, for example, involves mano sañkhāra and vacī sañkhāra (in the planning stage) and then doing it with kāya sañkhāra.
- In this case, all those sañkhāra are abhisañkhāra, that can bring future bad kamma vipāka, in the form of rebirth in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$, which includes the animal realm.


## Abhisañkhāra Are Strong Sañkhāra

6. Abhisañkhāra (potent or strong sañkhāra) give rise to kamma bīja, which are also part of dhammā. These are energies created by javana citta; see, "Javana of a Citta - The Root of Mental Power." They can bring kamma vipāka.

- At the moment of death, such a strong kamma bïja or a dhammā comes to the mind via "manañca paṭicca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviññāṇamं." That new viñ̃n̄̄ṇa is the paṭisandhi viññāṇa for the new life; see, "What are rūpa? - Dhammā are rūpa too!."
- Therefore, now a new life is formed as a result of that abhisañkhāra. This new life-form is also a saǹkhata because it arose due to that abhisañkhāra.

7. That sañkhata (sankata in Sinhala) came into existence because of that abhisañkhāra during that immoral act. It came to life at a later time via kamma vipāka.

- Moral abhisañkhāra or puñña abhisañkhāra lead to good kamma bīja/dhammā that will lead to good rebirths (in human, deva, and Brahma realms).
- Immoral abhisañkhāra or apuñña abhisañkhāra lead to bad kamma bīja/dhammā that will lead to unfortunate rebirths (in the apa $\bar{a} \bar{a}$ ).
- That is the link between mind and matter. An abhisañkhāra that arose in the mind led to the sañkhata (sankata in Sinhala), which is a rūpa (made of inert matter).
- That house in \#3 was built using existing rūpa. But it is also possible to "create" new matter if one has abhiñ̃̄̄a powers. Both are called sañkhata (sankata in Sinhala).


## All Rūpa Are Sañkhata (Sankata in Sinhala)

8. Any rūpa (including visible objects, sounds, smells, tastes, and body touches) that we experience in this world is a sañkhata (sankata in Sinhala), and they all undergo unpredictable change and eventually are destroyed.

- The point is that we make our future via our actions, speech, and thoughts; these are (abhi) sañkhāra.
- However, any of these new sañkhata (sankata in Sinhala) will not last forever. Even if one is born in deva or Brahma realms, kammic energy will run out one day. Then one will be directed to the next birth depending on the most potent kamma bīja/dhammā present at that time.
- The only difference is that one will be subjected to much suffering in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$, while one will get to enjoy a "good life" in a higher realm. We all have been going through this "unending journey through most of the 31 realms," which does not have a traceable beginning.


## No Rūpa (Sañkhata) Can Be Maintained in the Way We Like

9. Another critical point is that the net result of all these "journeys through various realms" is suffering. We tend to do more immoral things in "seeking pleasure" and are born mostly in the apāy $\bar{a}$.

- Any sañkhata (sankata in Sinhala) that we make for ourselves (whether it is a house or a new life in the deva realm) cannot be maintained to our satisfaction in the long run. The home will need repairs and may even get burned down or flooded. A new life in the deva realm will end one day, and one will be back to square one.
- That is why it is said that "Sabbe sañkhāra aniccā." It is there because any sañkhata (sankata in Sinhala) (that arise due to abhisañkhāra) has a finite lifetime and is subjected to unexpected changes (viparināma) during that existence.


## That Anicca Nature Leads to Suffering

10. When we don't get to maintain things to our satisfaction we suffer. Even if one makes a billion dollars and has a lovely family, one will have to leave all that behind when one dies. But even before that there could many other instances where one suffers (deaths of friends/family, diseases, loss of property, etc). That is the viparināma nature that arises due to anicca nature.

- And the root cause of that suffering is sañkhāra (more correctly abhisañkhāra). That is why it is said, "Sabbe saǹkhāra dukkhā."
- Again, sañkhārā are our CURRENT thoughts; as soon as those thoughts go past, they become nämagotta or memories.

11. The only thing not destroyed is nāmagotta, which are just records of "all events" (sañkhāra and abhisañkhāra) of any given lifestream; see, "What Reincarnates? - Concept of a Lifestream."

- All these different terms could be confusing at first. They will all make sense eventually because they are all pieces of a big puzzle.


## Nibbāna Not Included in $\operatorname{dhamma} \bar{a}$

12. Ven. Walpola Rahula Thero, in his famous and otherwise excellent book, "What the Buddha Taught," did not get it right when he interpreted those verses. He included Nibbāna in dhammā (p. 57 of 1974 edition). He took the difference between dhammā and sañkhāra to be Nibbāna.

- But as you can see, sañkhāra and dhammā are two different entities. Sañkhāra is what we generate in our minds.
- Strong sañkhāra or abhisañkhāra lead to the creation of kammic energy, and that is a dhammā or a kamma bīja.
- However, there are many dhammā other than kamma bīja, and the only abhisañkhāra lead to kamma bïja. But both sañkhāra or abhisañkhāra lead to memory records or nāma gotta. Also, dhammā includes concepts and even Buddha Dhamma.

13. Furthermore, Nibbāna does not belong to this world. Therefore, to say Nibbāna is anatta is a terrible mistake. There are four ultimate realities (paramattha): Thoughts (citta), mental factors (cetasika), matter (rūpa), and Nibbāna.

- The first three can describe everything "in this world." Nibbāna does not belong to "this world."
- Furthermore, anatta is also mistranslated as just "no-self." The problems with the traditional interpretation of anicca, dukkha, anatta are discussed in "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta - Wrong Interpretations."


## Nāmagotta are Permanent

14. When we do abhisañkhāra (strong types of sañkhāra), that lead to the formation of good or bad kamma bīja, or dhammā. That strong kamma bïja can lead to the arising of a sañkhata (sankata in Sinhala) (living beings and even inert things).

- And nāmagotta (pronounced "nāma goththā") are just records of what happened.

15. Unlike sañkhāra, kamma büja, and sañkhata, nāmagotta are PERMANENT (they are only records). As stated in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Najīrati Sutta (SN 1.76)": "Rūpaí jīrati maccānam், nāmagottaì na jīrati," or "material things decay and get destroyed, but nāmagotta do not decay."

- That is why someone with abhiñ̃n̄̄ powers can go back at any point in time to recall past events; also see, "Recent Evidence for Unbroken Memory Records (HSAM)."
- Whenever we do something (a sañkhāra), a "record" ("nāmagotta") of it is made. Thus for a given sentient being, a record of all activities from the beginning-less time survives and is one's nāmagotta. All previous lives and all activities of past lives are in that "record stream," like a movie reel (not physical, of course).
- Someone who has developed abhiññ̄a through anāriya jhānā can trace back that nāmagotta for several past lives. But with well-developed abhiññā powers, one can probe a much deeper history. A Buddha can trace back as far back as he pleases with astonishing speed. (Yet he could not see "a beginning' to any sentient being's nāmagotta). That is why there is no traceable beginning to the rebirth process.)

16. It is easier to explain this "nāmagotta" with an example. Let us take two popular US presidents, John Kennedy and Ronald Reagan. Their "physical bodies" are no longer with us, i.e., their " $\overline{\bar{u} p a " ~ o r ~ p h y s i c a l ~}$ bodies (which were sankhata (sankata in Sinhala)) decayed long ago. But their nāmagotta are with us to a certain extent. How much of their memories or "nāmagotta" remains with a given person depends on how closely they are associated with them. The moment we say "John Kennedy" or "Ronald Reagan," their picture comes to mind. Not only that, those who met them may remember that vividly and probably can recall that event just like watching a movie.

- Similarly, we can recall many of the "events" of our lives or parts of our "nāmagotta"; some young children can remember some events in their "nāmagotta" in their previous lives.
- What can be done with abhiñña powers is very similar. The abhiñ̃̃̄ $\bar{a}$ capabilities enormously stretch the memory or the ability to "look back" at past events in one's nāma gotta.


## Anatta Nature

17. We are subjected to suffering because we make sañkhāra (or plans,) and since they do not work out in the LONG RUN. Therefore, those sañkhāra lead to dukkha at the end, and thus to helplessness in the long run (anatta).

- But nāma gotta or other types of dhamm $\bar{a}$ does not lead to suffering. Therefore, dhamm $\bar{a}$ do not have the characteristics of anicca and dukkha.
- But there is nothing substantial to be had with dhamma $\bar{a}$, too; they are also anatta.

18. The Buddha's last words were, "vaya dhammā sañkhāra, appamādena sampādeta." Everything in this world (including sañkhāra) is dhammā. Only "sañkhāra are vaya dhammā", i.e., those that lead to one's demise (i.e., lead to adverse outcomes). Therefore, the Buddha instructed us to "sort out such 'san' without delay" ("san" "pādeta," which rhymes as "sampādeta").

- "Vaya" means destruction; here, it means leading to the destruction of one's future: sañkhāra are vaya dhammā.
- Sañkhāra are those these three types (mano, vacī, and kāya sañkhāra) that lead to "san" for extending saysāra; see, "What is "San"? - Meaning of Sansāra (or Samssāra)."
- Thus the Buddha was admonishing the bhikkhus that all sañkhāra are "vaya dhammä" (those leading to adverse outcomes), and therefore to comprehend what sañkhāra are.

19. In the "WebLink: suttacentral: Najirati Sutta (SN 1.76)," the nature of nāma gotta is clearly stated:

- "Rūpaì jīrati maccānaì, nāmagottaì na jīrati," or, "material things are subject to decay or jirati (pronounced "jeerathi") and death or destruction (maccanam; pronounced 'machchānam"), but nāmagotta do not decay.
- The "rūpa" of those two US presidents we mentioned earlier have decayed and gone. But their nāmagotta remain with us. We can access our nāmagotta with memory. Someone with abhiñ̃̃̄̄a powers can look at a complete nāmagotta not only spanning a current life but also going back to many lives. All of our nāmagotta, back to beginning-less time, are there whether accessed or not.

20. Dhammā are causes (energies) that we create with our minds with javana power (via abhisañkhāra.) Dhammā means "to bear." In fact, we create things that will bring NET suffering. Thus, they are without any substance. Nāmagotta and paññāti or concepts are also without any substance. They are all anatta. There is no point in "hanging on to them."

- Even Buddha Dhamma, which enables us to attain Nibbāna, should ultimately be abandoned (at Arahanthood). The Buddha compared Buddha Dhamma to a raft that one uses to cross a river. Once one crosses the river, there is no point in carrying the raft on one's back. So, even Buddha Dhamma is of value only until one reaches Nibbāna.
- Only Nibbāna, which is attained by "giving up EVERYTHING in this material world" is atta or "of value"; see, "Anatta - the Opposite of Which Atta?" and "Dasa Akusala and Anatta - The Critical Link."

More information on the connection between dhammā, kamma bīja, and paṭisandhi viññāna is at, "Dhammā, Kamma, Sañkhāra, Mind - Critical Connections."

### 3.2.5 <br> Kamma are Done with Sañkhāra - Types of Sañkhāra

May 13, 2019; revised May 14, 2019; August 27, 2022
This replaces an old post in this section entitled, "Sañkhāra and Kammā, Viññāṇa and Kamma Bīaa." I have re-written it with a new title.

## Origin of the Words Sañkhāra and Sansāra

1. All kamma are done with sañkhāra. However, only abhisañkhāra leads to strong kamma that can fuel the rebirth process.

- It is important to realize that sañkhāra involves everything we do, to live in "this world" of 31 realms. These include breathing, walking, eating, and pretty much everything we do; see "Complexity of the Mind - Viñ̃̃āna and Sañkhāra."
- Anything anyone does, needs to start as a thought in one's mind. For example, to lift a leg, one's mind must decide on that first, even though it appears automatic. Anything one does, starts with a thought of "san," i.e., something to do with "this world"; see "San" and "List of "San" Words and Other Pāli Roots." All these belong to sañkhāra ("san" + "khāra" or action).
- Even an Arahant has to be engaged in sañkhāra until Parinibbāna or death of the physical body.

2. Sañkhāra becomes abhisañkhāra when acting with greed, hate, and ignorance; see, "Nibbāna - Is it Difficult to Understand?."

- The sansāric process or the rebirth process is fueled by abhisañkhāra. The prefix "abhi" means "strong."
- An Arahant does not generate abhisañkhāra, i.e., thoughts of greed, hate, and ignorance.
- It must be noted that an Arahant would not generate puññābhisañkhāra (puñña abhisañkhāra) but can do puñña kiriya; see, "Kilesa - Relationship to Akusala, Kusala, and Puñña Kamma."
- Kiriya means "actions" or "deeds" without the involvement of greed, hate, and ignorance.
- One's puñ̃n̄abhisañkhāra turns to puñña kiriya when one fully comprehends Tilakkhaṇa (anicca, dukkha, anatta).

3. Therefore, the sansāric process - or the rebirth process - is fueled by abhisañkhāra.

- The word saysāra comes from "san" + "sāra" where "sāra" means"beneficial"; see, "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Samisāra)."
- One will have the perception that "this world is beneficial or fruitful" as long as one cannot grasp that most births in this world are filled with suffering.
- Even though some realms (like human, deva, and Brahma) may have long stretches of "pleasures", those are negligible compared to long stretches of suffering in the ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$ (the four lower realms including the animal realm).
- Sansāric process is fueled by (abhi)sañkhāra. This is why an Arahant will not be reborn in the 31 realms of this world. $\mathrm{He} /$ she would not generate abhisañkhāra.


## Connection Between Sañkhāra and Kammā

4. Kamm $\bar{a}$ is any action by us via body, speech, and thoughts (k $\bar{a} y a, v a c \bar{c}$, and mano kamm $\bar{a}$ ). Those three types of $k a m m a \overline{a r e}$ initiated by our thoughts, i.e., $k \bar{a} y a, v a c \overline{\text { a }}$, and mano sañkhāra.

- We can see that kammā and sañkhāra are closely related.
- The Buddha said, "cetanā hain, bhikkhave, kammain vadāmi", i.e., "Bhikkhus, I say kammā is intention." [WebLink: suttacentral: AN 6.63. Nibbedhikasutta] As we will see below, that intention is in sañkhāra, embedded in the types of cetasika (mental factors) as we will see below.
- "Intention" depends on the types of cetasika in a thought (citta). For example, in a thought with "greedy intention", will have the lobha cetasika, but it may also have other cetasika like issa (jealousy).

5. Let us take some examples to illustrate this relationship. If you swing your arm, that is a $\bar{a} y a \operatorname{kamm} \bar{a}$, i.e., that action involves moving a body part. That was initiated by kāya sañkhāra generated in mind.

- Now, if you swung your arm to get hold of a cup, that is a kammically neutral action (kammā) or just a sañkhāra. You did not do either a moral or immoral act. The intention was to grab a cup, which did not involve any sobhana or asobhana cetasika. That is called a kiriya (kriya in Sanskrit). [kiriya :[nt.] action; deed; performance.]
- On the other hand, if you swung your arm to hit someone, it was done with anger. So, the dosa cetasika (an asobhana cetasika) was in your thoughts. So, it was an apuññäbhi sañkhāra. It can also be called an akusala/apuñña kammā or an immoral deed.
- If you put your arms together to pay respects to the Buddha at a temple, that was done with saddh $\bar{a}$ cetasika (a sobhana cetasika), and thus it was a puñ̃āahhisañkhāra. It can also be called a kusala/puñña kammā or a moral deed.

6. We can see that all kamma involve the mind; they are initiated by sañkhāra.

- Mano sañkhāra are thoughts that come automatically to the mind when a sense object is experienced.
- Then if that object is of interest, we start generating conscious thoughts (speaking to ourselves)without talking and then we may speak out; both are vacī sañkhāra.
- If we then start moving body parts to respond, those are initiated by kāya sañkhāra.
- Also see "Sañkhāra - What It Really Means" and "Correct Meaning of Vacī Sañkhāra."

7. Thus it is important to note that kāya sañkhāra are also thoughts. They are responsible for body movements, i.e., kāya kammā. They are also responsible for making "bodily gestures" or "kāya viñ̃natti."

- In other words, all sañkhāra are generated by the mental body (gandhabba). It commands the brain to move body parts or to move lips and tongue to speak; see "Our Mental Body - Gandhabba" and other posts on gandhabba.
- Furthermore, k $\bar{a} y a \operatorname{kamma}$, vacī kammā, and mano kammā are all initiated by the respective types of sañkhāra: kāya, vacī, and mano sañkhāra.
- More information on these terms can be found at, "Sañkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka."


## Saǹkhāra and Kammā Can be Good or Bad

8. Therefore, sañkhāra can be understood in a deeper sense by realizing that types of sañkhāra generated are defined by the types of cetasika (mental factors) in one's thoughts.

- Some citta (thoughts) do not have either good (sobhana) cetasika or bad (asobhana) cetasika. Such a citta is said to have kammically neutral sañkhāra. Such kammically neutral sañkhāra involve only the types of cetasika like vedanā, sañ̃ña, and viriya that do not belong to either sobhana or asobhana categories.
- Kammically relevant sañkhāra (or abhisañkhāra) involve either sobhana cetasika (for kusala kammā) or asobhana cetasika (for akusala kammā).
- Therefore, it is easy to see that abhisañkhāra that involve sobhana cetasika are puñña abhisañkhāra or puñn̄ābhisañkhāra. Those that involve asobhana cetasika are apuñn̄̄bhisañkhāra; see, "Cetasika (Mental Factors)."

9. Knowing a bit of Abhidhamma can help clarify certain key dhamma concepts. It is not hard to learn. Since Abhidhamma was finalized after the Parinibbāna of the Buddha (see, "Abhidhamma Introduction"), these details are not in the Sutt $\bar{a}$.

- Now we can get a new perspective on cetasika, in terms of "san." As we know, "san" is what keeps us in the rebirth process or saimsāra; see, "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Samisāra)."
- We can see that such asobhana cetasika are what give rise to "san" in apuññābhi sañkhāra, which leads to rebirth in the bad realms.
- On the other hand, sobhana cetasika are what give rise to "san" in puññābhi sañkhāra, which leads to rebirth in the good realms.


## Puññābhisañkhāra Are Also Done With Avijjā

10. In WebLink: suttacentral: Paticcasamuppāda Vibhañga (Vb6), the term "avijjā paccayā sañkhārä" in akusala-mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda (that leads to suffering) is explained as follows: "Tattha katame avijjā paccayā sañkhārā? Puññābhisañkhāro, apuññābhisañkhāro, āneñjābhisañkhāro, kāyasañkhāro, vacīsañkhāro, cittāañkhāro."

Translated: ‘What is avijjā paccayā sañkhārā? Puññābhisañkhāra, apuñn̄ābhisañkhāra, āneñjābhisañkhāra, kāyasañkhāra, vacīsañkhāra, cittāañkhāra." (Here, cittāsañkhāra is the same as manosañkhāra).

- It needs to be noted that these are all abhisañkhāra, even though the verse is simplified as "avijjāa paccayā saǹkhārā."
- There are two categories of sañkhāra mentioned there: one category refers to types of kamma accrued. The other refers to whether they are done by the body, speech, or the mind.
- Therefore, sañkhāra has a much deeper meaning than just "mental formations", even though that is better than the translation for viñãāna as consciousness.


## 11. A question may arise about how puñ̃ā̄̄hisañkhāra (or meritorious thoughts) arise with avijjā.

A simple answer is that until one FULLY comprehends anicca, dukkha, and anatta (i.e., that anywhere in this world of 31 realms is not devoid of suffering), one does even meritorious deeds with expectation of "good outcomes/ good rebirths" in this world.

Therefore, until one FULLY comprehends anicca, dukkha, and anatta, one WILL have avijjā even when engaged in "meritorious deeds".

## Do We Need to Avoid Good Sañkhāra (Puñña Abhisañkhāra)?

12. However, this does not mean we should stay away from puññābhi sañkhāra. We MUST engage in puñ̃ābhi sañkhāra to avoid rebirth in the bad realms and also to cultivate morality, and also to prepare the necessary environment (especially to be healthy and to avoid poverty).

- The Buddha has emphasized the need to engage in meritorious deeds (puñ̃āabhi sañkhāra) in many Suttā; see, for example, "WebLink: suttacentral: Sumana Sutta (AN 5.31)."
- Nibbāna is attained via realizing the fruitlessness in rebirth anywhere in the 31 realms. For that, one needs to comprehend anicca, dukkha, and anatta, and for that one needs to attain the correct mindset by engaging in puñ̃na kammā (puññābhi sañkhāra).
- Once one FULLY comprehends anicca, dukkha, and anatta (i.e., when one becomes an Arahant), one's puññābhi sañkhāra will turn into puñña kiriyā. This is a subtle point.


## Instead of Puñ̃āābhisañkhāra an Arahant will do Puñña Kiriyā

13. Once one FULLY comprehends anicca, dukkha, and anatta (i.e., when one becomes an Arahant), one's puññäbhi sañkhāra will turn into puñna kiriyā without kammic consequences. Thus one will do meritorious deeds without any expectations (this is what is meant by "viññạna nirodha" too).

- Then those meritorious actions will not lead to rebirth even in the "good realms." An Arahant does not wish to be reborn in any realm, because he/she has seen the "anicca nature" of all 31 realms. This is a subtle point.
- This last part may not be clear to everyone. This is the "previously unheard Dhamma" that is hard to grasp ("pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu" that the Buddha mentioned in the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta).


### 3.3 Nibbāna

- Nibbāna - Is it Difficult to Understand?
$\circ$ The Four Stages in Attaining Nibbāna
- What Are Rūpa? (Relation to Nibbāna)
- Nirāmisa Sukha
- Does the First Noble Truth Describe only Suffering?
- Nirodha and Vaya - Two Different Concepts
- Nibbāna "Exists", but Not in This World


### 3.3.1 Nibbāna - Is it Difficult to Understand?

Revised December 6, 2016 (\#9); Re-revised December 20, 2016; November 22, 2018; January 3, 2019; June 5, 2022; September 17, 2022
Our distresses and sufferings are due to our defiled minds. As one purifies one's mind, one starts experiencing Nibbāna.

- I advise reading through any post one time without clicking on the links first. Once you get the main idea, the links can clarify the other related key concepts.
- Nibbāna may not be easy to attain, but it is easy to figure out what it is. You don't need complex concepts like emptiness (sunyātā) and Bodhi citta to describe or understand Nibbāna.

1. The Buddha said we suffer because of the defilements we have in our minds: greed, hate, ignorance, and other mental qualities that arise from them. Nibbāna has many synonyms, and "Nivana" ("cooling down") is one that conveys the above idea better; Nivana, which is also called "niveema" (子ిలోఅ) in Sinhala, conveys the same idea as nirāmisa sukha.

- As one moves away from hate, greed, and ignorance, one can feel oneself "cooling down" INSIDE. Nibbāna ("Nib"+"bāna", where "bāna" means bonds) and thus Nibbāna means to break free of bonds that make one bound to the 31 realms.
- I like the word Nivana or niveema because it conveys the benefits of the Path as one experiences gradual "cooling down" until it becomes complete at Nibbāna; see,"Three Kinds of Happiness - What is Nirāmisa Sukha?," "How to Taste Nibbāna," and "Learning Buddha Dhamma Leads to Nirāmisa Sukha."

2. To "cool down", we first need to know what is "burning" ("tāpa" in Pāli; pronounced "thāpa"); our minds are constantly burning due to greed, hate, and ignorance, and we don't even realize this; see the "Living Dhamma" section and specifically the post, "Satipatthāna Sutta - Relevance to Suffering in This Life."

- This "burning" is worse in the lowest four realms or the "ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$." Thus one needs to understand the first Noble Truth about suffering, to realize the value of Nibbāna. There are several posts at various levels on the real, deeper meaning of what the Buddha meant by "suffering in this world of 31 realms."
- Our sufferings are masked by the apparent sensory pleasures, which do not last. A Sotāpanna understands suffering better than a normal person, and as one gets to the higher stages of Nibbāna one will be able to see the meaning of the First Noble Truth even more clearly.

3. The key point is that one CAN start feeling "nivana" RIGHT NOW. Nivana is experienced by giving up the ten defilements (see, "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)"). One does not have to get rid of all of them at once, which is not advised either. One should get rid of the BIGGEST ones that can be easily removed.

- Killing, stealing, lying (and gossiping, slandering, verbally abusing), engaging in sexual misconduct, and being intoxicated (not just with alcohol or drugs, but also with wealth, power, etc.) are the first to be considered.
- Just abandon the relatively easy ones for a few weeks and experience the "nivana," the ease of mind, the "inner peace", that comes from that. That is the biggest incentive to continue on the Path.

4. One also needs to understand the relative kammic weights associated with dealing with animals and humans (and even among humans.) For example, it is very difficult to be born human; thus even saying a hurtful thing to a human (especially to an Ariya or a Noble One), could have a thousand-fold kammic weight compared to killing an animal; see, "How to Evaluate Weights of Different Kamma."

- Another key concept is that one does NOT need to worry about the past kamma. The role of kamma has been exaggerated; see, "What is Kamma? Does Kamma Determined Everything?." Nibbāna is not attained via the removal of kamma, but the removal of $\bar{a} s a v a \bar{a}$ or cravings; see "The Way to Nibbāna Removal of Āsavā."
- The main thing is not to repeat the same mistakes. The more one stays away from the ten defilements, it automatically BECOMES easier. It is like pushing a stalled car: initially hard, but it becomes easier when it starts moving.

5. Nibbāna is NOT removing everything from the mind, just removing the defilements: Nibbāna is rāgakkhaya (greed elimination), Nibbāna is dosakkhaya (hate elimination), Nibbāna is mohakkhaya (delusion elimination); those three are more synonyms for Nibbāna.

- Thus one sees Nibbāna with a thought (citta) that is devoid of rāga (greed), dosa (hate), and moha (delusion). This PURE MIND does not want to be burdened with a "material existence" anywhere in the 31 realms; see, "What are Rūpa? Relation to Nibbāna."
- By the way, citta is pronounced "chiththa"; see, "Pāli Glossary - (A-K)" and "Pāli Glossary - (L-Z)."

6. The suffering is a direct result of having a "material aspect" associated with the mind: that material body is subject to decay and death. The mind gets associated with a body that it gets "attached" to with greed, hate, and ignorance. If you look at the 31 realms of "this world" (see, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma‘):

- It is clear that suffering is there in the lowest five realms - including the human realm - where all three (greed, hate, ignorance) can be present; the bodies of beings in these realms are generally denser and subject to decay and diseases. Of course, there is unimaginable suffering in the lowest four realms.
- However, the human realm (\#5) is unique, because one COULD attain Nibbāna as a human, even though they are also subject to bodily pains, decay, and diseases.
- In the deva lok $\bar{a}$ (realms 6-11), hate is not there and suffering is less. And the bodies of dev $\bar{a}$ are less dense and not subject to physical ailments (until death of course).
- In the Brahma lokā (realms 12-31), hate and greed are absent, and suffering is even less. They have very fine (less-dense) bodies and no physical ailments.

7. However, since ignorance is there in all 31 realms, a complete, absolute state of happiness is absent anywhere in the 31 realms. Even if one is born in a deva or Brahma world, one will eventually end up in the lowest four realms (unless one has attained the Sotāpanna or a higher stage of Nibbāna).

- The suffering is of course unimaginably intense in the lower realms.
- This is the key message of the Buddha: He said that suffering never ends as long as one returns to "this world of 31 realms" when one dies (i.e., unless one attains Nibbāna).
- Suffering ends withArahant's death; no more births in this world of 31 realms.
- However, one could get depressed thinking that Arahanthood is "annihilation"; but that is not true. One just needs to follow the Path step-by-step; see, "Is It Necessary for a Buddhist to Eliminate Sensual Desires?" and "Mahā Cattārisaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty)."

8. Therefore, one could visualize a gradual decrease in suffering as one gets rid of hate, greed, and ignorance in that order.

- And one CAN experience this happiness called nirāmisa sukha in this human life itself, all the way up to Nibbāna; see, "Three Kinds of Happiness - What is Nirāmisa Sukha." That is the uniqueness of human birth.

9. When the mind "starts thinking" about a given thought object (arrammana), say a visual object, it starts as "just seeing"; this is the citta stage. But within a fraction of a second, the mind starts adding defilements (based on greed, hate, ignorance), if that object is "of interest."

- It develops further thoughts defiled by greed, hate, and ignorance (possibly a combination) by going around and around that thought object and ends up in the "defiled thought" (viñ̃̄̄ana) stage even before one realizes it; see, "Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)."
- This is also described in Paticcca Samuppāda; see, "Paticca Samuppāda - "Pati + ichcha" + "Sama + uppada"," and the links below that. Viññāna is a citta that is defiled by rāga (greed), dosa (hatred), and moha (ignorance).
- Pațicca Samuppāda, which is Buddha Dhamma, is discussed in detail in the series, "Paticca Samuppāda in Plain English."

10. When rāga, dosa, and moha are removed from the mind, cittā (plural of citta) become pabhassara (bright); there is no more defilements there clouding the citt $\bar{a}$. At this stage, it is said that the pure citta "sees Nibbāna"; see, "Pabhassara Citta, Radiant Mind, and Bhavanga."

- After one attains Nibbāna with one citta, the cittā fall back to the "normal state" and the person lives like a normal human (but without doing anything with greed, hate, and ignorance) until the kammic energy of the kamma seed that started the present life is exhausted.
- At death (called Parinibbāna), the mind of an Arahant does not grab (upādāna) another kamma seed (even if there may be many kamma seeds), and thus there is no further rebirth. The mind becomes free of a "body" that can be subjected to decay and death. That is Nibbāna, "complete Nivana" or "complete cooling down."

11. We are bound to this rebirth process due to two causes: $a v i j j \bar{a}$ and tanhh $\bar{a}$. The first version of tanhh $\bar{a}$ is lobha, the strong greed, which could easily turn to dosa (strong hate) when someone else gets in the way. Thus those two causes of $a v i j j \bar{a}$ and taṇha effectively become three: lobha, dosa, and moha.

- Even though dosa arises due to lobha, dosa brings about the worst vipāka: rebirth in the niraya (hell), where the suffering is optimum. Thus dosa has origins in the four greed-based "somanassa sahagata, dițthi sampayutta citta."
- When dittthi is removed at the Sotāpanna stage, all four greed-based citta stop arising. Thus at that stage, lobha and dosa become rāga and patigha, which are removed successively at the Sakadāgāmī and Anāgāmī stages. Avijjā keeps reducing at each stage of Nibbāna and is removed at the Arahant stage.

12. When rāga, dosa, and moha cannot arise in the mind, that mind (and thus cittā) are devoid (suñna) of them. That is the purified state of a citta, or a pabhassara viñ $\tilde{n} a ̄ n a$ (consciousness devoid of defilements,) i.e., pañ̃̃̄ā (wisdom). See, "Pabhassara Citta, Radiant Mind, and Bhavañga."

- Anidassana implies something that is not visible. Thus, anidassana viñ̃ñaña means "viññāṇa cannot be seen." See, "Anidassana Viññāna - What It Really Means."
- The forefathers of Mahāyāna Buddhism could not grasp the concept of Nibbāna, so they came up with misleading descriptions including that of Sunyata: see, "What is Sunyata or Sunnata (Emptiness)?."
- Even among the current Theravāda Buddhists, there are many debates about what is meant by Nibbāna. That is sad to see.

13. When rāga, dosa, and moha are removed, a citta stops going around and around a given thought object (ārammaña). This "wheeling" is what fuels the samisāric journey. Thus stopping this process is called "taking off the wheels of the samisāric vehicle."

- The Pāli (and Sinhala) word for a vehicle is "riya," and stopping of the "riya" is called "Ariya"; one who has taken the wheels off the vehicle for the samsāric journey is called an "Ariya." Thus contrary to popular usage, "Aryan" (with racial implications) has nothing to do with a Noble Person; it is Ariya.
- Therefore, it is clear that "Ariya" has nothing to do with a race, "Arryan."
- Furthermore, "viriya" (" $v i$ " + "riya") means staying away from the "wheeling process" (and the effort to do so). Therefore, viriya means actively engaging in Satipaṭthāna and $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p a \overline{n a s a t i}$; see, "Satipatthāna Sutta - Relevance to Suffering in This Life."

14. Anyone who has at least attained the first stage of Nibbāna, i.e., Sotāpanna, can be called an Ariya, or a Noble Person. This is because the "āsava" or deep-seated cravings that a Sotāpanna have been permanently removed.

- All the $\bar{a} s a v \bar{a}$ are removed at Nibbāna; thus "Āsavakkhaya" (elimination of $\bar{a} s a v \bar{a})$ is another synonym for Nibbāna. People who had been on the lowest social ladder or lowest caste at the time of the Buddha could become Ariyā or Noble Persons.

15. When one sees Nibbāna, one's mind does not crave anything "in this world" of 31 realms. There is nothing for the last citta (cuti citta, pronounced "chuthi chiththa") of this life (at death) to grab (nothing to upādāna) and to start a new birth in "this world", and the mind becomes free.

- The mind becomes PERMANENTLY pure and permanently detached from any type of physical body, dense or fine.

16. Thus, an Arahant will not be reborn in "this material world" of 31 realms (see "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma"), i.e., one attains Parinibbāna. He/she is simply "gone" from "this world" of 31 realms. The suffering stops permanently.

- Thus, it is quite clear WHAT Nibbāna is: it is stopping the rebirth process. What is hard to understand is WHY stopping the rebirth process can relieve one of all suffering.
- No matter how much hardship one has endured, one likes to live. This is true for a human or a lowly worm. For any living being, the most precious thing is its life. When one starts understanding the "big picture of the Buddha," one will slowly start seeing the dangers of staying in this endless rebirth process.

Other analyses of Nibbāna can be found in, "Nirodha and Vaya - Two Different Concepts" and "Difference Between Giving up Valuables and Losing Interest in Worthless",

Continue to "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Samisāra)."

### 3.3.2 The Four Stages in Attaining Nibbāna

## Revised February 4, 2016; revised October 25, 2017; August 28, 2022

1. The 31 realms discussed in " 31 Realms Associated with the Earth" are divided into three main categories based on the sense faculties and the level of suffering:

- The lowest eleven realms belong to the "kāma loka" where all five physical sense faculties are present; "ka$m a$ " is indulging in the five senses.
- Beings in the next sixteen realms have only two physical senses: vision and hearing. They have less-dense bodies, and this subset of realms is called the rūpa loka. In rūpa loka, there are mainly jhānic pleasures
corresponding to the first four mundane $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$ that are attainable by humans. There is relatively less suffering in the rūpa lok $\bar{a}$.
- The highest four realms correspond to the higher arūpa jhānic states (jhānic levels five through eight) that are also attainable in the human realm. Thus there is mainly jhānic bliss in these realms and relatively less suffering. These realms are commonly known as arūpa loka, because those beings have only a trace of matter with no physical senses and only the mind.

2. The lifetimes of the beings in the rūpa loka are very long, and those in the arūpa loka are even longer. The lifetime in the highest arūpa lok $\bar{a}$ is so long ( 84,000 eons or maha kapp $\bar{a}$ ) that it is beyond comprehension to us.

- The ancient yogis mistakenly thought that such realms correspond to Nibbāna. The Buddha (or rather Siddhartha Gotama) attained the eighth jhāna months after leaving the palace as an ascetic. But he realized that it would only lead to rebirth in a Brahma realm that still has a finite lifetime.
- Even though very long in the number of years, that lifetime is insignificant in the samināric time scale (see, "Samsāric Time Scale, Buddhist Cosmology, and the Big Bang Theory,") which is infinite (see, "Infinity = How Big Is It?.")

3. One in the human realm can experience the jhānic pleasure of both rūpa and arūpa lok $\bar{a}$ by attaining such jhānic states via Samatha meditation.

- Furthermore, it is possible to gain access to both rūpa lok $\bar{a}$ and arūpa lok $\bar{a}$ in the next birth by developing the corresponding $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$ and by being in a jhānic state at death. As I understand, this is the goal of most Hindu practices.

4. The Buddha pointed out that even the highest jhānic state is temporary (even though long), and once that kammic energy is exhausted, it is possible to be born in any of the 31 realms. Unless the being has attained at least the Sotāpanna stage, it is guaranteed that rebirth in one of the lowest realms is inevitable at some point in the future.

- He said that many of the beings still in the rebirth process (saimsāra), i.e., we all, are likely to have been born in the higher arūpa lok $\bar{a}$, as well as the lowest realm (niraya) in the past. The samisarra is that long.

5. From this discussion, it is clear that the actual suffering is mostly in the ka $\bar{a} a$ lok $\bar{a}$. But the problem is that beings spend the most time in $k \bar{a} m a$ lok $\bar{a}$ in their beginning-less journey in the samsāra.

- The Buddha gave a simile to describe this situation. We leave home only to go on short, or may be even extended, trips; but we always come back home. The Buddha said that the four lowest realms (the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$ ) are the home base for most living beings.


## Suffering in the Kāma loka

6. Suffering in the kāma lok $\bar{a}$ ranges from unfathomable suffering in the lowest realm, the niraya (hell), to relatively little suffering and the highest sensory pleasures in the deva lok $\bar{a}$ (the highest six realms in the ka $\bar{a} a$ loka).

- Just below the deva lok $\bar{a}$ is the human realm with both suffering and sense pleasures at about equal levels.
- Below the human realm, there is peta loka (hungry ghosts), asurā, animal realm, and the nirayā, and the level of suffering generally increases in that order.

7. The lowest four levels in the $k \bar{a} m a$ loka are collectively called the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$ (the undesirable realms). More than $\mathbf{9 9 \%}$ of the beings are trapped in these four realms. The problem is that once born in any of those four realms, it is virtually impossible to get out.

- This is because these realms are such that one is forced to commit apuñ̃̄ābhi sañkhāra or evil actions (see, "Sañkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka") by the very nature of that existence. For
example, in the animal realm, most animals have to kill others for survival. In the niraya, virtually every thought is of hate because of the incessant suffering.
- Still, when we analyze Abhidhamma, we can see that the javana of the citta are much less potent for animals. Thus the kammic power of those actions is relatively small compared to the kammic power of such actions by humans. This is an important point that I wish to discuss in the future.

8. Just as it is likely that we have been born in the higher rūpa lok $\bar{a}$ in the past, it is even more certain that we ALL have been in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$. Luckily we do not remember those past lives.

- But beings in certain realms (particularly the peta realm) remember their past lives, increasing the level of suffering.


## Why We Need to Strive Now

9. From the above discussion, it is clear that most suffering is in the four lowest realms, below the human realm, which is the fifth realm. Essentially, there is relatively less suffering above the human realm, starting with the deva loka, which is the highest realm in the kāma loka.
10. Even though the suffering is highest in the lower four realms, the beings there are helpless to do anything about the suffering. Their limited minds cannot grasps the causes that lead to suffering.

- Many people wrongly believe that one needs to feel suffering to understand it and to get an incentive to seek Nibbāna. But when one suffers (say, when one gets too old) it is NOT possible to contemplate the deep concepts of Dhamma.
- The Noble truth on suffering needs to be seen with wisdom (pañ̃̃̄), not via feelings (vedanā), i.e., by understanding the complete worldview AND the Three Characteristics of this "wider world": anicca, dukkha, anatta; see, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta."

11. Beings in the realms above the human realm, the 26 realms starting with the deva realms, do not even feel much suffering. This is the other extreme; there is no incentive for them to be concerned about suffering.

- But when they approach the end of their lives, they realize that and become distraught and fearful.

12. Thus, it is only in the human realm that one is at least exposed to suffering, even if one may not be subjected to much suffering. Furthermore, the human mind is the best suited for grasping the true nature of "this world of 31 realms", i.e., the Three Characteristics (see, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta").

- This is why the Buddha said that a human should not miss this opportunity to attain Nibbāna.


## The Four Stages of Attaining Nibbāna

13. The first stage of Nibbāna is attained by "seeing" (not just reading about, but grasping) the true nature of existence: anicca, dukkha, and anatta.

- Thus one needs to first learn from someone (like from this website) the nature of existence with the 31 realms, the aimless wandering of a being through endless rebirths (saimsāra), the reasons for the rebirths, etc.
- Thus the key areas to understand are the Three Characteristics, the Four Noble Truths, and the Noble Eightfold Path. No one but a Buddha is capable of finding these, and this is why it is important to have exposure to the PURE DHAMMA.

14. At the first stage (Sotāpanna or Stream Enterer), one partially comprehends the validity of the Buddha's world view. This is called attaining Sammā Ditṭhi (elimination of defilements through clear vision/understanding) to a significant extent.

- He/she understands the "true nature" of existence: significance and the true meaning of the Three Characteristics of Existence (see "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta").

15. The realization that it is not worthwhile or fruitful to stay in any of the 31 realms, in the long run, makes one morally conduct oneself. One's mind decide it is not worthwhile or beneficial to do those actions that destine oneself to birth in the lower four realms.

- This realization leads to a Sotāpanna phala citta (one thought -moment of realizing the Sotāpanna stage). When that is achieved, one will never again be reborn in the lower four realms ("free of suffering in the apāy $\bar{a}$ forever.") That is explained in "Akusala Citta - How a Sotāpanna Avoids Apayagami Citta."

16. At this stage, one has realized the First Noble Truth of suffering (dukkha), and one earnestly starts on the Noble Eightfold Path. He still has greed and hate left in him to some extent, but at the next stage (Sakad $\bar{a} g \bar{a} m \vec{l}$ ), he loses more of the strength of such greedy or hateful thoughts.

- A Sakadāgāmī is not fully released from the kāma loka since he/she will be born in the deva loka (but not in the human realm).
- In the deva loka (and in the Brahma realms above that where a Sakadāgāmī can be born subsequently), the bodies are not subjected to diseases. Thus a Sakadāgāmī is said to be "healthy forever."

17. When the third stage of $\operatorname{An} \bar{a} g \bar{a} m \bar{\imath}$ (Non-Returner) is attained, one loses any desire to be born in the kāma loka. Then greedy or hateful thoughts belonging to the kāma loka cannot arise.

- Thus, he/she will be born only once more in a higher Brahma world reserved for the Anāgāmis.

18. All through these three stages, avijj $\bar{a}$ or ignorance gradually diminish. But it is completely removed only at the Arahant stage.

- Once the Arahant stage is reached, the mind becomes pure and is incapable of desiring anything "in this world of 31 realms." Thus there is no more rebirth, and one attains the perfect happiness at the peak of nirāmisa sukha.

Also, see "Nibbāna - Is it Difficult to Understand" and "The Way to Nibbāna - Removal of āsavas."

## Why Living a Moral Life Would Not Prevent a Birth in the Four Lower Realms

19. We desperately cling to "things in this world" because we perceive that lasting happiness can be achieved. We crave sensory pleasures. As mentioned before, nothing or no one is holding us in this world of 31 realms. We cling to existence in these realms like an octopus grabbing its prey with all eight legs.
20. Many Buddhists (who have not yet comprehended the anicca nature) like to stay in this world a bit more. They do not realize the level of happiness associated with the Nibbānic bliss; see, "Three Kinds of Happiness - What is Nirāmisa Sukha?."

- Some Buddhist monks even today give a popular blessing like the following. "May you be reborn in prosperous (deva or human) realms and then attain Nibbāna." Even they do not understand the permanent happiness associated with Nibbāna or the possibility of much suffering in the next birth.

21. The danger in such thinking is due to the following reason. We all have done good and bad deeds in our lives before and have acquired uncountable kamma seeds, both good and bad. See, "Sañkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka."

- At death, any of those seeds can bear fruit. If it is a good kamma seed, one will get a good birth, but if it is a bad kamma seed one will get a bad birth.

22. Our future births are not necessarily determined by how we live this life because we have done many good and bad kamma in previous lives.

- This is why the Buddha said that even if one lives a perfectly moral life he cannot say that one will get a good rebirth UNLESS one has attained at least the Sotāpanna stage. A Sotāpanna has made ineffective all those bad kamma seeds that could give birth in the lower four realms.
- The Buddha also said that even if one lives immorally, that does not necessarily lead to a bad life in the next birth unless it is an anantariya kamma. (Ānantariya kamma is an extremely bad kamma, like killing one's parents.)
- However, those bad acts will bear fruit at some point in the future. It is just that there are many good seeds as well as bad seeds with any lifestream. See, "What is Kamma? Is Everything Determined by Kamma?."
- Thus the goal of this life should be to attain at least the Sotāpanna stage of Nibbāna.

A different analysis of Nibbāna can be found in "Difference Between Giving up Valuables and Losing Interest in Worthless",

Next, "Nirāmisa Sukha (Happiness Arising from Dissociating from the 31 realms)", ......

### 3.3.3 What Are Rūpa? (Relation to Nibbāna)

## Revised May 25, 2018; February 19, 2020; February 16, 2022

1. In Buddha Dhamma, everything in "this world" of 31 realms can be put into two categories: mana or mano (mind) and rūpa (material form).

- The mind is citta (thoughts) and the mental properties in the thoughts, cetasika.
- Everything else is $r \bar{u} p a$ (material forms).

2. Now let us look at $r \bar{u} p a$ : Many people think $r \bar{u} p a$ is just the body or "material things." A better translation for rupa is "matter and energy." As stated in \#1 above, everything else in the 31 realms that is not citta or cetasika is rūpa.

- There are five types of $r \bar{u} p a$ that we experience with our five senses: With the eye (cakkhu), we experience vanṇa rūpa (whatever that is visible.) We experience sounds (sadda) with ears (sota) and smells (gandha) with the nose (ghāna.) Taste (rasa) is experienced with the tongue (jivhā) and the touch (photthabba) with the body (kāya.)

3. We can see that smells are due to tiny material particles that enter the nose. The taste is also due to food and drinks that touch the tongue; touch is also contact between "material things."

- But what about visible objects? We need light to see any objects; without light, we cannot see. Thus "seeing" involves matter and energy. Same for sound. Thus vanṇa rūpa (or varna rūpa) are really "matter and energy", which in the end is just energy. Since the turn of the 20th century, science has confirmed that matter is just energy: they are related by Einstein's famous formula of $\mathrm{E}=\mathrm{mc}^{2}$.
- It is important to realize that what is meant by "cakkhuñca paticca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhu viññanam." That means the light impinging on the eye indriya to give us the sensation of vision. Thus, in vaṇ̂na (also called varna or rūpa rūpa), sadda, gandha, rasa, and phoṭthabba (the five senses), rūpa are really types of energy or particles.
- Modern science now agrees that there is no distinction between matter and energy. However, matter/energy is created by the mind (as "dhammā.") See, "Manopubbangamā Dhammā..."
- Matter above the bhūta stage will eventually be destroyed in the "loka vināsa" in a supernova type explosion. See, "Sansāric Time Scale, Buddhist Cosmology, and the Big Bang Theory."

4. Thus the rūpa can vary in "density" from almost pure energy to the solid objects that we can see with our eyes.

- They go through three stages: At the "gati" stage, they overlap with energy; in the "bhūta" stage, they are more solidified but the human eye still cannot see (this is why some beings that the humans cannot see are called "bhūta" in Pāli or Sinhala); it is only in the "dhātu" stage that the human eye can see; see, "The Origin of Matter - Suddhatthaka."
- At Parinibbāna (death of an Arahant), the mind is not attached to a rūpa in any of the three forms: dhātu, bhūta, or gati.

5. When one is born anywhere in the 31 realms, it is the viññāna (impure consciousness) that keeps the mind bound to a material body. As the purity level of the mind goes higher one moves up from the lower realms with dense bodies to higher realms with less dense bodies.

- In the lower realms (at or below the human realm, which is the fifth realm), the mind is normally attached to a dense body that the human eye can see. This is dense dhätu form.
- In the deva lok $\bar{a}$ (realms 6-11), the bodies are finer (subtle.) Their minds are devoid of hate and thus are purer. In the realms 6-11, the bodies are made of $r \bar{u} p a$ still in the "dhātu" form, but less dense.
- The minds are devoid of both hate and greed, and are thus, are purer in the rūpa loka and arūpa loka.
 the "bhūta" form.
- In arūpa lok $\bar{a}$ (realms 28-31) there is no rūpa even in the sense of bhūta. But the four mahā bhūta are still associated with those being's "gati" (see, Kevaddha Sutta in Dīgha Nikāya.) In those realms, $r \bar{u} p a$ can be thought of as indistinguishable from energy.
- When the mind becomes purified, which is the viññāna of an Arahant (also called paññ̄a). Here there is no association of the mind with even fine rūpa associated with "gati." The mind completely detaches from $r \bar{u} p a$. The mind becomes pure and free. When one attains Aranthood, one still lives with the "solid body" of a human being until death. At Parinibbāna, the mind becomes completely free of rūpa. See, "Pabhassara Citta, Radiant Mind, and Bhavanga."

6. At a deeper level, the anicca nature, i.e., our inability to maintain anything to our satisfaction, is based on the fact that any $r \bar{u} p a$ is subjected to not only decay (impermanence) but also to unexpected change (viparinama nature).

- This fact is embodied in the Second Law of Thermodynamics; see, "Second Law of Thermodynamics is Part of Anicca."

7. Thus to attain Nibbāna is to attain the perfectly purified mind, which refuses to be burdened with a physical body that leads to decay and rebirth repeatedly (and thus to dukkha).
8. In the 31 realms, one is born with a dense body ( $k \bar{a} m a ~ l o k a$ ), fine-material body (rūpa loka), or only a trace of "matter" in the form of "gati" (arūpa loka). When the mind becomes free of a "body" anywhere in the 31 realms, that is Nibbāna. This is another way to understand Nibbāna.
9. In Buddha Dhamma, any given thing or concept can be looked at from many different angles. They are all consistent. It is a complete "world view." Some people think, why do we have to worry about 31 realms, etc., but the world is very complex. Scientists are just beginning to appreciate this complexity.

- The amazing fact is that the Buddha discerned all this with his mind. Furthermore, he was able to present it all in a coherent manner.

10. Please re-read and contemplate the above. In the long run, it will be very helpful. If you do not really understand it now, do not worry. You will be able to understand more when you become familiar with other concepts discussed in other posts. Everything at this site is inter-connected. It may take some time to "fill in the blanks."

More details at, "Nāma \& Rūpa to Nāmarūpa."

## Nirāmisa Sukha

Revised September 15, 2017; July 1, 2018; June 15, 2020; September 17, 2021; rewritten October 15, 2022

Sāmisa, nirāmisa, and nirāmisatara are qualities associated with kāma loka, above kāma loka, and Nibbāna.

## Sāmisa, Nirāmisa, Nirāmisatara

1. Those three terms describe various qualities associated with kāma loka, above kāma loka (Brahma loka), and Nibbāna.

- The basic concepts can be understood by looking at the three types of sukha. See "Three Kinds of Happiness - What is Nirāmisa Sukha?"
- Thus sāmisa sukha is the pleasure that arises while enjoying all five sensory inputs, particularly those associated with taste, smell, and body touch. Those are present only in kama loka, which includes the six Deva realms.
- There is better happiness in giving up sensory pleasures and getting to jhāna. That is nirāmisa sukha experienced in rūpāvacara Brahma realms. Those are temporary for anāriya versions and permanent for Ariya (Noble) versions.
- The ultimate nirāmisa sukha is nirāmisatara. It is reached at the Arahant stage.
- The "WebLink: suttacentral: Nirāmisa Sutta (SN 36.31)" describes various aspects of the three terms in detail. Let us go through the sutta.


## Nirāmisa Sutta (SN 36.31)

2. Nirāmisa Sutta discusses several aspects of sāmisa, nirāmisa, and nirāmisatara. Those are pīti (joy,) sukha (happiness,) upekkhā (neutral mindset,) and vimokkha (freedom/liberation.) Let us quickly discuss what these entities mean.

- As discussed in "Three Kinds of Happiness - What is Nirāmisa Sukha?" pīti and sukha are two mental factors (cetasika.) Sukha is a type of vedanā.
- Upekkhā means neutrality.
- Vimokkha means transcending some state or overcoming that state, i.e., freedom/liberation from that state.
- In general, Nibbāna is the release from this world, and the world consists of kāma loka, rūpa loka, and arūpa loka. But pīti and sukha are not present in certain higher realms, particularly in arūpa loka.
- I will translate the descriptions of each category.


## Sāmisa, Nirāmisa, and Nirāmisatara Categories for Pīti and Sukha

3. Pīti and sukha are fully experienced in the kāma loka and are associated with the five types of kāma guña. They are associated with sights, sounds, tastes, smells, and bodily contacts. See "Kāma Guna - Origin of Attachment (Tanhā)" and "Kāma Guna, Kāma, Kāma Rāga, Kāmacchanda." [guna : [m.] virtue; quality; a cord or string; a bow-string; (with numerals: diguṇa = twofold).]

- Thus, pīti and sukha arising due to contacts with eyes, ears, tongue, nose, and the body are sāmisa pīti and sukha.
- When one transcends the $k \bar{a} m a$ loka and enters the first or the second $j h a \bar{a} n a$, a different kind of $p \bar{t} t i$ is experienced in those two jhānās. They are jhāna factors (jhānañga) and are of "higher quality." That is nirāmisa pīti.
 sukha experienced in the first three $j h a \bar{a} \bar{a} s$.
- The ultimate versions of pīti and sukha (nirāmisatara pīti and sukha) are reached at the Arahant stage.


## Sāmisa, Nirāmisa, and Nirāmisatara Categories for Upekkhā

4. When sensory contacts with eyes, ears, tongue, nose, and the body lead to a "neutral state of mind" that is sāmisa upekkhā.

- When a "neutral state of mind" is reached at the fourth jhāna (after overcoming nirāmisa pīti and sukha; see \#3 above) that is nirāmisa upekkhā.
- The ultimate version of upekkhā (nirāmisatara upekkhā) is reached at the Arahant stage.


## Sāmisa, Nirāmisa, and Nirāmisatara Categories for Vimokkha

5. When one transcends the kāma loka and enter rūpa loka (i.e., rūpāvacara jhāna) that is liberation from the kāma loka. In the sutta this is expressed by "Rūpappatisaminutto vimokkho sāmiso vimokkho" or "entering the rūpa loka is sāmiso vimokkho."

- Nirāmisa vimokkha is attained when one overcomes the rūpa loka and enters arūpa loka (i.e., arupāvacara jhāna.) That is liberation from the rūpa loka and entering the higher arūpa loka. Suffering is even less there.
- But the "ultimate release from all suffering" is with the Arahanthood. That is nirāmisatara vimokkha.
- What we discussed above is the essence of the Nirāmisa Sutta (SN 36.31.)


## Discussion

6. The Nibbānic bliss (nirāmisatara pīti, sukha, or upekkhā) is the absence of both $\bar{a} m i s a$ and nirāmisa sukha.

- There are no words to describe the "state of an Arahant" after Parinibbāna. They will not be reborn in ANY realm of this world. All we can say is that there will be absolutely no suffering after Parinibbāna. Ven. Sāriputta explained that in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Nibbānasukha Sutta (AN 9.34)."
- The status of an Arahant is not understandable to those just starting on the Path. It is better not to think that far at the beginning because that could lead to confusion.
- Further information is in "WebLink: suttacentral: Pathamavibhañga Sutta (SN 48.36)."

7. The Buddha never said there is no sāmisa sukha/pīti (sensory pleasure/joy) to be had in this world. The only reason people cling to this world is BECAUSE of the sensory delights available.

- Buddha taught that such sensory pleasures are short-lived and lead to harmful consequences in the future. Even if one inherits a fortune and lives in luxury the whole life, suffering is inevitable in the next life or the next life. The real suffering (dukkha) is in the four lowest realms (apāy $\bar{a}$ ).
- We all live with a baseline "chronic headache" that we don't even realize. We have gotten used to it and don't even realize we have headaches. Only when that ever-present "stress" goes away, that one starts feeling the "reduced stress" of nirāmisa sukha. That is the real inspiration for trying to attain the higher stages of Nibbāna.

8. It is essential to realize that nirāmisa sukha cannot be attained by "just giving up things" or by leaving everything behind and going to seclusion. Some yogis (even today) cultivate $j h a \bar{n} a$ by "hiding from sensual pleasures in jungles." But any jhāna cultivated without comprehension of the Four Noble Truths/Paṭicca Samuppāda/Tilakkhaṇa are mundane (anāriya) jhāna.

- Such yogis will be born in a Brahma realm and will enjoy nirāmisa sukha/pīti until the end of that existence. After that they can be reborn in any realm, because they are not released from even the apāyās.
- Only when one gets to the Sotāpanna stage by comprehending the Four Noble Truths/Paticca Samuppāda/Tilakkhaṇa that one will be free from the apāyās.
- Thus, "giving up worldly things" needs to come through a proper understanding of the fundamental nature of "this world." Many people gave up worldly things and became bhikkhus, but only after seeing the fruitlessness of craving for material things.

9. The mind's nature to see the benefit or pleasure of something before embracing it.

- One may force the mind to "forcibly give up" some sensory pleasures, but one cannot sustain that effort. "Giving up" happens automatically with the realization of anicca/anatta nature. See, "
- The mind has to "see" that there is a better option than the sāmisa sukha or sensory pleasures. When one starts on the Path and living a moral life, one will gradually see the nirāmisa sukha emerge.

10. The Buddha gave a simile to explain this effect. When people took to the oceans to look for new lands in the old days, they took caged birds. When they got lost, they released a bird. The bird would fly around and return to the ship if it did not see land.

- The same is true for the mind. It will not latch on to something new (nirāmisa sukha) unless it is better than the one it already has (sāmisa sukha).
- The points in \#9 and \#10 are discussed in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Cūladukkhakkhandha Sutta (MN 14)".


### 3.3.5 Does the First Noble Truth Describe only Suffering?

Revised October 24, 2018; re-written August 5, 2019; revised July 28, 2022

## Difference Between Dukkha and Dukkha Sacca

1. Buddha Dhamma describes nature's laws. Many think that dukkha Sacca (the First Noble Truth, pronounced "dukkha sachcha") says everything is suffering. That is not true; there is a lot of apparent happiness, which makes people unaware of the hidden suffering until it is too late.

- The key is to develop pañ̃̃̄̄ or wisdom to see the suffering hidden in sensory pleasures.
- That is why Noble Persons consider sensory pleasures as suffering and painful feelings as acute suffering! I highly recommend reading the "WebLink: suttacentral: Verses of the Elder Sumedhā" utterances by an Arahant bhikkhuni. The following verse is among many insightful verses:
"Sensual pleasures are like the stake of a spear, a disease, an abscess, a calamity, an affliction; Like a fire pit, the root of calamity, fear, and destruction."
- One does not necessarily need to feel pain/suffering to understand the dukkha sacca, even though that may motivate one to investigate.

2. There is a difference between suffering (the feeling or vedan $\bar{a}$ ) and the ability to understand the causes for it (pañ̃̃̄̄ or wisdom.) The latter can lead to future suffering, and that is what the First Noble Truth explains.

- Pāli word for suffering is dukha. On the other hand, dukkha is $d u k h a+k h a$ or the "removal of dukha" in the sense that there is dukha in the world, but it can be overcome. Thus, in most places in the Tipitaka, dukkha conveys "suffering" but implies that it can be overcome. [khaya or kha means removal]
- Dukha (suffering) is the opposite of sukha (pleasure). That is in several sutt $\bar{a}$. For example, in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Bhāra Sutta (SN 22.22)":
"Bhārā have pañcakkhandhā,
bhārahāro ca puggalo;
Bhārādānamं dukham loke,
bhāranikkhepanaì sukhaì."
Translated: "The five aggregates are burdens,
The burden-carrier is the person; Carrying the burden is suffering in the world, Laying the burden down is blissful."
- Of course, the word dukkha appears in most sutta because that is what Buddha Dhamma is all about, i.e., the removal of suffering.

3. We do not realize that the five aggregates are burdens. We like our bodies and mind-pleasing objects in the world (rūpakkhandha). We crave what we experience with the mind (aggregates of vedana, sañ $\tilde{n} \bar{a}$, sañkhāra, and viññāna).

- There are bouts of happiness everywhere. If everything FELT LIKE suffering, everyone will be seeking Nibbāna. It is hard for people even to see the real suffering out there.

4. Apparent pleasures mask the pain and suffering we experience. In the HUMAN REALM, suffering and happiness exist; one can experience both.

- In the realms higher than the human plane, suffering is relatively much less, which is why it is hard for devās to even think about Nibbāna. However, even those devās and Brahmā end up in the lowest four realms. Of course, each birth in any realm ends with death, which is unavoidable as long as one is in the rebirth process.
- Beings in the lowest four realms (apāy $\bar{a}$ ) are the ones who experience a lot of dukha. Of course, they have no idea about the Dukkha Sacca. The key point is that each living being spends a lot of time in the ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$ compared to other realms in the rebirth process, see, "Rebirth - Connection to Suffering in the First Noble Truth."
- That is why the rebirth process is filled with suffering. The good news is that suffering can be stopped.


## What is the Noble Truth of Dukkha?

5. Let us see how the Buddha described the First Noble Truth on suffering in the Dhamma Cakka Pavattana Sutta:
"Idaì kho pana, bhikkhave, dukkhamं ariyasaccami-jātipi dukkhā, jarāpi dukkhā, byādhipi dukkho, maraṇampi dukkham், appiyehi sampayogo dukkho, piyehi vippayogo dukkho, yampiccham na labhati tampi dukkhai்-saìkhittena pañcupādānakkhandhā dukkhā." [sañkhittena means being overthrown by defilements]

- Let us go through this "definition" of dukkha step-by-step.

6. In the first part, it says, "jātipi dukkhā, jarāpi dukkhā, byādhipi dukkho, maraṇampi dukkhamं..."

Translated: "birth is suffering (that can be overcome). Getting old is suffering (that can be overcome). Sickness is suffering (that can be overcome). Death is suffering (that can be overcome)..."

- Other than "birth," the others (getting old, sickness, and death) are associated with suffering.
- However, the other three types of inevitable suffering are attached to every birth.
- Furthermore, the other three types of suffering cannot be eliminated without stopping birth, i.e., the rebirth process.
- Even though this is easy to see logically, understanding requires much more contemplation.

7. The Buddha clarified dukkha in the next verse, where he explicitly said: "appiyehi sampayogo dukkho, piyehi vippayogo dukkho." That means, "it brings sorrow to associate with persons/things one does not like. It also brings sorrow when one dissociates from people/things that one likes."

- We all know the truth of this first hand. It is unpleasant to associate with people one does not like and have a job that one does not like, etc.
- Of course, the reverse is true too: "it brings sorrow when a loved one has to depart, and it also to lose a job or an object that one likes."


## Dukkha Arises Due to Anicca Nature

8. Then comes "Yampicchaim na labhati tampi dukkhaï" which is shortened for "yam pi icchaím na labhati tampi dukkhaì."
Here we see "iccha" (same as "icca") that we encountered in both anicca, dukkha, and anatta, and also in Paticca Samuppāda ("pati+icca" "sama+uppāda"). And "labhati" means "get", and "na labhati" means


- Translated: "If one does not get what one wants or likes, that leads to suffering."
- We also note that anicca comes from "na" + "icca" or "not getting what one desires." Of course, anicca is the first of the three characteristics of Nature (Tilakkhana).
- Therefore, this statement of the anicca nature, i.e., it is a natural law that one WILL NOT get what one desires in the long run. That is why it is not possible to eliminate suffering in the long term within the rebirth process.
- Suffering ends only with the ending of the rebirth process.

9. That same concept is in the WebLink: suttacentral: Yadanicca Sutta (SN 22.15) as, "yadaniccaim taim dukkhaim, yaì dukkhaím tadanatt $\bar{a}$." That is the abbreviated version of "yad aniccaim taim dukkhaim, yaì dukkhaím tad anattā." Translated: "if something is anicca, dukkha arises, and one becomes helpless (anatta)."

- Of course, the verse, "Yampicchaim na labhati tampi dukkhaï" corresponds to just the first part of that verse: "yad aniccam tam dukkham."


## Sensory Pleasures are the Cause of Future Suffering

10. The Buddha never said there is only suffering in this world. These bouts of "apparent happiness" keep the real suffering hidden. We always try to look at the bright side, and our societies also try to "cover up" most of the pain and suffering that is out there.

- Both suffering and happiness are out there. The key is to see the pain and suffering masked in apparent joy.
- The Buddha described an analogy in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Hook/Balisa Sutta (SN 17.2)."When a fish bites the bait, it sees only a bit of delicious food and does not see the hook, the string, and the man holding the fishing pole. It cannot understand that "whole picture," with the suffering hidden (the hook). In
the same way, humans cannot see the pain and suffering hidden in the apparent sensory pleasures until a Buddha comes into the world and reveals it.
- There is suffering hidden in ALL sensory pleasures, but that can be seen/realized only via stages. At the Sotāpanna stage, one willingly gives up only the intense greed and strong hate; ALL cravings are removed only at the Arahant stage.

11. On television, we see mostly glamorous people. You can see what happens to such beautiful people when they get old: WebLink: RANKER: Celebrities Who Have Aged the Worst.

- We must realize that we all will undergo such inevitable changes as we age. No matter how hard we try, it is not possible to maintain ANYTHING to our satisfaction in the LONG-TERM.
- Furthermore, there is suffering and happiness in the broader world of 31 realms. There is much more happiness in the planes above the human plane (but that happiness is temporary). And there is unimaginable suffering in the lower four, especially in the lowest one, the hell (niraya).


## The Necessity of the Rebirth Process in Comprehending Anicca

12. The verses discussed in \#8 through \#10 above describe anicca nature. In the long run "we cannot maintain things to our satisfaction, and that leads to suffering"; This is "ya da niccam taim dukkahaï"" that was discussed in "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta - Wrong Interpretations."

- Later in the sutta, it says, ".....dukkho anariyo anatta samhito." One becomes anatta or helpless because of that. That is "tam dukkhaì tad anatta" part of the verse in \#9.
- These concepts were further detailed in the Anatta Lakkhaṇa Sutta (the second sutta delivered after the Dhamma Cakka Pavattana sutta); see "Anatta - No Refuge in This World."
- Anicca, dukkha, and anatta are thus the foundational "vision" that can be achieved only by a Buddha. It is "pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu..." as emphasized at the beginning of the Dhamma Cakka Pavattana sutta.

13. That is why it is imperative to understand the "big picture" of "this world" with 31 realms, the process of rebirth, laws of kamma, and most importantly, Paṭicca samuppāda. Then we realize that most beings, due to their ignorance, are trapped in the lower four realms.

- There are only about 7 billion people on Earth, but each carries millions of living beings in our bodies. See, "There are as many creatures on your body as there are people on Earth!"
- A household may have 4-6 people, but how many living beings are in that house and the yard? Millions, possibly billions. In a single scoop of dirt, there are thousands of tiny creatures.

14. The concept of $d u k k h a$ (dukha that can be stopped) is seen only in the context of the rebirth process. It is all about removing suffering associated with FUTURE births.

- One's current life has already started (which is a result of past kamma) and WILL go through until the kammic energy for the physical body runs out. We can only MANAGE any suffering associated with sicknesses, injuries, etc. Those are associated with a life that has already started.
- However, those future sufferings can be stopped by stopping the rebirth process. That is the Dukkha Sacca.


## Five Aggregates - What We Like to Maintain to Our Satisfaction

15. Finally, the last line of the verse in \#5 summarizes it all: "saìkhittena pañcupādānakkhandh $\bar{a}$ dukkha." [sañkhittena means being overthrown by defilements]

Translated: "The suffering that can be stopped arises because of the craving for the five aggregates."

- What we crave in this world can be divided into five groups: rūpa, vedanā, sañña, sañkhāra, and viññān̄a. We want to maintain our bodies and other inert or live bodies to our satisfaction. We want to keep our vedanā, saññā, sañkhāra, and viññāna (our thoughts) to our satisfaction.
- In other words, what we crave (icca) - and thus have upādāna for - are the five aggregates (pañcakkhandha). The "portion" of pañcakkhandha that we desire is called pañcupādānakkhandha (pañca + upādāna + khandha).

16. Therefore, dukha (suffering or the vedanā felt) arises BECAUSE we crave things in this world and do "san" to acquire such things.

- Again, we crave rūpa, vedanā, saññ̄ā, sañkhāra, and viññāna, ONLY because we believe those will bring us happiness. But the reality is that those cravings will inevitably bring suffering as the net result. We can stop suffering by stopping those cravings via understanding the real nature of this world, i.e., anicca nature leads to dukkha.
- This truth (dukkha sacca) is realized by cultivating wisdom (pañ̃ $\tilde{\boldsymbol{a}}$ ), i.e., by comprehending anicca, dukkha, and anatta. Please re-read this until you get the idea. That is the "pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu ..." or the message only a Buddha can discover.


## A Living Arahant has Pañcakkhandha but not Pañcupādānakkhandha

17. The realization of the actual characteristics of nature leads to giving up craving (upādāna due to tanhhā), which in turn leads to the release from the 31 realms, i.e., Nibbāna.

- Thus, one becomes an Arahant when pañcupādānakkhandha becomes just pañcakkhandha (i.e., no attachments even if the "world exists as before"). Of course, when the physical body dies, that Arahant will not be reborn in this world, and all suffering will stop.
- It is essential to realize that this craving cannot be removed by force. The mind needs to see the benefits of that through the cultivation of wisdom (pañ̃̄̄a) via comprehending anicca, dukkha, and anatta; see "Anicca - True Meaning" and "Anattā - A Systematic Analysis."
- Another critical concept to understand is the benefits one gets by the removal of craving for worldly things; see, "Three Kinds of Happiness - What is Nirāmisa Sukha?."


## Nirodha and Vaya - Two Different Concepts

1. I know of several "Buddhist" groups who try to "stop" thoughts, believing that is what happens at the Arahant stage of Nibbāna, i.e., they believe that the Buddha spent 45 years of his life trying to teach people how to stop thoughts, which is an even worse interpretation of Nibbāna than the Mahāyānists.

- When we are in deep sleep or are unconscious, we do not 'think thoughts." Does that mean we attain Arahanthood during such times?
- What the Buddha advised was to stop immoral thoughts, and to ENCOURAGE moral thoughts; that is how one purifies the mind. This is what one does in the correct annāpana meditation too; see, "7. What is Ānāpāna?."
- The reality is that an Arahant‘s thoughts are crystal clear (and pure), because they are devoid of defilements. Their memory is actually enhanced.
- Stopping all thoughts can lead to loss of perception and memory.

2. Many misconceptions about Nibbāna arise because the true meanings of some key Pāli words that the Buddha used are misunderstood. We have discussed how Mahāyāna forefathers twisted the concept of sunyata (emptiness) because they could not understand the concept of Nibbāna; see, "What is Sunyata or Sunnata (Emptiness)?."
3. There are several key words in Buddha Dhamma that need to be comprehended without even the slightest change. Most of these misconceptions arise because such key Pāli words are misinterpreted and also mis-
translated. Buddha's teachings were delivered in Mäghadhi language and made to a form suitable for verbal transmission in the Pāli language ("Pāli" means "lined up"). Many times problems arise when people try to use Sanskrit translations as originals and try to interpret those Sanskrit words.
4. Three such words are anicca, dukkha, anatta: see, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta - Wrong Interpretations." Three more such words are nirodha, khaya, and vaya. In this case the three words have apparently similar, but very different meanings. Let us look at the origins of these words:

- Nirodha comes from "nir"+"udaya", where "nir" means stop and "udaya" means "arise." Thus nirodha means stop something from arising. In Buddha Dhamma anything happens due to one or more causes. Thus if one does not want something to happen, one should remove the causes for it, and thus stop it from arising.
- "San" causes anything in this world to arise via "sankkhāra"; see, "What is "San"? - Meaning of Samsāra." However, anything that arises is subjected to the natural law of decay; this "khaya."
- "San" and "khaya" go together: As explained in "What is "San"? - Meaning of Samisāra", "sankhya" in Pāli or Sinhala means numbers, and "san" means adding (or multiplying) thus contributing to "building or arising" and "khaya" means subtracting (or dividing) and thus leading to "decay or destruction."
- Things that undergo this "arising" and "destruction" are called "sä்khata." Everything in this world is a sañkhata.

5. Anything that arises in this world (a sañkhata) starts decaying ("khaya") from the moment it starts arising. For example, when a baby is born, all the cells in the baby's body would have died in a couple of months, but more cells are born than those died; until that baby becomes a young person of around twenty years of age, more cells arise in a given time than decayed. Thus the baby "grows" into a young person, and then things are sort of in balance until about forty years of age, and then the "khaya" process starts dominating and person slowly starts to get weaker. Eventually, that person dies or destroyed; this is "vaya."

- Once starts arising, a sañkhata cannot be stopped; it needs to undergo its natural process of growing, come to an apparent stationary state (but not stationary even momentarily), and eventually is destroyed. If someone commits suicide, this life may end, but that unspent energy starts a new life right away. Thus all one can do is to stop something from arising. This stopping of a sankhata via removing its causes is called "nirodha."

6. A "sañkhata" is anything in this world that arises due to "san" and decayed inevitably (khaya), and is eventually destroyed (vaya). Any living being is a sañkhata and arises due to "san." We acquire "san" via "sañkhāra" because we do not comprehend the true nature of the world (avijja or ignorance) and thus cling to things in this world with "taṇh $\vec{a} "$; see, "Tanhā - How we Attach via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance."

- We can begin to see with clarity when we get rid of taṇhā and avijjā via removing lobha (greed), dosa (hatred), and moha (delusion) from our minds gradually; this is also a "khaya" process for such defilements ("āsava"), where we gradually remove these three defilements ( $\bar{a} s a v a$ ) from our minds; see, "The Way to Nibbāna - Removal of Āsavā." When a mind is pure (i.e., all āsava are removed), it does not do any sanjkhāra and thus no "sankkhata" can arise. At that stage, one has attained "nirodha" of any future "arising", i.e., one has attained Nibbāna.

7. Now let us take some famous verses from the Tipitaka and see how the meanings come out naturally, without effort:

- The third Noble truth is "dukkha nirodha sacca" (here "sacca" is pronounced "sachcha"; sacca is truth), i.e., that suffering can be stopped from arising. Most people misinterpret "dukkha nirodha sacca" as "existing suffering can be stopped." Our current life is a sañkhata that was caused by PREVIOUS causes; this life and any associated suffering CANNOT be stopped, and need to undergo its natural cause until death. That is why an Arahant (or even a Buddha) feels suffering due to past kamma (old causes).
- However, an Arahant has stopped FUTURE suffering from arising. This is indicated by another meaning of nirodha: "ni" + "roda", where "roda" means wheels; this nirodha also means "taking the wheels off of the sansäric (rebirth) process." There is no rebirth with a physical body that could result in old age, sickness, and death. Thus Nibbāna is removal of the causes that could lead to future suffering.

8. This is why the Nibbāna is of two kinds: "saupadisesa Nibbāna" and "anupadisesa Nibbāna."

- When a person attains Nibbāna, it is called saupadisesa Nibbāna because that person is still "in this world of 31 realms"; he/she still has a body that needs to undergo its natural destruction; but one can still experience the Nibbānic bliss by getting into nirodha samāpatti for up to 7 days at a time.
- When that person dies, there is no rebirth and Nibbāna is "complete"; this is called anupadisesa Nibbāna. Suffering ends permanently.

9. Finally, not absolutely everything in this world of 31 realms is sañkhata or sañkhāra. Absolutely everything is denoted by "dhamma", which includes sañkhata (sañkhāra) AND nāmagotta. Here nāmagotta are the "records" of all events of all beings in the mental plane that are truly permanent; see, "Difference Between Dhamma and Sańkhāra (sanikhata)."

- This is why the Buddha's last words were, "vaya Dhamma sañkhāra, appamādena sampādetha," or "All perishable Dhamma are sañkhāra (or sañkhata); thus strive diligently and identify "san" ("san" + "p $\vec{a} "$ "detha")."
- From beginningless time, we all built a new sañkhata each time the old sañkhata got destroyed. We do this uncountable times DURING each lifetime and also at death: we have been brahmā, devas, and humans countless times, but we have spent much more time in the four lowest realms. Thus in his last words the Buddha advised us to stop this senseless rebirth process which is filled with so much suffering, and to attain the permanent happiness of nirāmisa sukha in Nibbāna.
- By the way, Nibbāna is the only "entity" that does not ARISE due to causes; it is "asankata" ("a" + "sañkhata" or "not sañkhata" or "not conditioned") because it does not have causes. It is reached via ELIMINATING THE CAUSES for everything that arise due to causes, i.e., nirodha of sañkhata automatically leads to Nibbāna.


### 3.3.7 Nibbāna "Exists", but Not in This World

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## Introduction

1. Misconceptions about Nibbāna arise because its true meaning has been hidden for hundreds of years. In the previous posts in this series, I have described what Nibbāna is. See, "Nibbāna."

- Many people ask, "what happens to an Arahant upon death?". One is not reborn anywhere in the 31 realms of this world. It is called Parinibbāna ("pari" + Nibbāna"; meaning "full Nibbāna").
- Until Parinibbāna, an Arahant lives like a normal person and is subjected to kamma vipāka. However, "stressful thoughts that arise due to greed, anger, and ignorance" do not arise in a living Arahant. Until the death of the physical body, an Arahant has saupadisesa Nibbāna, i.e., Nibbāna is not complete.

2. It is not possible to "describe" Nibbāna (or more precisely what happens after Parinibbāna) in terms of the terminology rooted in "this world." Not a single word that we use in this world can be used to describe what Nibbāna is like.

- We do not have any "data" or "concepts" or "terminology" that pertain to Nibbāna because those would be foreign to us living in "this world."
- One crude analogy would be trying to explain to a fish what life is like outside the water. A fish would not understand the need to breathe air instead of water.
- Another would be trying to explain how radio or television works to a person who has time-traveled from thousands of years ago. He would not have sufficient "data" to comprehend how radio or TV works.


## Suttā on Nibbāna

3. But Nibbāna "exists" because one can attain it. But it does not exist in this world of 31 realms.

- There are four suttā in the Udāna section of the Ańguttara Nikāya that explain Nibbāna (Udāna 8.1 through 8.4).
- Once you open a sutta at the Sutta Central website, click on the left-most drop-down to choose one of several languages. This is a good resource; consider donating if you find it useful. Note: I am not associated with Sutta Central.
- The translations are frequently incorrect for key Pāli words, as in many websites/books. But at least one can see the correct Päli version.


## Paṭhama Nibbāna Paṭisamyutta Sutta - Nibbāna Exits

4. Let us look at the first one, "WebLink: suttacentral: Pathama Nibbāna Patisaminutta Sutta (UD8.1)." It says, "Atthi, bhikkhave, tadāyatanaì, yattha neva pathavī, na āpo, na tejo, na vāyo, na ākāsānañcāyatanaì, na viññānañcāyatanaín, na ākiñcañ̃̄āyatanaì, na nevasaññānāsaññāyatanam̀, nāyaì loko, na paraloko, na ubho candimasūriyā. Tatrāpāhaí, bhikkhave, neva āgatim vadāmi, na gatim, na thhitim, na cutim, na upapattim; appatiṭthamं, appavattaì, anārammanamevetaì. Esevanto dukkhassā"ti.".

- The first part is "atthi, bhikkhave, tadāyatanamं." Here "atthi" means "exists," and "tadāyatana" is another word for Nibbāna. Tadāyatana comes from "tath" + "āyatana," where "tath" (pronounced "thath") means "perfect." Since Nibbāna is something that we cannot define in terms of words, the closest English word for "ayatana" is something like "dimension" or "sphere." This "āyatana" is not to be confused with the six āyatana referring to the six sensory faculties in "Nāmarūpa Paccayā Salāyatana."
- Phonetically, the combined word is "tadāyatana" (pronounced "thadayathana").
- We need to be familiar with how to spell Pāli words with the "Tipitaka English" convention. It is DIFFERENT from "Standard English." See, "Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars - Part 1 and "Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars - Part 2
- Thus the translation of "Atthi, bhikkhave, tadāyatanaí" is, "Bhikkhus, Nibbāna exists (where everything is perfect)."

5. The second part in the blue says what can be said about Nibbāna. First, "appatitṭhaí, appavattaim, anārammañamevetaì" means, "It is without support (causes), unmoving, without any ārammaṇa (thought object)." The last part in the blue, " 'Esevanto dukkhass $\bar{a} t i$," means, "it is the end of suffering."

- Therefore, those sentences in the blue state ALL that one can say about Nibbāna.
- The rest of that verse (in the red) says what is ABSENT in Nibbāna.


## Paṭhama Nibbāna Paṭisaminutta Sutta - What is Absent in Nibbāna

6. The first part marked in deep red is, "there is no pathavi, $\bar{a} p o, t e j o, ~ v \bar{a} y o ~(m a h a \bar{a} b h \bar{u} t a)$ there; there is no ākāsānañcāyatana, no viñ̃̃ānañcāyatana, no äkiñcaññāyatana, no nevasañ $\bar{n} \bar{a} n \bar{a} s a \tilde{n} \tilde{n} \bar{y} y a t a n a ;$ furthermore, there is no "this world (that we experience), there is no
para loka (where gandhabbā live, see, "Hidden World of the Gandhabba: Netherworld (Para loka)"; and the Moon or the Sun would not arise there" (candimasūriyā is Moon and the Sun).

The second part marked in red says, "Bhikkhus, I say there is surely no coming and going between ayam loko and para loko, no living in either of those, no passing away (cuti), no birth."

- The absence of pathavi, āpo, tejo, and vāyo means NOTHING made of matter that we see around us (people, animals, trees, other planets, or stars) is there in Nibbāna.
- So, all we experience (including jhāna) will not be there after Parinibbāna, as discussed in \#2 above.
- And, of course, there is no gandhabba going back and forth between "ayam loko" and "para loko."
- Our terminology regarding ANYTHING AT ALL does not apply there.


## Without Nibbāna There Would Not Be an End to Suffering

7. The Tatiya Nibbāna Paṭisamiyutta Sutta (Udāna 8.3) has the following key verse: "Atthi, bhikkhave,
 asañkhataì, na yidha jātassa bhūtassa katassa sañkhatassa nissaranaim paññ̄yetha. Yasmā ca kho, bhikkhave, atthi ajātaì abhūtai் akatai் asañkhataí, tasmā jātassa bhūtassa katassa sañkhatassa nissaranàm pañ̃̄āyatı̄"ti.

Translated: "Bhikkhus, "not born," "not formed," "not made," "not conditioned" exists. For Bhikkhus, if there had not been that which is "not born," "not formed," "not made," "not conditioned," an escape here from the born, become, made, and conditioned cannot be discerned. But Bhikkhus, since there is a "not born," "not formed," "not made," "not conditioned," an escape from the born, become, made, and conditioned is evident."

- The "not born", "not formed", "not made", "not conditioned" is Nibbāna. It is reached by eliminating all that is formed, made, and conditioned.
- In other words, "this world" comes to existence (for a given person) because of the bhava and jāti built via defiled thoughts (sañkhāra) generated due to avijjā (in the Paṭicca Samuppāda process.) With the cessation of avijja, that mechanism or process stops, and no more rebirths will be possible. That results in Nibbāna.
- There are two more companion suttā that describe Nibbāna: "WebLink: suttacentral: Dutivanibbānapatisaminutta Sutta (Ud 8.2)" and "WebLink: suttacentral: Catutthanibbānapatisaminutta Sutta (Ud 8.4)." The translations available there are good enough to get further insights.


## The Fire Analogy

8. One time, the inquisitor Vacchagotta (there is a whole series of sutta in the Vacchagottavagga of the Saimyutta Nikāya about his probing questions put forth to the Buddha) asked the Buddha what happens to an Arahant upon death: "Where would he/she go?."

- The Buddha showed him a burning fire and asked, "when this fire is extinguished, can you say where it went?." Vacchagotta understood. When the fire is extinguished, it simply is not there anymore. That is all one can say. In the same way, when an Arahant dies, he/she is not reborn and thus cannot be "found" anywhere in the 31 realms.
- On the other hand, someone with abhiññ̄̄ powers (with the cutūpapāda ñāna) can see where a normal person is reborn upon death. That lifestream exists somewhere in the 31 realms.


## Rāgakkhayo Dosakkhayo Mohakkhayo-Idaỉ Vuccati Nibbānan

9. The Buddha could only explain how to attain Nibbāna by relinquishing our desire for worldly things based on this world's unsatisfactory nature (or the anicca nature).

- The Buddha said, "rāgakkhayo dosakkhayo mohakkhayo-idaì vuccati nibbānan" ti," i.e., one attains Nibbāna via getting rid of rāga, dosa, moha in one's mind. Thus cleansing our minds is the only way to Nibbāna. See, for example, WebLink: suttacentral: Nibbānapañhā Sutta (SN 38.1) and WebLink: suttacentral: Sämandaka Sutta (SN 39.1.)
- However, it is impossible to even start on "rāgakkhaya" until one reaches the Sotāpanna stage. "Rāgakkhaya" attained partially at the $A n \bar{a} g \bar{a} m \bar{\imath}$ stage (via removal of $k \bar{a} m a$ rāga) and fully at the Arahant stage (via removal of rūpa rāga and arūpa rāga). A Sotāpanna reduces dosa to patigha level (removed at the Anāgāmī stage), and moha to avijjā level (removed at the Arahant stage).
- In the new section, "Living Dhamma," we discuss these points and start from a basic level, even without referring to deeper concepts like that of rebirth.


## Nibbāna Reached In Stages

10. The point is that Nibbāna is to be comprehended in stages.

- The first stage of Nibbāna, or "Niveema" or "cooling down," can be experienced even before getting to the Sotāpanna stage. In fact, skipping this step is impossible to get to the Sotāpanna stage.
- To attain the Sotāpanna stage, one MUST comprehend the anicca nature of this world to some extent. For the mind to grasp that concept, it must be free of the "five hindrances" ("pañca n̄̄varaṇa") or "five factors that cover one's mind."
- For that one MUST live a moral life, start contemplating Buddha Dhamma and experience the "cooling down" that results.

11. Many people try to attain or comprehend Nibbāna by reading about deep concepts about what it is. There are so many books explaining what Nibbāna is by people who may not have experienced even the basic "cooling down" or "nirāmisa sukha."

- They try to explain concepts like suñyata or "emptiness" and bodhicitta; see, "What is Suñyata or Suññata (Emptiness)?". That is a complete waste of time because, as we saw above. It is not possible to describe Nibbāna with words that we know.
- Rather, one starts experiencing Nibbāna in stages. One can start experiencing the RELIEF or COOLING DOWN that results when one starts living a moral life and discarding dasa akusala in STAGES.
- Furthermore, it is important to understand that one does not start on the Path by first comprehending the anicca nature; the anicca nature will gradually become clear.
- The Buddha clearly stated the importance of following a gradual Path in the "Mahā Cattārīsaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty)." Also, see "Buddha Dhamma - In a Chart."
- Even a person who does not believe in rebirth can start from this level: "Living Dhamma."


## Nibbāna Is Not a Dhamma - It Is a Paramattha Dhamma

12. In the post, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma - Introduction", we saw that everything that EXISTS could be put into four ultimate constituents (paramattha dhamma):
(i) Thoughts (citta)
(ii) Thought qualities or mental factors (cetasika)
(iii) Matter (rūpa)
(iv) Nibbāna

- Any dhamma in this world is normally a COMBINATION of ALL THREE of the first three paramattha dhamma. Note that Dhammā "bear" things in this world.
- The fourth paramattha dhamma in the list above, Nibbāna, does not exist within the 31 realms. But Nibbāna exists, and one can attain it. An Arahant merges with Nibbāna at the death of his/her physical body.
- Nibbāna is NOT dhamma. It does not "bear" anything in this world.


## Nibbāna Can Be Experienced in Nirodha Samāpatti

13. Let us discuss some relevant characteristics of an Arahant, i.e., one who has attained Nibbāna. He/she cannot experience Nibbānic bliss (experience of full Nibbāna) unless getting into Nirodha Samāpatti . An Arahant can experience Nirodha Samāpatti for a maximum of seven days at a time.

- When an Arahant is in Nirodha Samāpatti, no citta or thoughts flow through his/her mind. There is no breathing, and it is not very different from a dead body (other than the fact that the body of the Arahant will have normal body temperature.) The point is that Arahant will not be able to explain to us "the experience of Nibbāna." In our terminology, all he/she can say is that he/she did not experience any "worldly thoughts."
- At other times, an Arahant will be experiencing "this world" just like another human: he/she will recognize people/things, sounds, smells, etc. The only exception is that thoughts burdened with rāga, dosa, and moha cannot arise: Asobhana (non-beautiful) cetasika are absent in those thoughts; see, "What Are Kilesa (Mental Impurities)? - Connection to Cetasika."
- But he/she will be engaged in puñña kriya (meritorious deeds like delivering discourses), just like the Buddha did; they are just "actions" and are not puññābhisañkhāra or puñña abhisañkhāra.


## Nibbāna and Parinibbāna

14. Here is another interesting point. Some Arahants may have kammic energy for the "human bhava" left when he/she dies; see "Bhava and Jāti - States of Existence and Births Therein." But still, there will not be another rebirth for any Arahant in this world of 31 realms.

- The reason is that the "status of the Arahanthood" could not be borne (or sustained) by any other "finer body" than a dense human body. Thus, at the death of the physical body of an Arahant, the gandhabba that comes out of the dead body will perish. Since Arahant's mind will not grasp existence within the 31 realms, so the rebirth process will stop.
- What happens to the "gandhabba kāya" of an Arahant is similar to the burning of a heater coil removed from a water bath. The heated coil will survive as long as it is immersed in water:

WebLink: youtube: How to use immersion water heater? | How to Boil water for Bathing

- Thus, the fine body (trija kaya) of the gandhabba cannot "bear" the energy associated with an Arahant. See, "Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya)."
- In the same way, the fine, subtle "bodies" of a Deva or a Brahma also cannot sustain the mind of an Arahant. Thus, if a Deva or a Brahma attains the Arahanthood, they will immediately attain Parinibbāna. In other words, there are no living Arahants in Deva or Brahma realms.

15. We can consider the following analogy to make clear what happens. A heater-coil is immersed in water, and can "bear" the current that passes through it while immersed in boiling water. But if we take a coil out of the water, it will burn. The heater coil cannot "bear" the current passing through it unless immersed in water.

- In the same way, the "Arahanthood" can be "borne" or "sustained" only with a solid human body. Once the gandhabba comes out of that body -upon the death of that physical body - the "Arahanthood" cannot be "borne" by that gandhabba body. The "Arahanthood" cannot be "borne" by even a
layperson for more than seven days. Once attaining the "Arahanthood," one must become a Bhikkhu within seven days, or one will die because a layperson cannot "bear" the "Arahanthood."
- With Parinibbāna (death of an Arahant), "the Nibbāna is complete." The Sinhala word is "pirinivana," where "nivana" is Nibbāna, and "piri" means "full" or "complete."
- Therefore, Nibbāna exists. But one who has attained "full Nibbāna" or Parinibbāna will no longer be in this world of 31 realms. One would be free of any sufferings in this world, including harsh sufferings in the apāyā.


### 3.4 Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta

- Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta - Wrong Interpretations
- The Way to Nibbāna - Transcription of a Discourse by Waharaka Thero
- Anicca - True Meaning
- Anicca - Inability to Keep What We Like
- Anicca - Repeated Arising/Destruction
- Anicca - Worthlessness of Worldly Things
- Anicca - The Incessant Distress ("Pillana")
- How to Cultivate the Anicca Saññā
- How to Cultivate the Anicca Saññā - II
- If Everything is Anicca Should We Just give up Everything?
- Anattā - A Systematic Analysis
- Anattā in Anattalakkahana Sutta - No Soul or an Ātma
- Anatta - No Refuge in This World
- Dasa Akusala and Anatta - The Critical Link
- Anatta - the Opposite of Which Atta?
- Anattā (Mundane Interpretation) - No "Unchanging Self"
- Anatta and Dukkha - True Meanings
- Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta - According to Some Key Suttā
- Three Marks of Existence - English Discourses
- Sotāpanna Stage and Tilakkhana
- Sakkāya Ditthi and Tilakkhana
- Sakkāya Ditthi - Getting Rid of Deeper Wrong Views
- Associations (Sevana) - A Root Cause of Wrong Views
- Why are Tilakkhana not Included in 37 Factors of Enlightenment?
- Two Versions of 37 Factors of Enlightenment
- Types of Bodies in 31 Realms - Connection to Jhāna
- Finest Manomaya Kāya of an Arūpāvacara Brahma


### 3.4.1 Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta - Wrong Interpretations

Revised October 25, 2016; April 11, 2017; September 13, 2017; November 25, 2017; January 26, 2018; May 25, 2019; August 6, 2019; January 11, 2020; August 23, 2022

## Introduction

1. No other factor has contributed to helping keep Nibbāna hidden in the past many hundreds of years than the incorrect interpretations of anicca as just "impermanence" and anatta as just "no-self." If one can find even a single instance in the Päli Tipitaka (not translations) that describes anicca and anatta that way, please let me know at lal@puredhamma.net. Also, before quoting English translations of the Tipitaka, please read the post, "Misinterpretation of Anicca and Anatta by Early European Scholars."

- I consider this series of posts on "anicca, dukkha, anatta" to be the most important on the website. Reading the posts in the given order could be very beneficial.
- A Buddha comes to this world to reveal three words and eight letters (in Pāli). "Attakkarā thīnapadā Sambuddhena pakāsithā, na hī sīla vatan hotu uppajjati Tathāgatā." That means "a Buddha (Tathāgata) is born NOT just to show how to live a moral life, but to reveal three words with eight letters to the world." So far, I have not seen this verse in the Tipitaka. It is likely to have been in an old commentary.
- These three words with eight letters are anicca, dukkha, and anatta. (when written in Sinhala/Pāli:

 see how four letters become three there).

Anicca is pronounced "anichcha," which rhymes with "picture."

## WebLink: Listen to pronounciation of : anicca

Dukkha pronounced similarly, duk+kha.

## WebLink: Listen to pronounciation of: dukkha

Anatta is pronounced "anaththa."

## WebLink: Listen to pronounciation of: anatta

See "Pop-up Pāli Glossary with Pronunciation" for more meanings of Pāli terms and sound files on pronunciations.
2. Asubha ("non-auspicious" or "unfruitful" nature) is another characteristic of nature. It appears with anicca, dukkha, and anatta in several suttā, for example, "WebLink: suttacentral: Vipalläsa Sutta (AN 4.49)."

- Furthermore, the word, Tilakkhana, does not appear in the Tipitaka to my knowledge.
- However, as discuss below, anicca, dukkha, and anatta appear as a group in many sutt $\bar{a}$. Thus it is justifiable to clump them together as Tilakkhana.


## Why Are Tilakkhana so Important?

3. The Buddha clarified these "three characteristics of this world" in his first sutta; see, "Does the First Noble Truth Describe only Suffering?."

- These are the three primary characteristics of "this world." Buddha comes to the world to reveal the true nature of the world.
- Any moral person instinctively knows (and most religions teach) how to live a righteous life; see, "Buddha Dhamma - In a Chart."
- The Buddha stated that if one comprehends the true nature of "this world," as codified in these three words, then one would attain the Stream Entry (Sotāpanna) stage of Nibbāna; see, "Why is Correct Interpretation of Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta so Important?."

4. Therefore, a good understanding of the words anicca, dukkha, and anatta is critical. If one sticks to incorrect interpretation of these three words, no matter how much effort one exerts, there is no possibility of attaining the Sotāpanna stage. Even in most Theravāda English texts, these three words have incorrect translations: impermanence, suffering, and "no-soul" or "no-self." The correct meanings are the following.

- Nothing in this world can be maintained to one's satisfaction (anicca).
- When one strives to achieve that, it leads to suffering (dukkha). However, many people try to gain "happiness" by resorting to immoral deeds, ending in the apa$y \bar{a}$. That is how one becomes genuinely helpless.
- Striving to achieve the impossible (i.e., seeking happiness in worldly things) only leads to suffering. Thus, one's efforts are not only unfruitful, but one becomes helpless in the rebirth process (anatta).


## Pāli Words for Impermanence Are "Adduvain" or "Aniyata"

5. The Pāli word for impermanence is NOT anicca; it is addhuva or aniyata. For example, " $\bar{\imath} v i t a \dot{n}$ aniyatami, Maranaim niyatam" means, "life is not permanent, death is." [addhuva :[adj.] unstable; impermanent. aniyata :[adj.] uncertain; not settled.]
"addhuvaì jīvitaì, dhuvaì maraṇam̀" means the same thing.

- Therefore, the critical mistake was in translating the original Pāli word anicca to Sanskrit as "anitya," which does mean impermanence.
- This term, "dhuva" comes in the Brahmanimantanika Sutta (Majjhima Nikāya 49), where the Baka Brahma says his existence is permanent; see \#12 of "Anidassana Viññāña - What It Really Means."


## Anatta Is Not "Self" or "No-Self"

6. Now let us examine the damage done by translating the original Pāli word anatta to Sanskrit as "anātma."

- At the time of the Buddha, there were two opposing views on the idea of a "self." One camp believed in an unchanging "soul" (ātma) associated with a being. This camp thus corresponds to the world's major religions today with the concept that when one dies, one's soul goes to heaven or hell.
- The opposing camp argued that there is "no-soul" (anātma) and that when one dies, there is nothing that survives the death. This view is the materialistic view today that our minds arise from matter, and thus, there is nothing that survives death.

7. The Buddha said it was neither. There is no "self" permanently associated with a living being: both the mind and the body are in constant flux (see the Section on "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma"), and thus there is no "soul" or an "unchanging self." See "What Reincarnates? - Concept of a Lifestream."

- However, one can choose how to respond to an external stimulus. Therefore, it is also incorrect to say there is "no-self."
- Furthermore, there is continuity at death based on cause-and-effect (paticca samuppāda; see, "Paticca Samuppāda - Introduction").
- The new living being is a continuation of the old living being, just as an older man is a continuation of the process from the baby stage. Change is there at every MOMENT, based on cause-and-effect. The "new" is dependent on the "old."
- That is also why it is incorrect to say that an Arahant is annihilated at death (i.e., at Parinibbāna). See "Yamaka Sutta (SN 22.85) - Arahanthood Is Not Annihilation but End of Suffering."


## They Are Related to Each Other

8. The Buddha stated that the three characteristics of "this world" are RELATED to each other:
 tad anattā"), i.e.,
"if something is anicca, dukkha arises, and one becomes helpless (anatta)." Note that "yam" and "yad" have the same meaning and are used interchangeably. In the same way, "yadidamं" comes from "yad idam.".

- (In the Samiyutta Nikāya (Anicca Vagga), many suttā including WebLink: suttacentral: Ajjhattanicca Sutta (SN 35.1), WebLink: suttacentral: Bahiranicca Sutta (SN 35.4), and WebLink: suttacentral: Yadanicca sutta (SN 22.15) have the above verse.)

9. Now, let us see what happens if we take anicca to be impermanent and anatta to be "no-soul." Then the above verse reads, "if something is not permanent, suffering arises, and because of that one becomes "no-self."

- Many people think since one's body is impermanent, suffering arises. But the sutt $\bar{a}$ mentioned above describe this for all six internal senses (Ajjhattanicca or Ajjhatta Anicca Sutta) and for everything external sensed by the six sense faculties (Bāhiranicca or Bāhira Anicca Sutta). Therefore, that verse holds for anything and everything "in this world."
- Thus if a headache becomes impermanent (i.e., if it goes away,) that will lead to happiness. Thus, impermanence does not necessarily lead to suffering. But if we cannot handle a headache the way we want (i.e., cannot get rid of it), then that will lead to suffering!
- As we will show in the next post ("Anicca - True Meaning"), the correct translation holds for any case.

10. The opposite of the above statement must be correct, too (in mathematical logic, this is not correct generally, but in this particular case, it can be shown to be right. It is due to the assumption that "dukkha" depends only on "nicca" or "anicca" and no other factor).

Let us consider the incorrect interpretations that say:
"if something is permanent, suffering does not arise, and because of that, it implies a "self."

- How can one stop suffering if one has a permanent headache or a sickness? And in what sense does a "self" arise?
- There are many things in this world, if it becomes permanent, would lead to suffering: a disease, poverty, association with someone disliked, moving away from a loved one, etc.

Thus we can see that anicca and anatta do not mean impermanence and "no-self."

- However, if we take the correct translation, we can show that the reverse statement also holds. as discussed in the next post: "Anicca - Inability to Keep What We Like."


## Everyone Knows Anything in This World is Impermanent

11. Permanence and impermanence are inseparable PROPERTIES of living beings, objects, and events. On the other hand, niccalanicca are PERCEPTIONS IN ONE'S MIND about them.

- In the long run, we cannot maintain anything to our satisfaction (including "our" own body), which is anicca. And because of that, we become distraught, and that is dukkha. And since we cannot prevent this sequence of events, we are truly helpless in the long run (nothing of real substance left in the end.) That is anatta.
- Here is a video that illustrates the concept of anicca clearly:
- We must realize that we all will undergo this inevitable change as we get old. No matter how hard we try, it is not possible to maintain ANYTHING to our satisfaction. It is the nature of "this world": anicca.
- Of course, any of these celebrities (or their fans) will be saddened to see that comparison in the video above. They have not been able to maintain their bodies to their satisfaction. However, a person on bad terms with any of these celebrities could be happy to see those pictures since he/she would like to see something terrible happen to that celebrity.

12. Thus, "impermanence" is inevitable; it is a property of anything in this world. But "anicca" is a perception in someone's mind. That perception CAN be changed; that is how one gets rid of suffering.

- In the above case, celebrities' bodies ARE impermanent; but that did not necessarily cause suffering to ALL. It caused pain to only those who did not like them getting old. If they had any enemies, those would be happy to see them losing their "good looks."
- Impermanence is a fact; see "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma." But impermanence is NOT the MEANING of anicca.
- These pictures provide the visual impact that we do not usually get. We don't see changes in ourselves because the change is gradual.

13. A Buddha is not needed to show that impermanence is an inherent characteristic of our universe. Scientists are well aware of that, but they have not attained Nibbāna. Anicca is a profound concept with several meanings, and they are all related. Here are three ways to look at it:

- "Anicca - Inability to Keep What We Like" (listed above).
- "Anicca - Repeated Arising/Destruction."
- "Anicca - Worthlessness of Worldly Things."


## Anicca - The Incessant Distress ("Pillana")

14. Finally, the Buddha said, "Sabbe Dhammā anattā." So, what does "all dhammā are "no-self" mean (if anatta meant "no-self")? Dhammā means "to bear" and includes those kammic energies that can bring in the future vipāka including future rebirths. We strive to make such Dhamma $\bar{a}$ which will only bring NET suffering in the future. Nothing in this world is of any real value in the end. That is anatta nature.

- This is systematically explained in "Origin of Life" and specifically in the post, "Dhammā, Kamma, Sañkhāra, Mind - Critical Connections."
- Another keyword that has lost its true meaning is "san"; see, "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansara (or Samsara)."


## Possible Historical Reasons for Mistranslations

15. We can see the origins of some of these incorrect translations by looking at how Buddha Dhamma was transmitted over time. For details, see "Historical Background."

- For about 500 years after the Parinibbāna of the Buddha, the Pāli Tipitaka was transmitted orally from generation to generation of bhikkhus, who faithfiully passed down the Pāli Canon. Of course, it had been DESIGNED for easy oral transmission.
- See "Preservation of the Dhamma" for a discussion on this aspect. The original teachings of the Buddha are still intact.

16. Then, it was written down in Sinhala script for the first time in 29 BCE in Sri Lanka. Pāli is a phonetic language that does not have an alphabet.

- The Tipitaka was never translated to any other language until the Europeans discovered "Buddhism" in the late 1600 s; see "Background on the Current Revival of Buddha Dhamma."
- Tipitaka was not translated to even the Sinhala language until 2005.

17. When Rhys Davis and others started doing those English translations, they were heavily influenced by Sanskrit Mahāyāna sutras and Vedic literature. Think about it: when the Europeans first started discovering all these different Pāli and Sanskrit documents, they must have been overwhelmed by the complexities.

- It took them some time to separate Buddhism from Hinduism, and in the process, some concepts got mixed up; see "Misinterpretation of Anicca and Anatta by Early European Scholars."
- For example, They ASSUMED that "anatta" was the same as "anātma," which is a Sanskrit word, with a different meaning, i.e., "no-self." Similarly, they took "anicca" to mean the same as Sanskrit "anitya," which does mean "impermanent."


## It Will Take Time to Untangle These Issues

18. The worst was that even contemporary Sinhala scholars like Malasekara (a doctoral student of Rhys Davis) "learned" Buddhism from the Europeans and thus started using wrong interpretations. Other Sinhala scholars like Kalupahana and Jayathilake also learned "Buddhism" at universities in the United Kingdom.

- Following the original translations by Rhys Davis, Eugene Burnouf, Olcott, and others, those Sinhala scholars also write books in both English and Sinhala. Of course, scholars in other Buddhist countries did the same in their languages, and the incorrect interpretations spread worldwide.
- To correct this grave problem, we must go back to the Tipitaka in Pāli and start the process there.
- Pāli suttā should not be translated word to word. Most of the suttā are condensed and written in a style conducive to oral transmission; see, "Sutta Interpretation - Uddesa, Niddesa, Patiniddesa."
- Commentaries were written to explain critical concepts in the Tipitaka, and only three of those original commentaries have survived. We need to rely heavily on Paṭisambhidāmagga, Peṭakopadesa, and Nettippakarana.
- Instead, most people rely on incorrect commentaries written in more recent years, especially Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga. For details, see "Buddhaghosa and Visuddhimagga - Historical Background." However, Buddhaghosa did not change the meanings of the words anicca, dukkha, and anatta. That is likely to have happened in more recent times, as I explained above). But he incorporated many other Hindu concepts like breath and kasina meditation; see, "Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga - A Focused Analysis."

19. It is also important to note that mass printing was not available until recent years and became common only in the 1800 s; see, "WebLink: newworldencyclopedia.org: Printing press."

- Thus mass production of books became possible only with the new printing presses in the 1800s. By that time, key concepts had been mistranslated.
- In the early days, Tipiṭaka was written on specially prepared leaves and needed to be re-written by hand every 100-200 years before they degraded. So, we must be grateful to the bhikkhus in Sri Lanka who did this dutifiully for almost 2000 years.
- Sinhala language (both spoken and written) changed over the past 2000 years. The need to re-write the Tipitaka every 100 or so years made sure that any changes in Sinhala script were taken into account; see \#21 of "Misinterpretation of Anicca and Anatta by Early European Scholars."


## Other Related Issues

20. I came across another problem in a recent online forum. People are debating the meanings of the words
 added to the latter word.

- So, most people write it as "anatta." It does not matter how one writes it, as long as one understands the meaning as "with no refuge" or "without essence," and NOT "no-self."
- But it does mean "it is not fruitful to take anything in this world to be mine."

21. Two more main misconceptions are prevalent today. They not only block the path to Nibbāna but are micch $\bar{a}$ ditṭthi that could be responsible for rebirth in the apayy $\bar{a}$. I am not trying to scare anyone, but "making adhamma to be dhamma is a serious offense."

- Misinterpretation of breath meditation as Ānāpānasati: "Is Ānāpānasati Breath Meditation?."
- Insisting that the gandhabba (manomaya kāya) is a Mahāyāna concept: "Gandhabba State - Evidence from Tipitaka."

22. All these misconceptions are not the fault of current Theravādins; they have been handed down hundreds of years, as explained in the "Historical Background." However, it makes no sense to adhere to them when substantial evidence is presented against them, per the above posts, and many others on this website.

- Of course, no one should be able to insist, "this is the only truth, and nothing else is the truth." But the truth can be verified to one's satisfaction by critically examining the evidence. I am open to discussing any valid contrary evidence. We need to sort out the truth for the benefit of all.

23. Finally, it may not be possible to comprehend anicca, dukkha, and anatta. One must first follow the mundane path to learn basic concepts like kamma and rebirth.

- More details in "Transition to Noble Eightfold Path."
- A systematic approach at "Living Dhamma."

24. Anicca and anatta are complex Pāli words that cannot be translated into English directly. No English word can convey the meaning of anicca (or anatta). The following subsections discuss those two complex Pāli words:

Anicca - True Meaning

## Anattā - A Systematic Analysis

July 10, 2020: A new series of posts on "Origin of Life" systematically explain Tilakkhaṇa and Paṭicca Samuppāda and also makes the connection between them.

### 3.4.2 Anatta and Dukkha - True Meanings

What really matters in the end is one comprehends, not words. The way different people interpret "no-self" could be different, even though the concept of a "self" is very clear.

- If anatta means "no-self", then there is nothing that can distinguish person A from person B. So, if A takes something belongs to B, he can say, "there is no "me" and there is no "you"; what is wrong in me using "your" stuff?." If B believes in "no-self" can he argue with A?
- Similarly, there are many other contradictions: If there is "no-self", (i) who attains Nibbāna?, (ii) who does moral or immoral acts?, etc.
- Instead one needs to comprehend that "one is really helpless in this rebirth process" or "one is not in control over the long run"; that is the concept of anatta, as we discuss below.

1. Let us look at the two words the Buddha used: "àthma" and "anāthma." In the Brahmajala sutta, the Buddha definitely said both those are not correct. The best translation of those two terms to present day, I believe, are "soul" and "no-soul":

- "Soul" in the sense of an unchanging entity; for example, most religions believe one's soul goes to hell or heaven and then that "soul" is forever in that state.
- "No-soul" in the sense interpreted by a materialist, i.e., "a person" is just the body (with thoughts arising from the material brain), and when one dies that is end of story; nothing survives physical death.
- Those were the two extremes rejected by the Buddha as "athma" and "anathma."

2. The real confusion arose when the Pāli word "anatta" was translated to Sanskrit as "anathma." Subsequently, the Sanskrit word "anathma" was translated to English as "no-self." This was done at the same time when "athma" was translated as "soul."
3. The real question is when one says, "there is "no-self"", does one imply that there is no "soul", i.e., no "athma"? There are two possibilities. Let us look at them carefully:

- If one means by "no-self" that when one dies that is the end of story, i.e., there is no rebirth process, then this is same as "no-soul."
- Or, it is possible that some people may have the idea of a "changing personality" rather than the above materialistic view of nothing surviving the death, i.e., one believes that a human can be reborn an animal. Then one has the right concept of "no-self" or what I call a "ever-changing personality."
- One needs to contemplate on this and clearly distinguish between the two possible interpretations.

4. But I have seen many people just use the phrase "no-self" in the wrong way.

- Some say, 'The Buddha told us that there is "no-self." So, what is the point of going through learning Dhamma etc., because there is no "me."
- Others say, "Even if I die and get reborn as an animal, it will be not "me", because there is "no-self."
- They are both wrong by talking about a "no-soul." What I ask them is, "If there is no "me", would it be OK if someone hits you hard with a stick or worse?." Then of course they realize that there is a "me." That is the "me" who learns Dhamma or who could be reborn an animal.

5. We can take a simple simile to get an idea of these two extremes of "soul" and "no-soul." We have all seen shapes and colors created by water fountains.

- We all know those structures created by water are not real. But we cannot say they do not exist.
- In the same way, since we cannot say that a person does not exist. However, there is nothing that exists permanently, it is just transitory. Thus both "self" and "no-self" are wrong perceptions.
- Just like we can create different shapes and figures using that water fountain, we all go through various lifeforms in the rebirth process.
- However, the suffering (or the intermittent happiness) is real.

6. This is a deep concept. We cannot deny that we have the inner perception (sañ̃̃̄ $\bar{a}$ ) of a "me" (unless one is an Arahant). That is also THE reason that we go through this rebirth process. But that sañ̃̄ $\bar{a}$ CANNOT be gotten rid by forcing the mind to accept that there is no "me." THAT DOES NOT WORK. When one starts learning the true nature of the world by understanding the real meanings of anicca, dukkha, anatta, the mind gradually realizes that there is no real "me", but just an ever-changing "lifestream."

- Thus one could meditate for thousand years muttering to oneself, "it is anāthma" or "there is no-self", or anything equivalent with the meaning "there is no "me'", and would not get anywhere close to the Sotāpanna stage or even any nirāmisa sukha, because deep inside one does not really believe in that.
- Instead one needs to comprehend that "there is nothing fruitful to be had in this world in the long run", or "one is really helpless in this rebirth process"; that is the concept of anatta.
- Another word for anatta is "anātha" (this is the Sinhala word), which means "utterly helpless." That is the status of a human being who is unaware of the perils of the rebirth process. The opposite is "nātha,"
which is actually also used in Pāli to refer to the Buddha (as in one becomes " $n \bar{a} t h a$ " when one embraces the message of the Buddha).

7. In other words, "there is a 'me' as long as one craves for things in this world." Denying that perception is not the solution. One craves for things in this world because one believes there is happiness to be had by seeking "things" in this world. That tendency to seek things will not reduce until one understands that it is fruitless to strive for such things in the long term; even though one may not know it, one is truly helpless. And that is a real meaning of anatta.

- But that cannot be grasped just by reading about it. One needs to contemplate (meditate) using real examples from one's life. One will know that one is starting to get the concept when one starts realizing that one's cravings for things in this world is gradually waning.


## Why Dukkha is not Merely Suffering?

1. There is confusion about what the Buddha said about suffering because most cannot distinguish between dukha and dukkha. But the Pāli word for suffering is dukha. Dukkha (dukha+khya) means there is hidden suffering AND that suffering can be eliminated (khya is removal); see, "What is San? - Meaning of Samsāra (or Samsāra)."

- And dukkha sacca (the first Noble Truth) is the knowledge on seeing that those things we value as "sense pleasures" are in fact the CAUSE of this "hidden suffering."

2. Dukha is a vedanā (feeling). Anyone, and even animals feel dukha. No one has to convince anyone there is $d u k h a$ in this world. If anyone can attain Nibbāna by realizing $d u k h a$ in this world, then animals would attain Nibbāna first, because they know dukha very well.

- However, dukkha (or the dukkha sacca) is the First Noble Truth. It says there is "hidden suffering" behind all this apparent happiness or the illusion of a future happiness that can be achieved by "working hard."
- Dukkha Sacca is comprehended not by contemplating on suffering, but contemplating on the causes for suffering, i.e., the immoral things we tend to do because of the lack of understanding of anicca, dukkha, anatta.
- In order to comprehend dukkha, one needs to understand the wider world view of the Buddha and see that most suffering will be in future rebirths unless one attains at least the Sotāpanna stage of Nibbāna.
- That is why it takes a lot of time and effort to gain wisdom (pañña $\bar{a}$ ) and truly start on the Path. Since our senses cannot sense other realms, including the suffering-filled lowest 4 realms (except the animal realm), it is not a trivial matter to understand and truly believe the message of the Buddha.

3. This wrong conception has also led to the popularity of "breath meditation" (the incorrect $\bar{a} n \bar{a} p \bar{a} n a$ meditation) as a way to remove "suffering."

- It is true that one could get 'temporary relief' and even jhānic experiences using the breath meditation. But that does not solve the problem of "long-term sansāric suffering" emphasized by the Buddha.
- When one cultivates the true "ānāpāna meditation" (see, " 7 . What is Ānāpāna?"), one can achieve temporary relief AND work towards "long-term happiness" of Nibbāna.

4. Most people have the perception that Buddha Dhamma is pessimistic, because it emphasizes suffering. Actually, it is quite the opposite.

- The Buddha was just the messenger of the bad news. He DISCOVERED the true nature of this world: No matter where we are reborn within the 31 realms, we will not find happiness and in the LONG RUN, suffering prevails; see, "The Four Stages in Attaining Nibbāna."
- A world which is based on constant change, or more correctly constant disorder, (impermanence) is inherently incapable of providing stability (thus anicca is not impermanence, but anicca arises out of impermanence); see, "Second Law of Thermodynamics is Part of Anicca!."
- Yet, we have the PERCEPTION that we can somehow "beat the system" and find happiness. That is the wrong perception of nicca. Once we truly realize dukkha, we will see that anything in this world has the anicca nature; nothing in this world can provide long-lasting happiness in the long term.

5. The Buddha not only discovered that "this world" cannot provide us with stable and lasting happiness. He also found the way to get out of this inherently unstable, and thus unsatisfactory nature of existence. This is the Noble Eightfold Path.
6. Thus it is important to realize that dukkha has embedded in it the only optimistic message anyone can deliver: That we can overcome this inevitable suffering.

- When one truly realizes the true nature of "this world", one voluntarily gives up struggling in vain to achieve the impossible, and that automatically leads to a state of happiness in one's mind even before the Sotäpanna stage.
- This particular happiness, nirāmisa sukha, is different from the sense pleasures and one can experience it more and more as one follows the Path, and culminates in Arahantship or unconditioned happiness; see, "Three Kinds of Happiness - What is Nirāmisa Sukha?." One can experience this nirāmisa sukha all the way up to its peak at Nibbāna during this very life.

7. Another important thing to realize is that there are only two ways that anyone's destiny works out:

- One waits until one gets really old to EXPERIENCE the suffering even in this life itself. It does not matter how much money one has: One will NOT be able to enjoy the sensual pleasures as one used to in the younger ages: all sense faculties degrade including culinary pleasures, visual, auditory, sex, etc. And if one gets a major illness it will be worse. The absolutely worse thing is that by that time it will be too late, because even the mind starts to degrade (it is actually the brain that degrades), and one will not be able to make any spiritual progress.
- The other and the ONLY reasonable option is to develop insight NOW. The Buddha had revealed the true nature of 'this world" of 31 realms. At least one should examine the big picture laid out by the Buddha to see whether that picture makes sense, and if it does to work towards getting out of "this world."
- People commit suicide thinking that it will end the suffering. It does not. The only way to stop suffering is to stop rebirth. There is nowhere to be found in the 31 realms that will end the suffering. One may find relatively long periods of happiness in the higher realms, but in the sansäric time scale that will only be a blip; see, "Sansāric Time Scale, Buddhist Cosmology, and the Big Bang Theory" and "Infinity - How Big Is It?."
- And one can test the path prescribed by the Buddha. As one experiences the nirāmisa sukha by removing greed, hate, and ignorance, one can start feeling the "cooling down", the early stages of Nibbāna; see, "How to Taste Nibbāna." This will accentuate one's liking of Dhamma (chanda), enhance one's determination (citta) and effort (viriya) to seek insight (vīmainsā); see, "The Four Bases of Mental Power (Cattāro Iddhipāda)."

Next, "Anicca - Repeated Arising/Destruction",

### 3.4.3 Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta - According to Some Key Suttas

## Revised: January 20, 2016; December 3, 2017; January 26, 2018; July 2, 2020

The key to understanding the First Noble Truth (Dukkha Sacca; pronounced "dukkha sachcha") is to understand the Three Characteristics or Tilakkhana of "this wider world of 31 realms", i.e., anicca, dukkha, anatta. Let us discuss a few key sutta.

## Dhamma Cakka Pavattana Sutta (SN 56.11)

1. How suffering arises from anicca is explicitly described in the very frst sutta, WebLink: suttacentral: Dhamma Cakka Pavattana Sutta (SN 56.11). Here is the text from the sutta:

Idam kho pana, bhikkhave, dukkham ariyasaccam:
jātipi dukkhā, jarāpi dukkhā, byādhipi dukkho, maranampi dukkhā̀̇, appiyehi sampayogo dukkho, piyehi vippayogo dukkho, yampicchaì na labhati tampi dukkhāंㅁ-saïkhittena pañcupādānakkhandhā dukkhā. [sañkhittena means being overthrown by defilements]
2. Bhikkhus, What is the Noble Truth of Suffering?

- "jātipi dukkhä" means "birth causes suffering" (all births end up in suffering and death.) "Jarā pi $d u k k h \vec{a} "$ means, "decay of something that is liked causes suffering." And "maranamim pi dukkhä" means, "Death of a liked causes suffering."
- Then comes, "..appiyehi sampayogo dukkho, piyehi vippayogo dukkho" meaning, "it brings sorrow when a loved one has to depart, and it also brings sorrow to be with a hated person."

3. And then the summary of all that: "Yamp'icchaín (yam pi icchaí) na labhati tam'pi dukkham.". Here we see, "ichcha" that we encountered in both anicca, dukka, anatta and also in Paticca Samuppāda ("pati+ichcha" "sama+uppada"). And "labhati" means "get."

- Thus, "If one does not get what one likes, that leads to suffering." This phrase has everything condensed. That is anicca. It does not say suffering arises because of impermanence.
- For detail, see, "Does the First Noble Truth Describe only Suffering?."
 different sutt $\bar{a}$, as you can see below. The word "iccha" with the emphasis on the last syllable indicates "strong icca" or "strong attachment."
- For correct pronuciations see, "Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars Part 1."


## Anatta Lakkhana Sutta

4. The Buddha delivered WebLink: suttacentral: Anatta Lakkhana Sutta (SN 22.59) to the five ascetics within a fortnight of the first sutta. The following are some questions that the Buddha asked the ascetics.
"Taï kimं maññatha, bhikkhave, rūpaì niccam̀ vā aniccaì vā"ti?

- "Aniccami, Bhante."
"Yaim panāniccaín dukkhain vā taín sukhaín vā"ti?
- "Dukkham, Bhante."
"Yaì panāniccain dukkhaì viparināmadhammaì, kallaì nu taì samanupassitumi: 'etaì mama, esohamasmi, eso me atta'" ${ }^{\prime} t i$ ?
- "No hetamं, Bhante."

5. The first question was, "Bhikkhus: is any rūpa nicca or anicca?" or "Bhikkhus: can any rūpa be kept to one's satisfaction or cannot be kept to one's satisfaction?"

And the bhikkhus answer: "It cannot be kept to one's satisfaction, Venerable Sir."

- Here it is to be noted that "r $\bar{u} p a$ " can be either internal or external. There are many $r \bar{u} p a$ in this world that are "permanent," at least compared to our lifetimes. For example, an item made of gold or a
diamond can last millions of years. But neither can be kept to "our satisfaction" since we will have to give them up when we die.

6. The second question: "Will such an entity lead to suffering or happiness?" And the bhikkhus answer: "Suffering, Venerable Sir."

- Here it is essential to see that if an entity is not permanent, whether that will lead to suffering: How many people suffered when Bin Laden got killed? Only those who liked him to live! Many people rejoiced in his demise. See details in "Does the First Noble Truth Describe only Suffering?."
- The third question: "Will such an entity that cannot be kept to one's satisfaction, that leads to suffering, and is a viparināma dhamma, should be considered as "myself or mine, or has any substance?" And the bhikkhus answer: "No reason to think so, Venerable Sir."

Then the Buddha explained that those characteristics of anicca, dukkha, anatta also hold for vedanā, saññā, sañkhārā, viññ̄ạna.

## Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta Are Related and Universal

7. Here we need to pay attention to the sequence of the three questions. The Buddha was pointing out that no "rūpa" can be kept to our satisfaction. Forming attachment to such rūpa will lead to suffering. Therefore, there is no reason to consider them having any substance. Anicca leads to dukkhāand anatta because we have nicca sañña about such (anicca) rūpa.

- Of course, the same holds for vedanā, saññ̄a, sañkhārā, viññāṇa.
- This relationship among anicca, dukkha, anatta was pointed out as "Yad aniccaím taím dukkhaím, yaim dukkhaim tad anatta." in the WebLink: suttacentral: Ajihattānicca Sutta (SN 35.1) in the Samyutta Nikāya. See, "Anicca, dukkhā, Anattā - Wrong Interpretations."
- Therefore, anicca, dukkha, anatta are UNIVERSAL characteristics applicable to anything in this world.


## Impermanence Does Not Always Lead to Suffering

8. It is essential to realize that the Buddha was not referring to just one's body. Anicca applies to all sañkhāra and sankata. Nothing in this world can be kept to our satisfaction: "Sabbe sañkhārā aniccā." By the way, it is superfluous to say, "all sañkhāra are impermanent." Of course, all sañkhāra arise and fall. How can sañkhāra be permanent anyway?

- Furthermore, "impermanence" does not ALWAYS lead to suffering. When Osama bin Laden died, most people were happy.
- However, bin Laden's death caused suffering to his followers. In both cases, the statement, "if something cannot be maintained to one's satisfaction, that causes suffering" holds. The death of bin Laden caused suffering only to his followers.
- If we have a headache/injury/disease, and if it became permanent, would we not suffer? It is a good thing that those conditions are impermanent so that we can get rid of them with medical treatment.

9. We strive to accumulate "good stuff," but will have to leave them all behind at death. When we go through the rebirth process, we just repeat this process in each life.

- In most rebirths, the suffering is great, and in some, there is happiness (human, deva, and Brahma realms.) But such "good rebirths" are encountered very rarely. The Buddha said that the lowest four realms are the "home base" for the living beings; they may visit other realms once-in-a-while, but always have to come back and spend the most time in the home base.
- That is why the Buddha said this never-ending process of the cycle of rebirths, where we suffer so much, is fruitless and one is truly helpless. That is anatt $\bar{a}$.
- It does not make sense to say because of anicca and dukkha, we have "no-self" or "no-soul." Instead, as long as we have the wrong perception of anicca about anything in "this world", we are subject to suffering, and thus we are truly helpless, anatt $\bar{a}$.


## Girimananda Sutta

10. WebLink: suttacentral: Girimananda Sutta (AN 10.60) is another critical sutta in the Tipitaka that describes anicca in the most profound sense. The Buddha delivered this sutta to Ven. Ānanda (for him to recite to Ven. Girimananda, an Arahant, who was in pain due to an ailment). Here is a key phrase (in the middle of the sutta):

Katamā cānanda (ca Ānanda), sabbasañkhāresu aniccha sañña??
Idhānanda (Idha Ānanda) bhikkhu sabbasañkhāresu atttīyati harāyati jigucchati.
Ayaì vuccatānanda (vuccati Ānanda), sabbasan̉khāresu aniccha saññā.

## Translated:

## "Ānanda, What is the (correct) perception of all sañkhāra?

Ānanda, all sañkhāra are like meatless bones, without substance, to be rejected like urine and feces. [atṭi : wounds. yati : [aor. of yatati] exerted oneself; strived. (m.), a monk. attityati : wounds inflicted by oneself. harāyati :[deno. from hiri] is ashamed, depressed or vexed; worries. jigucchati: [gup + cha; gu is doubled and the first gu becomes ji] shuns; loathes; is disgusted at.]

## That is Ānanda, how one should perceive all sañkhāra."

11. Here the Buddha is describing the characteristics of all sañkhāra ("sabba" is "all").

- "Attic" is "bone." A dog enjoys chewing a bone. But a bone has no nutrition or taste. Most of the time, the dog's gum starts bleeding and that is what it tastes. But the dog does not realize that and values a bone very highly.
- "Hara" is "substance", and "harāyati" is without substance.
- Furthermore, " $J i$ " and " $g u$ " (pronounced "jee" and "goo") are the Pāli and Sinhala words for "urine" and "feces." As we already know, "icca" (Pronounced "ichcha") means "like." Thus "jiguccati" pronounced "jiguchchathi" means "it is no different than liking urine or feces." Note that "jiguccati" is "ji" + "gu" + "icchati" means "a liking for urine and feces."
- All (abhi)sañkhāra should be avoided (but this applies only at the Arahant stage).

12. Another critical point here is to note that the Buddha was talking about the "anicca sañ $\tilde{\boldsymbol{a}}$," where saññā or perception is one of the main mental factors or cetasika. Anicca is a perception in our minds as we pointed out in the discussion on the Anatta Lakkhana Sutta above.

- Impermanence is a physical reality of things in the universe. Scientists know quite well that nothing in our universe is permanent. But that does not provide them with the perception of anicca. No scientist can attain Nibbāna via comprehending impermanence.


## Anicca Does Not Mean Impermanence

13. Thus it is quite clear that anicca does not mean "impermanence." The Pāli words for impermanence are aniyata and addhuva. Once one understands the true nature of the world, one will realize that any sañkhāra (thought, speech, and action that is focused on attaining pleasurable things) is not to be valued. None can be maintained to one's satisfaction and will only lead to suffering at the end.

- The fruitlessness of ALL sañkhāra is perceived only at the Arahant stage. We cannot even begin to comprehend that yet. That is why an Arahant is said to see the burden associated with even breathing (which is a kaya sañkhāra). Anything we do to live in this world is a sañkhāra.
- Initially, we should try to comprehend the unsuitability of apuñnabhi abhisañkhāra, those associated with immoral actions. Since we can grasp the consequences of such sinful actions, we CAN get our minds to reject them. That is enough to get to the Sotāpanna stage.
- Once we do that, our cleansed minds can begin to see the fruitlessness of puññabhi abhisañkhāra, and then even the pleasures of arūpāvacara jhānic states (āneñjābhi abhisañkhāra).


## Icca Sutta (Saminutta Nikāya)

14. The "WebLink: Suttacentral: Icca Sutta (SN 1.69)" clearly describes what "icca" (and thus what anicca) is:
"Kenassu bajjhat̄̄ loko, kissa vinayāya muccati;
Kissassu vippahānena, sabbaì chindati bandhanan"ti.
"Icchāya bajjhatı̄ loko, icchā vinayāya muccati;
Icchāya vippahānena, sabbaì chindati bandhanan"ti.

## Translated:

"What binds the world together? How does one get released? How can one gain release?
The world is bound by iccha; one becomes free by losing iccha, one becomes free of all bonds by losing iccha"

The word "icca" means "liking" and is closely related to "nicca." Of course "nicca" means the perception that one can maintain those things to one's satisfaction (and "anicca" implies the opposite: "na +icca"). The perception of nicca leads to icca, i.e., one believes that worldly things can provide everlasting happiness and thus one likes to hold on to them. Just like an octopus grabs stuff with all its eight legs and will not let go, humans (and other beings too) grab onto to worldly things with the hope of enjoying them.

- Note that in this sutta, the word "iccha" is used instead of "icca" to emphasize that "strong attachment" as in the Dhamma Cakka Pavattana Sutta discussed above.


## The Key Problem with Sutta Interpretations

15. There are many, many suttā in the Tipiṭaka that describe anicca, dukkha, anatta. But if one starts with the wrong interpretations, some of those sutt $\bar{a}$ can be interpreted the wrong way. Many sutta do not describe the relevant concepts in detail. Instead, a suttā provides a brief description or the niddesa version. The commentaries (Sinhala Atthakath $\bar{a}$ ) were supposed to give the detailed (patiniddesa) explanations; see, "Sutta Interpretation - Uddesa, Niddesa, Patiniddesa."

- The root cause for the confusion has been the acceptance of the Visuddhimagga by Buddhaghosa as THE key commentary by Theravāda tradition.
- Nowadays, most bhikkhus do not read the Tipitaka or the remaining three original commentaries that are in the Tipitaka. They just follow what is in the Visuddhimagga. That has been the single-most obstacle for people attāining Nibbāna for the past many hundreds of years.
- Luckily, we have three of the original commentaries (even earlier than the Sinhala Atthakathā) preserved in the Tipiṭaka. See, "Misinterpretations of Buddha Dhamma" and "Preservation of the Dhamma."

Then there is the following sutta which clearly states that the Buddha rejected both "self" and "noself", even according to conventional translations.

## Channa Sutta - Anatta Does Not Mean "No-Self"

16. The "WebLink: suttacentral: Channa Sutta (SN 22.90)" clearly says anatta does not mean "no-self," even in a "traditional" English translation: "WebLink: accesstoinsightŏrg: Channa Sutta: To Channa (SN 22.90)":
"Everything exists": That is one extreme. "Everything doesn't exist": That is a second extreme. Avoiding these two extremes, the Tathagata teaches the Dhamma via the middle: From ignorance as a requisite condition come fabrications. From fabrications, consciousness. Similarly, to name-\&-form, the six sense faculties, contact, feeling, craving, clinging/sustenance, becoming (bhava), and birth. From birth as a requisite condition, then aging \& death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, \& despair come into play. Such is the origination of this entire mass of stress \& suffering."

- "Everything doesn't exist" in the above translates to "no-self" when applied to a "living being." As far as a "person" is concerned, "self" is one extreme, and "no-self" is the other extreme. Therefore, it wrong to say either "a person exists" or "a person does not exist."
- Most Theravāda websites (including the above sites) and texts today translate "anatta" as "no-self." But, it is clear from their translations (especially of the Channa Sutta) that the Buddha rejected this "noself' view.
- Whether it is a living being or the whole world, it is not correct to say they "exist" or "do not exist." Things exist when suitable causes and conditions (per Patticca Samuppāda) are there.
- Also, see, "Atta - Two Very Different Meanings."

Next, "If Everything is Anicca Should We Just give up Everything?",

### 3.4.4 Anicca - True Meaning

Anicca is commonly translated as "impermanence." But it is a fundamental concept in Buddha Dhamma, which has many related - but somewhat different - meanings. Some are discussed in the following posts:

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O Anicca - Inability to Keep What We Like
O Anicca - Repeated Arising/Destruction
O Anicca - Worthlessness of Worldly Things
O Anicca - The Incessant Distress ("Pilana")
o How to Cultivate Anicca Sanna
O How to Cultivate the Anicca Sanna - II
O Three Marks of Existence - English Discourses
O If Everything is Anicca Should We Just give up Everything?
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### 3.4.4.1 Anicca - Inability to Keep What We Like

## Re-written May 26, 2019; revised June 13, 2020; August 23, 2022

This post originally had the title, "Anicca - Inability to Maintain Anything." I have re-written it with a new title to emphasize the meaning in the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta (SN 56.11); for more details: "Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta."

1. The First Noble Truth clearly states that anicca nature is the root cause of suffering. Let us look at how the Buddha summarized the First Noble Truth about suffering in that very first sutta he delivered.

Idaì kho pana, bhikkhave, dukkham ariya saccaí:
jātipi dukkhā, jarāpi dukkhā, byādhipi dukkho, maranampi dukkhā$\dot{\mathbf{m}}$, appiyehi sampayogo dukkho, piyehi vippayogo dukkho, yampicchaím na labhati tampi dukkhā $\dot{\boldsymbol{m}}$-saimkhittena pañcupādānakkhandhā dukkhā. [sainkhittena means with being overthrown by defilements]

Translated: Bhikkhus, What is the Noble Truth of Suffering?
'Birth is suffering, getting old is suffering, getting sick is suffering, dying is suffering. Having to associate with things that one does not like is suffering and having to separate from those things one likes is suffering. If one does not get what one likes, that is suffering - in brief, the origin of suffering is the craving for the five aggregates of rūpa, vedanā, sañña, sañkhāra, viñṇ̣̃̄̄a (pañcupādānakkhandha). Pañcupādānakkhandha (upādāna or the "tendency to keep close" to pañcakkhandha) includes all that we crave in this world.

- Note that "Yampiccham"" is "yam pi icchaṃ" or "what one likes."


## Analysis of the First Noble Truth

2. The first part in bold indicates what we consider to be forms of suffering: Birth, getting old, getting sick, and dying.

- We also DO NOT LIKE to get old or get sick, and do not like to die. If we have to experience any of them, that is suffering.
- We WOULD LIKE to stay young, not get old, not get sick, and not die ever. If we can have those conditions fulfilled we will be forever happy.
- Stopping (re)birth is the only way to avoid sicknesses, old age, and death. Even births in Deva and Brahma realms will end up in death. All births end up in old age and death.
- Therefore, the suffering that the Buddha taught in his first discourse was associated with the rebirth process.

3. That is what the second part of the verse in \#1 (not in bold) says: Having to associate with things that one does not like is suffering, and having to separate from those one likes is suffering.

- We all have experienced sorrow when separating from those who we like. We also feel distressed when we have to associate with those who we do not like.
- If we can be born instantaneously at a young age (say, 15 to 25 years) and stay at that age without getting old or sick and never die, that is what we WOULD LIKE. But no matter how much we would like to associate with such a life, we will NEVER get it.
- Instead, we have to suffer through each life. Each birth ends up in death. Furthermore, we suffer when getting old, when getting sick/injured, and finally when dying. There is no way to dissociate from those four things that we do not like.
- But that is not the end of it. We keep doing this over and over in the rebirth cycle. Furthermore, things can worsen in the lowest four realms, including the animal realm.


## We Suffer When We Do Not Get What We Desire

4. Both those parts are combined into one succinct statement in the third part of the verse in \#1 (in bold):
"Yampiccaì na labhati tampi dukkham.".
"Yampicchaí na labhati tampi dukkhaí" is a shortened version of the verse (that rhymes).

The full sentence is "Yam pi icchaì na labhati tam pi dukkhaim."

- "Yam pi iccham" means "whatever is liked or craved for." "Na labhati" means "not getting." "Tam pi dukkhaì" means "that leads to suffering."
- Therefore, that verse simply says: "If one does not get what one craves or likes, that leads to suffering."
- This is a more general statement and applies in any situation. We can see that in our daily lives. We like to hang out with people we like, and it is stressful to be with people we do not like.
- Furthermore, the more one craves something, the more suffering one will endure in the end. But this requires a lot of discussion.


## Anicca - The Inability to Fulfill Our Desires

5. The negation of the word "nicca" is "anicca" ("na" + "icca"), just like the word Anāgāmi comes from "na" + "āgāmi." Therefore, even though we would like Nature to be "nicca," in reality, it is "anicca," i.e., it is not possible, in the long run, to have, to be with, what we like, and that is the root cause of suffering. One may live most of one's life happily, but one must leave all that behind when one dies.

- A deeper point is that we all like to be born in good realms, but most future births will NOT be to our liking but are based on "Paticca Samuppāda."
- By the way, Pāli words "icca" and "anicca" are pronounced "ichcha" and "anichcha."
- Not getting what one desires or craves is the opposite of "icca" or "na icca" or "anicca." This is the same way that "na āgami" becomes "Anāgāmi" ("na āgami" means "not coming back"; but in the context of Anāgāmi, it means "not coming back to kāma loka or the lowest 11 realms. These are examples of Päli sandhi rules (connecting two words).

6. Therefore, "yampiccam nalabhati tampi dukkham" is the most important verse in the first sutta delivered by the Buddha, Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta. It provides the key to understanding the Buddha's message and led to the attaining of the Sotāpanna stage by the five ascetics.
 word "iccha" with the emphasis on the last syllable is used to indicate "strong icca" or "strong attachment."

- The word "icca" (liking) is closely related to "taṇhä" (getting attached). Taṇhā happens automatically because of icca.
- The intrinsic nature of this world is "anicca," i.e., we will never get what we crave for, and thus, in the end (at least at death) we will leave all this behind and suffer, that is dukkha.


## Nicca - The Wrong Perception We Have

7. It is important to realize that nicca is the PERCEPTION that one can maintain things one likes to one's satisfaction.

- If this is the case, one is happy, i.e., sukha arises, or at least suffering does not arise. In that case, one is in control, and something fruitful to be had, i.e., att $\bar{a}$. Thus even if one needs to work hard to get something that can be maintained to one's satisfaction, in the end, one can find permanent happiness, and one is in control of one's destiny.
- Humans normally have that nicca sañ̃ña and work hard to gain material things. But at death, one has to leave behind all those possessions, and thus one's life ALWAYS ends in despair and suffering (in addition to suffering due to old age).
- When one realizes the true "anicca nature," one will see that one will be trapped in the rebirth process and be subjected to much suffering in the rebirth process. The Buddha advised cultivating the anicca sañ̃n̄a by constantly thinking about that reality.
- More information on anicca as the opposite of "nicca": "Three Marks of Existence - English Discourses."


## Root Cause of Suffering Is Anicca Nature

8. Thus, the root cause of suffering is NOT impermanence, even though it does play a role.

- The world is inherently impermanent (see "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma"). However, impermanence by itself does not lead to suffering. If that is the case, since no one can change that fact, no one will be able to end the suffering (and attain Nibbāna).
- The wrong PERCEPTION (sañña) of nicca leads to suffering. We struggle to find lasting happiness in a world that intrinsically has the anicca nature.
- That wrong perception CAN BE changed by learning and contemplating Dhamma, i.e., by cultivating the anicca sañ̃̃̄a.
- The CORRECT PERCEPTION of anicca (once accepted by the mind), will lead to cessation of suffering (via the four stages of Sotāpanna, Sakadāgāmi, Anāgāmi, Arahant).

Also see, "Does Impermanence Lead to Suffering?",

## Things We Like Cannot Be Kept That Way for Too Long

9. The above point can be illustrated with the following video:
"WebLink: ranker.com: Celebrities Who Have Aged the Worst"

- We must realize that we all will undergo such inevitable changes as we age. No matter how hard we try, it is not possible to maintain ANYTHING to our satisfaction. It is the nature of "this world."
- Now, of course, any of these celebrities (or their fans) would be saddened to see the comparison. They have not been able to maintain their bodies to their satisfaction.
- However, a person on bad terms with any of these celebrities could be happy to see these picture, because they wish to see something bad to happen to the celebrity (in this case, to lose their "looks").
- Thus "impermanence" is inevitable; it is a property of anything in this world. But the perception of "anicca" is in someone's mind. In the above case, bodies of celebrities ARE impermanent; but that did not necessarily cause suffering to ALL. Even those celebrities, if they realize that anicca nature cannot be avoided, would not undergo additional suffering by subjecting themselves to plastic surgeries, botox treatments, etc. Most of all, depression can be avoided.
- Anicca nature leads to suffering for ALL. But many go through added suffering by trying to "overcome it." More importantly, one can stop future suffering by comprehending the anicca nature.


## Root Cause of Depression

10. When one realizes that one cannot maintain something that is desired after a long struggle, one becomes distraught, depressed, and unsatisfied ("yam pi icchain na labati tam pi dukkhaim", where "na labati" means "not get"). Thus the wrong perception of nicca (or a sense of fulfillment of one's desires) ALWAYS leads to dukha or suffering in the end.

- The mindset is that even if something is not permanent and breaks down, one can always replace it with a new one and feel a sense of fulfillment one desires. It is not the impermanence that gives a sense of
invincibility but the mindset that one can always find a replacement for it and maintain one's happiness.
- But if one carefully examines the wider world view of the Buddha, one can easily see that this mindset of the possibility of "long-lasting happiness in this world" is an illusion.
- No matter what we achieve in this life, we HAVE TO leave it all behind when we die.
- And in the new life, we start all over; this is what we have been doing from beginning-less time.
- And, of course, we make it worse by doing immoral things, "trying to maintain things to our satisfaction," and thus generating bad kamma vipāka, leading to immense suffering in the four lowest realms (apāy $\bar{a}$ ).


## Anicca Nature Leads to Suffering and Helplessness

11. In the Samiyutta Nikāya (Anicca Vagga), many suttā, including WebLink: suttacentral: Ajjhattanicca Sutta (SN 35.1), WebLink: suttacentral: Bahiranicca Sutta (SN 35.4), and WebLink: suttacentral: Yadanicca sutta (SN 22.15), the Buddha stated that the three characteristics of "this world" (anicca, dukkha, anatta) are RELATED to each other:
 taín dukkhaì tad anatta"), or,

- "if something cannot be maintained (or managed depending on the case) to one's satisfaction, suffering arises, therefore, one is helpless in the end."


## Impermanence Does Not Always Lead to Suffering

12. Let us consider the examples in bullet \#6 of the introductory post "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta - Wrong Interpretations."

- If we take a "headache" as the "something," the statement now reads as follows. "If a headache cannot be managed to one's satisfaction (i.e., if one cannot get rid of the headache), suffering arises. Therefore one is helpless."
- Similarly, you can substitute anything we considered in the previous post and see that it will hold.
- On the other hand, if anicca means "impermanence," the statement reads: "If a headache is impermanent, suffering arises. Therefore one is helpless." That is not correct. Suffering would arise only if the headache becomes permanent!


## Anicca Nature Is There in All the Realms of This World

13. No existence in "this world" is exempt from these three characteristics. It applies to all 31 realms. Even though one may be able to find happiness at certain times, nothing we do can get us out of the realities of getting old, sick, and finally dying. Then the cycle repeats in the next life, and next, ....

- Furthermore, any such "happy times" are insignificantly small in the sansāric time scale; see "The Four Stages in Attaining Nibbāna," and "Rebirth - Connection to Suffering in the First Noble Truth."

14. But the good news is that we can gain a kind of happiness that will not go away by comprehending the anicca nature, especially if one attains at least the Sotāpanna stage of Nibbāna; see, "Three Kinds of Happiness - What is Nirāmisa Sukha?," and "Nibbāna - Is it Difficult to Understand?."
15. The Tipitaka describes the concept of anicca in many different ways. Two more are discussed in "Anicca - Repeated Arising/Destruction" and "Anicca - Worthlessness of Worldly Things."

### 3.4.4.2 Anicca - Repeated Arising/Destruction

1. Anicca has been analyzed in several different ways in the Tipitaka. In the Patisambidhā Magga Prakarana in the Tipitaka, it is explained as,

## "uppāda vayattena anicca",

which means "(this world is) anicca because we just keep going through the birth (arising)/ death (destruction) process."

- Of course, in between birth and death there is mostly suffering (in the realms at and below the human realm, where most beings spend time). This is the dukkha characteristic.

2. This is what we have been doing for an unimaginably long time (beginning-less), there is no break from it until one attains Nibbāna.

- We see some people committing suicide hoping to end it all; but ending this life does not solve the "problem." In fact, it may lead to a birth in a lower realm, which will only increase the suffering.
- Thus continuing this ceaseless birth/death process is anatta, i.e., it is fruitless, burdened with suffering, and thus one is truly helpless.

3. We can see the Three Characteristics (Tilakkhana) of this world by carefully examining the fate of anything that arises in this world, which goes by the name sañkhata.

- Whether it is a living being or an inert thing any sañkhata arises, lasts for a certain time, and then perishes.
- For an inert object, the process stops at the destruction step, and it does not feel anything as it goes through the process.
- But for a living being, there is (mostly) suffering during arising/living/death, even though there may be spurts of "happiness" if one is fortunate enough to be born in human realms or the realms above it.
- And the process does not stop at death unlike for an inert object. It just keep repeating.

The arising/destruction of a sañkhata is described in "Nirodha and Vaya - Two Different Concepts."
4. A living being's suffering is also enhanced by the "sañkhata characteristics of inert objects" too. We work hard to acquire "things" but either they get run down/destroyed (houses, cars, furniture,....) or we die leaving them behind. Then if we are lucky to be born human in the next birth we just start this "accumulation process" and get distraught at death again....

- If we think through logically (and this is real meditation), we should be able to grasp this main concept of anicca, dukkha, anatta.
- Through the ages, philosophers (as well as most people) have wondered, "What is the meaning of life?." And they normally think about just this present life; see, "Why Does the World Exist?" by Jim Holt"

5. Someone who has accomplished something significant may think otherwise at the moment of that accomplishment. But it lasts only a short time; at death, it is all gone. If he/she wanted to accomplish something significant in the next life (provided one is lucky to be reborn human), then one has to start all over.

- This point becomes poignantly clear, if one takes a little time and think about the life of any famous personality (emperors, kings, politicians, movie stars,...from times past to the present). Most of them are bound to be born in lower realms because of the heinous acts they did to get some of those positions.
- If one knows the "big picture" about the wider world and the beginning-less journey we have made, it becomes clear that all through uncountable number of lives we have struggled in vain "seeking an elusive happiness." There is no meaning to life in the long run, AND it makes one suffer, and this is the nature of this world: anicca, dukkha, anatta.

6. If there is a birth, there MUST be a death. There is no exception, other than Nibbāna.

This is the "akālika" or "timeless" quality of Nibbāna.

- All sañkhata operate on the basis of kamma vipāka, which normally take time to bring their fruits. This is why people are unable to "see" the working of kamma. There may be drug dealers who live like kings, but they will be paying with interest in the future.
- Nibbāna brings fruits instantaneously, there is no time gap involved (it is "akalika"), unlike a sañkhata. Furthermore, once attained there is no time duration after which it is destroyed; it is forever.
- The magga phala (Sotāpanna, Sakadāgāmī, Anāgāmī, Arahant) are attained in one citta (lasting less than a billionth of a second). And since they were attained via ELIMINATION OF CAUSES, there is no destruction associated with them. i.e., they are forever.
- In comparison, a living being arises DUE TO CAUSES, and when the underlying cause or the fuel is spent, the living being dies. But the process does not stop, because the being had acquired NEW CAUSES (new kamma) during that life or in the previous lives.

7. In the Dhamma Vandana:
"Svākkhato Bhagavatā Dhammo Sandiṭthiko Akāliko Ehi-passiko Opanāyiko Paccattam
veditabbo vinnuhiti",
the quality of Dhamma that is described by "akālika" is that it leads to effects that do not depend on time.

- And that is achieved via the quality listed before that: "sandiṭthiko" ("san" + "ditṭhiko"). Dhamma explains and clarifies "san" that are the causes (avijjā and taṇhā) for arising of sañkhata (whether they are living or inert); see, "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Samsiāra)."
- "Bhagavatā Dhammo" can be taken as "Buddha's Dhamma," but it has a deeper meaning too (This Dhamma was only DISCOVERED by the Buddha Gotama, as had countless other Buddhas before him. "Bhagavata"" ("bhaga" + "vata" where "bhaga" means divide and "vata" means "the process" that looks like a "living being"") means this Dhamma, by analyzing a "person" in terms of "actions", illustrates that there in no enduring entity in a "living being."
- And this process leads to "svakkhata" ("sva" for "self" and "+ "akkata" or "akrutha" or "akriya" means putting out of action) meaning it leads to getting rid of the concept of a "me" (āsmai māna) which happens at the Arahant stage. It is not about whether a "self" exists or not; it is rather to realize that nothing in this world is worth to be considered "mine."

8. Some people erroneously interpret "uppāda vayattena anicca" as "things are IMPERMANENT because EVERYTHING is formed and destroyed within 17 thought moments."

- This serious misconception is discussed in the post, "Does any Object (Rūpa) Last only 17 Thought Moments?."
- Each sañkhata that arises has its own lifetime: a fly lives only for a few days, a human lives for about 100 years.
Next, "Anicca - Worthlessness of Worldly Things",


### 3.4.4.3 Anicca - Worthlessness of Worldly Things

August 20, 2017; revised June 8, 2020

## Different Meanings of Anicca

1. Anicca (pronounced "anichcha") is a profound concept that has several meanings (impermanence is only a small part of it). We discussed one interpretation as "it is not possible to maintain anything in this world to one's satisfaction"; see, "Anicca - Inability to Keep What We Like."

- Another interpretation is the following. Whatever that seems to provide lasting happiness arises and destroyed. Anything is subjected to unpredictable changes (viparināma) while it lasts. See, "Anicca Repeated Arising/Destruction."
- Here we discuss another: There is nothing in this world that is valuable and can provide lasting happiness. Not only that, but more craving can only lead to more suffering!


## We Like to Get Hold of Things That We Like (Crave)

2. The desire (icc $\bar{a}$ or $i c c h \bar{a}$; pronounced "ichchā") for any object depends on the value that one places for that object. If one realizes that the object does not have any significant value, then one would not have any desire for that object.

- One has iccā for a given object which one perceives it to be of "nicca" (pronounced "nichcha") nature, i.e., that one thinks has value and can provide happiness.
- If one realizes that a given object does not have a real value, one loses craving for that. The anicca nature means NOTHING in this world has real value. Of course, full comprehension comes only at the Arahant stage. The starting point is to see that immoral actions MUST BE avoided regarding even "seemingly high-value things."


## The Perception of "Value" Depends on One's Level of Understanding

3. Suppose you give the following choices for a five-year-old. A giant chocolate bar or the title to a brand new house (written to his/her name so that the child will be the owner of the house).

- What will the child choose? Of course, the child will want chocolate, and he/she will have no idea how a piece of paper can be more valuable than tasty chocolate! Thus the child has the perception of nicca for the chocolate, i.e., that it can bring happiness whereas the happiness from the house is hard to be grasped by the child.
- However, when that same child grows up and becomes an adult, he/she will choose the title to the house without hesitation. By that time, he/she would have realized that a house is much more valuable than a bar of chocolate. The adult will recognize the "anicca nature" of the chocolate: it can only bring happiness only for a few minutes!
- Did anyone have to explicitly tell that adult that the title to the house is much more worth than chocolate? No. One would realize that when one learns more about the world.
- Just the same way, when one learns Dhamma, one will AUTOMATICALLY realize that nothing in this world has real value. But that realization comes gradually.


## The Tendency to Do Immoral Deeds Based on Cravings

4. All immoral deeds (dasa akusala) are done because of the "value" that one places on worldly things. A child may hit another over that chocolate. An adult may be willing to lie, steal, or even kill to get possession of a house.

- When that adult grasps the critical message of the Buddha, he/she will realize the "anicca nature" of the house too. That even craving for a house is not worth compared to the "cooling down" one can gain by getting rid of the cravings associated with the house. Of course, one does not need to get rid of the house.
- He/she would realize that collecting "valuables" like houses, cars, etc. or making a lot of money (much more than one needs) can bring only suffering at the end (and lose precious time one could have spent on learning Dhamma and making progress towards Nibbāna).


## Adverse Consequences of Cravings

5. Craving for sense objects can have adverse consequences in a wide range. At a lower level, just enjoying sense pleasures without harming others will make one bound to the kāma loka (via "paṭi icca sama uppāda" or "what one likes is what one gets"); see, "Paticca Samuppāda - "Pati+ichcha" + "Sama+uppāda."

- However, if one does immoral deeds (dasa akusala) to get such "valuables," then one will be subjected to dukkha dukkha (direct suffering) in the apāy $\bar{a}$ in future lives; see, "Introduction -2 - The Three Categories of Suffering." That is the worst kind of future suffering, and one would not be able to comprehend that if one does not believe in rebirth or that kammā vipāka, i.e., if one has micchā ditthi.
- Once one gets rid of micch $\bar{a}$ dittthi, it will be easier to see one aspect of the anicca nature. That is "aniccam khayatthena," which means "anicca nature leads to one to the downside," i.e., to do immoral acts and to end up experiencing unimaginable suffering (dukkha dukkha) in the apayy.
- Thus anicca nature not only means that one cannot maintain things to one's satisfaction in the long run but ALSO, it can lead to much suffering in the future.


## The Understanding Leads to the Sotāpanna Stage

6. One can get to the Sotāpanna stage by comprehending the above harsh consequences of anicca nature.

- Buddha also said, "dukkhamं bhayatthena" or "one should be fearful of the dukkha nature" when describing the characteristic of dukkha. At the Sotāpanna stage, one can see that not comprehending the anicca nature can lead to suffering in the apāya. But he/she may still not realize that much suffering (even though less than in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a})$ can also arise due to just being attached to sense pleasures, i.e., kāma rāga.
- The full impact of "dukkhamं bhayatthena" is realized only at the Anāgāmi stage (having seen a glimpse of it at the Sakadāgāmi stage). That is when one realizes the dukkha associated with just the craving for sensual pleasures.
- Craving for sense-pleasures lead to sañkhāra dukkha and vipariṇāma dukkha, as explained in detail in the post, "Introduction - What is Suffering?."

7. At the Sotāpanna stage, one comprehends the "anicca nature" at a preliminary level and grasps the dukkha dukkha. Even though one can see the truth of the other two types of dukkha (sañkhāra dukkha and viparin̄āma dukkha), one does not "truly grasp their effects." Those two aspects of dukkha are present in the higher realms of kāma loka (human and deva realms).

- One truly starts comprehending sañkhāra dukkha and vipariṇāma dukkha at the Sakadāgāmi stage, and it will be completed only at the Anāgāmi stage. That leads to further strengthening of "dukkham bhayatthena." One can see the danger in the types of dukkha arising from attachment to sense pleasures (even without engaging in immoral acts).
- Comprehending the bad consequences of sensual pleasures is much harder than seeing the dangers associated with immoral deeds. That is why a Sotāpanna is still "not free" from rebirths in kāma loka.


## Cravings for Sense Desires Lost Only at the Anāgāmi Stage

8. By the time one gets to Anāgāmi stage, one would have removed the lower five types of bonds (orambhagiya samyojana) that bind one to the realms in the kāma loka; see, "Dasa Samyojana - Bonds in Rebirth Process."

- There are five higher samiyojana associated with higher rūpa and arūpa realms. First one removes rūpa rāga (attachment to rūpa jhāna) and then arūpa rāga (attachment to arūpa jhāna).
- The $r \bar{u} p a$ and arūpa realms (highest 20 realms) mostly have rūpa and arūpa jhānic pleasures. In those realms, dukkha dukkha and sañkhāra dukkha are mostly absent, and only the vipariṇāma dukkha (death at the end) is present. One lives with jhānic pleasure until the end when one becomes helpless and could end up even in the apāy $\bar{a}$.

9. In comprehending the Three Characteristics of nature, the critical step is in realizing that collecting "valuables" (houses, money, etc.) as an adult is as foolish as collecting candy wrappers as a child.

- To make that step of "higher wisdom" per Buddha Dhamma, one needs first to understand the "world view of the Buddha," that the world is of anicca nature, i.e., CRAVING for those "valuables" only lead to suffering in the long run. "Long-run" involves not only this life but future lives.
- That is why belief in rebirth is an important requirement to even start on the mundane Path.


## The World is of Anicca Nature, Not Nicca Nature

10. It is an illusion to believe that ANY object in this world will have the "nicca" nature. That there are things in this world that have real, lasting value. The reality is the opposite expressed by the word "anicca." One meaning of "anicca" is that there is nothing in this world of value that can bring lasting happiness.

- However, it is challenging for one to comprehend this "anicca nature" unless one believes in the laws of kamm $\bar{a}$. That one's actions will have consequences. A natural extension of the laws of kamm $\bar{a}$ is the validity of the rebirth process.
- Many actions committed in this life do not bring their results in this life. But they will appear in future lives. Therefore, the laws of kamm $\bar{a}$ necessarily REQUIRE the rebirth process.
- One has more "icc $\bar{a}$ " (or more attachment) for an object that one perceives to be of high value. Then one would have the perception of "nicca" nature for that object. He/she thinks that it can provide happiness.
- But the reality is that either that object loses its value OR one dies, making any perceived value zero at the end. One of those two outcomes is inevitable.


## It is Impossible to Comprehend Anicca Nature Without Belief in Rebirth Process

11. If one does not believe in the rebirth process, then one could be compelled to do immoral deeds to get possession of valuable objects. That is a hidden defilement (anusaya) that may not manifest unless the temptation is high.

- For example, one may not steal anything for a lifetime but could be tempted to take a bribe of a million dollars.
- Or, a drug addict could say, "I am just going to enjoy inhaling drugs until I die from it," thinking that there will not be any consequences after the physical body dies.
- However, one's outlook on such things will dramatically change if one can see the reality of the rebirth process. Most people just believe what "science says" and do not even bother to look at the everincreasing evidence for the rebirth process. See "Evidence for Rebirth."
- Science agrees that causes lead to corresponding effects. Any action has a reaction. However, since science does not know much about how the mind works, it is unable to provide answers to issues that involve the mind. Kammā and kamma vipāka are causes and corresponding effects.


## Greed Comes from the Perception of Nicca Nature

12. Lobha (abhijjhā) is the greed generated in a mind that puts a "very high value" for an object. One is willing to do immoral acts to get possession.

- One with just kāma rāga (desire for sensual pleasures) has the desire to enjoy sensual objects but would not hurt others to get them. Most "moral people" belong to this category UNLESS the temptation becomes high. A Sotāpanna has kāma rāga but will not succumb to ANY temptation to do apāyagāmi deeds.
- A Sakadāgāmi has lost the desire to "own" such sensual objects but still likes to enjoy them.
- Any desire for sensual pleasures goes away at the Anāgāmi stage.

13. In other words, one starts losing the value that one places for "mind-pleasing" objects as one progresses to higher stages of Nibbāna.

- But the critical point to understand is that one LOSES such desires AUTOMATICALLY. One does not need to, and one CANNOT, lose such desires by sheer will power. One needs to "see" the dangers of such cravings by developing the "dhamma eye," or pañ̃̃̄̄ (wisdom) by learning and contemplating on the Tilakkhanna.
- Even if one forcefully keeps such desires SUPPRESSED, such desires will just stay dormant (remain as anusaya.) Those anusaya WILL resurface later in this life or future lives. They can only be removed by comprehending Tilakkhaṇa. See, "Āsava, Anusaya, and Gati (Gathi)."
- With gradual cleansing of the mind, one will start seeing the worthlessness of worldly things.

Also, see, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta - According to Some Key Suttā."

### 3.4.4.4 Anicca - The Incessant Distress ("Pīlana")

Revised July 14, 2018; June 15, 2019; re-written with the new title June 1, 2020; revised July 3, 2022
[Old Title: The Incessant Distress ("Pīlana") - Key to Dukkha Sacca]

## Key Verse in The Girimānanda Sutta

1. In the "WebLink: suttacentral: Girimananda Sutta (AN 10.60)", the Buddha stated key features of the anicca nature of "all sañkhāra": "Katamā cānanda, sabbasañkhāresu anicchāsaññā? Idhānanda, bhikkhu sabbasañkhāresu aṭt̄̄yati harāyati jigucchati. Ayaì vuccatānanda, sabbasañkhāresu anicchāsaññā."

Translated: "Ānanda, what is the anicca saññā associated with all sañkhāra? One is subjected to stress, one should be ashamed of engaging in such useless activity, and liking sañkhāra is like embracing urine and feces. That is the anicca saññā associated with all sañkhāra." [at! $t i$ : wounds. yati : [aor. of yatati] exerted oneself; strived. (m.), a monk. attityati : wounds inflicted by oneself. harāyati :[deno. from hiri] is ashamed, depressed or vexed; worries. jigucchati: [gup + cha; gu is doubled and the first gu becomes ji] shuns; loathes; is disgusted at.]

- We will briefly discuss the "att!īyati" nature. "Atti" means "bones" ( 2 z O in Sinhala ). A dog thinks that a bone is precious. It spends hours and hours chewing it and becomes tired in the end. Sometimes, the bone would scrape the gum, and the dog would taste its own blood thinking that the taste it from the bone.
- In the same way, we only get tired and stressed out (pīlana) by generating all types of sañkhāra. However, we do not realize that while making that effort. That is why sañkhāra dukkha remains hidden.
- We engage in mano, vacī, and kāya sañkhāra; see, "Sañkhāra - What It Really Means."


## The Mental Suffering (Pīlana)

2. Most people think that the first Noble Truth on suffering (dukkha sacca) is the physical suffering itself, i.e., they associate it with dukha vedan $\bar{a}$, which is part of the vedana cetasika. However, the Buddha said, "This Dhamma is unlike anything that the world has ever seen." The real truth about suffering is the following. It is the suffering hidden in what everyone perceives to be happiness. That needs to be seen with the pañ̃̃ $\bar{a}$ (wisdom) cetasika

- Thus, "seeing dukkha sacca with wisdom" means "seeing the suffering hidden in sensory pleasures."
- It is difficult to understand the first Noble Truth on suffering for someone who is feeling too much suffering. When someone is hurting from an ailment or when someone's mind is too weak at old age, it is not possible to contemplate the profound message of the Buddha, as we will see below.

3. Dukkha sacca (pronounced, "sachcha") is the Truth of Suffering; sacca is the truth.

- "Pịlana" (pronounced as "peelana") is the Pāli word for distress or hardship. That is part of the suffering we undergo, even without realizing it.
- "Peleema" (зఠக্C७) is the Sinhala word for distress, or hardship, where the first part "pe" rhymes like "pen."
- The spelling of Pāli words is according to an adopted convention that is different from "standard English." See, ""Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars - Part 1" and "Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars - Part 2."

That is the kind of meditation (contemplation) one needs to do initially, even before starting on the Ariya $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p \bar{a} n a s a t i ~ b h a \bar{a} v a n \bar{a}$. I cannot emphasize enough the importance of understanding the real message of the Buddha first.

## Incessant Distress/Depression (Pīlana)

4. Even though we do not realize it, we are stressed out ALL THE TIME. Constant work is necessary to keep our physical body in good condition. Anyone who has had temporary relief from this constant distress (pìlana) via a good meditation program (even the mundane "breath meditation") knows this; it is called nirāmisa sukha. It is even more apparent if one can have a jhānic experience. Only when one gets into a jhānic state that one realizes that one had been under incessant stress all life.

- We do not realize this because this is the "baseline" for existence (our "comfort zone"); this is what we have done over innumerable rebirths.
- To get some relief from this constant distress, we strive to bring about periods of happiness. We keep thinking of ways to get a better house, car, or zillions of other "things" that are supposed to provide us with joy. Thus, we are ALWAYS stressing out to adjust this "baseline comfort zone." We move to a bigger house, buy a set of new furniture, work harder to get a better job, etc.
- Furthermore, when we go a little bit below the current "comfort level," we need to do work (kāya sañkhāra) to remedy that. For example, when we get hungry, we may have to prepare a meal or walk/drive to a restaurant to get a snack.
- Or, we may be sitting at home, satisfied after a meal, but then all of a sudden, we again go "below the comfort level" for no apparent reason; we just become "bored" sitting at home and think about going to a movie. So, we get in the car and drive to a movie theater.
- I am sure you can think about zillion such things we do all day long.


## Dukkha Dukkha - Doubling the Suffering

5. We have to endure injuries and various forms of sicknesses because of the physical body that we have. That physical body had origins in past kamma. Then, based on such physical ailments, we also suffer mentally.

- Such "distresses" belong to one type of dukkha. That is dukkha dukkha. Thus, on top of physical suffering, we double that suffering by such "mental suffering. That mental suffering is part of "samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedanā." See, "Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways."
- In addition to direct ailments, we have other forms of suffering associated with the physical body. We get hungry, thirsty, lonely, bored, etc. Thus, we need to attend to the needs of our physical bodies continually. It is like taking care of an invalid. These are all part of dukkha dukkha.


## Sañkhāra Dukkha

6. Our senses continually ask for enjoyment. We want to see beautiful things, hear pleasurable sounds, smell sweet fragrances, and taste sumptuous foods. The body wants luxurious touches, and the mind likes to think about pleasant thoughts.

- Then we have to do things (via kāya sañkhāra) to satisfy these "urges." That is "sañkhāra dukkha" mentioned in \#1 above.
- In addition to doing work going to a restaurant, traveling to a cinema, etc., we also need to do a job to make money for all those activities. Constant work (sañkhāra) is required to keep us afloat.
- Most times, we get one urge on top of another: we may want to eat and drink, we may want to watch a movie, but also may want company (gather friends).
- We do not realize this suffering because our minds are focused on THE RESULT, the pleasure we MIGHT have after doing all that work. That "made-up mental pleasure" is another part of "samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedana $\bar{a}$ " mentioned above.
- You may be thinking, "What is he talking about? Isn't this what life is supposed to be?". Exactly! We do not even realize this because this is our "baseline" of existence. We have done this over and overextending to beginning-less time, and we PERCEIVE this to be "normal."


## Dukkha Dukkha and Sañkhāra Dukkha Go Together

7. What we perceive as happiness comes from the relief we get when the distress level decreases due to our efforts. All we do is to suppress "imbalances" or "take actions to bring it to balance." We get relief from that. But the same imbalance keeps coming back and we will have to go over the same "balancing act" again! Let us consider an example.

- We naturally get hungry and thirsty, which are two main "pillana" that we cannot avoid as long as we have this physical body.
- However, when we eat and drink, that leads to a sense of happiness. But we never think that this "happiness" actually arose due to inevitable distress.
- If we cannot find water when we get thirsty, that will lead to real suffering. At that point, a glass of water will taste heavenly. However, after drinking a glass or two, we will not be able to enjoy drinking any more water.
- That "happiness" actually arose when getting rid of the pillana due to thirst.
- The problem is that hunger/thirst keeps coming back!

8. The reality is that no matter what we do to please the senses, those delightfil moments are limited. They do not arise without "pillana" or inherent distress associated with the body. Even if we can maintain that sensory fulfillment for a long time, we become tired after a while. Then the mind asks for a different kind of experience. Let us look at some examples.

- When we are in a warm climate, we are thrilled to be in an air-conditioned room. But we would not like to be in an air-conditioned room in the middle of winter in Alaska, where we would like the place to be warmed up. "Happiness" is not associated with cold or hot air. We will feel happy when we remove "pillana" or the discomfort/distress for the body by cooling or warming the environment.
- We can be lying in the most comfortable bed, but sooner or later, we start shifting and rolling, trying to find a better posture, and eventually cannot stay in bed anymore.
- The most beautiful scenery can be watched only for so long and would get bored. The joy of sex is gone once satisfied, and that urge will not arise until at a later time again.


## Viparināma Dukkha

9. Then there is a third type of suffering called viparināma dukkha. That is also associated with the body but is due to "unexpected changes" and eventual death. That is called "vipariṇāma" dukkha.

- For example, an accident can cause injury. We may come down with a major illness like cancer anytime.
- Death cannot be avoided in ANY realm and is "built-in" suffering. That WILL NOT be stopped until Parinibbāna.
- All three types of suffering are associated with anicca nature. Because of the anicca nature, dukkha arises inevitably. That is why we are helpless (anatta) in the rebirth process!
- Thus, anicca, dukkha, and anatta are inter-related. See, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta."


## The Three Types of Suffering

10. In summary, out of the three types of suffering, we notice (and worry about) only the viparināma dukkha.

- One may not even notice the other two types of suffering (dukkha dukkha and sañkhāra dukkha). They are masked by our perceived "happiness." Especially those of us who are born with a reasonable level of wealth can overcome both easily.
- Most of us get to eat before we become starving, and it becomes a "suffering." Furthermore, we don't need to go hunting and kill an animal to eat; we can go to a restaurant and have a nice meal.
- Therefore, those two types of suffering are hidden from us. But we know that many people feel such suffering.

11. The worse part is that in the lowest four realms, beings become truly helpless (anatta). There is little one can do (sañkhāra) to make amends for the incessant dukkha dukkha in those realms.

- For example, a wild animal has very few choices when it gets hungry. It may go hungry for days with much suffering.
- In the wild, you do not see any old, sick animals. When they become weak, they are eaten by bigger, stronger animals. That is the true meaning of anatta. There is absolute helplessness, especially in those lower realms.


## Suffering Is Present in All Realms

12. There is nowhere in the 31 realms where $d u k k h a$ is absent. The three types of $d u k k h a$ are present in the 31 realms in varying degrees:

- In the lowest realm, the niraya, dukkha dukkha is predominant; there is only suffering, and no way to get relief by doing sañkhāra. Even in the animal realm, there is relatively little sañkhāra dukkha; they just suffer directly, as pointed out above.
- In the higher realms (above the human realm), there is very little dukkha dukkha because those are "good births" that originated due to meritorious kamma. In these higher realms, it is the viparināma dukkha that ends the life there. Also, any Brahma has not overcome suffering in the lowest four realms in the future, unless they have attained magga phala.
- It is in the human realm that all three types of dukkha are present at significant levels. The sañkhāra dukkha is highest in the human realm compared to all the realms.

13. What we discussed is the First Noble Truth, Dukkha Sacca. There is hidden dukkha, even in bouts of apparent happiness. There is no place within the 31 realms where dukkha can be overcome. See, "Essence of Buddhism - In the First Sutta."

### 3.4.4.5 How to Cultivate the Anicca Saññā

Revised November 26, 2017; major revision June 28, 2022; revised August 25, 2022 (\#1)
It takes an effort to get the anicca saññā and get to the Sotāpanna stage. Reading about the anicca nature is not enough.

## Acquiring Anicca Sañ̃̄̄̄ Requires an Effort

1. Many people tell me, "I think I understand what anicca means. But then what?".

- If one gets at least a glimpse of what is meant by anicca, that goes a long way. And that is not hard if one spends some time contemplating it. A Sotāpanna fully comprehends the anicca nature and the anatta nature. The next step is to fully comprehend dukkha and asubha nature. See, "Vipallāsa (Ditthi, Saññā, Citta) Affect Sañkhāra."
- A Sotāpanna Anugāmi may not have diṭthi vipallāsa about anicca and anatta, but may have saññ̄a and citta vipallāsa. Thus, it is important to spend time cultivating anicca sañña.
- Reading and learning about anicca and experiencing anicca sañña are two different things. First, it is a good idea to figure out what sañ̃̃̄a is; see "Saññā - What It Really Means."
- One needs to contemplate the anicca nature with real examples from one's life to get that anicca sañña $\bar{a}$ to sink in one's mind.

2. A Buddha must first point out the essential truth about this world, i.e., "that we cannot maintain anything in this world to our satisfaction." But once told, it is not difficult to see the truth by critically evaluating that statement.

- If one CAN maintain ANYTHING to one's satisfaction, that HAS TO BE one's own body and mind: "This is my body, and these are my thoughts." Therefore, one should start by contemplating one's own body and mind.


## The Mind - Can We Keep It the Way We Want?

3. Close your eyes and try to fix your mind on your wife, husband, friend, house, or anything else. Can you keep your thoughts on that one subject for any significant time?

- It is not possible to do that. Our minds wander off, seeking "more enticing thought objects." You will notice that it becomes even more challenging when one's mind is excited, for example, when one has seen an attractive object or done something strenuous. In the first case, kāmacchanda n $\bar{v} v a r a n ̣ a ~ i s ~$ strong. In the latter, one is breathing hard. In both cases, the "excitability" is high).
- Thus when one's mind is calm, it is a bit easier to keep the mind on something, but still not for too long.

4. It is essential to verify for oneself these examples. Buddha Dhamma is to be experienced, not just read.

- One can cultivate wisdom only by "verifying for oneself that what the Buddha said is indeed true." Blind faith will not get anyone close to the truth. Thus true meditation is to learn the true and pure Dhamma and critically evaluate it based on one's own experiences.

5. Once we confirm that one cannot keep one's mind to the way one wants, the next step is to consider whether one can maintain one's body the way one likes.

- We cannot change our basic body features like height, the color of the skin or the hair, etc. Furthermore, if one is born blind or without a limb, there is nothing one can do about that. Thus to a significant extent, we have to live with the body we were born with.


## The Body - Can We Keep It to Our Liking?

6. Next, consider our body and see whether we can maintain it like that if we like that appearance.

- Of course, we can do that for a while, especially if one is young. But there inevitably comes a time when one will not be able to do that. One can verify that by looking at one's parents and grandparents: look at their old pictures and see how young and vibrant they were back when they were your age.
- Therefore, we need to see that we cannot even maintain things that we consider "our own" to our satisfaction in the long run. That is to help cultivate the "anicca sañña" to a large extent.


## The Truth Will Set You Free!

7. Contrary to those who believe that thinking along these lines is "depressing," it can be liberating to realize the truth. Those who keep trying to "patch up one's losing body assets" by artificial means end up "highly depressed" and even commit suicide. It is better to have thought about the "inevitabilities of life" ahead of time.

- If one contemplates deep enough, one realizes that no matter how much money one can throw at such problems, in the end, one will become helpless. Just think about any old movie stars, beauty queens, bodybuilders, politicians, kings, emperors, etc., and see how they died helplessly at the end.
- Each person dies helplessly at old age or dies unexpectedly of an accident or a significant illness. There is nothing that can be called "graceful death." It may seem to outsiders that "one is aging gracefuilly," but that person knows how hard it is, even if at average health. One cannot do things the way one did once, and one cannot enjoy any sensory pleasure at the same level. All our sense faculties degrade with time.

8. This was the basic message of the Buddha, and it is not something he made up. He just revealed the truth about the nature of this world, which any average person would not think about themselves. We are too busy enjoying sensory pleasures (or trying to acquire enjoyable objects) even to think about it.

- The Buddha also showed that unless we do something about it, this is what we will be doing forever in the future. We will be reborn and will go through the same cycle over and over. It is much worse since most births in this cycle of rebirths are in the lower four realms, where the hardships and sufferings are much higher.
- More importantly, he revealed a way to eliminate this cycle of births wrought with suffering.


## We Have a Distorted (Viparīta) Sañ̃̃̄̄ About the World

9. The Buddha explained that we keep returning to this world because we don't realize "this unsatisfactory nature." No matter how much suffering we go through, we always think we can overcome them (and sometimes we do, but in the end, we all die). We have the wrong perception that somehow we can "beat the system," i.e., attain happiness and MAINTAIN that happiness. We have the incorrect "nicca sa $\tilde{n} \tilde{n} \vec{a} "$. It is not real nature. The Buddha called it "viparīta saññ̄a."

- He said as long as we have this "nicca saññā," we can never escape future suffering. The solution is in that first truth about suffering (Dukkha Sacca, the suffering that we can eliminate): What we need to do is to fully realize the "anicca nature" of this world, that "we cannot maintain anything to our satisfaction in the long run."
- Most people do not realize that the mere change of perception can lift a heavy load that one has been carrying. That is the basis of "nirāmisa sukha"; see "Peace of Mind to Nibbāna - The Key Step."
- That does not mean one will give up trying to give up everything and go to a forest; see, "If Everything is Anicca, Should We Just give up Everything?". One needs to spend time in actual meditation, which means always trying to "see the anicca nature" around.


## Sainsāric Suffering Maintained With Nicca Sañ̃̄̄̄

10. When we have this wrong "nicca sañña," we willingly embrace this world, and that is "Pațicca" ("pati" + "icca," where "pati" is bind and "icca" means willingly). When that happens, "sama uppāda" (where "sama" is similar and "uppāda" means birth) follows inevitably; see, "Paticca Samuppāda - "Pati+ichcha" + "Sama+uppāda"."

- Thus, we will be born into whatever type of existence we crave.
- But that does not mean if we crave a human rebirth, we will get that. Instead, rebirth is, according to "gati," the critical aspect of one's mindset. If one is excessively greedy, one may be born in the realm of "hungry ghosts"; if one is excessively angry or hateful, one will be born where that mindset prevails, i.e., in the niraya (hell).
- In other words, when one has the wrong "nicca saññā," one tends to do immoral things to get what one perceives to provide sensory pleasures. Then vipäka of those kamma $\bar{a}$ will lead to worse existences in the future, both in this life and, more importantly, in future lives.


## Necessary Background to Cultivate Anicca Sañ̃̄̄̄

11. As one cultivates the "anicca sañ̃ $\bar{n}$," one begins to stay away from the ten immoral actions more and more due to clear comprehension that such efforts are unfruitful.

- What is the point of stealing money at the expense of others and acquiring a "good lifestyle" that will last only 100 years? And one will have to pay that with interest?
- What is the point of verbally abusing someone for a momentary satisfaction if that will only hurt oneself in the end (even just by leaving oneself agitated, let alone such kamma vipāka that will come down later)? If one can stop such an incident, one can look back and see the "cooling down" resulting from that effort. That is what "Ānāpāna" or "Satipatṭhāna" is all about.
- What is the point in hitting back even if someone physically hurts you? Will you feel PHYSICALLY better by hurting that person? Will your bodily pain go away? That also did not happen without a cause; it resulted from a bad kamma done sometime back (a kamma vipāka).
- By the way, kamma vipāka are not deterministic. One can avoid many kamma vipāka by not allowing conditions for them to take place; see, "What is Kamma? - Does Kamma determine Everything?". Thus, when living with "sati," many such kamma vipāka can be avoided.


## Mindfulness - Be Mindful About the Anicca Nature

12. It may take some contemplation to sort these out, but one must look at the broader picture. Ignorance is not being aware of the "whole picture." We tend to act impulsively by reacting to events. But that tendency will diminish when one cultivates the "anicca sañ̃̃ā."

- Acting with "sati" or "being mindful" is being mindful of the "anicca nature of this world." That is the basis of both "Ānāpāna" and "Satipaṭthāna."
- Nibbāna or "cooling down" can be experienced in this very life by cultivating the "anicca sañ̃̃̄̄" and thus be motivated to strive harder; see, "Living Dhamma."

Next, "How to Cultivate the Anicca Sañ̃ña - II",............

### 3.4.4.6 How to Cultivate the Anicca Saññā - II

## Revised November 26, 2017; June 27, 2022; June 29, 2022

Saññā is normally translated as "perception", but it has a much deeper meaning. Learning about anicca is the first step, but cultivating anicca saññ̄ $\bar{a}$ is critical.

## Sañ $\tilde{n} \bar{a}$ - What Is It?

1. Saññ̄ $\bar{a}$ is normally translated as "perception", but it has a much deeper meaning; see, "Sañ̃̃̄̄ - What It Really Means." Anicca saññ̄̄ $\bar{a}$ has many different aspects, and in this and the next post, we will discuss some of these deeper aspects; see the link at the end of this post.

- When reading about it, it may make sense that anicca means, "that we cannot maintain anything to our satisfaction." And from the examples given, one can see the truth of that statement. But that is just the start. One just has just been informed of what anicca is. Now one has to "see it with wisdom", in order to get to the Sotāpanna stage. This is what is called "dassanena pahātabba" or "start seeing things as they are" or "Yathābhūta Ñāṇa."
- One needs to develop the "anicca sañ̃̄ $\bar{a}$ "; the mind needs to grasp the essence of the correct perception of what anicca implies. Book knowledge is one thing, and "grasping it with the mind" is much deeper.
- Getting rid of both distorted views (diṭthi) and distorted sañ̃̃̄ $\bar{a}$ is required to get to the Sotāpanna stage; see, "Vipallāsa (Ditthi, Sañ̃ña, Citta) Affect Sañkhāra."
- This is the second of two posts on that issue. In the previous post we determined that it is not possible to keep to our satisfaction what we think of as ours, our bodies, and our thoughts. See, "How to Cultivate the Anicca Sañ̃ñ.."


## Knowing About Something - Different Levels

2. When contemplating external objects, there are many "levels of sañña": the more one KNOWS about a given object, one tends to cultivate a "better sañ $\tilde{n} \bar{a}$ " about it.

- Let us take an example to illustrate this important difference. Suppose a person from a remote region in the Amazon forest, who has never seen an apple, is shown an apple. He would not know what it is. If we give him the apple to hold and teach him the word "apple", now he knows what an apple is, but only in the sense that if he is shown an apple again, he will say "that is an apple." But he would still not know how it tastes. He will have to eat some apples to get an idea of their flavor. He may still not know how to identify a "ripened apple" that will taste better, etc. All that comes when he gets to experience apples at various stages of "ripeness" and even different varieties.
- All those different aspects of an apple need to be experienced in order to really get the sañ̃̄̄̄about an apple. Only then that one can picture an apple, know what it feels like to hold it, how it tastes, etc. At the mention of the word "apple" all that instantly comes to that person's mind.

3. In another example, if we see someone at work regularly at a distance, we can recognize him as $X$ if we meet him at the market. But we would not know much ABOUT him. However, if we get to associate with him and start doing things together, pretty soon we will know much more about him.

- At that point, when we even catch a glimpse of him, everything about him comes to our mind. If we wanted, we can recall how many kids he has, where he went to school, etc.
- Thus "sañ̃̃̄"" can be at different levels. The more one gets to associate with someone or something, then our "sañ̃$\tilde{\tilde{a}}$ " on that person or concept will grow.
- However, it is possible that our "sañ $\tilde{n} \overline{\boldsymbol{a}}$ " about person $X$ may not be really correct. One day, police find video evidence that X is a child molester, and it becomes clear that there is no doubt about it. At that moment, our "sañ̃̃̄"" or perception of X is altered permanently. We will no longer let him even come close to our children.


## Viparīta Saññ̄ - Distorted Perception of This World

4. The Buddha said our "sañ̃ $\bar{a} "$ " about "this world" - that it can provide happiness — is a "viparīta sañña" (pronounced "vipareetha"), i.e., it is a distorted or wrong perception. If one carefully examines the rebirth process in the 31 realms, that wrong perception has provided us with the most suffering in the long run.

- When we realize the "anicca nature" of this world to some extent, our wrong perception will change. That is when one really sees "Sammā Ditthi" or "correct vision" about this world. One becomes a Sotāpanna.
- Just like a fish does not see the "hidden hook" and that it will undergo unbearable suffering by biting the tasty worm, we normally do not "see" the suffering hidden in the "tasty materialistic things." A fish will never be able to figure that out, and as normal human beings we cannot figure it out ON OUR OWN either. Only a Buddha can figure it out, and a Buddha can TEACH us, and we can figure it out by spending some time contemplating it.

5. Therefore, one should not be discouraged if one does not even realize "what the big deal is" about anicca. Like everything else, understanding comes with repeated application and thinking about it. If one can see that "it makes sense" to say, "anicca describes the inability for us to maintain anything to our satisfaction in the long term" that is a good start. Then one should start checking the validity of that concept at every opportunity in real life.

- Also, anicca is not merely, "the inability for us to maintain anything to our satisfaction in the long term." There are many other implications that arise because of this characteristic of anicca. Another way the Buddha described anicca was to use the term attiyati ("atṭeeyathi"); i.e., "it is like a dog chewing on a meatless bone." The dog thinks very highly of the bone and values its 'taste." But there is not even any real taste in that bone. It is taste that is made up by the mind, but sometimes, its gums start bleeding and it may taste its own blood.
- Various aspects of anicca are discussed in: "Anicca - True Meaning."

6. Just like a dog will spend hours and hours chewing its "highly valued" bone, we also give much value to sense pleasures that are fleeting in nature. We do get brief instances of real pleasure, but we do not realize the effort and suffering that we go through to get that brief sense of pleasure. Most of the time, the pleasure is a "pleasure of anticipation." We trudge through hard work with the mind cheering on showing the "possible pleasures to be had."

- The Buddha likened this to oxen (in the old days) who drags a heavy bullock cart with eagerness to get to the pile of straw being held in front of it by a pole. It does not realize the futility of its efforts because it is only thinking about the "prize" being held in front of its eyes. It does not even feel the burden of the heavy load, or even if feeling it, just disregards that pain in anticipation of the "reward that is only a few steps away." The average human's mindset is not that different.
- Most of our pleasures are short-lived and arise just out of putting down the "fires" or distresses. The water tastes best when we are thirsty. Think about how you felt when you were very thirsty; the first sip
of water was heavenly. But as the thirst went down with drinking more water, the "sense of pleasure" went down as well. After at most two glasses, the "feeling of pleasure" turns to discomfort.


## Unseen Drawbacks [Ādīnava] of Sensory Pleasures

7. The same thing applies to any of the sense pleasures. We are constantly under pressure from the mind to "provide relief to one or another sense faculty"; this is "dukkha dukkha" that we discussed elsewhere. If we have not eaten anything for a while, we get the urge to eat something tasty. If we have not listened to some good music for a while, that urge kicks in. If you think about any sensory pleasure, this is true.

- Many people value sex very highly. But how long can one keep that pleasure going? Most of the sexual pleasure is gained by just thinking about it; it is mostly mind-made. One needs to think about this carefully. How much time does one spend "fantasizing" versus "actually having sex"?
- Even if we eat the most delicious food in the whole world, it will not taste good after the stomach gets full. But we keep thinking about that "great experience" of eating that meal many times afterward. Then we form an urge to do it again.
- This "feeling of unsatisfactoriness" or even feeling of "something is missing" is "attiyati." The dog may get tired of chewing the bone and may leave it alone, but after a while, the urge comes back and he is at it again.

8. Even if we are fully content and lying on a comfortable couch, we may get a "feeling of unfulfillment", that something is "missing." We then get the idea, "to go and watch a movie" or to "drop by a friend's place to chat." Then we have to get in the car and drive there. We do not even feel the burden associated with getting dressed and driving because our minds are focused on the pleasure of "watching the movie" or "having a good time with a friend." And after that session, we have to drive back and if it was a bad movie we might even get a bit depressed.

- This is "attiyati." Just like a dog that incessantly is chewing on a dry bone to get mental satisfaction and eventually gets tired doing it, this is what we have been doing life after life (if born in the human realm). Many people eventually realize this at old age, but then it could be too late to do anything about it. [atṭiyati, \& atṭiyati [denom. fr. atṭa3, q. v.] to be in trouble or anxiety, to be worried, to be incommodated. atț̄yati \& atțita] distressed, tormented, afflicted; molested, plagued. attita : [pp. of ardayati] distressed; grieved; afflicted with.]
- As one gets old, the ability to derive pleasure from such activities goes down. If you have friends, relatives, parents, or grandparents who had enjoyed life at a younger age, but now are in distressful situations it is easy to see what happened to them over the years. Now they do not have the energy to try to do all those activities and even if they do to some extent, their sense faculties have degraded to the point of not providing much sensory pleasure.
- But most people still keep thinking back about the pleasures they had when they were young. This may even prompt them to seek ways to "somehow get those experiences back." And when that fails depression sets in.


## Yathābhūta Nāṇa - Removal of Viparīta Sañ $\tilde{n} \bar{a}$

9. As the mind realizes the burdens of the "incessant distress", and that one has endured all that for no real benefit, it will gladly give up those burdens and the mind will start losing those cravings automatically. This is the key to "giving up unnecessary attachments"; see, "Anicca - The Incessant Distress ("Pilana")."

- That post discusses how we encounter suffering when anicca inevitably leads to unexpected "changes" in things we value; this is viparināma dukkha. We encounter more suffering by trying to overcome the effects due to viparināma dukkha by doing more sañkhāra, and that is sañkhāra dukkha. And if we do "bad types of sañkhāra" or apuññäbhi sañkhāra, they lead to rebirths in realms where direct suffering or dukkha dukkha is unbearable. Thus all types of suffering eventually arise due to anicca.

10. Those are key concepts to meditate on (or contemplate). This is real vipassanā bhāvanā.

- However, it is important to make sure one starts abstaining from at the least the conventional five precepts and possibly the "BIG EIGHT" discussed in the " 2 . The Basics in Meditation." Otherwise, the mind will not be calm enough to grasp these concepts. The difference between "book knowledge" and "developing anicca sañña" will become slowly clear as one proceeds.
- That is why reading, listening and contemplating Dhamma concepts are so crucial. This is one component of the Satta Bojjhañga (dhamma vicaya) and one of the Cattāro Iddhipāda called vīmaìssā. When concepts become clear, one will automatically develop anicca sañña. [vicaya: [m] investigation. iddhipāda: [m.] basis of psychic power.]
- And with time, one will be able to grasp it better. One will "start feeling" things in one's own body; see, "11. Magga Phala and Ariya Jhānā via Cultivation of Satta Bojihhanga."
- This is a process that goes all the way to Arahanthood. It is said that one truly understands anicca only at the Arahant stage. But our goal here is to at least get to the Sotāpanna stage. And that CAN BE DONE in this very life, as I discussed in my own experience in the above post.


## Not Just Impermanence - Anicca Is Much Deeper

11. Finally, if anyone has spent long times - may be years - meditating on "impermanence" without results, it would be worthwhile to spend some time meditating on the "anicca" nature. I know by experience that will make a big difference if one does it right.

- I spent 4-5 years contemplating on wrong anicca, dukkha, and anatta (and a few other things like the wrong ānāpāna sati bhāvanā). I really believe that the very first desanā that exposed me to the correct interpretation of anicca, dukkha, and anatta changed my progress instantaneously. It was a profound effect.
- It is also important to realize that what ultimately matters is not just a "good feeling" or even getting to $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$, but whether one has removed "gati" suitable to be born in the apa$y \bar{a}$. Thus one should be able to look back at one's life and see significant improvements in getting rid of greed, hate, and ignorance; see, "Transition to Noble Eightfold Path."

Next, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta - According to Some Key Suttā".......

### 3.4.4.7 If Everything is Anicca Should We Just give up Everything?

## Revised February 11, 2020; June 27, 2022

## Introduction

1. Anicca means "we cannot maintain anything to our satisfaction in the LONG RUN." The time scale of existence is an important factor when we contemplate the significance and implications of this fundamental characteristic of nature.

- So, the question is, "if nothing can be maintained to our satisfaction, what is the point in spending so much time in learning, getting a decent job, making plans for businesses, etc.?."
- We do need to pursue those short-term goals while keeping the "bigger picture" in mind. The "big picture" is the non-existence of a future birth without suffering. Since investigating that "big picture" takes time, we need to make sure we have the means to live a comfortable life that leaves time for such contemplation/investigations.

Short-Term Goals Are Necessary to Comprehend the "Big Picture"
2. During life, we do see many instances where we can attain certain things (pass exams, get jobs, initiate successful businesses, have a comfortable life, etc.) and be happy about such achievements. Of course, there are many times we encounter unexpected things too (coming down with health problems, traffic accidents, floods, hurricanes, loss of jobs, etc.).

- That is the nature of existence as a human. It is a mixed bag, at least until we get to old age; then it becomes increasingly difficult to maintain things (especially our bodies) to our satisfaction, and of course, at death, we have to leave everything behind whether we like it or not.
- In the realms above the human, in fact, life is even more predictable and enjoyable, that is of course until death comes calling.
- But the real problems are encountered in the four realms below the human realm. It is increasingly difficult to "maintain things to one's satisfaction" in lower realms. Animals are truly helpless, especially the vast majority that live in the wild. There are no "old animals" in the wild; they either get sick and die or even worse: they get eaten up as soon as they slow down a bit.
- There is no happiness at all in the lowest realm, the niraya ("ni"+" $r a$ " means without ANY happiness).


## The "Big Picture"

3. Thus the main reason why "we cannot maintain things to our satisfaction in the LONG RUN" is that all beings spend most of their lives in the lower four realms; see, "Rebirth - Connection to Suffering in the First Noble Truth."

- It may take time to convince oneself that this "big picture" about the rebirth process is correct. See, "Evidence for Rebirth."
- When one truly understands that, one will see the dangers of living an immoral life first. Then one will start getting rid of wrong views. Only then one would be able to "see" the bigger picture clearly. It is a step-by-step process. See, "Is It Necessary for a Buddhist to Eliminate Sensual Desires?"
- Then one will see that one's own actions decide one's future rebirths. See, "Origin of Life."
- The above is a very brief summary. It will require a real effort to go through them and the references therein.


## Some Implications of the "Big Picture"

4. Then we can examine the question in terms of this "big picture" while keeping in mind the need to attend to "short-term goals."

- If we do give up everything, we will probably die a miserable death (because we will be poor, unhealthy, etc. because we would not be able to even support ourselves,) and be born most likely in a lower realm. That it will make the situation much worse.
- We do need to contemplate this situation. If one thinks through this line of thoughts, one can see that one is really helpless in this cycle of rebirths, which is the third characteristic of existence, anatta. Until a Buddha comes to this world and shows humans this "big picture", AND shows how to get out of it, no one is able to escape this trap.
- The only solution is to at least attain the Sotāpanna stage of Nibbāna in this life. We MAY have some kammic energy left for one or more human lives (see, "Bhava and Jāti - States of Existence and Births Therein"'), but this COULD BE the last for a long while, which could be billions of years. Even if we get another human birth, we do not know under what circumstances; it could be somewhere Buddha Dhamma is not readily accessible.

5. There is another point that we need to consider when tackling this issue. We have become indebted to numerous beings in this journey of rebirths, and thus we have debts to pay back. Having all these debts is a hindrance to attaining any stage of Nibbāna; see, "Kamma, Debt, and Meditation."

## Short-Term Actions

6. Therefore, instead of abandoning our families (to whom we owe the most), we need to do our utmost to make sure they are well-off. We also need to make sure that we do not become dependent on society (and thus accumulate more debt). Even in this life, we depend on others for so many things: we are indebted to our teachers, friends, as well to many unknown people who contribute to providing us with essentials to sustain life; we all are interconnected and have responsibilities for each other. We have "to do our part" to live in a society.

- Therefore, part of the solution is to first prepare oneself (or one's children if one is a parent) with a good education so that supporting oneself (and a family) is possible. Furthermore, a good education helps with understanding Dhamma too. And if one can make a lot of money (by honest means) then one can do many meritorious deeds too, thereby helping oneself spiritually as well.
- In any case, giving up everything and hiding in a forest will not solve the problem of existence. But there are some who have a sansäric tendency to abandon the "householder life." What I am saying here is for the majority of people, not for everyone: Of course, we need to sustain the bhikkhus who spend all their time for the benefit of others as well as themselves.


## Coping With Both "Long-Term" and 'Short-Term" Concerns

7. Therefore, what needs to be done is to understand the true nature of existence and realize that the ONLY solution is to try the best to attain at least the Sotāpanna stage of Nibbāna. Then one becomes free of rebirths in the lower four realms forever. This is THE solution to the problem.

In order to do that we need to,

1. Fulfill our obligations to our families, friends, and society in general,
2. Make our best effort to learn pure Dhamma and attain the Sotāpanna stage of Nibbāna.

When one does this, one will become happy, not depressed, about the outlook. One has understood the problem and knows what to do about it. And when one starts working on it, one's confidence will grow because one can feel the difference in oneself. One will become even more determined AND energetic, not just to save oneself, but also to help out the others.

Next, "Anicca - The Incessant Distress ("Pilana")",

### 3.4.5 Anattā - A Systematic Analysis

## December 12, 2018

The Pāli word anatt $\bar{a}$ has a mundane meaning and a deeper meaning. The deeper meaning is discussed in a series of posts in a systematic manner.
Anattā in Anattalakkahana Sutta - No Soul or an Ātma
Anatta - No Refuge in This World
Dasa Akusala and Anatta - The Critical Link
Anatta - the Opposite of Which Atta?
Anattā (Mundane Interpretation) - No "Unchanging Self"

### 3.4.5.1 Anattā in Anattalakkahana Sutta - No Soul or an Ātma

## May 31, 2019; revised August 25, 2022

1. Attā is a Pāli word with two primary meanings that vary and depend on the context.

- In the conventional sense, "att $\bar{a} "$ means "a person," like calling someone "John." In rural Sri Lanka, to refer to someone, one could say "this $a t t a "$ " (0ఠ \& \&
- The deeper meaning of "atta" is "fiull control" and "with substance."
- If one is in complete control of SOMETHING, that THING can be called their att $\bar{a}$. If something is not under full control, that is anatt $\bar{a}$.
- That is related to the fundamental concepts of "anatt $\bar{a}$ " and "anatta" (one of the three characteristics of Nature or Tilakkhaṇa); see "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta." "Anatta" is having "no control" and "without substance" or "without essence."

2. Therefore, we need to determine the meaning of "att $\bar{a}$ " based on the context where the word is used.

- For example, "bear" refers to the large animal in "I saw a bear," but in "to bear a burden," it has an entirely different meaning.
- Let us clarify those two meanings of attā directly using the Tipitaka.

3. The usage of "att $\bar{a}$ " in the ordinary sense is seen in the famous Dhammapada verse; see, "Attā Hi Attano Nātho." There, "att $\vec{a} "$ refers to "any person." It just says that each person has strived for their salvation (Nibbāna). Even the Buddha can only teach the way.

- Another is "attānam damayanti paṇ̂itā," which means, "a wise person would control/discipline oneself." That is in Dhammapada verse 80. [udakam hi nayanti nettik $\bar{a}$; usukārā namayanti tejanaì; dārumं namayanti tacchakā; attānai் damayanti paṇ̣itā̄.]

4. Buddha describer the second and deeper meaning of "att $\vec{a}$ " in his second discourse delivered after attaining Buddhahood.
"WebLink: suttacentral: Anattalakkhana Sutta (SN 22.59)" starts with the verse: "Rūpaï, bhikkhave, anattā. R̄̄pañca hidam், bhikkhave, attā abhavissa, nayidaì rūpaì ābādhāya saìvatteyya, labbhetha ca rūpe: 'evai் me rūpaì hotu, evaì me rūpaì mā ahosītti. Yasmā ca kho, bhikkhave,
 me rūpaì mā ahosì ti.

- Translated: "Bhikkhus, form (physical body) is anattt (or not att $\bar{a}$ ). For if, bhikkhus, if one's body is att $\bar{a}$, one would have full control over it, and it would be possible to say: 'Let my body be like this; let my body not be like this.' But because the body is anatta, it is subjected to decay and disease, and it is impossible to have it the way one desires: 'Let my body be this way; let my body not be this way."

5. The verse in \#4 is critical because it clearly describes what is meant by att $\bar{a}$ and anatt $\bar{a}$ in the more profound sense: Att $\bar{a}$ would be one in complete control. If one has full control of something, one would be able to maintain it the way one wants.

- For example, we like to think that if we "own" something, we should be able to "have full control" over it. But we know that is not the case (cars, houses, anything we own evolves in their way. Even though things like gold jewelery are stable, we will lose control over them when we die).
- Specifically, if one's body is $a t t \bar{a}$, one should be able to make it the way one would like it to be: say, strong, healthy, and handsome/beautiful; one would be able to maintain it without catching any disease or injuries; furthermore, one would be able to make it live forever. But our bodies evolve in their way. No matter how hard we try, they age, decay, and die.

6. This is emphasized in the another verse in that sutta: "Taí kim mañnatha, bhikkhave, rūpaï niccam $v \bar{a}$ aniccaím vā"ti? "Aniccamं, bhante." "Yaím panāniccaì dukkhaím vā taì sukhaím vā"ti? "Dukkham̀, bhante."

Translated: "What do you think, bhikkhus, can one's body be maintained to one's liking or not?"-"not possible, bhante."-"Does that lead to suffering or happiness?"-"Suffering, bhante."

- As we have seen before, the anicca nature (inability to satisfy one's desires/expectations) leads to suffering; see, "Anicca - Inability to Keep What We Like."
- We suffer when something we own breaks down (houses, cars, etc) and when people we love get sick or die. However, the worst suffering is when we get ill or face death. That is expressed in the next part of the above verse.

7. The verse continues: "Yaì panāniccaì dukkhaì viparināmadhammaí, kallaì nu taì samanupassitum: 'etaì mama, esohamasmi, eso me atta’" $t i$ ? "No hetami, bhante."

Translated: "If something cannot be maintained to one's liking, if it undergoes unexpected change, and lead to suffering, is it appropriate to say: ‘This is mine, this I am, this is my atta (my essence)'?"-'No, bhante."

- Now we are getting to the deeper aspect. If X owns a car, X would say, "this car is mine." If that car breaks down, X will become unhappy (suffer).
- However, X will never say, "this car is me; this is my attā (my essence)."
- On the other hand, X is likely to say, "this body is me; this is my att $\bar{a}$ (my essence)."

8. Then, the Buddha pointed out that the statement also holds for one's physical body. One's body cannot be maintained to one's liking; it undergoes unexpected change and leads to suffering. Thus, is it NOT appropriate to say: ‘This (body) is mine, this II am, this is my att $\bar{a}$ (my essence)."

- Understanding that will remove sakkāya diṭthi.

9. Furthermore, it is not only our body but any $r \bar{u} p a$ (family, friends, cars, houses, etc) that is not under our control. In our deep past, we never had that control over any external or internal $r \bar{u} p a$, and we will never be able to have such control in the future either. Therefore, the whole rūpakkhandha is anattă.

- The sutta now repeats the same argument for the other four khandhās or aggregates: vedanākkhandha, saññ̄̄kkhandha, san̉khārakkhandha, viññānakkhandha.
- Those are our thoughts, experiences, hopes and dreams. We do not have much control over them, and whatever control we have will be lost at death. We have no idea where we will be born next.
- We are helpless in this beginning-less rebirth process, which is the anatta nature.

10. Anything rellated to a "living being" (or a given lifestream) is in the five aggregates. There is not even a single entity we have control over, i.e., none of them can be called one's $a t t \bar{a}$.

- Therefore, there is NOTHING that can be called one's own and thus can be maintained to one's liking. For example, one has no control over WHERE one will be reborn.
- Anything in the five aggregates arises via Paticca Samuppāda. We only have control over two types of sañkhāra (vacī and kāya sañkhāra) and have no control over mano sañkhāra. It is essential to understand the types of sañkhāra: "Sañkhāra - What It Really Means."
- Furthermore, most rebirths are the lower realms with much suffering. Thus one is helpless or anatt $\bar{a}$.

11. Thus, there is "no real intrinsic essence" like a soul. Also, "one is helpless in the long run" and "all struggles for permanent happiness will go to naught," etc. Even if one lives a perfect and healthy life, one WILL become helpless at death, with the future uncertain.

- Note that "rūpaim anattā" refers to the fact that one's body cannot be one's attā, and also, anatta (without the long "a") is a characteristic of nature.
- Realizing this particular aspect of anatta nature, i.e., that any part of one's five aggregates can not be taken as "one's own" is the removal of sakkāya ditt!hi. We get attached to small parts of pañcakkhandha (i.e., pañcupādānakkhandha) because we think those are our own. See "Essence of Buddhism - In the First Sutta."

12. Now, we can see how this concept of anatt $\overline{\boldsymbol{a}}$ is opposite to the concept of a "soul" in Abrahamic religions or the concept of an "ātma" (pronounced "āthma") in Hinduism. Thus, according to those religions, there is an att $\bar{a}$, the "soul" or the "ātma."

- In the case of Abrahamic religions, one's goal is to "purify" one's soul and make it go to heaven where one will live forever.
- In the case of Hinduism, the goal is to merge one's $\bar{a} t m a$ with the Mahā Brahma, and again be in that Brahma realm forever.
- However, the Buddha stated that no realm in this world has a permanent existence like that.
- This concept of an "everlasting identity" or a "soul" or an "ätma" is referred to as the "sassatavāda" in the Tipitaka. [sassatavāda :[m.] eternalism.]

13. Those who do not believe in rebirth say that a "person" exists only as long as his/her body is alive. When one dies, that identity is terminated. Most scientists today seem to believe in this idea: There is nothing that is "carried over" to the next life. This concept (or argument) is called the "uccedavāda" in the Tipiṭaka. [uccheda: :[m.] cutting off, perishing; annihilation.]

- But the Buddha explained that the fundamental nature lies between those two extreme views. Any "living being" exists as an ever-changing lifestream and that "lifestream" is carried over to a new life. But there is NOTHING that remains the SAME in that lifestream. The next life could be VERY DIFFERENT from the current life; see, "What Reincarnates? - Concept of a Lifestream."
- The next life is determined by the root causes and conditions when leaving the current existence (cutipatisandhi moment) based on Paticca Samuppāda.

A second fundamental meaning of anatta is in "Anatta - No Refuge in This World."
Anattalakkahaṇa Sutta discussed in detail: "Anatta in Anattalakkhana Sutta - Part 1."

### 3.4.5.2 Anatta - No Refuge in This World

June 7, 2019; revised June 12, 2021; August 29, 2022

## Recap of First Meaning of Anatta - No "Soul" or "Atma"

1. In the previous related post, we discussed one aspect of anatta - that there is no everlasting "essence" in a living being like a soul or an $\bar{a} t m a$; see, "Anattā in Anattalakkahana Sutta - No Soul or an Ātma."

- However, life does not come to an end at death. There is a continuation at death with birth in one of the realms "in this world of 31 realms"; see, "What Reincarnates? - Concept of a Lifestream."
- When life as human ends, one does not control what the next existence will be. It happens according to the prevailing causes and conditions, i.e., via the Patticca Samuppāda process.

2. Therefore, there is no "unchanging essence" in a given "person"; he/she is just a collection of the five aggregates that keep evolving according to the principle of cause and effect (Paticca Samuppāda).

- Vedanā, sañ̃̃̄a, sañkhāra, and viññāna all arise due to conditions present at a given time, i.e., they arise on Paṭicca Samuppāda ("avijjā paccayā sañkhāra," "sañkhāra paccayā viññāṇa" lead to sañkhāra and viññāna; "phassa paccayā vedanä" leads to vedanā (and saññā since vedanā and
sañ̃̃̄̄ arise together; see, "Citta and Cetasika - How Viññāna (Consciousness) Arises"). Furthermore, our bodies (rūpa) arise via "bhava paccayā jāti").
- A "person" is no more than the five aggregates: rūpakkhandha, vedanākkhandha, sañ̃̄̄̄̄kkhandha, sañkhārakkhandha, viññānakkhandha.
- Those aggregates evolve moment-to-moment according to Paticca Samuppāda or the principle of cause and effect, where conditions play a major role.
- There is no "att $\vec{a}$ " or a "soul" or an " $\bar{a} t m a$ " that can cause these entities to arise when a new
 "Kamma are Done with Sañkhāra - Types of Sañkhāra."

3. We can see that the Buddha explained the deep concepts of anicca, dukkha, and anatta in his first two suttā (Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta and Anattalakkhana Sutta that were delivered to the five ascetics just after attaining the Buddhahood.

- In the post, "Anicca - Inability to Keep What We Like" we discussed the first discourse of Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta, in which the Buddha described what anicca means, and how the inherent anicca nature leads to dukkha or suffering.
- As we discussed in that post, the key verse in that sutta is, "yampicchaim nalabhati tampi dukkhamं," which is shortened version (that rhymes) of the full verse "yam pi icchaí na labhati taim pi dukkhamं," and that the word "anicca" is the opposite "icca" that is hidden in that key verse (then dukkha arises because of the inability to satisfy one's expectations (icca).
- In the same way, Anattalakkhana Sutta introduced the term anatta, which highlights the fact that one is unable to maintain even things one perceives to be "one's own" like one's physical body or one's mental faculties (vedanā, saññā, sañkhāra, and viñ̃̃̄̄ṇa); see, "Anattā in Anattalakkahana Sutta - No Soul or an Ātma."
- Of course, those two aspects are related. Since one does not have complete control over ANYTHING, one will become helpless and will inevitably be subjected to suffering in the rebirth process. Of course, we are only talking about long-term consequences in the rebirth process, and NOT short-term ones. One MUST have short-term goals.


## Anatta - Becoming Helpless in the Rebirth Process

4. In this post, we will discuss another aspect of the anatta nature: how one becomes helpless (anatta) in the long term. That is another meaning of anatta, sometimes written as anattha. (The Tipitaka was written down in Pāli, but with Sinhala script; see "Historical Background." The word "anatta" was written as
 q20s3'J and that we write here as "anattha").

- The Pāli word "attha" could mean "the truth" or "having a refuge" or "meaningful," depending on the context. The opposites of "untruth," "helpless" or "meaningless/unprofitable" are indicated by the word "anattha."
- When one does not comprehend the anicca nature (that it is impossible to get what one wants AND keep it that way), one would be tempted to try to get one's wants by any means necessary. This is when one starts engaging in immoral deeds.
- This is when one sets up causes and conditions to bring so much suffering in the future that will lead to becoming truly helpless (anattha) via bad rebirths due to bad kamma.
- Therefore, knowing the first meaning of anatta is not enough; one needs to comprehend the second related meaning and work diligently to avoid dasa akusala. This is discussed below.

5. In the "WebLink: suttacentral: Pathama Adhamma Sutta (AN 10.113)," the Buddha succinctly states what dhamma/adhamma and attha/anattha are:
＂Katamo ca，bhikkhave，adhammo ca anattho ca？Micchādiṭthi，micchāsañkappo，micchāvācā， micchākammanto，micchāāj̄̄vo，micchāvāyāmo，micchāsati，micchāsamādhi，micchāñāṇamं， micchāvimutti－ayamं vuccati，bhikkhave，adhammo ca anattho ca，＂AND
＂Katamo ca，bhikkhave，dhammo ca attho ca？Sammādittthi，sammāsañkappo，sammāvācā， sammākammanto，sammāāj̄̄vo，sammāvāyāmo，sammāsati，sammāsamādhi，sammāñānaín， sammāvimutti－ayaì vuccati，bhikkhave，dhammo ca attho ca．＂
－＂Dhamma＂are those thoughts，speech，and actions that benefit oneself．One who engages in those is engaged in fruitfiul／meaningful things and will lead to one＇s refuge（＂attha＂）．As we can see，this encompasses the Noble Eightfold Path followed by sammā ñāna and sammā vimutti（i．e．， Arahanthood）．
－The opposites or＂adhamma＂are those thoughts，speech，and actions that lead to much future suffering． Those who engage in those are engaged in unfruitful／immoral things，leading to becoming helpless in the rebirth process（＂anattha＂）．

6．Another way to express the same idea is to say that one who is engaged in dasa akusala（adhamma）will become helpless in the rebirth process（anattha）；see，＂Dasa Akusala and Anatta－The Critical Link．＂

One who is engaged in the opposites of dasa kusala（i．e．，Buddha Dhamma）will have refuge in the rebirth process（attha）and become free of future suffering by becoming an Arahant．
－Many key suttā stating these＂core facts＂about Buddha Dhamma is listed in＂Anguttara Nikāya－Suttā on Key Concepts．＂

7．Therefore，we see that the first meaning of anatta states that one will never have full control over one＇s affairs in the long run，and thus one is bound to become helpless in the rebirth process．
－The second meaning provides a practical way out of this dangerous outcome：Only a Buddha can discover this special way to avoid future suffering；it is the Noble Eightfold Path．
－In other words，one should follow Buddha dhamma to have refuge（attha）instead of following adhamma to become helpless（anattha）．
－In the＂WebLink：suttacentral：Pathamanātha Sutta（AN 10．17）＂and＂WebLink：suttacentral： Dutivanātha Sutta（AN 10．18），＂the Buddha advised bhikkhus to live a moral life to avoid becoming anātha：＂Sanāthā，bhikkhave，viharatha，mā anāthā．＂

## Yadaniccam tam dukkham，tam dukkham tadanatta

8．With this second interpretation，It is easier to see how the anicca nature leads to suffering（dukkha）and eventually to helplessness（anatta）．
－Any human who has not heard and comprehended to some extent what anicca nature is called an ＂assutavā puthujjano．＂One who has is called a＂sutavā ariyasāvako．＂Here sutavā means＂has heard about the true teachings of the Buddha（and comprehended），＂and assutava $\boldsymbol{a}$ ，is of course，one who has not heard／comprehended．［sutavā ：已聞，have heard；assutavā ：Not learned，ignorant，無聞的，無知的］［See WebLink：suttacentral：AN 5．48 Alabbhanīyathānasutta］
－If one does not realize that all struggles to achieve＂permanent happiness＂are not possible，one would be doing one＇s best to achieve such a state of happiness．This is done by merging one＇s soul with a Creator God in heaven or one＇s ātma with Mahā Brahma in a Brahma realm．But the Buddha explained that those efforts would be in vain．

9．It is，of course，necessary to have goals for certain achievements while one is living in this world－even mundane achievements．For example，one needs to get a good education and employment（and that one＇s children will do the same）．This is necessary to avoid suffering in this life．

- But then one would need to hear about the true nature of this world on a long-term basis: That life continues after the death of this physical body, and one needs to work towards attaining some spiritual goals. That will lead to stopping suffering in the rebirth process.
- It is only when one contemplates this "long-term picture" that one can comprehend the anicca (and $d u k k h a$ and anatta) nature of this world: No matter how many mundane achievements one may achieve, one would have to leave all that behind when one dies and then - if fortunate enough to be born human - re-start the whole process again.

10. Therefore, ignorance of anicca nature leads to suffering (dukkha).

- If one tries to attain happiness by doing dasa akusala (which is very likely to happen when the temptations become high), one would be born in the lower four realms, and the suffering will be much higher. That is when one becomes helpless (anatta).

This fact is stated repeatedly in many sutt $\bar{a}$ with the succinct statement: "yadaniccain tain dukkhaim, tain dukkhamं tadanatta."

- That is a condensed version made to rhyme for easy oral transmission. The complete verse is: "yad aniccaì taì dukkhaì, taì dukkhaì tad anatta",
- "If we cannot maintain things to our satisfaction, suffering arises; that makes us helpless in the end."
- For more details see, "Anicca - Inability to Keep What We Like."

11. The above important verse appears in many suttā in the Saimyutta Nikāya (Anicca Vagga), including WebLink: suttacentral: Ajihattanicca Sutta (SN 35.1), WebLink: suttacentral: Bahiranicca Sutta (SN 35.4), and WebLink: suttacentral: Yadanicca sutta (SN 22.15), the Buddha stated that the three characteristics of "this world" (anicca, dukkha, anatta) are RELATED to each other:

- This statement is applicable in this life. No matter how many achievements/accomplishments/victories we make in this life, we will have to leave all that behind when we die.
- However, the Buddha's key message was regarding this statement's implications in the rebirth process. If one engages in dasa akusala (unavoidable if the temptation is high enough), one is bound to be subjected to much suffering via rebirths in the four lower realms. That is when one becomes helpless (anatta).
- This is why one would need to remove the ten types of micchā dittthi first (mundane Eightfold Path) to understand the fundamentals like the laws of kamma and the validity of the rebirth process. Only then can one start comprehending the anicca, dukkha, and anatta nature and start on the Noble Eightfold Path; see, "Buddha Dhamma - In a Chart"" and "Mahā Cattārisaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty)."


## All Meanings of Anicca/Anatta Self-Consistent

12. All meanings/interpretations of anicca and anatta are interrelated.

- The first meaning of anatta says that there is no "unchanging essence" in a living being, controlling its destiny. Everything happens due to causes and conditions even moment-by-moment Idappaccaya $\bar{a}$ Pațicca Samuppāda. Then the rebirth process takes place according to Uppatti Paṭicca Samuppāda; see, "Paticca Samuppāda." Once the basic idea is grasped, one can follow the steps in "Paticca Samuppāda - Overview" to understand things better.
- This is related to the anicca nature of not being able to maintain anything to one's liking. One does not have that ability because one does not control anything one perceives to be "one's own."
- When one goes against nature (i.e., do adhamma) and tries to maintain things to one's liking, one may do dasa akusala and then be subjected to their bad kamma vipāka. One critical aspect of this is to be
born in the four lower realms where suffering is high. One can avoid much suffering by grasping this meaning of anatta.

13. There is something under our control, even though one has to be really disciplined to make it to work. This is one's own gati. One's own gati controls one's destiny.

- Since one's gati can change at any time, those are not fixed. Anyone can decide to change one's gati and work towards a better outcome by rejecting adhamma and adhering to dhamma, i.e., by following the Noble Eightfold Path; see, " 9 . Key to Ānāpānasati - How to Change Habits and Character (Gati)."
- But first, one must fully grasp the fundamentals embedded in anicca, dukkha, and anatta (and sometimes asubha is added to the list).
- Even before that, one must get rid of those ten types of micchā ditthi. For example, one can never grasp the aniccalanatta nature if one does not believe in rebirth. The whole point is to stop suffering in future rebirths. Current life has already arisen due to past causes/conditions and will inevitably lead to decay and death.


### 3.4.5.3 Dasa Akusala and Anatta - The Critical Link

April 2, 2017; revised November 10, 2017; August 30, 2018; September 1, 2018; June 6, 2019; June 12, 2021; re-written June 13, 2021

## Atta/Anatta - Various Meanings

1. This important post will help connect the deeper teaching of the Buddha Dhamma (anicca, dukkha, anatta) and the practice, i.e., cleansing one's mind via abstaining from dasa akusala and cultivating dasa kusala.

- The Tilakkhana (three characteristics) represent the "theory side" or the "nature of this world" and dasa akusala are associated with the practice. Thus the connection between the two is important.
- I have not seen this addressed directly, outside of the Tipitaka.

2. We discussed in the previous post, "Anatta - the Opposite of Which Atta?" why the Pāli words "atta/anatta" do not convey "self/no-self" but rather "with essence/no essence" or "truth/untruth" or "useful/not useful" or "protected/helpless."

- We also discussed how "atta/anatta" is closely related to the Sanskrit words

- Finally, we touched on the fact that anatta (and thus $d u k k h a$ and anatta) nature is a manifestation of engaging in dasa akusala.

3. Recently I realized that many suttā in the Anguttara Nikāya (AN) express various concepts in brief. Many suttā are just a paragraph, providing the key idea; see "Anguttara Nikāya - Suttā on Key Concepts."

- Here we will discuss three short suttā in the A $\dot{n} g u t t a r a$ Nikāya that can clarify the connection between dasa akusala and Tilakkhaṇa.


## Kusala and Akusala

4. First, the (WebLink: suttacentral: Kusala Sutta (AN 10.180; in the Sadhuvagga) has just one verse defining dasa akusala:

- "..katamanca bhikkhave, akusalam? pānātipāto, adinnādānaim, kāmesumicchācāro, musāvādo, pisunā vācā, parusā vācā, samphappalāpo, abhijjhā, vyāpādo, micchādiṭthi akusalaí.."
- Conventionally translated: "killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, slandering, harsh talk, empty talk, greed, hate, and wrong views." These are discussed in "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)."
- In the next and last paragraph of the sutta, dasa kusala are defined as the opposites of dasa akusala (veramani means "abstain from"): "..katamanca bhikkhave, kusalam? pānātipātā veramani, adinnādānā veramani, kāmesumicchācārā veramani, musāvādā veramani, pisunā vācā veramani, parusā vācā veramani, samphappalāpā veramani, abhijjhā veramani, vyāpāda veramani, sammādițthi kusalain 'ti.
- Therefore, kusala and akusala are stated clearly and succinctly in that sutta.


## Engaging in Akusala Lead to Anattho (One Who Has Become Anatta or Without Refuge)

5. Then in the very next sutta, WebLink: suttacentral: Attha Sutta (AN 10.181; in the Sadhuvagga) anattho is defined in terms of dasa akusala:

- "..katamo ca bhikkhave, anattho? pānātipāto, adinnādānaim, kāmesumicchācāro, musāvādo, pisunā vācā, parusā vācā, samphappalāpo, abhijjhā, vyāpādo, micchādiṭ̣thi - ayam vuccati, bhikkhave, anattho.."
- This means dasa akusala are "not the real nature." When one goes against nature, one gets into trouble; see, "Anatta - the Opposite of Which Atta?."
- In the next and last paragraph of the sutta, attho is defined as the opposite of that: panatipat $\bar{a}$ veramani, adinnādānā veramani, kāmesumicchacārā veramani, musāvādā veramani, pisuṇa vācā veramani, parusā vacā veramani, samphappalāpā veramani, abhijjhā veramani, vyāpāda veramani, sammaādiṭthi - ayam vuccati, bhikkhave, attho. 'ti.
- That means one will have refuge (and thus will NOT be helpless) if one refrains from such akusala kamma.
- Here are more short suttā that confirm this point: "Angiguttara Nikāya - Suttā on Key Concepts."


## The Wrong View of a "Me" Is in Sakkāya Dițthi

6. Those two short suttā make crystal clear the following important facts:

- Anatta has nothing to do (directly) with whether a "self" exists. Note that the wrong view of a "me" is Sakkāya Dițthi.
- Anatta is all about being helpless in the rebirth process due to one's engagements with dasa akusala.
- Therefore, getting to Nibbāna is about avoiding dasa akusala, i.e., cleansing one's mind.


## Confirmation in Other Suttā

7. Now, several suttā in the Anguttara Nikāya put it all together. The first verse in the Patama Adhamma Sutta (WebLink: suttacentral: AN 10.113 in the Paccorohanivagga) states it nicely:

- "Adhammo ca, bhikkhave, veditabbo anattho ca; dhammo ca veditabbo attho ca."
- I will write another post explaining other verses in that sutta. Still, we can easily translate that verse: "Bhikkhus, it is to be comprehended that adhamma leads to |anatt $\bar{a} \mid$ (helplessness), and dhamma leads to $|a t t \bar{a}|$ (refuge in Nibbāna)."
- Furthermore, those who are still clinging to the incorrect interpretation of "anatta" as "no self," should be able to clearly see that it leads to the foolish statement: "Bhikkhus, it is to be comprehended that adhamma leads to no-self, and dhamma leads to self."
- Even Sakkāya Ditthi is not about a "self." It is deeper. It says that nothing in this world can be OR should be taken as "me" or "mine." In ultimate reality, not only is there no everlasting "soul," there is no "me" or "I" either. But the PERCEPTION (saññ̄a) of a "me" goes away only at the Arahant stage. See, "Vipallāsa (Ditthi, Saññā, Citta) Affect Sañkhāra."
- The root cause of this misinterpretation is explained in "Misinterpretation of Anicca and Anatta by Early European Scholars."


## Dhammā and Adhammā

8. Dhamma is what one should bears, i.e., what principles one should lives by. But it is normally used in the sense of "good dhamma."

- Adhamma (or adhammā) is the opposite, i.e., immoral living. If one engages in dasa akusala, one engages in adhamma, i.e., one bears adhamma $\overline{\text {. }}$
- Consider the following similar situation. We normally use the word "smell" to mean "bad smell." However, we specifically say "good smell" to indicate a good smell.
- In the same way, dhammā can be good or bad ("what one bears"). However, we normally use the word dhammā to indicate good dhammā. Bad dhammā are adhammā.

9. Normally the word dhamma indicates teaching or a principle, as in Buddha Dhamma. The word dhamm $\bar{a}$ (with a long "a") is used to indicate what one bears as a result of past kamma; see, "What are rūpa? Dhammā are rūpa too!." Dhammā are the same as kamma bīja.

- We need to determine the meaning depending on the context and how the word is used in a given verse.


## Consistency Within the Whole Tipiṭaka

10. When examining ANY sutta in the Tipitaka, they will be consistent with the above explanation.

- Those three suttā make the key connection between the deeper Tilakkhaṇa ('theory") and the practice (cleansing the mind via sīla, i.e., staying away from dasa akusala). We don't need to analyze hundreds of suttā to see the connection.
- When I go to online discussion boards, I get baffled. People quote suttā from different sites, and normally they have incorrect meanings of key Pāli words. It is a waste of time to read all those long posts providing "evidence" from different places, and of course, there are usually inconsistencies among them.
- This was a major reason that I decided to start this website because I can show that everything is consistent if one uses the true meanings of key Pāli words.

11. It is also good to remember that a major problem with many texts is that they take conventional meanings of keywords and apply them incorrectly.

- Unless one knows the true meanings of such keywords and where to use a given meaning, it is easy to veer off in a wrong direction; see, "Pāli Dictionaries - Are They Reliable?." Also see, "Buddha Dhamma: Non-Perceivability and Self-Consistency."

12. In the previous post, "Anatta - the Opposite of Which Atta?," we briefly mentioned that anatta is closely related to dasa akusala. I hope the connection is much clear now.

- Engaging in dasa akusala can only lead to suffering and thus helplessness in the long run. Therefore, engaging in actions, speech, thoughts associated with dasa akusala is pointless and dangerous.
- This idea is quite clear in the Sinhala word for anatta. It is "anārtha" that we discussed in that previous post. It means "doing useless things and can only bring harm."


## Kamma Vipāka Can Materialize at any time - When Conditions Are Right.

13. Those who believe that doing dasa akusala can bring "bad vipāka" only in future lives are mistaken. Many people do not realize that even having immoral thoughts can bring us stress in this life itself.

We discussed this in detail in the beginning posts in the "Living Dhamma" section. That section is important in two aspects:
a. While abstaining from dasa akusala, one can experience a definite sense of relief - also called nirāmisa sukha - and that should be the initial focus.
b. When one starts experiencing this nirāmisa sukha, one also starts comprehending deeper aspects of Dhamma like the anicca and anatta nature. Only with those insights can one start to "see" the longterm kamma vipāka due to dasa akusala - like those leading to births in the apāyā (lowest four realms).

## Attha Could Also Mean "Truth"

14. Note that atta is sometimes spelled out as "attha" (with an "h") in many texts, and each may imply a mundane or deeper meaning. For example, the old Sinhala commentaries are called "atthakathā." It means "accounts about the truth" ("kathă" means "story").

- Those are the reliable commentaries in the Tipitaka:Patisambhidamagga, Petakopadesa, and Nettippakarana. Of many Sinhala atthakathā, those three are the only ones surviving.
- On the other hand, commentaries by Buddhaghosa and others do not belong to atthakath $\bar{a}$. Visuddhimagga is a popular but erroneous commentary; see, "Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga - A Focused Analysis."


## One Will Live by Dhammā When One Grasps Noble Truths/Paṭicca Samuppāda/Tilakkhana

15. Finally, we can now see the truth in verse, "Adhammañca viditvā anatthañca, dhammañca viditv $\bar{a}$ atthañca yathā dhammo yathā attho tathā patipajjitabbaí," that is also in the Patama Adhamma Sutta of \#7 above.

- That means, "Knowing that adhamma leads to anattha and dhamma leads to attha, you should practice accordingly (following yathā dhammo will lead to yathā attho.)
- If one bears dhamm $\bar{a}$ and stays away from adhamm $\bar{a}$, that will help one grasp the Noble Truths/Pațicca Samuppāda/Tilakkhana. Then one will not become |anattā| or helpless in this rebirth process. Instead, one will have "attā|" or refuge.
- Once grasping the Noble Truths, one will never live by adhamma.
- This important post provides a simple but critical link between "theory and practice." It is a good idea to read those relevant other posts and come back and re-read this post, until this connection is grasped.


### 3.4.5.4 Anatta - the Opposite of Which Atta?

March 17, 2017; revised November 4, 2017; June 1, 2021

## We can see how the word "anatta" got mistranslated as "no-self" by carefully examining the different usages of the word "atta."

- There is "atta," which is different from "lattā|" (with a "long a" at the end). Anatta is the opposite of "atta," not of "|attā|." [atta : [m.] soul; oneself. $|\boldsymbol{a t t} \overline{\boldsymbol{a}}|:$ Self, body, person, individuality; life, mind soul.]
- The Sanskrit word anātma has been misinterpreted as anatta. That Sanskrit word anātma does mean "no-soul," but the Buddha NEVER used it. Similarly, anitya (meaning "impermanence") is a Sanskrit word, but that is not what is meant by the Pāli word anicca.
- We will discuss these in detail below.

1. In the previous post, "Sakkāya Ditthi is Personality (Me) View?," we discussed how the term sakkāya ditthi gets incorrectly translated when the word "atta" in a key verse in the Culavedalla Sutta is misinterpreted. Atta has two meanings:

- One meaning is mundane: "I" or "myself" as in the first verse of "|attā| hi attano nātho" ("only I can be of salvation to myself'), and that is the meaning implied in the above verse.
- The other deeper meaning of "atta" is "in control" or "has essence", and the opposite of that ("na" + "atta") is the anatta in Tilakkhana: "one is helpless in this rebirth process."
- Those two meanings are explained in "'Attā| Hi Attano Nātho" and in detail in, "Pāli Dictionaries - Are They Reliable?."

2. Comprehension of a concept is very different from memorization of the definition of a word. All one needs to do is understand the meaning of the word saññ̄̄ ; see, "Saññ̄̄ - What It Really Means."

- Atta/anatta are key Pāli words concerning the Tilakkhaṇa, so it is essential to get the correct sañña $\bar{a}$ or the idea. In future posts, we will discuss several other critical usages of atta/anatta.


## A. Atta as "a Person" versus "Essence" or "Truth"

3. Many of the misconceptions about "self" and "no-self" can be understood by taking a systematic look at how the Pāli word "atta" is used in the conventional sense and in the more profound sense (to give different meanings in different places).

- "|atta|" (pronounced with a "long a at the end") is used to denote a person: There is no word for the negation of that $|\boldsymbol{a t t} \overline{\boldsymbol{a}}|$.
- In Sinhala, it is written as "eqる"Bo" That is how it appears in the Pāli Tipitaka that is written in Sinhala.
- Even though $|a t t \bar{a}|$ has this meaning as a "person", anatta is never used as the opposite of that $|a t t \bar{a}|$.
- Pronunciation:


## WebLink: Pronunciation - attā

4. The word "atta" (pronounced with a "short a at the end") is "the essence" or "the truth that is timeless." The negation is "anatta."
 is written in Sinhala.

- Pronunciation of the two words:


## WebLink: Pronunciation - atta and anatta

- There is a third meaning too (mainly when it is written as "attha," with an emphasis at the end), which is closely related to the second meaning above:
- The Sinhala word for attha is "artha" which means "rruth" or "that which makes sense." The opposite in Sinhala is "anartha," which emphasizes that "anartha" is not worth doing.

- Pronunciation of the two words:


## WebLink: Pronunciation - artha and anartha

I hope you can catch the differences in pronunciations.

- Anatta is the negation of the latter two meanings: "na" + atta" (which rhymes as "anatta"): there is no substance/ does not hold any ultimate truth.

5. One who is engaged in things that are "anatta" or "anartha" will become "anātha" (helpless), the opposite of " $n \bar{a} t h a$." As was mentioned in the post "" $\mid$ Attā| Hi Attano Nātho," "nātha" is another word for Nibbāna.

- One who is trying to find refuge in this world will become truly helpless in the long run. On the other hand, the only refuge (" $n a \bar{t} h a^{"}$ ) is Nibbāna, i.e., overcoming the rebirth process.
- Therefore, atta/anatta in Pāli can be translated to Sinhala as artha/anartha, and both usages convey the more profound meaning that represents the following ideas: "essence/no essence," "truth/false", "useful/useless," etc.

6. On the other hand, the word "atta|" (pronounced with a "long a at the end") is used as "me" only in the conventional sense. To communicate with others, we have to say things like, "one needs to defend oneself." Here "one" exists only in the conventional sense.

- There is no single Pāli word to express the negation of that, i.e., "not |attā|"; If there were to be such a word that would be "non-person." It just cannot be used that way.
- As we see below in \#11 and \#12, other words to denote "me" or "self" are "mama," "asmi" or "me."

7. Therefore, the critical mistake was made by trying to translate anatta as the opposite of "|att $\bar{a} \mid$ " with the conventional meaning of "a person" or "self."

- The word anatta was ALWAYS used with the deep meaning of "no truth or no essence." Anatta is a fact indicating there is no essence or truth to be had in this world of 31 realms.
- $|\boldsymbol{A t t} \bar{a}|$ (in the conventional sense) is used to indicate "a person." There is no single Pāli word to give the opposite meaning to that.

8. Concerning anatta in Tilakkhaṇa, "atta" can also be described as "ultimate truth" ("sathya" in Sinhala and Sanskrit). That truth is anicca nature: "this world cannot bring happiness anywhere in the 31 realms."

- Therefore, this whole world is of anatta nature, having no "essence" and lacking anything worth pursuing. Therefore, if one tries to do that impossible task, one will only get exhausted, i.e., subjected to suffering.
- Anyone who is struggling to achieve this impossible task is truly helpless.
- All the above statements convey the meaning of the word "anatta"; that is the saññā that one needs to absorb.

9. When one pursues "pleasurable things in this world," assuming that nature is nicca (i.e., can lead to happiness), one will be subject to suffering or dukha and thus one is anatta (becomes helpless). This is explained in the key post, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta - Wrong Interpretations."

- When one pursues worldly things assuming that the world is of "nicca" and "atta" nature, one tends to do dasa akusala.
- When one realizes that nature is anicca and anatta, one will try to stay away from dasa akusala even when pursuing worldly things. It is fairly easy to see potential problems with the three types of akusala done with the body and the four types of speech. This is the first stage in the path (mundane path).
- When one follows the mundane path (i.e., live a moral life), one starts to cleanse one's mind and discard many micchā diṭthi.
- At that stage, when one is exposed to the true meanings of anicca, dukkha, anatta, one can comprehend them and start on the lokuttara (Noble) Path.
- One would seriously start tackling the akusala done by the mind when one becomes a Sotāpanna and starts on the Noble Path. All dasa akusala are removed only at the Arahant stage. That is the "atta" or the "nātha" state; one is no longer anatta.

10. One will be subjected to much suffering (dukha) until one realizes that it is fruitless to pursue "valuable things" by engaging in dasa akusala.

- The Noble Truth of dukkha sacca (or dukkha sathya) is to see that relief from suffering comes only by rejecting dasa akusala and engaging in "good and moral activities," i.e., dasa kusala.
- When one reaches Nibbāna, that is the state of nicca, sukha, atta. It is the opposites of anicca, dukkha, anatta, that are characteristics of this world of 31 realms.


## B. Discussion of the Anatta Lakkhaṇa Sutta

11. There are several Pāli (and Sinhala) words (mama, asmi, and me) that are used to indicate "mine," "I," "to me." $|\boldsymbol{A t t} \overline{\boldsymbol{a}}|$ is also used to mean "self" in the conventional sense and "having essence" in the more profound sense. It is important to note the difference in all those usages.

- These terms are in the Anatta Lakkhaṇa Sutta [SN 22.59], which is the key sutta that discussed the concepts of atta and the opposite, anatta in the more profound sense. Here are the key verses that are relevant to our discussion here:
"Taín kim maññatha, bhikkhave: rūpaì niccaì vā aniccaín vā ti? "Bhikkhus: is any rūpa (material entity) nicca or anicca?" or "Bhikkhus: can any rūpa be kept to one's satisfaction, or can one keep it to one's satisfaction?" [mañnati :(man + ya), imagines; is of opinion: deems.]
- Aniccaì , Bhante "It cannot be kept to one's satisfaction, Venerable Sir."

Yaì pana aniccaím dukhaím vā taì sukhaiं vā ti? "Will such an entity lead to suffering or happiness?"

- Dukhami, Bhante. "Suffering, Venerable Sir."
 eso hamasmi, eso me attā 'ti? "Will such an entity that cannot be kept to one's satisfaction, that leads to suffering, and is a viparin̄āma dhamma, should be considered as "myself or mine, or can be taken as my attā?"
- N' hetaì, Bhante." "No reason to think so, Venerable Sir."

12. Now, that last verse also clearly states what words were used by the Buddha to mean "me," 'I," "myself."

- This key verse with these words is, "Etaim mama, eso'ham asmi, eso me attāti," which means, "That is mine, it is me, or my $\boldsymbol{a t t} \overline{\boldsymbol{a}}$ (my essence)."
- It is interesting to note that even today, the Sinhala word for "me" or "myself" is "mama," and "asmi" is the sense of "me" or "mine" as in asmi māna, which is one of the last samiyojana removed at the Arahant stage; see, "Päli Dictionaries - Are They Reliable?."
- Also see, "Anattā in Anattalakkahana Sutta - No Soul or an Ātma."

13. The first type of "wrong ditṭhi" or the idea that "I am my physical body" (and "I am my vedanā," etc.) are removed at the Sotāpanna stage by removing Sakkāya Ditṭhi. The much deeper-embedded saññ̄a of "a me" is removed only at the Arahant stage; see, "Sakkāya Ditthi is Personality (Me) View?."

- Anatta - on the other hand - is the correct saññā that, (i) this world of 31 realms cannot offer any "essence" or "true happiness" and, (ii) therefore, one who is struggling to find such "ultimate truth in this world" is helpless.
- This is why a qualified person explaining Dhamma must have the patisambhidā $\tilde{n} a \underline{n} a$ to at least some extent, to figure out the correct meaning of keyword in the sutt $\bar{a}$. We discussed another important example in last week's post: "Sakkāya Ditthi is Personality (Me) View?."
- One cannot just consult a Pāli dictionary and use the meaning given there; see, "Sutta Interpretation Uddesa, Niddesa, Patiniddesa" and "Pāli Dictionaries - Are They Reliable?."
- Of course, that seems to be the origin of the incorrect translation of anatta as "no-self", i.e., choosing the wrong (conventional) meaning of " $|a t t \bar{a}|$ " (with a long "a" at the end).


## C. What About Āthma/Anāthma?

14. The final piece of this puzzle are the words ātma/anātma. These are Sanskrit words and NOT Pāli words. Pronunciation:

## WebLink: Pronunciation - athma and anathma

- The confusion came when people started translating atta/anatta as ātma/anātma in Sanskrit and Sinhala (many Sanskrit words have been adopted as Sinhala words is unfortunate; because that makes things more confusing).

- In Sanskrit, atma basically means "soul," an indestructible entity that survives death and eventually merges with the "Mahā Brahma" equivalent of the "Creator God" in Abrahamic religions. This is different from both Pāli words of atta and |attā| that we discussed above.
- Atta/anatta are deep concepts with several underlying concepts. One meaning of anatta is that there is no unchanging soul $\bar{a} t m a$. Therefore, anatta INCLUDES anātma (the opposite of $\bar{a} t m a$ ); see, "Anattā in Anattalakkahana Sutta - No Soul or an Ātma."

The connection between dasa akusala and anatta is discussed at, "Dasa Akusala and Anatta - The Critical Link." That will complete this discussion, and will help to cultivate the "anatta sañ̃̃̄̄."

### 3.4.5.5 Anattā (Mundane Interpretation) - No "Unchanging Self"

## December 5, 2018; revised March 6, 2021; August 29, 2022

## Anatta is Not About a "Self"

1. These days, most people translate the key Pāli word "anatta" simply as "no-self." However, just by looking at a few occurrences of "anatta" in the Tipitaka, we can see that it needs to be interpreted differently, depending on the context.

- The words "attha," "atta," and "att $\vec{a} "$ can have many different meanings depending on the context.
- Even in English, there are cases like this: The word "right" can mean two different things "you are right" and "turn right." Even though it is pronounced the same way, "write" means something entirely different from those meanings of "right."
- An easy way to remember the true meaning of anatta is to understand what is meant by "sabbe dhammā anatt $\bar{a} "$ " in the "Uppād $\bar{a}$ Sutta (AN 3.136)." Here, "dhammä" refers not to Buddha Dhamma but to "dhamm $\bar{a}$ " (plural) that bears everything in this world. This is the dhamm $\bar{a}$ in "Ye dhamm $\bar{a}$ hetuppabhavā, Tesaì hetumं tathāgato $\bar{a} h a$ " or "any dhammā giving rise to this world arises due to "three "san" of lobha, dosa, moha as explained by the Buddha." See \#6 below. Thus, all such dhammā are without essence (anattā.) ["Ye dhammā hetuppabhavā, Tesaí hetum tathāgato āha; Tesañca yo nirodho, Evaìvādī mahāsamaṇo"ti.]

2. Even though this is a bit deep sutta, "WebLink: suttacentral: Ananda Sutta (SN 44.10)," provides an excellent basis to start a discussion on anatta. Just as now, many people in the days of the Buddha wondered whether a "self" or a "soul" (att $\bar{a})$ exists. That is, of course, the ordinary meaning of att $\bar{a}$.

- Vacchagotta comes to the Buddha asked "kim nu kho, bho gotama, atthattä" ti?" OR "Master Gotama, is it correct to say that there is a "self"?."
- Note that "atthatt $\vec{a} "$ is "atthi att $\bar{a} "$ where "atthi" means "exists" and (as Vacchagotta meant in this case) "att $\bar{a} "$ to be "self." Thus, by saying "atthatt $\bar{a}$, ," Vacchagotta meant: "correct to say an att $\bar{a}$ exists."

3. The Buddha remained silent, and Vacchagotta asked the question in the negative form. The second time, he asked: "Kim pana, bho gotama, natthatt $\overline{\boldsymbol{a}}$ " ti?" or, "Master Gotama, is it not correct to say that there is a "self"?." Seeing that the Buddha refused to answer his question, Vacchagotta got up and left.

- Note that "natthatt $\bar{a} "$ " is made up of three words: "na atthi att $\bar{a}$," which negates "atthatt $\bar{a}$."
- I have discussed some of these word combinations in Pāli: "Kāmaccandha and Icca - Being Blinded by Cravings."


## Buddha Rejected Both "Self" and "No-Self"

4. When Vacchagotta left, Ven. Ānanda asked why the Buddha did not answer the question.

- The Buddha explained that if he answered positively (i.e., there is a "self"), then he would agree with those who had the wrong view that such a "self" exists. This view is called sassatavāda or the belief that there is an "everlasting entity" (these days also called "a soul"). [sassatavāda: [m.] eternalism.]
- If answered in the negative (i.e., there is "no-self"), then he would agree with those who had the wrong view that such a "self" does not exist. That is called ucchedavāda or the belief that the body's death is the "end of a person," i.e., no re-birth. [ucchedavād̄$:[\mathrm{m}$ ] one who professes the doctrine of annihilation.]
- The Buddha rejected both views of "self" (sassatavāda) and "no-self"(ucchedavāda).


## A Rare Correct Translation of Anatta at Sutta Central

5. Just from that verse, it is clear that if one takes "anatta" as "no-self," one has the wrong view taken by one faction of brahmins in the days of the Buddha: that of ucchedaväda.

- I was surprised that the Sutta Central English translation says precisely what I explained in \#4 above; see, "WebLink: suttacentral: A$n a n d a$ Sutta (SN 44.10)." Directly quoting from that translation:
- 'If, Ānanda, when I was asked by the wanderer Vacchagotta, 'Is there a self?' I had answered, 'There is a self,' this would have been siding with those ascetics and brahmins who are eternalists. And if, when he asked, 'Is there no self?' I had answered, 'There is no self.' That would have been siding with those ascetics and brahmins who are annihilationists."
- So, the translation of this verse is the same as mine. But the Sutta Central translation of the next verse uses the same meaning of "no-self' in 'sabbe dhamma $\bar{a}$ anatt $\bar{a}$ ' and gets into a contradiction, as we discuss now.


## Sabbe Dhammā Anattā

6. Then the Buddha told Ven. Ānanda that any discussion on this topic would confuse Vacchagotta because he would then get mixed up with the deeper meaning of "anatta" in 'sabbe dhamma anattā.' That refers to "anatta nature": "Ahañcānanda, vacchagottassa paribbājakassa 'atthattā’ti puṭtho samāno 'atthattā'ti byākareyyaì, api nu me taì, ānanda, anulomaì abhavissa ñānassa uppādāya: 'sabbe
dhammā anattā'"ti?." "No hetaim, Bhante." [See What are Dhamma? - A Deeper Analysis and What are rūpa? - Dhamma are rūpa too!]

- That is the confusion most people have today. They equate "anatta nature" in "sabbe dhamm $\bar{a}$ anatt $\vec{a}$ " with the "no-self" meaning of "anattā."
- "Sabbe dhamma anatta" needs to be translated as "all dhammā are of anatta nature," i.e., of "without essence," and that one would become "anatt $\vec{a}$ " or "without refuge" if one does not comprehend the "anatta nature." [Anattā meaning 1. without essence, 2. without refuge or not in control.]

7. In the Sutta Central translation, the same mundane meaning ("no-self") is used for anatta in "sabbe dhamma anattā."

- The verse in \#6 in the Sutta Central translation is: "If, Ānanda, when I was asked by the wanderer Vacchagotta, 'Is there a self?' I had answered, 'There is a self,' would this have been consistent on my part with the arising of the knowledge that 'all phenomena are nonself?."
- First, "all phenomena are non-self," does not make sense. Dhammā cannot have a "self" anyway. Here, the correct translation is, "all phenomena are of no essence." We will discuss this in detail later.
- Furthermore, that translation, "all phenomena are non-self," is self-contradictory to the Sutta Central translation of previous verses in \#5 above, where both "self" and "no-self" were shown to be rejected by the Buddha.


## The Danger in Translating Suttā Word-by-Word

8. That is the danger in translating sutt $\bar{a}$ word-by-word, without grasping the real meanings of Pāli words and understanding that meanings depend on the context.

- Therefore, it should be quite clear that Vacchagotta's confusion is not different from the misunderstanding that many people have today.
- However, Vacchagotta could grasp that distinction later on and became a bhikkhu. Ven. Vacchagotta became an Arahant.
- I sincerely hope those with the wrong understanding will also be able to see the truth at some point.

9. The deeper meaning of "anatta" will become clear as we discuss this in detail. See, "Paticca Samuppāda - Essential Concepts." Without understanding those more basic concepts, it is dangerous to translate a given key Pāli word like anatta using a generic English word(s).

- For now, we will postpone the discussion on the deeper meaning of "anatta" and focus on "att $\vec{a}$ " and "anatt $\vec{a} "$ in the sense of "self" and "no-self."


## Which Realm Correspond to an Unchanging "True Self"?

10. A given living being can be born in any of the 31 realms (a few realms are reserved for Anāgāmis); see, " 31 Realms of Existence" and " 31 Realms Associated with the Earth."

- But the point is that a human could be born a deva or an animal in the next life. Would a dog have the same "self" as a human?
- So, it is quite clear that there in no "unchanging self."

11. On the other hand, a human does not just become a deva or an animal or a preta in the next life without underlying causes. It is not a random process.

- There is a continuation of the "lifestream" from this life to the next. One's gati, and one's kamma vipāka play key roles. I have discussed the critical and forgotten keyword gati (or gathi) in many posts.
- That is why it is incorrect to say there is "no-self." There are "personality attributes" that flow from this life to the next.
- That is explained in Paṭicca Samuppāda (PS) or Dependent Origination. As we know, PS cycles start with "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" and go through "bhava paccayā jāti." That explains how avijjā leads to future births ( $j \bar{a} t i)$.
- Roughly speaking, high levels of $a v i j j \bar{a}$ (or moha) leads to births in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$.


## Summary

12. Therefore, from \#10 and \#11, we can see why the Buddha rejected both views of "an unchanging self" and "no-self."

- Instead, there is a next life (birth) according to the principle of Paticca Samuppāda, which is cause and effect, just like in modern science. We will discuss PS later. However, it is easy to see this with an understanding of kamma and kamma vipāka.
- Dasa akusala (and pāpa kamma or immoral deeds) lead to bad births, and dasa kusala (and puñña kamma or moral deeds) lead to good births.
- This was discussed in: "Kilesa - Relationship To Akusala, Kusala, And Puñña Kamma."


### 3.4.6 Tilakkhaṇa - English Discourses

## February 3, 2018; revised February 11, 2020; July 28, 2022 (note on Discourse 4)

Tilakkhaṇa or Three Marks of Existence or Three Characteristics of Nature (anicca, dukkha, anatta) are discussed in detail in a series of five discourses. These are based on the first two suttā (Dhammacakka Pavattana Sutta and the Anatta Lakkhaṇa Sutta) that the Buddha delivered to the five ascetics right after attaining Enlightenment.

- Only an essential outline is provided in these discourses. There will be five topics (for each discourse) in the "discussion forum" under the forum Three Marks of Existence Discourses, where one can ask any questions/ express opinions.
- No question is too simple or too hard. We can find more details in other suttā or in Abhidhamma.
- However, these discourses are not recommended for those who are not familiar with basic concepts in Buddha Dhamma. They might get discouraged. They may want to first get familiar with the basic concepts in "Moral Living and Fundamentals," "Working Towards Good Rebirths," and "Bhāvanā (Meditation)" sections.
- In-Depth analysis at, "Origin of Life."


## February 3, 2018

Discourse 1 - Nicca, Sulkha, Atta (Before understanding anicca, dukkha, anatta, it is necessary to understand the opposites).

WebLink: Desana 1 - Nicca, Sukha, Atta<br>WebLink: Desana 1 - Nicca, Sukha, Atta (Original - Larger file size)

## Key Relevant Posts:

What is Kamma? - Is Everything Determined by Kamma?
Could Bodily Pain Be Due to Causes Other Than Kamma Vipāka?
Saññā - What It Really Means
Paticca Samuppāda - "Pati+ichcha"+"Sama+uppāda

## February 10, 2018

Discourse 2 - Icca, Nicca, Anicca
WebLink: Desana 2 - Icca, Nicca, Anicca
WebLink: Desana 2 - Icca, Nicca, Anicca (Original - Larger file size)

## Key Relevant Posts:

How to Cultivate the Anicca Saññā - II
Correct Meaning of Vacī Sañkhāra
Viññāna - What It Really Means
What are rūpa? - Dhamma are rūpa too!
Details of Kamma - Intention, Who Is Affected, Kamma Patha

## February 19, 2018

## Discourse 3 - Distorted Perceptions or Saññā Vipallāsa <br> WebLink: Desana 3 - Distorted Perceptions or Saññā Vipallāsa <br> WebLink: Desana 3 - Distorted Perceptions or Saññā Vipallāsa (Original - Larger file size)

## Key Relevant Posts:

Micchā Ditthi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage

February 27, 2018
Discourse 4 - Sakkāya Diț̣hi - What is "a Person"?
WebLink: Desana 4 - Sakkāya Ditthi - What is "a Person"?
WebLink: Desana 4 - Sakkāya Ditthi - What is "a Person"? (Original - Larger file size)
Note: @34:00 minutes, I said, "Immoral deeds or dasa akusala are done with apuññābhisañkhāra or bad thoughts in our minds. Good deeds or kusala kamma are done with puñ̃nābhisañkhāra."

- That should be corrected as, "Immoral deeds or dasa akusala are done with apuññābhisañkhāra or bad thoughts in our minds. Good deeds (or puñ̃äbhisañkhāra) done with the comprehension of the Four Noble Truths/Paṭicca Samuppāda/Tilakkhaṇa become kusala kamma due to that understanding."
- See, "Kilesa - Relationship To Akusala, Kusala, And Puñña Kamma" for a detailed explanation.

What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Sampsāra)

## Key Relevant Posts:

[^1]
## March 02, 2018

## Discourse 5 - Tilakkhaṇa and Micchā Ditṭhi

WebLink: Desana 5 - Tilakkhana and Micchā Ditthi
WebLink: Desana 5 - Tilakkhana and Micchā Ditthi (Original - Larger file size)

## Key Relevant Posts:

## Mahā Cattārisaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty) <br> What are rūpa? - Dhammā are rūpa too! <br> Anidassana Viññāna - What It Really Means <br> Sañkhāra - What It Really Means <br> Our Two Worlds: Material and Immaterial <br> Pabhassara Citta, Radiant Mind, and Bhavañga <br> Nāma \& Rūpa to Nāmarūpa

This concludes the series of discourses on Tilakkhana.

### 3.4.7 The Way to Nibbāna - Transcription of a Discourse by Waharaka Thero

July 6, 2020
This was one of the first discourses by the late Venerable Waharaka Abayarathanalankara Thero. Janith Boniface Fernando has made it into a youtube video with transcription in Sinhala and English languages.

## 

1. This discourse is an introduction to Tilakkhaña (anicca, dukkha, anatta) that is critical for one to start on the Noble Eightfold Path.

- I have revised and expanded the English transcript that can be downloaded as a pdf file: Waharaka Thero Discourse - The Way to Nibbāna
- This is an updated version of the document that I posted in the discussion forum (see \#3).


## 2. A few comments:

- As I mentioned, this was one of the early discourses, soon after Waharaka Thero started explaining the correct meanings of the Pali words anicca and anatta.
- At that time, Waharaka Thero was also used to the incorrect interpretation of "anicca" and "anatta" as "anitya" and "anātma" in the Sinhala language (and "impermanence" and "no-self" in English.)
- Therefore, even while describing the correct interpretation, he also inadvertently referred to "anicca" as "anitya" and "anatta" as "anātma" once-in-a-while. I have corrected those, of course.
- Furthermore, I have expanded the original text and also referred to a few relevant posts at puredhamma.net.

3. Any comments/questions can be discussed at the discussion forum: WebLink: Pure Dhamma Forum: Waharaka Thero English Subs Discourse

- Janith Fernando has transcribed a few more of Waharaka Thero's discourses and both English and Sinhala transcripts (from him) are available under my entry at that forum on June 19, 2020. As he transcribes more discourses, I will add them there. I do not plan to work on other discourses (than the one posted above in \#1) any time soon.
- Many merits to Janith and several readers at the discussion forum who contributed to this effort.

4. I just finished updating the section on "The Five Aggregates (Pañcakkhandha)."

- It has a subsection on "Five Aggregates - Connection to Tilakkhana."
- There is a new section on "Buddhahood Associated Controversies" Most people are not aware of the qualities of a Buddha and the capabilities of a Buddha.


### 3.4.8 Sotāpanna Stage and Tilakkhaṇa

## Sakkāya Ditthi and Tilakkhana

Sakkāya Ditthi - Getting Rid of Deeper Wrong Views
Associations (Sevana) - A Root Cause of Wrong Views

### 3.4.8.1 Sakkāya Diṭ̣̣hi and Tilakkhaṇa

June 14, 2019; revised October 23, 2019; May 25, 2022

## Sakkāya Dițṭhi - Wrong Views of a "Self"

1. When one gets rid of sakkāya ditṭhi (together with vicikicchā and silabbata parāmāsa), one becomes a Sotāpanna and will never be reborn in the four lowest realms (apāy $\bar{a})$.

- It is a change in one's world view (dassanena pahātabb $\overline{\boldsymbol{a}}$ ) that leads to this enormous change.
- It cannot be attained by just doing moral deeds. (In fact, sīlabbata parāmāsa is the wrong belief that living a righteous life by itself can liberate oneself).
- Getting rid of sakkāya ditṭhi requires a deep understanding of how nature works. Tilakkhaṇa or the Three Characteristics of Nature encompasses those basic principles: anicca, dukkha, anatta.
- Here we will examine this relationship, which will help get rid of sakkāya diṭthi.


## Definition of Sakkāya Ditṭhi

2. Sakkāya ditṭhi is defined in the Dhammasañgañ̄ of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka: WebLink: suttacentral: 2.3.2.13.1. Dassanenapahātabbaduka.
"Katame dhammā dassanena pahātabbā? Tīni saññojanāni-sakkāyadiṭthi, vicikicchā, sillabbataparāmāso.

- Translation: "What are those dhamma removed via correct vision? Three saññojanā (samiyojana as commonly called today) - sakkāyadiṭthi, vicikicchā, sīlabbataparāmāso.

Tattha katamā sakkāyadițthi? Idha assutavā puthujjano ariyānamं adassāv̄̄ ariyadhammassa akovido ariyadhamme avinīto sappurisānaì adassāvī sappurisadhammassa akovido sappurisadhamme avinīto rūpaí attato samanupassati, rūpavantaì vāattānaim, attani vā rūpaím, rūpasmim vā attānami. Vedanaì ... pe ... saññam ... pe ... sañkhāre ... pe ... viñ̃ñạnam attato samanupassati, viññānavantaí vā attānaim, attani va viñ̃n̄ṇaí, viññānasmim vā attānam். Yā evarūpā dițthi ditṭhigataì ... pe ... vipariyāsaggāho-ayaì vuccati sakkāyadiṭthi."

- Translation: "What is sakkāya dittthi? A person uninstructed in Dhamma, who has not associated with Noble ones, who is not well-versed or disciplined, has the following wrong views. 'I am my body; my body is me; my body is in me; I am in my body.' He perceives vedanā..sañña $\bar{a}$..sañkhāra,..viññanna in the same four ways (e.g., I am my viññāna, my viññāna is me, my viññāna is in me, I am in my viñ $\tilde{n} \bar{a} n a)$ - that is sakkāya diṭthi.

That is the same definition given in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Cūlavedalla Sutta (Majiima Nikāya 44)" that we discussed in the post, "Sakkāya Ditthi is Personality (Me) View?." This definition of sakkāya diṭthi is in many more suttā, including "WebLink: suttacentral: Dutivaisidatta Sutta (SN 41.3)."

## Twenty Types of Sakkāya Diṭ!hi

3. The key is to understand the meaning of "rūpaím attato samanupassati, rūpavantaim vā attānaím, attani $v \bar{a}$ rūpaì, rūpasmim vā attānamं, vedanaím attato samanupassati." Similarly for vedana, sañña, sañkhāra, and viññāna. Thus, when one has sakkāya ditṭhi, one has four wrong perceptions each for the five aggregates.

- That is called the 20-types of sakkāya diṭthi (vīsativatthukā sakkāyaditṭhi).
- In the Brahmajāla Sutta (DN 1), the Buddha discusses 60 more wrong views, but those are variations of the above two. Therefore, getting rid of sakkāya ditt thi leads to the removal of all wrong beliefs about this world.
- Tipiṭaka description of uccheda diṭthi and sāssata diṭthi is "Sakkāya Ditthi - Getting Rid of Deeper Wrong Views."


## Sakkāya Is Pañcupādānakkhandhā

4. A definition of sakkāya is in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Sakk $\bar{a} y a p a n ̃ h \bar{a}$ Sutta (SN 38.15)": "'Sakkāyo, sakkāyo'ti, āvuso sāriputta, vuccati. Katamo nu kho, āvuso, sakkāyo"ti? "Pañcime, āvuso, upādānakkhandhā sakkāyo vutto bhagavatā, seyyathidaim-rūpupādānakkhandho, vedanupādānakkhandho, saññupādānakkhandho, sañkhārupādānakkhandho, viññānupādānakkhandho. Ime kho, āvuso, pañcupādānakkhandhā sakkāyo vutto bhagavatā"ti."

Translated: "sakkk̄ya is pañcupādānakkhandhā: rūpupādānakkhandha, vedanupādānakkhandha, saññupādānakkhandha, sañkhārupādānakkhandha, viññānupādānakkhandha."

- Therefore, we can deduce that sakkāya ditthi is the wrong vision that the five aggregates (pañcakkhandha) are excellent and beneficial.
- The word "sakkāya" comes from "sath" + "kāya," which rhymes as "sakkāya." "Sath" means "good" and "kāya" means "a collection" or "an aggregate" (it could also mean "physical body," which is also a collection of parts). Thus "sakk $\bar{a} y a "$ " means those five aggregates (including one's own body) are fruitful.
- Our world consists of 12 types of $k \bar{a} y a$ or "collections": cakkhu kāyalrūpa kāya, sota kāya/sadda $k \bar{a} y a$, etc. for the six sense faculties.
- That vision or mindset - sakkāya diṭthi - is what leads to a craving for them (upādāna).

5. When one has the wrong view of sakkāya ditṭhi, some parts of pañcakkhandha become pañcupādānakkhandh̄̄ (pañca upādāna khandha). Those are the parts that one likes based on one's gati,

Therefore, one needs to comprehend that one gets attached to things based on one's gati AT THAT TIME. One's gati keeps changing and can be very different, especially in one who is reborn. If one is reborn into a bad environment (conditions), one is likely to develop "bad gati."

- Such bad kamma were done with bad gati AT THAT TIME. They can bring bad vipāka much later, even in future lives, when one may be living a moral life. The opposite is correct too. One's good kamma in a previous life can bring good vipāka even while one lives an immoral life in this life.
- That is why we experience both good and bad kamma vipāka.
- That is also why we cannot speak about an "unchanging attā/soul/ātma." A living being is a "lifestream" that encounters good/bad vipāka based on what had been done in the past based on one's gati at that time. Under suitable conditions, both kinds (good/bad kamma) bring vipāka.


## There Are Only Causes and Effects

6. What is discussed in \#5 is succinctly stated in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Catutthaabhabbatthāna Sutta (AN 6.95)."

Translation: "A Sotāpanna (or one with higher magga phala) accomplished in view (ditthisampanno puggalo) is unable (abhabbo) to fall back on the idea that pleasure and pain are made by oneself (sayaimkataí). Or that they are made by another (parainkataí). Or that they are made by both (sayamikatañca paraimkatañca). Nor can they fall back on the idea that pleasure and pain arise by chance, not made by oneself, by another, or by both. (Asayamikārai் adhiccasamuppannam், aparañkāraì adhiccasamuppannà், asayañkārañca aparañkārañca adhiccasamuppannaì).

- Why is that? It is because a person accomplished in view has seen that phenomena arise due to causes and conditions (according to Paṭicca Samuppāda). Those are the six things that a Sotāpanna (or one with higher magga phala) accomplished in view will not fall back to."
- There is no "attā" or a "soul" or a "ātma" doing those things that will lead to pleasure or pain (sooner or later).
- Such kamma vipāka (pleasure or pain) materialize due to two factors. (i) Causes were created in the past based on the "gati" of the lifestream AT THAT TIME, and, (ii) Corresponding vipāka materialize when suitable CONDITIONS become available (at a later time).
- Patticca Samuppāda describes that process.
- That is why understanding "gati" is so important. One may have had "bad gati" in the past, and those can bring "bad vipāka" now, EVEN IF one has "good gati" now.
- That is why even the Buddha had to bear bad kamma vipāka. Even though he had "no gati left," he had to endure the results of past kamma done when he had "bad gati."


## Deeper Aspects of Sakkāya Diṭthi

7. In the "WebLink: suttacentral: Sakkāyaditthi Sutta (SN 22.155)" it is stated how sakkāya ditṭhi arises:
"Kismim nu kho, bhikkhave, sati, kim upādāya, kim abhinivissa sakkāyadiṭthi uppajjatī"ti?" rūpe kho, bhikkhave, sati, rūpaì upādāya, rūpaì abhinivissa sakkāyaditthi uppajjati. Vedanāya sati ... saññāya sati ... sañkhāresu sati ... viññāne sati, viññānàm upādāya, viññāṇam abhinivissa sakkāyadiṭthi uppajjati."

Translated: "Bhikkhus, because of focusing on what, attaching to what, and clinging to what leads to the arising of sakkāya ditṭhi? It arises due to focusing on rūpa (forms: things and people), attaching to forms, and clinging to forms. It arises similarly due to vedanā, sañ̃ña, sañkhāra, and viññān̄a."

Buddha explains: "Tai் kimं maññatha, bhikkhave, rūpaín niccaì vā aniccaín vā" ti? "What do you think Bhikkhus, can $r \bar{u} p a$ be maintained to one's satisfaction?'.
"Aniccamं, bhante." "They cannot be, bhante."
"Yaì panāniccaì ... pe ... api nu taì anupādāya sakkāyaditthi uppajjeyyā"ti? "Understanding that if something cannot be maintained to ones' satisfaction, if it undergoes unpredictable change and is destroyed, would one get attached to it and generate sakkāya ditṭhi?
"No hetaim, bhante." "No reason for that, bhante."
and the same for the other four aggregates: "Vedanā ... saññ̄ ... sañkhārā ... viññ̄ạamं niccamं v $\bar{a}$ aniccamं $v \bar{a} " t i$ ?
"Aniccaì, bhante." "Yaì panāniccaì ... pe ... api nu taì anupādāya sakkāyaditṭhi uppajjeyyā"ti? "No hetaì, bhante." "Evaì passaì ... pe ... nāparaì itthattāyāti pajānātī"ti."
8. Thus, one gets attached to the five aggregates and considers them to be one's own, ONLY IF one does not see the anicca (and dukkha and anatta) nature of those entities. When one understands that such attachments invariably (without exception) lead to suffering (because none of them can be maintained to one's satisfaction), one loses the craving for them.

- That understanding by itself first leads to "loss of cravings" to the extent that one would NOT be able (abhabbo) do immoral kamma that makes one suitable for rebirth in the ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$. When one loses such upādāna, one would also not grasp such thoughts at the cuti-patisandhi moment.
- The word abhabbo is commonly mistranslated. It does not just mean "one would not do," but one "is incapable of doing." The enforcement is AUTOMATIC; one does not need to think about whether such an action is immoral. When certain types of gati are removed PERMANENTLY (with magga phala), one's mind WOULD NOT be CAPABLE of doing such sinful actions.
- When one cultivates such "bad gati," one would upādāna (and be born) to bad births; that is what is meant by "needing suitable conditions to bring kamma vipāka in," In the "WebLink: suttacentral: Kukkuravatika Sutta (MN 57)" (English translation there: "WebLink: suttacentral: The Dog-Duty Ascetic (MN 57)"), the Buddha explains how those "dog gati" that Seniya was cultivating would lead to him to be born a dog.
- On the reverse, when one permanently gets rid of such "bad gati," one would NOT be born in such unfortunate realms. That is what is meant by the verse, "Catūhapāyehi ca vippamutto, Chaccābhithānāni abhabba kātum" ("(an Ariya) is free from the four apāy $\overline{\boldsymbol{a}}$ because he/she is incapable of doing six highly immoral acts") in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Ratana Sutta (Snp 2.1)."


## What is $\operatorname{Att} \bar{a}$ ?

9. Now, it is important to figure out what is meant by "att $\bar{a} "$ " in the description of sakkāya dittthi.

The "WebLink: suttacentral: Patipadā Sutta (SN 22.44)" describes the way to get rid of sakkāya diṭthi: "Katamā ca, bhikkhave, sakkāyanirodhagāmin̄̄ patipadā? Idha, bhikkhave, sutavā ariyasāvako ariyānaì dassāv $\bar{\imath}$ ariyadhammassa kovido ariyadhamme suvinīto, sappurisānaì dassā$v \bar{\imath}$ sappurisadhammassa kovido sappurisadhamme suvinīto, na rūpaì attato samanupassati, na rūpavantaì vāattānaí; na attani vā rūpaì, na rūpasmim vāattānam. Na vedanaím attato ... na saññam் ... na sañkhāre ... na viññạnamं attato samanupassati, na viñnāṇavantaí vā attānai்; na attani vā viñãāṇam̀, na viññāṇasmimं vā attānaì. .."

- Translated: "And what, bhikkhus, is the way leading to the cessation of identity with the five aggregates (sakk $\bar{a} y a$ ditṭhi)? Here, bhikkhus, the instructed noble disciple ... does not regard form [rūpa] as attā ...n nor vedanā as attā ... nor sañ̃̃ā as attā ... nor sañkhāra as attā ... nor viñ̃̃āna as attā ... nor attā as in viññāna.."
- See \#2 above for the full translation of the verse.


## Anattalakkhaṇa Sutta (SN 22.59)

10. Let us compare the above definition to the following verse in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Anattalakkhana Sutta (SN 22.59)": "Rūpaì, bhikkhave, anattā. Rūpañca hidamं, bhikkhave, attā abhavissa, nayidaì rūpaiं ābādhāya sainvatteyya, labbhetha ca rūpe: 'evaì me rūpaì hotu, evaì me rūpaì mā ahosītti. Yasmā ca kho, bhikkhave, rūpaí anattā, tasmā rūpaí ābādhāya samंvattati, na ca labbhati rūpe: 'evaì me rūpaì hotu, evai் me rūpaì mā ahosī'ti.

- Translated: "Bhikkhus, form (physical body) is anattā (or not att $\bar{a}$ ). For if, bhikkhus, if one's body is att $\bar{a}$, one would have full control over it, and it would be possible to say: 'Let my body be like this; let
my body not be like this.' But because the body is anatt $\bar{a}$, it is subjected to decay and disease. And it is not possible to have it the way one desires: 'Let my body be this way; let my body not be this way."
- The recent post, "Anattā in Anattalakkahana Sutta - No Soul or an Ātma" explained the reality. That there is no att $\bar{a}$ or a "soul" or a " $\bar{a} t m a$ " that can be associated with either one's physical body or its four mental aggregates.

11. Again, from the "WebLink: suttacentral: Anattalakkhana Sutta (SN 22.59)": "Taim kim maññatha, bhikkhave, rūpaí niccaì vā aniccaì vā" ti? "Aniccaí, bhante." "Yaím panāniccaì dukkhaím vā taím sukhaì v $\bar{a} " t i$ ? "Dukkhaì, bhante." "Yaì panāniccaì dukkhaì vipariṇāmadhammaì, kallaì nu taí samanupassitum: 'etamं mama, esohamasmi, eso me atta'" $t i$ ? "No, hetaí, bhante..."

Translated: "What do you think, bhikkhus, can form be maintained to one's satisfaction?"-"No, bhante"-"Would something of such nature lead to suffering or happiness?"-"Suffering, venerable sir."-"Is it prudent to regard such a thing thus: ‘This is mine, this I am, this is my self?"-'No, bhante."

AND
"Tasmātiha, bhikkhave, yaì kiñci rūpaì atītānāgatapaccuppannaì ajjhattaỉ vā bahiddhā vā
 nesohamasmi, na meso attā'ti evametaì yathābhūtaì sammappaññāya daṭthabbaï."

Translated: "Therefore, bhikkhus, any form ( $r \bar{u} p a$ ) whatsoever, whether past, future, or present, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near, all form (these are 11 types of rūpa in rūpakkhandha) should be seen as it really is, with correct wisdom. Thus: ‘This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.'

- The same argument would hold for the other four mental aggregates as well.


## Sakkāya Diț̣hi and Anatta Nature

12. Therefore, sakkāya ditţhi permanently disappears when one comprehends the real nature of this world. That is the anicca nature (inability to maintain rūpa, vedan̄ $\bar{a}$, sañ̃ $\bar{a}$, sañkh $\bar{r} a$, and viñ̃ $\bar{n} n a$ in the way one likes to). Much suffering (including in the apa $\bar{y} \bar{a}$ ) will result because of not realizing the anicca nature. That is when one becomes helpless (anatta); see "Anicca - True Meaning."

- Therefore, one is truly helpless in this rebirth process (anatta); see, "Anatta - No Refuge in This World." That is the same as not having full control ("na" + "att $\vec{a} "$ or anatt $\bar{a}$ ); see, "Anattā in Anattalakkahana Sutta - No Soul or a Ātma."
- The existence (bhava) in this world and corresponding births ( $j \bar{a} t i$ ) filled with suffering arise because one tries to go against the true nature and generates sañkhāra (due to avijjā). That is Paṭicca Samuppāda.
- When one comprehends that, one would stop generating sañkhāra, starting with the worst kind: apuñña abhisañkhāra (leading to immoral deeds). That is how a Sotāpanna starts on the Noble Path.


### 3.4.8.2 Sakkāya Ditṭhi - Getting Rid of Deeper Wrong Views

June 22, 2019; revised October 23, 2019; March 1, 2021 (\#7, \#8); June 20, 2022

## Introduction - Two Types of Wrong Views

1. In the "Mahā Cattārisaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty)," the Buddha explained that there are two eightfold paths; also see, "Buddha Dhamma - In a Chart" and the post referred to therein. Therefore, there are two types of sammā ditṭhi, attained via the removal of two types of micchā diṭthi.

- First, one needs to follow the mundane eightfold path and get rid of the ten types of micchā ditthi. That is the necessary foundation needed to comprehend the nature of a broader world of 31 realms. One
must realize the truth of kamma/kamma vipāka, rebirth process, that there is a paraloka where gandhabba lives, etc.; see, "Micchā Ditthi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage."
- The more profound wrong views of nicca, sukha, atta can be removed, and one can then comprehend the real nature of this world of 31 realms (only after one gets rid of the ten types of micchā ditt?hi); see, "Three Marks of Existence - English Discourses."
- When that happens, one becomes a Sotāpanna Anugāmi and starts on the Noble Eightfold Path.

2. Removal of sakkaya ditthi is the basis of one's start on the Noble Eightfold Path. It is really about getting a "new vision" about the true nature of this world of 31 realms.

- That requires getting rid of the more in-depth wrong views (nicca, sukha, atta) about the nature of this world.
- In this post, we will discuss how " 20 types of sakkāya diṭthi" is reached by getting rid of 5 types of wrong views on the five aggregates based on uccheda ditthi and 15 types of wrong views on the five aggregates based on sassata diṭthi. [uccheda :[m.] cutting off, perishing; annihilation. sassata :[adj.] eternal.]


## Sakkāya as "Sath" + "Kāya"

3. In the previous post, "Sakkāya Ditthi and Tilakkhana," we discussed how sakkāya dițthi is related to one's cravings. Those cravings (upādāna) are for one's own body and other material things of perceived value ( $r \bar{u} p a k k h a n d h a$ ). They also include one's mental constituents that define those cravings (khandha or aggregates of vedanā, sañ̃̄̄a, sañkhāra, and viññāṇa).

- As we saw in that post, The word "sakkāya" comes from "sath" + "kāya," which rhymes with "sakkāya." "Sath" means "good" and "kāya" means "a collection" or "an aggregate" (it could also mean "physical body," which is also a collection of parts). Thus "sakkāya" means those five aggregates (including one's own body) are fruitful. Mental entities are also "collections" or "aggregates."
- These cravings for the five aggregates arise because of the wrong views of uccheda ditthi or sassata ditthi or views in between those two (with different combinations), as we discuss below.


## Two Main Diṭthis (Deeper Wrong Views)

4. There are two main "ditthis" or "wrong views" about the world discussed in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Brahmajāla Sutta (DN 1)." Note that I always provide the Pāli version of a sutta, because sometimes the commonly available English translations have errors. I usually give a link to the Pāli version at Sutta Central. One can get translations to English - and even a few more languages - there by clicking on the "hamburger icon" (represented by three short parallel lines) at the top left. Keep in mind that some translations there are incorrect.

- One is the uccheda ditthi, which says a "person" exists only until the death of the physical body; a "person" is nothing more than a collection of physical matter (molecules). When the "person" dies, that is the end of the story (uccheda means "cut off").
- The second is sassata ditthi - which is the exact opposite of the first (sassata means "eternal.") It is the view that a "person" has a "mental body" that survives the death of the physical body: In Abrahamic religions (Christianity, Judaism, and Islam), it is called the "soul," which goes to either heaven or hell at death and will stay there forever. In Hinduism, it is called " $\bar{t} t m a$," which merges with Mahā Brahma at some point and remains there forever.
- In the Brahmajāla Sutta (DN 1), the Buddha discusses 60 more wrong views, but those are variations of the above two. We can see that most scientists have the uccheda ditthi (that one's physical body with its brain is all that is there.) Most religious people (in Abrahamic religions and Hinduism) have the sassata ditṭhi that one's soul or àtma lives forever.

5. If uccheda ditthi is the actual reality of the world, then suffering will end with the death of the physical body. Thus one may seek to "enjoy worldly pleasures" without paying attention to the harmful consequences of doing immoral deeds (when the temptation gets high enough).

- If sassata ditṭhi is the actual reality of the world, then suffering will never end, because there is an "unchanging essence" that will survive the death of the body at any time. Even though the premise there is of a "suffering-less, joyful realm" (merge with the Creator), the Buddha said that there is no such existence. All existences are subject to suffering, simply because matter ( $r \bar{u} p a$ ) is unstable. Any life with even a trace of the tangible matter is inherently unstable. Modern science has confirmed this fact; see, "Second Law of Thermodynamics is Part of Anicca!."
- In Buddha Dhamma, there is a monomaya kāya (gandhabba, mostly "mental" with just a few suddhatthaka or smallest units of matter) that survives the death of the physical body. Any existence in this world is associated with such a "mental body." The mental body of a human or an animal is a gandhabba. However, that gandhabba also has a finite lifetime. See, "Bhava and Jāti - States of Existence and Births Therein."
- Buddha Dhamma says a living being (with monomaya kāya) comes into existence due to six root causes, but all six disappear with the removal of three root causes (lobha, dosa, moha). As long as those root causes are present there will be an associated life. And any being in this world has much more suffering than any short-lived happiness; see, "Six Root Causes - Loka Samudaya (Arising of Suffering) and Loka Nirodhaya (Nibbāna)" and "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma."

6. Therefore, the concept in Buddha Dhamma is in between those two extremes of uccheda ditthi and sassata ditṭhi.

- There is a mental-body with a trace of matter (gandhabba) that survives the death of the physical body, but that mental body is ever-changing, according to Paticca Samuppāda.
- Therefore, there is no everlasting "self" or a " $\bar{t} t m a "$ " or an "att $\bar{a}$." The denial of an eternal "att $\vec{a}$ " is called "anatt $\bar{a} " ~(" n a "+~ " a t t \bar{a} ")$. That is the meaning of anatt $\overline{\text { }}$; see, "Anattā in Anattalakkahana Sutta - No Soul or a Ātma."
- Since the death of the physical body is not the end of suffering, one will become helpless (anatta) in the rebirth process since births in the four lowest realms (apāy $\bar{a}$ ) are unavoidable. That is another meaning of anatta ("na" + "atta") or "without refuge or becoming helpless); see, "Anatta - No Refuge in This World." Here, atta means "with refuge.."
- When one understands this world view of the Buddha, one removes sakkāya ditthi (together with vicikicca and silabbata parāmāsa) and attains the Sotāpanna stage.


## Two Main Types of Character (Carita)

7. A revealing analysis of sakkāya diṭthi in terms of one's character qualities (carita, pronounced "charitha") is in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Nayasamutthāna section (NE 36)" of the Nettippakarana (a Commentary in the Tipitaka). It defines the Four Noble Truths in terms of "sakkāya": "Tattha ditṭhicaritā rūpaì attato upagacchanti. Vedanaì ... pe ... saññaiं ... sañkhāre ... viññānaì attato upagacchanti. Taņācaritā rūpavantaì attānaí upagacchanti. Attani vā rūpaí, rūpasmim v $\bar{a}$ attānai், vedanāvantaì ... pe ... sañn̄āvantai் ... sañkhāravantaì ... viñ̃n̄ạavantaì attānaì upagacchanti, attani vā viññāṇaim, viññānasmim vā attānamं, ayam vuccati vīsativatthuk $\bar{a}$ sakkāyadiṭ!thi."

Translated: "A person with "characteristic wrong views" (ditṭhicaritā) perceives "I am my body," "I am my vedanā," "I am my saññā," "I am my sañkhāra," and "I am my viññāna." A person with "characteristic cravings for sense pleasures" ( $\tanh \bar{a} c a r i t \bar{a})$ perceives my body is me; my body is in me, I am in my body. He sees vedanā..saññā..sañkhāra..viññāna in the same four ways (e.g., my viññāna represent me, my viñnäṇa is in me, I am in my viñ̃näna) - that is twenty types of sakkäya diṭ!̣hi.

- Thus, there are five types (one view for each aggregate) of sakkāya dițthi due to uccheda dițthi and 15 types (three views for each aggregate) of sakkāya ditṭhi due to sassata diṭthi.


## Dițṭhicaritā With Ucceda Diṭthi and Taṇhācaritā With Sassata Diṭthi

## 8. From the same section of WebLink: suttacentral: Nayasamutthāna (NE 36) of the Nettipakarana, we

 have two definitions for uccheda ditṭhi and sassata diṭthi."Tattha ye rūpaì attato upagacchanti. Vedanai் ... pe ... saññaं் ... sañkhāre ... viñ̃n̄ạamं attato upagacchanti. Ime vuccanti "ucchedavādino"ti."
"Ye rūpavantaì attānaì upagacchanti. Attani vā rūpaì, rūpasmimं vā attānaim. Ye vedanāvantaì ... pe ... ye saññāvantaiं ... ye sañkhāravantaì ... ye viññānavantaì attānaì upagacchanti, attani $v \bar{a}$ viññānaì, viññānasmim vā attānaì. Ime vuccanti "sassatavādino"ti, tattha ucchedasassatavādā ubho antā, ayain samisārapavatti."

Translated: "One with uccheda ditṭhi (ucchedavādino) perceives 'I am my body," "I am my vedanā,"
"I am my sañ̃̄̄ $\bar{a}$," "I am my sañkhāra," and "I am my viññạna."

- In other words, One with uccheda ditthi attributes all five aggregates to the physical body. Thus, when the physical dies, that is the end of all five aggregates. No rebirth.
"One with sassata dittthi (sassatavādino) perceives 'my body is me; my body is in me, I am in my body.' He also perceives vedanā..saññā.. sañkhāra.. viññāna in the same four ways (e.g., my viññāna is me, my viñ $\tilde{n} \bar{a} n a$ is in me, I am in my viñ $\tilde{n} \bar{a} \underline{a} \boldsymbol{a}$ )." Those with such extreme views are bound to the cycle of rebirths (samisāra).
- In other words, One with sassata dittthi attributes all five aggregates to the mental body. Thus, even when the physical dies, the five aggregates will continue.

9. This verse introduces dividing anariyas (puthujjano) into two categories: (1) ditthicarita or those with personalities dominated by the wrong vision of uccheda diṭthi. (2) tanh ācarita or those with characters dominated by the wrong view of sassata ditṭhi. If you look at the definitions in \#7 above, you will see that a diṭthicarita is one with uccheda ditṭhi, and a taṇhācarita is one with sassata diṭthi.

- The last part says that the 20-types of sakkāya ditthi is the combination of uccheda and sassata ditthis. Since all other 60 ditthis or wrong visions about the world are different combinations or variations of uccheda and sassata ditṭhis, 20-types of sakkāya diṭthi includes all the wrong views about "this world."


## Sotāpanna Stage - A New World View

10. Now we look at the last of the verse in \#8 above, which gives another clue: "..tattha ucchedasassatavādā ubho antā, ayain saminārapavatti."

- Here, "ucchedasassatavādā" results from the combination of uccheda sassata vād $\bar{a}$, i.e.,uccheda vād $\bar{a}$ and sassata vādā, where vāda means "argument or theory," or in this case "view." It says those two are the two extreme views. [ $\boldsymbol{v} \overline{\boldsymbol{a}} \boldsymbol{d a}:[\mathrm{m}$.$] theory; saying; creed controversy.]$
- Then it says, "ayain sainsārapavatti." That means those two extreme views lead to the continuation of the rebirth process! (sainsāra pavatti, where "pavatti" means to "continue or sustain").
- That makes perfect sense. One removes sakkāya ditṭhi (and get to the correct world view) by getting rid of the two main wrong views about the world of 31 realms, i.e., uccheda ditṭhi and sassata dittthi, and any combination of them.

11. If a living being does not cease to exist at the death of the physical body (uccheda ditthi does not hold) AND if there is no "permanent essence of a being" like a soul or a a atma (sassata ditṭhi does not hold), then what is the explanation?

- Continuation of a lifestream NOT ONLY at the death of the physical body but at ANY MOMENT is explained via the principle of causes and conditions (Paticca Samuppāda).
- One who gets to be a Sotāpanna comprehends this fact and realizes that there is nothing to be called "mine" because, in reality, there is absolutely nothing that can be under control of "oneself"; see, "Anattā in Anattalakkahana Sutta - No Soul or an Atma."
- As long as one does not comprehend that, one will become helpless in the future, especially when one is reborn in an apāya; see, "Anatta - No Refuge in This World."
- That is why getting rid of Sakkāya ditṭhi REQUIRES one to get rid of any trace of uccheda dittthi or sassata diṭthi.
- That is not possible until one first gets rid of the 10 types of micchā ditthi and gets basic understanding of the broader world with 31 realms, laws of kamma, existence of a paraloka with gandhabba, and of course the validity of the rebirth process; also see, "Buddhism without Rebirth and Nibbāna?."

12. However, this is only a change of ditthi vipallāsa (getting rid of muddled or distorted vision). There are two more vipallāsa (saññā vipallāsa and citta vipallāsa or "distorted perceptions and thoughts.") Their removal happen at higher stages of Nibbāna; see, "Discourse 3 - Distorted Perceptions or Sañ̃̄̄a Vipallāsa" in "Three Marks of Existence - English Discourses."

- Therefore, getting rid of ALL wrong views starts at the Sotāpanna Anugāmi stage, and established at the Sotāpanna stage.
- However, all types of vipallāsa wear out step-by-step and ultimately go away only at the Arahant stage; see the forum discussion "Sakkāya Ditthi and Tilakkhana."


### 3.4.8.3 Associations (Sevana) - A Root Cause of Wrong Views

## June 29, 2019; revised July 1, 2019 (comment added at the end)

1. Our world views are first formed by our families. Most people just keep those views during their whole lifetimes. A good example is one's religion.

- With the advent of the internet, this is changing. Now, people are exposed to many world views, and can learn about different world views and decide for themselves which one(s) make more sense.
- Still, the basic mindset instilled at a young age can have a long-lasting effect. This is why it is important to make sure that our children are not exposed to "bad influences", especially bad friends.

2. In the terminology of the Buddha, one's "gati" (habits/character qualities) are determined by one's world views and vice versa. Furthermore, whether one acts with avijjā (ignorance) at any given time depends on one's gati. In simple terms, "good gati" are associated with Sammā Ditthi (correct views) and "bad gati" are associated with micchā dittthi (wrong views).

- This is why Sammā Ditṭhi comes first in the both the mundane and Noble Eightfold Paths.
- The basic concepts are discussed in, "Gathi (Gati), Anusaya, and Āsava" and the posts referred to there.
- This is also true at the deeper level; see, \#8 of "Sakkāya Ditthi and Tilakkhana"" and "Sammā Ditthi Realization, Not Memorization." One's gati can lead to specific future births.

3. Gati are carried from from life-to-life. However, gati are FORMED mainly during human lives.

- If a human cultivates an "animal gati," that human is likely to be born as that animal in the next life (or a future life). This is explained clearly in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Kukkuravatika Sutta (MN
57)" (English translation there: "WebLink: suttacentral: The Dog-Duty Ascetic (MN 57)"). There the Buddha explains how those "dog gati" that Seniya was cultivating would lead to him to be born a dog.
- Similarly, a human who cultivates "deva gati" by cultivating sañkhāra that are good and moral (puññābhisañkhāra) - and thus engages in such thoughts, speech, and actions - that human is likely to be born a deva.
- A human is born with a certain set of gati acquired in past lives as a human. But a human CAN change those gati by WILLFULLY cultivating different types of sañkhāra (and thus one's actions). In particular, a human can cultivate "Ariya gati" by cultivating the Noble Eightfold Path (which means cultivating puññābhisañkhāra AND by comprehending Tilakkhana).

4. A human baby has similar gati to his/her parents. That is not an accident. Normally a gandhabba with gati similar to those of the parents can take possession of the zygote in mother's womb that was formed by the union of mother and father; see, "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception."

- This is another reason that a child would likely to maintain the gati (and thus world views, religion, behavior patterns) of the parents.
- However, if the child comes under strong influence of a bad set of friends, those gati can change for the worse. We discussed an example of a teenager transforming to a drug addict/gang member in our discussion of Paticca Samuppāda; see, "Phassa paccayā Vedanā....to Bhava."
- In the same way, that teenager could have been pointed in the right direction if, for example, the parents themselves started following the Noble Path, and encouraged the teenager to do the same.
- Therefore, one's environment (whom one associates with) can have a major impact on one's gati. This is true for adults too, but children can be easily influenced. This is why one MUST associate with people with "good and moral gati."

5. In the "WebLink: suttacentral: Mangala Sutta (Snp 2.4)," a deva comes to the Buddha and asks, "what are the highest auspicious deeds to be cultivated ("brūhi mañgalamuttamaí"); here, "mañgalamuttamaì" is "mangalam + uttamam", where "mangala" means "auspicious" and "uttama" means "highest").

- The very first auspicious deed listed by the Buddha is: "Asevanā ca bālānamं, paṇditānañca sevanā.." OR, "not to associate with ignorant people (bāla) and to associate with the wise (panditita)."
- In the above I have translated "sevana" as "to associate" and "asevana" as "not to associate." A better description would be, "to get advice from and to follow" and "not to get advice from or to follow." Sometimes it is not possible to stop "associating" with a group of people, even if they have bad character qualities. For example, such people may be there at one's workplace, and it is not possible to stop interacting with them. However, one does not have to follow their bad opinions/world views.
- In the same way, just by "associating with an Ariya" does not necessarily qualify as "paṇ̣itānañca sevanā." For example, there were many people who associated closely with the Buddha himself (Devadatta and King of Kosala, for example), who did not profit from that association: Devadatta was born in the apayy $\bar{a}$, and the King of Kosala failed to become a Sotāpanna.

6. Of course it is prudent to minimize interactions with those with micchā ditthi. However, this again depends on the context.

- For example, many prominent scientists have "uccheda ditṭhi," that the physical body is all one has, and life ends at the death of the physical body. This is one of the two major wrong views associated with sakkāya ditṭhi (that blocks the Sotāpanna stage); see, "Sakkāya Ditthi-Getting Rid of Deeper Wrong Views."
- It is fine to listen to them and even learn from them about MUNDANE things like science. Most of them have never been exposed to true Buddha Dhamma, and all of them are "moral people." I discussed a good example recently (June 27, 2019 at 9:48 am post) at the discussion forum, "Sakkāya Ditthi and

Tilakkhana." As I explained there, Dr. James Tour is correct when he explains why there is more to life than just the physical body. Furthermore, he explains with clear evidence why life could not have evolved from "inert matter."

- However, since he apparently has not been exposed to true Buddha Dhamma, he cannot think of a good explanation other than to say that life must have been created by God, and that there is an everlasting "soul" (i.e., he has sāssata ditthi). I do not blame him; as he firmly believes (and he is right), life is very complex and it is NOT possible to explain the origins of life by the theory of evolution.
- What he has not been exposed to is Buddha's explanation that life has ALWAYS existed (no traceable beginning to life) and evolves according to causes and conditions (Paticca Samuppāda); see, "Buddhism and Evolution - Aggañña Sutta (DN 27)."

7. Among the four conditions that must be fulfilled to attain the Sotāpanna stage of Nibbāna, "Sappurisasamsevo" or "Association with "sappurisa (sath + purisa or "Noble friend", i.e., an Ariya)" is the first condition; see, "Four Conditions for Attaining Sotāpanna Magga/Phala."

- Since Buddha's teachings are unique, the true message has to come from a Buddha or someone "who can be traced back to the Buddha", as explained in the above post. The teachings can be explained accurately only by an Ariya who has GRASPED those unique teachings that have never been known to the world: "pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu.." (see \#8 of "Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta Interpretation - Uddesa, Niddesa, Patiniddesa").
- But it is not necessary to "hang out" or "directly associate" with an Ariya. The key is to "to get advice from and to follow" such Noble Persons, as explained above. That can be done by listening to their desanās (discourses) and/or by reading their writings.
- One cannot attain the Sotāpanna stage while having sakkāya dittthi (i.e., uccheda diṭthi or sāssata ditṭhi or some combination of the two): see, "Sakkāya Ditthi-Getting Rid of Deeper Wrong Views."

8. Now we can look into the term "sappurisa" in more detail to get a better picture of the whole situation. There are many suttā that describe sappurisa/asappurisa in different ways (all related to each other).

- For our discussion here, the description given in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Atthañgika Sutta (AN 4.205)" is more relevant: "Katamo ca, bhikkhave, asappuriso? Idha, bhikkhave, ekacco micchādiṭthiko hoti, micchāsañkappo hoti, micchāvāco hoti, micchākammanto hoti, micchāāj̄̄̄o hoti, micchāvāyāmo hoti, micchāsati hoti, micchāsamādhi hoti. Ayaì vuccati, bhikkhave, asappuriso."
- Translated: "An asappurisa is one who follows micchā ditṭhi, micchā sañkappa, micchā vācā, micchā kammanta, micchā àj̄̄va, micchā vāyāma, micchā sati, and micchā samādhi.
- In other words, when one has wrong views (micchā ditthi), one thinks in wrong ways, speaks in wrong ways, acts in wrong ways, follows a wrong livelihood, makes efforts in accomplishing wrong (or useless) goals, gets to the wrong mindset, and thus ends up with a perturbed state (and thus is prone to act unwisely).

9. Of course, a sappurisa is one who is on the correct pat with samm $\bar{a}$ diṭthi, samma $\bar{a}$ sañkappa hoti, sammā vācā, sammāka mmanta, sammā ājīva, sammā vāyāma, sammā sati, and sammā samādhi.

- Furthermore, the sutta explains that there is a worse asappurisa, who in addition encourages others to follow the wrong path.
- Similarly, there is a better sappurisa, who encourages others to follow the correct path.

10. Another definition of a asappurisa is given in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Patipadā Sutta (SN 22.44)," which is relevant to the present discussion: "Sakkāyasamudayagāminiñca vo, bhikkhave, paṭipadam desessāmi, sakkāyanirodhagāminiñca paṭipadaì.

Taì sunātha. Katamā ca, bhikkhave, sakkāyasamudayagāmin̄̄ pațipadā? Idha, bhikkhave, assutavā puthujjano ariyānai் adassāvī ariyadhammassa akovido ariyadhamme avinīto, sappurisānamं adassāvī sappurisadhammassa akovido sappurisadhamme avinīto, rūpai் attato samanupassati, rūpavantaì vā attānaì; attani vā rūpaì, rūpasmim vā attānaì. Vedanaì attato ... saññaì ... sañkhāre ... viññānaì attato samanupassati, viñn̄ạnavantaì vā attānaì; attani vā viññ̄ānaí, viññānasmim vā attānamं."

Translated: ""Bhikkhus, I will teach you the way leading to the origination of sakkāya (dittthi) and the way leading to the cessation of sakkāya (ditṭhi). The description in blue is exactly same as discussed in \#2 of the post, "Sakkāya Ditthi and Tilakkhana."

- The next verse in the sutta states that a sappurisa is one who has removed sakkāya ditthi.

11. Two more relevant terms are "sutavā ariyasāvako" (a Noble person who has comprehended Buddha Dhamma) and "assutava puthujjano" (who has not heard/comprehended Buddha Dhamma).

- The "WebLink: suttacentral: Ānandatthera Sutta (SN 55.13)" describes a "sutavā ariyasāvako" as one who has "buddhe aveccappasādena samannāgato," "dhamme aveccappasādena samannāgato," "sanghe aveccappasādena samannāgato," "ariyakantehi sīlehi samannāgato." That means one who has "unbreakable faith in the Buddha, Dhamma, Sañgha, and unbreakable moral mindset that would not do an apāyagāmi deed."
- Those are actually the four qualities of a Sotāpanna; see, "Sotapatti Anga - The Four Qualities of a Sotāpanna." The key term "aveccappasädena" and "ariyakānta sīla" are discussed in that post.
- Again, there are many suttā describe these terms in different (but related) ways. For example, "WebLink: suttacentral: Dutiyaarivasāvaka Sutta (SN 12.50)" describes a "sutavā ariyasāvaka" as one who has comprehended Paticca Samuppāda.
- Therefore, a "sutavā ariyasāvako" is a Noble Person or an Ariya.
- On the other hand, "assutava puthujjano" is one who who has not heard/grasped those.

12. Therefore, even a person who may be considered highly moral by mundane standards (like famous philanthropists, scientists, etc) is likely to be an "asappurisa" or an "assutava puthujjano." That is IF they have micchā diṭthi (10 types of micchā dițthi which include sakkāya diṭthi). As we have discussed, sakkāya dittthi is uccheda dittthi or sāssata ditṭhi or a combination of the two. Such persons would not be able to guide one on the Noble Eightfold Path.

- Again, that does not mean one cannot learn other useful (mundane) concepts from them.
- One really needs to avoid those who are engaged in immoral deeds: drug use, excessive alcohol use, sexual misconduct, etc.
- In order to make progress on the Noble Path, one should associate (follow and take advice from) a pandita (wise person) in the context of Buddha Dhamma, i.e., a sappurisalsutavā ariyasāvaka. A pandita is not determined by age, educational degrees, or other metrics, but only based on whether one has removed sakkāya ditṭhi.

July 1, 2019: Regarding \#5 above, it is important to note that asevana is different from asevana.

- Sevana is association. Āsevana ( $\overline{\mathrm{A}}+$ sevana) is "came to associate with"; see, "Āsevana and Aññamañña Paccayā."
- Asevana ( $\mathrm{A}+$ sevana) is "not to associate with", the negation as discussed in \#5 above.

It is very important to see the difference, which illustrates how Pāli words combine (sandhi) to produce other words with very different meanings. Thanks to Tobias Große for bringing this distinction to our attention at the discussion forum today.

## Why are Tilakkhana not Included in 37 Factors of Enlightenment?

April 1, 2016; revised June 30, 2021

1. It is possible that one may ask, "If anicca, dukkha, anatta are so important, why are they not included in the 37 Factors of Enlightenment?." After all, one attains Nibbāna via cultivating the 37 Factors of Enlightenment (also called 37 Bodhipākkhiya Dhamma, or the Dhamma concepts that takes one to Bodhi or "bhava" + "uddha," i.e., to Nibbāna; "päkkhiya" means "on the side of").

- The key to the answer is that there are two 37 Factors of Enlightenment, one is mundane (lokiya) and one is transcendental (lokuttara). We have previously discussed that there are two eightfold paths as well: one mundane and one transcendental; see, "Mahā Cattārīsaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty."
- The mundane versions are followed by those who do not comprehend the Tilakkhaṇa (anicca, dukkha, anatta). Thus Tilakkhana are preconditions (prerequisites) to be able to follow the Noble Path.

2. This is related to the fact that the 37 Factors of Enlightenment were there when Prince Siddhartha was born. The existence of the mundane version of the 37 Factors of Enlightenment or eightfold paths is possible only if there has been a previous Buddha in the same mahā kappa, where a mahā kappa is the time span of an "Earth system" or more precisely a solar system with an Earth-like planet supporting human life (an eon).

- All Buddhas discover the Tilakkhana, the Four Noble Truths, the Noble Eightfold Path, etc by their own efforts. But since these Dhamma concepts encompass Nature's laws, all Buddhas keep rediscovering the same Dhamma.
- However, like anything else in this world, a "Buddha Sāsana" or the "original Dhamma preached by a Buddha" lasts only for a certain time. For Buddha Gotama, his Sāsana is supposed to last only 5000 years (when the human lifespan is about 100 years), and we are halfway through.
- There have been four Buddhas on this Earth (which formed about 4.6 billion years ago), and Buddha Gotama was the fourth. The three Buddhas preceding him were: Kakusandha, Konagama, and Kassapa; one more Buddha, Buddha Maitreya, is supposed to appear long after the Gotama Buddha Sāsana disappears.

3. It is said that a Buddha comes to this world to reveal three words and eight letters (in Pāli): "Attakkarā theenapadā Sambuddhena pakāsithā, na hi sīla vataỉ hotu uppajjanti Tathāgatā," which means, "a Buddha (Tathāgat $\bar{a}$ ) is born NOT just to show how to live a moral life, but to reveal three words to the world. "

- These three words are anicca, dukkha, anatta.

4. When a given Buddha Sāsana fades away, it does not disappear abruptly. What happens is that the true meanings gradually get lost, and are replaced by easier to grasp, mundane meanings; the first to lose the true meanings are anicca, dukkha, anatta. Without them, all other concepts remain there with mundane meanings.

- When the Kassapa Buddha Sāsana faded away, most of the concepts survived only with mundane meanings and that is why most terms like kamma and even Satta Bojjhañga survived up to the time of Prince Siddhartha's birth.
- In fact, even during a given Buddha Sāsana, the true meanings of Tilakkhaṇa get lost for periods of time but are revived by Jāti Sotāpannas (when one attains the Sotāpanna stage, it is not lost in future lives; so, if one is reborn human, they will be a Jāti Sotāpanna). Thus during a given Buddha Sāsana, such as Jäti Sotāpannas, keep bringing back the true Dhamma until the end of that Buddha Sāsana.
- After that, no more Jāti Sotāpannas are born, and true Dhamma disappears from this world (or, more correctly, from this Earth). Again, the mundane versions may survive for a long times.
- Then the world has to await the appearance of a new Buddha to reveal the true meanings of anicca, $d u k k h a$, anatta. But a mahā kappa with five Buddhas (like ours) is a rare event, and it is called Mah $\bar{a}$ Badda Kappa.
- More common is to have no Buddhas or just a single Buddha in a given mahā kappa. For example, there were 30 mah $\bar{a} k a p p \bar{a}$ before this mahā kappa where there was not even a single Buddha present.

5. This is why the Buddha emphasized that there is a very brief window of time to attain Nibbāna (at least to attain the Sotāpanna stage).

- The time span of each Buddha Sāsana is different because the average lifetime of humans keeps changing. Gotama Buddha Sāsana is supposed to be 5000 years long, with the average lifetime of a human being about 100 years. During the Buddha Säsana of Buddha Kassapa, the human lifespan was about 20, 000 years. Thus, we can guess that Sāsana lasted about $20,000 \times 50=$ about a million years.
- Therefore, even though there will be one more Buddha appearing in this mahā kappa, the total time one could be potentially exposed to Buddha Dhamma would be only a few million years.
- Our Earth (i.e., the Solar system) may last a few more billion years, so we can say that the lifetime of this mahā kappa is roughly $8-10$ billion years or 8000 to 10,000 million years. Only a few million years, at most, is the "short window" that is available to work towards Nibbāna.
- Of course, one needs to be fortunate enough to be born human on this Earth during the Maitreya Buddha Sāsana to get the next opportunity to work towards Nibbāna. This is an improbable event for any given person.
- Also see, "Rebirth - Connection to Suffering in the First Noble Truth." Even when one is born human, most mahā kappā (eons) will have no Buddhas present to teach the way to Nibbāna.

6. Going back to our main discussion, when Buddha Kakusandha appeared first in this world (i.e., on this Earth), there was no previous Buddha on this Earth. Therefore, concepts like the eightfold path, Satta Bojjhanga, 37 Factors of Enlightenment (or terms like kamma and rebirth) were not there even by name.

- It is clear why those concepts were there before Buddha Gotama (i.e., when Prince Siddhartha was born). After Buddha Kassapa's Sāsana faded away, mundane interpretations of key concepts were passed down through generations (initially through vedic traditions, which then transitioned to the Hindu religion; of course, most concepts survived only by the name).
- Therefore, not only concepts like kamma, rebirth, the five (and eight) precepts were there when Prince Siddhartha was born, but also Satta Bojjhañga and ways to attain jhānā. Of course, those meanings were mundane and the jhānā were anāriya jhānā. Without Tilakkhaṇa, it is not possible to attain Ariya jhānā.

7. The difference that the Buddha Gotama made was to bring back the true Dhamma based on the true nature of this world, i.e., anicca, dukkha, anatta. But even during a given Buddha Sāsana, the true Dhamma starts to fade away from time to time (people tend to embrace the easy and mundane version) and needs to be revived by a $j \bar{a} t i$ Sotāpanna.

- And that is what is happening even at present. The true Dhamma of Buddha Gotama had again started to fade away, and a jāti Sotāpanna in Sri Lanka is bringing back the correct or lokuttara version now. Within the past 2500 years, it happened at least once before, and we will discuss that when the time is appropriate.

8. The difference between the two versions of the 37 Factors of Enlightenment or the eightfold paths is that the Noble versions are based on Tilakkhana: anicca, dukkha, anatta. Their true meaning is that it is fruitless, tiring, and often dangerous to keep struggling to attain happiness in this world; that is the real meaning of dukha or suffering. And Dukkha Sacca (First Noble Truth) is that this dukha (suffering) can be overcome; see the second part of the following post: "Anatta and Dukkha - True Meanings."

- The mundane versions can be grasped by a normal human who is unaware of the true Tilakkhaña or the true nature of this world. The transcendental or lokuttara versions can be comprehended only with an understanding of anicca, dukkha, anatta.
- Without an understanding of the anicca nature, we perceive that sense pleasures are good, and are worth striving for. But when one starts comprehending the anicca nature, one realizes that suffering is actually rooted in sense pleasures; see, "Assāda, Ādīnava, Nissarana - Introduction."

9. But the Tilakkhaṇa (starting with anicca nature) are hard to comprehend. It helps to understand and follow the mundane versions of Dhamma concepts first; see "Buddha Dhamma - In a Chart" and the post "What is Unique in Buddha Dhamma?" referred to in that chart.

- Not everyone can grasp the deeper meanings of the anicca, dukkha, anatta right way. It takes a significant effort. After all, a Sotāpanna is better off than an Emperor or a King (see, "Why a Sotāpanna is Better off than any King, Emperor, or a Billionaire"). One should not think it can be done easily (even though it may be easier for those who happen to have cultivated the Path in recent previous births).

10. To summarize, the critical difference between the two types of 37 Factors of Enlightenment is the following:

- The mundane (lokiya) 37 Factors of Enlightenment are cultivated to live a "moral life" and to seek "good rebirths" in future lives.
- The transcendental (lokuttara) 37 Factors of Enlightenment can be cultivated only after realizing that this world of 31 realms has nothing but suffering to offer in the long run.
- The 37 factors are the same in both versions, but each term has a deeper meaning in the lokuttara version since it has Nibbāna as the goal.
- As one starts to grasp the meanings of Tilakkhana, one will automatically transition over to the lokuttara version. There is no need to worry about which version one is cultivating. The difference is not in terms but in grasping the anicca (and thus dukkha and anatta).
- Furthermore, it is not necessary to cultivate (or even to memorize) all 37 factors. When one cultivates even one factor, all 37 grow together; but it is good to know the factors and how they work together. The 37 factors are listed in " 37 Factors of Enlightenment."

11. There are many things to contemplate in the above material to continue this discussion on the 37 factors in a follow-up post. Some of the ideas discussed above may seem surprising (but also illuminating to those who may have wondered how terms like kamma and Satta Bojjhañga were in usage before Buddha Gotama). They will turn out to be supported by future evidence and also by the inter-consistency that I always try to emphasize.

- Even though we may not have all the evidence of historical facts (they keep emerging slowly), there is no need to wait for fool-proof archaeological evidence.
- One can analyze and examine the "bigger picture" of the Buddha, the soundness of Abhidhamma, and the solid inter-consistency of Buddha Dhamma to realize that the above explanation must be correct. Of course, we will discuss much more detail in future posts.
- In many areas, I have published only a small fraction of material due to time limitations. I will not publish anything that I have doubts about. It is immensely satisfying to figure out a "missing piece" and be able to "see the bigger picture" with more clarity. It is also amazing how deep, consistent, and wonderful Buddha Dhamma is.


### 3.4.10 <br> Two Versions of 37 Factors of Enlightenment

April 8, 2016; revised July 1, 2021; July 21, 2021 (\#3); August 20, 2022

1. In the previous post, we discussed two versions of 37 Factors of Enlightenment (Bodhipākkhiya Dhamma) and two versions of eightfold paths. See, "Why are Tilakkhana not Included in 37 Factors of Enlightenment?" Here, we continue that discussion.
2. Throughout the website, I have tried to make the case that there are three broad categories that people can be divided into :

- Some have one or more of the ten types of micchä ditṭhi; see, "Three Kinds of Ditthi, Eightfold Paths, and Samādhi."
- Those who have been exposed to some form of Buddha Dhamma, have removed micchā dittthi and thereby have the mundane (lokiya) version of sammā ditṭhi.
- Then some have transcendental (lokuttara) Sammā Diṭthi, i.e., they comprehend the true nature of the 31 realms (anicca, dukkha, and anatta), i.e., that there is hidden suffering in what we perceive to be enjoyment.

3. When one is exposed to Buddha Dhamma, one can understand the need for the wider world view with 31 realms and that living beings are born in all those realms due to their actions (kamma). This leads to getting rid of micchā ditṭhi; see, "Buddha Dhamma - In a Chart" and "What is Unique in Buddha Dhamma?."

- When one gets rid of micchā ditṭhi, one has the mundane sammā ditthi: One knows that to avoid future births in the apayy (four lowest realms), one needs to avoid immoral deeds (akusala kamma) and to cultivate moral deeds.
- With mundane samma dittthi, one also strives to accumulate kusala by doing puñña kriya or good deeds; this leads to FOUR benefits of $\bar{a} y u$ (long life), vaṇ̣a (healthiness), sukha (mundane happiness), bala (wealth/strength) in future lives. Note that this "bala" is different from the "Pañca Bala;" see, "Pañca Indriya and Pañca Bala - Five Faculties and Five Powers."
- The "mundane bala" appears in the Dhammapada verse 109:
"Abhivādanasìlissa
niccaí vuḍ̣̣hāpacāyino
cattāro dhammā vaḍ̣hanti àyu vaṇno sukhaì balaìn."
- Translation: "For one who always respects and honors those older and more virtuous, four benefits of longevity, beauty, happiness, and wealth/strength will increase."
- That enables one to grasp Tilakkhaṇa in future lives if one fails to do so in this life. Normally, those who are born with tihetuka patisandhi will have those qualities in this life. See "Patisandhi Citta How the Next Life is Determined According to Gatti."

4. Now let us talk specifically about the mundane 37 Factors of Enlightenment, tied to the mundane samm $\bar{a}$ ditthi. There is no specific order because they are all interrelated. But for convenience, we could use the following guide:

There are four obvious things to do when one knows what is right (moral or kusala) and what is not (immoral or akusala). These are called cattāro sammappadhāna, conventionally translated as Four Supreme Efforts. One exerts to:

- 00 prevent immoral qualities that have not yet arisen from arising
- 01 abandon immoral qualities that have arisen
- 10 initiate moral qualities that have not yet arisen to arise
- 11 maintain and cultivate moral qualities that have arisen
[compare 37 Factors of Enlightenment item 4]

1. Not to let an unwholesome thought arise which has not yet arisen.
2. Not to let an unwholesome thought continue which has already arisen.
3. To make a wholesome thought arise which has not yet arisen.
4. To make a wholesome thought continue which has already arisen.

They can briefly be expressed as "avoiding," "overcoming," "developing," and "maintaining," and are called the four supreme efforts.

By the way, these are intimately related to viriya in some other categories in the 37 factors: Cattāro Iddhipada, Pañca Indriya, Pañca Bala, Satta Bojjhañga, and the Noble Eightfold Path.
5. One could make much progress (mundane or lokuttara) by focusing on the Cattāro Sammappadhāna. The word sammappadhāna comes from "san" + "ma" + "padhāna." We have previously discussed "samm $\vec{a} "$ or "san" + "ma" means getting rid of defilements; see, "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Samsāra)." In Pāli or Sinhala, "padhāna" or "pradhāna" means dominant or leading. Cattāro is, of course, four.

- Therefore, Cattāro Sammappadhāna means four key methods for eliminating defilements, i.e., cleansing the mind.
- If we can get to the habit of following the four guidelines listed in \#4, then we will be cleansing our minds with time.

6. Cattāro Satipatthhāna (Four Foundations of Mindfulness) helps one with the four tasks listed in \#4 by being vigilant. These are discussed in detail in several posts in the "Mahā Satipatthāna Sutta."

- One keeps vigilant about committing immoral deeds with the body ( $k \bar{a} y \bar{a} n u p a s s a n \bar{a})$ and becomes good at not reacting automatically to feelings (vedanānupassanā) or thoughts (cittānupassanā), and when in doubt about the suitability of a given action one is about to do, compare with what is in the Dhamma (dhammānupassanā).
- We have not discussed dhammānupassanā in the Mahā Satipatṭhāna Sutta yet, and we can go to great depths. But we can get a simple idea from what "dhamma" means: Dhamma is what one bears. If one engages in activities that lead to great suffering to another (say, rape or murder), then one has accumulated a "bad Dhamma" that will yield corresponding results (Paṭicca Samuppāda) in future lives in the four lowest realms. Similarly, if one acts with kindness one grows Dhamma to be born in human or higher realms.
- Thus one should think about the consequences of bad actions one is about to do and stop such an action. On the other hand, one can be joyful about a good act that one is about to do or has done, and acquire many merits that will lead to $\bar{a} y u$, vaṇ̣na, sukha, bala, and pañ̃̄ $\bar{a}$ as discussed in \#3 above.

7. Then there are Cattāro Iddhipāda or the Four Bases of Mental Power; see, "The Four Bases of Mental Power (Cattāro Iddhipāda)." When someone has a firm goal, one develops chanda (liking for it), citta (thinking about it always), viriya (making efforts on it), and vīmains $\bar{a}$ (finding out all relevant information).

- That completes the "three sets of fours" in the 37 Factors of Enlightenment. Next there are "two sets of fives."

8. The Pañca Indriya (Five Mental Faculties) are: saddhā (faith based on knowledge), viriya (effort), sati (mindfulness), samādhi (calming of the mind), and pañ̃̃ $\bar{a}$ (wisdom).

- These five factors help one move forward on the Dhamma path. It is like a vehicle with two sets of wheels with a driver: Sati is in front and can be compared to the driver; saddh $\bar{a}$ and paññ $\bar{a}$ are the two front wheels, and viriya and samādhi are like the back wheels.
- All five need to be cultivated together; in particular, those sets need to be balanced: one cannot move forward with saddh $\bar{a}$ without pañña $\bar{a}$, or just by sheer effort (viriya) without feeling the benefits in samādhi.

9. When the Pañca Indriya is cultivated, they grow and become Pañca Bala or the Five Powers.

- These "two sets of five" are discussed in detail in "Pañca Indriya and Pañca Bala - Five Faculties and Five Powers."

10. Next is Satta Bojjhañga or the Seven Factors of Enlightenment.

- These seven factors are dhammavicaya (which is closely related to vīmamisā and paññā), viriya (effort), pīti (joy), passaddhi (tranquility), samādhi (one-pointedness), and upekkhā (equanimity).
- Here again, sati should be in front, and the other six are better cultivated in two sets; see, "11. Magga Phala and Ariya Jhānā via Cultivation of Satta Bojihañga." In that post, the Satta Bojjhañga are those for the lokuttara Path, but as I mentioned before, the procedures are the same with deeper meanings.

11. Finally, there is the Ariya Atthangika Magga or the Noble Eightfold Path.

- Of course it has been discussed in many posts throughout the site. One could enter "Noble Eightfold Path" in the Search box on the top right and get a list of relevant posts.
- A table in the post "37 Factors of Enlightenment" shows how many factors in different categories overlap.
- Therefore, there is no need to try to cultivate each factor. It is much better to concentrate on one category: Cattāro Sammappadhāna or Cattāro Satipatṭhāna are common ones. When further along the Path, one could cultivate Satta Bojjhañga. Of course, the Noble Eightfold Path encompasses all.

12. The cultivation of the mundane samm $\bar{a}$ dițthi together with contemplation of "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta" gradually moves one to transcendental (lokuttara) sammā ditthi.

- Then one will gradually switch over to the lokuttara 37 Factors of Enlightenment. Like a train smoothly switching railway tracks at a railroad switch, one will move over to the lokuttara track at some point; it happens in one citta vīthi, and one may not even realize it for a while. There is no need to worry about which one to be followed. As the meanings of anicca, dukkha, and anatta sink in, one will start seeing the deeper aspects of the 37 Factors of Enlightenment.

13. One will truly comprehend the Four Noble Truths starting from that point. One truly starts grasping the First Noble Truth (Dukkha Sacca), only when comprehending anicca, dukkha, and anatta.

- Again, this is why the first three Noble Truths are also not listed under the 37 Factors of Enlightenment. In the previous post we discussed why the Tilakkhana are not included; see, "Why are Tilakkhana not Included in 37 Factors of Enlightenment?."
- Comprehension of anicca, dukkha, and anatta, at least to some extent, at the Sotāpanna stage, helps one grasp the first Noble Truth, i.e., that this world is filled with suffering and that it can be overcome.
- The lokuttara version of the 37 Factors of Enlightenment - which describes ways to get to Nibbāna or Enlightenment - requires the comprehension of the Tilakkhaṇa and the first three Noble Truths first.
- Even before grasping anicca, dukkha, and anatta, one can see the dangers of a defiled mind and be motivated to follow the mundane Path with mundane sammā ditṭhi.

14. Therefore, it is better not to think much about which version of the 37 Factors of Enlightenment one follows.

- The key is to purify one's mind gradually: "rāgakkhayo Nibbānan, dosakkhayo Nibbānan, Mohakkhayo Nibbānan," i.e., Nibbāna or Niveema or "cooling down" is achieved by getting rid of greed, hate, and ignorance in steps. Moral behavior helps with the first two, and reading and listening to Dhamma helps with the third.
- Knowingly or unknowingly, one will be completing the 37 factors with time.
- It happens with even the mundane Path but accelerates when switching to the lokuttara Path.
- The "Bhāvanā (Meditation)" section could be useful in following a systematic path. But it is essential to read different posts on varying subjects, starting with the "Moral Living and Fundamentals" section. It could be harder to grasp advanced topics on "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta," without grasping the fundamentals.


### 3.4.11 Types of Bodies in 31 Realms - Connection to Jhāna

December 12, 2018

1. Even before the Buddha, people had three different basic ideas about "the essence" of a living being and specifically a human.

- Just like today, many people believed that the current physical body is all that is there. When one dies, that is the end of the story. One's body would decompose and be absorbed into the Earth. Nothing at all will be leftover, either physical or mental. The physical body is called "karaja kaya" in Buddha Dhamma.
- However, there was another view that there is something that survives the physical death of the body. This is the same as the concept of a "soul" in major religions today. In Abrahamic religions today, it is believed that upon death, the soul will either go to heaven or hell and will forever remain there.
- So, those are the two main views about "the essence" of a human being today.

2. However, at the time of the Buddha, those with the second view of a surviving "mental body" were split into two camps. In order to understand that, we need to remember that there were yogis who were able to get into jhānā and also had some supernormal (abhiñña $\bar{a}$ ) powers.

- There are three kinds of "pleasures", as we discussed in the post, "Three Kinds of Happiness - What is Nirämisa Sukha?." Two of these are "mundane pleasures", associated with the 31 realms of this world.
- One is of course the "physical sense pleasures": those associated with pictures, sounds, food, smells, and touches. That is what most humans experience. In fact, these are the pleasures associated with the 11 realms in the kāma loka (four lowest realms, human realm, and the 6 deva realms).
- The second are the jhānic pleasures, and those are of two varieties: rūpāvacara jhāna and arūpāvacara jhāna.

3. If one can cultivate $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$, one can experience "jhānic pleasures." Unlike the pleasures associated with the physical senses, jhānic pleasures are associated with less and less with the dense physical body as one gets to higher jhāna.

- Of course, jhānic pleasures have nothing to do with seeing nice objects, hearing nice music, eating tasty foods, smelling nice odors, or physical touching.
- In the first four $\boldsymbol{j} \boldsymbol{h} \overline{\boldsymbol{a}} \boldsymbol{n} \overline{\boldsymbol{a}}$, one just experiences fine bodily feelings (lightness in the body, etc.) as well as mental happiness. By the time one gets to the fourth jhāna, almost all "bodily sensations" fade out and only "rūpa" that is left is a "white soothing light." So, by the fourth jhāna, one loses any awareness of one's own physical body, i.e., the only "matter" one experiences is that of light.
- We must remember that light is a $r \bar{u} p a$ in Buddha Dhamma, even though it is a "very fine $r \bar{u} p a$." In fact, in quantum mechanics, photons (light) and electrons (matter) are treated on the same footing.

4. The four rūp $\bar{a} v a c a r a ~ j h a \bar{a} \bar{a}$ correspond to mental states of the $r \bar{u} p \bar{a} v a c a r a b r a h m a \bar{a}$, i.e., those brahma in the rūpa loka realms. Now we can see why those rūpāvacara brahmā do not have dense bodies.

- They do not need dense bodies! Brhamas do not eat, smell nice fragrances, or engage in sex.
- Those humans who can get to the fourth jhāna can cultivate the ability to separate the "brhama-like mental body" from the solid physical body. That means the "mental body" - called manomaya kāya - can come out of the physical body.
- This manomaya kāya essentially has the seat of the mind (hadaya vatthu) and the five pasāda rūpa for sensing vision, sounds, smells, taste, and touch.
- As we mentioned above, the physical body is called the karaja kaya.

5. The Buddha gave several analogies to describe this separation of the manomaya kāya from the karaja kaya. In the WebLink: suttacentral: Sāmaññaphala Sutta (DN 2):
"..Seyyathā vā pana, mahārāja, puriso asim kosiyā pavāheyya. Tassa evamassa: 'ayamं asi, ayamं kosi, añño asi, aññā kosi, kosiyā tveva asi pavālho'ti. Seyyathā vā pana, mahārāja, puriso ahim karaṇ̂ā uddhareyya. Tassa evamassa: 'ayà̇ ahi, ayam̀ karaṇ̣o. Añ̃̃o ahi, añño karaṇ̣̣o, karaṇ̣ā tveva ahi ubbhato 'ti."

- Translated: "..suppose a man were to draw a sword out from its scabbard (sheath). He would think: "This is the sword; this is the scabbard. The sword is one thing, the scabbard another, but the sword has been drawn out from the scabbard." Or suppose a man were to pull a snake out from its old outer skin. He would think: "This is the snake; this is the old skin. The snake is one thing, the old skin another, but the snake has been pulled out from the old skin."
- Therefore, separating the manomaya kāya from the karaja kaya is just like pulling out a sword from its sheath: sword is the "active element" and the sheath is like the karaja kaya. In the analogy: "A snake shedding its old skin", snake is like the manomaya kaya and old skin is like the karaja kaya."
- Manomaya kaya is the "active or important element."
 get to those rūpāvacara jhāna.
- The only difference is that the manomaya kāya of the rūpāvacara brahmā do not have the three pasāda rūpa for smelling, tasting, or touch.
- Rūpāvacara brahma's fine bodies have just the hadaya vatthu (seat of the mind) and two pasāda $r \bar{u} p a$ for seeing and hearing.
- Of course, they do not need eyes. They see and hear using a different method. Seeing by those brahmā is similar to how we see dreams with our eyes closed.

7. This manomaya kāya is the same one that enters the womb at conception.

- We remember that a gandhabba has a manomaya kāya as well as fine, misty-like body due to inhaling aroma. When a gandhabba enters a womb, this "extra bit of matter" is shed and only the manomaya $k \bar{a} y a$ (of the size of a few suddhaṭthaka) enters the womb.
- We also remember that these five pasäda rūpa are the actual sensing elements. When the manomaya kāya is inside a physical body, they get the signals THROUGH the five physical senses: eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and the body. Those signals are analyzed by the brain and transmitted to the manomaya kāya inside the physical body.
- That can be compared to a human sitting inside a totally enclosed military tank seeing the outside with aid of cameras mounted on the body of the tank. This is discussed in "Our Mental Body - Gandhabba."

8. When a yogi cultivates the fourth jhāna and perfects it, he/she will be able to come out of the physical body or the karaja kaya at will.

- Just like a rūpāvacara brahma, these yogis who come out of the physical body with just the manomaya kāya can "see" and "hear" over great distances.
- Of course, we have a hard time imagining that. But it can be compared to what happens when we see a dream. There is no need for eyes or light to see dreams; we see dreams when it is pitch black at night with our eyes closed; we do not "see" dreams with our eyes.

9. In some stressful situations (like heart operations), the manomaya kāya can separate from the physical body, and that is what is called the "out-of-body experience (OBE)."

- It also happens to some who had almost died, but "manage to come back to life." These are also called Near-Death Experiences (NDE).
- There are many books written on OBE and NDE. "Consciousness Beyond Life", by Pim van Lommel (2010) gives detailed accounts of case studies of OBE experienced by people undergoing heart operations.

10. This manomaya kāya (with a hadaya vatthu and five pasāda rūpa) that can be separated from the karaja kaya was called " $r \bar{u} p i$ manomaya k $\bar{a} y a$ " by those yogis at the time of the Buddha.

It is called "rūpi manomaya kāya" because it has all five pasāda rūpa and thus essentially has all five senses. Even though one cannot move solid objects with the fine body, one will be able to "touch." Just like vision is not with physical eyes, all five "physical senses" are different than with physical body.

- There is a second type of manomaya kāya discussed by the Buddha in the WebLink: suttacentral: Potthapāda Sutta (DN 9). This was called "arūpi saññ̄āmaya kaya." We will discuss that in the next post. These bodies or "kaya" are associated with arūpāvacara brahmā (and thus arūpāvacara $j h a ̄ n \bar{a})$.
- It could be a good idea to get refresh the memory on what is meant by sañ̃̄̄̄: "Sañ̃ñā - What It Really Means."
- Basically, when one recognizes an object or understands a concept, then one has "an understanding" of what it is. That is what saññā is. So, an "arūpi sañ̃ñ̄maya kaya" basically means a "body (almost) devoid of matter but has the ability to recognize/understand."


### 3.4.12 <br> Finest Manomaya Kāya of an Arūpāvacara Brahma

## December 19, 2018

1. As we discussed in the previous post, we can get some insights on "what survives the death of a physical body" by analyzing jhānic experiences; see, "Types of Bodies in 31 Realms - Connection to Jhāna."

- As discussed there, one can experience for oneself that life is possible without a heavy, solid physical body. This can be experienced for oneself by cultivating jhāna.
- There are many people even today who can experience $j h a \bar{a} a$, especially up to the fourth $j h a \bar{a} a$.

2. When one gets to the first jhāna, one "transcends" (or go beyond) the kāma loka or "sense sphere." Our human realm is one of 11 realms in the kāma loka as we discussed before.

- There are 16 realms in "rūpa loka" where rūpāvacara brahmā live and there are 4 realms in "arūpa loka" where arūpāvacara brahmā live. Those are the 31 realms.
- In the WebLink: suttacentral: Anupubbanirodha Sutta (AN 9.31): "Paṭhamaim jhānaì samāpannassa kāmasañ̃̄̄̄ niruddhā hoti" OR ""When one has attained the first jhāna, perceptions of sensuality (kāma sañ̃̄̄ $\bar{a})$ stop from arising."
- That means kāma sañkappa (or sensual thoughts) would not arise in the yogi. However, the yogi still feels his/her physical body. Those "bodily sensations" decrease as the yogi attains from the first to the fourth $j h a ̄ n a$.
- Those jhānic levels one through four correspond to the 16 rūpāvacara brahma realms.

3. If the yogi can advance above the fourth jhāna, he/she next gets into the fifth $j h a \bar{n} a$ which has a different mental experience. Jhānās fifth through eighth are called arūpāvacara jhāna.

- The fifth $j h a \bar{n} a$ or the first of the arūpāvacara jhāna is called the $\bar{a} k \bar{a} s a \overline{n a n c} \bar{a} y a t a n a$.
- Even though those arūpāvacara jhāna are labelled as fifth through eighth jhāna these days, in suttō they are just called by their names: ākāsānancāyatana, viññannañcāyatana, ākiñcaññāyatana, nevasaññānāsaññāyatana.
- The experiences of yogis in arūpāvacara jhāna are similar to those of arūpāvacara brahmā in the highest $\mathbf{4}$ realms in the $\mathbf{3 1}$ realms.

4. Those arūpāvacara brahmā cannot even see or hear, unlike the rūpavacara brahma $\bar{a}$.

- Those arūpāvacara brahmā have just a trace of matter: a hadaya vatthu, which is the seat of the mind. However, unlike rūpāvacara brahmā, they do not have pasāda rūpa for seeing and hearing.
- They only have an awareness (saññā) of existence. In the WebLink: suttacentral: Potthapāda Sutta (DN 9) (and other suttā) this "third type of body" is called an "arupi saññāmaya kaya."
- Arupi means "without rūpa" (it actually has a trace of rūpa, just the hadaya vatthu). Saññ̄āmaya means "with sañña", i.e., one can still experience that one is still alive, one has perception (sañ̃$\tilde{a} \bar{a}$ ).

5. It may be a good idea to re-read the following posts in this series just to firmly grasp these key ideas. Then it would be easier to follow the upcoming discussions. The first was, "Anattā (Mundane Interpretation) - No 'Unchanging Self."

- We discussed in the second post that the manomaya kāya (with a hadaya vatthu and five pasāda rūpa) that can be separated from the karaja kaya was called "rupi manomaya kāya" by those yogis at the time of the Buddha:'Types of Bodies in 31 Realms - Connection to Jhāna."
- With that extremely small manomaya kāya, a rupavacara brahma or a yogi who can come out of the physical body can hear and see. Since this manomaya kāya is much smaller than an atom, this is something that is hard for us to even imagine.
- However, those who experience out-of-body experiences, that is exactly what happens. So, this effect has been experienced by many people; see, "Manomaya Kāya and Out-of-Body Experience (OBE)."

6. Now we can summarize what we have figured out so far: Any living being is born with a basic manomaya kāya that comes in three basic varieties:

- Those in kāma loka have a manomaya kāya with hadaya vatthu and five pasāda rūpa (i.e., all six "sensing elements." That manomaya kāya is "enclosed in" in a solid physical body (karaja kaya) that allows one to experience "sense pleasures."
- In the 16 rūpāvacara brahma realms, the manomaya kāya has two pasāda rūpa (for vision and hearing), in addition to the seat of the mind (hadaya vatthu).
- The finest manomaya kāya is in the arūpa loka (4 arūpāvacara brahma realms), which only has the hadaya vatthu. They can only think.

7. There are 11 realms in $k \bar{a} m a ~ l o k a ~(f o u r ~ a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$, human realm, and 6 deva realms).

- The six deva realms belong to the kāma loka, and all those devas have "physical bodies" (karaja kaya) but they are finer than those of humans.
- Of course, a solid physical body (karaja kaya) is not there for either a rūpāvacara or an arūpāvacara brahma.

8. By the way, we can now see how suffering decreases as one starts at the lowest realms (apāyā) and move up to human, deva, and brahma realms. Human realm is where both suffering and happiness are present. Sense pleasures are optimum in deva realms.

- However, sense pleasures are not available in brahma realms. But the jhānic pleasures in those brahma realms are much better than sense pleasures.
- Thoughts of greed and hate/anger cannot arise in any brahma, including rūpāvacara brahmā. This is why their minds are at peace.

9. That is also true of those who can get into the corresponding jhānā. While in those jhāna, thoughts of greed or hate/anger do no arise.

- This is as close as one can get to Nibbāna, without even comprehending Buddha Dhamma. As we know, yogis were able to get to those jhānā even before the Buddha by using breath or kasina meditations.
- If those yogis do not lose the ability to get into jhāna until death, they will be born in the corresponding brahma realms. However, since they have only SUPPRESSED greed and hate, they will come back down to the human realm at the end of "brahma bhava." Subsequently, they can eventually end up in the lowest four realms (apāyā).

10. So, now we can see that there are two types of jhānic pleasures, and that those two varieties give rise to "two types of mental bodies or manomaya kāya" (in addition to the dense body or the karaja kaya that we are familiar with).

- However, a human who cultivates jhāna and even get to the highest arūpāvacara jhāna (8th jhāna), will still have the human manomaya kāya that he/she was born with.
- If a yogi comes out of the physical body with that manomaya kāya, it would have five pasāda rūpa and a hadaya vatthu.

11. Therefore, that manomaya kāya that can be separated from the physical body of a human would have all five pasāda rūpa that are the actual "sensing elements" for seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, and touching. Of course the "seat of the mind" - or the hadaya vatthu - would also come out with those five pasāda rūpa.

- This is because it is not possible to separate any pasāda rūpa form the manomaya kāya that is born at the beginning of the human bhava.
- In fact, it is that manomaya kāya that lives as a gandhabba in between two adjacent human births ( $j \bar{a} t i$ ) until a suitable womb becomes available for it to enter.

12. In Buddha Dhamma, the closest equivalent of a "soul" is the "manomaya kāya" or the "mental body."

## However, it is not the same an unchanging soul.

- As we saw, manomaya kāya will take fundamentally different forms in the three types of loka that encompasses the 31 realms: kāma loka, rūpa loka, and arūpa loka.
- Furthermore, even during the human bhava, the manomaya kāya can undergo drastic changes. When one attain jhāna or magga phala, it will undergo significant changes. In the case of magga phala, those changes are permanent.

13. In the next post, we will summarize the information that we have discussed so far with reference to key sections in the WebLink: suttacentral: Potthapāda Sutta (DN 9).

- In that sutta, the Buddha explained those three types of "kaya" to Potthapāda, who was asking whether there exists an "absolute, unchanging, self" or an attā in the deeper sense (just like a
"soul" that would have a "permanent existence" in heaven or hell in Abrahamic religions today).
- It must be kept in mind that the above descriptions provide only the basic framework of the three types of loka (kāma loka, rūpa loka, and arūpa loka), that encompass the 31 realms.
- However, that is sufficient to get a good idea about the key differences among the 31 realms.
- Furthermore, it explains a deeper meaning of "attā."


### 3.5 Gati, Bhava, and Jāti

- Namagotta, Bhava, Kamma Bīja, and Mano Loka (Mind Plane)
$\circ$ Gati and Bhava - Many Varieties
- Gati to Bhava to Jāti - Ours to Control
- Memory, Brain, Mind, Nama Loka, Kamma Bhava, Kamma Vipāka
- Bhava and Jāti- States of Existence and Births Therein
- Cuti and Marana - Related to Bhava and Jâti
- Anusaya, Gati, Bhava - Connection to Manomaya Kāya (Gandhabba)
- Difference Between Tanhā and Upādāna
- Pāpa Kamma Versus Akusala Kamma


### 3.5.1 <br> Namagotta, Bhava, Kamma Bīja, and Mano Loka (Mind Plane)

## Revised September 1, 2018; Mar2, 2020; September 10, 2022

1. A strong kamma can bring vipāka in the future. The mind releases a bit of energy, which is a kamma büja (or kamma bhava.) Where are those kamma bïjalbhava "located"? That is difficult to explain because we have no "feel" for mental phenomena. We have difficulty connecting with anything that is not discernible to our five physical senses. We need to see, hear, taste, smell, or touch to feel confident that "something is real."

- Yet, if one makes an effort, it is quite possible to get a good idea of what these are. Modern science helps here too.
- If someone is serious about figuring this out, I would recommend reading the posts, "Difference between a Wish and a Determination (Pāramitā)" and, mainly, "Recent Evidence for Unbroken Memory Records (HSAM)" first.

2. It is impossible to "store" records of ALL our past activities in the brain. Some people can remember EVERYTHING that happened to them over many years in minute detail, as we saw in the second post above. In addition, how can memories of past lives be stored in the brain? It has no connection to past lives!

- The Buddha said those memories are in mano loka ("nāma thalaya" in Sinhala) which could be called the "mind plane"; those memories in the mano loka come to our mind via mana indriya in the brain: "WebLink: suttacentral: Indriyakathā (Kv 19.8)" (no details given in this link).
- The "storage" is not in a physical device like a tape. Mano loka is devoid of material things; it is all " $n \bar{a} m a$ " and no matter.
- The closest analogy we have to the mental plane is the "dream world." When we dream, we can "hear", "see" and "do" things but it is all "nāma." When we "playback" memories, it is like seeing a dream.
- We can recall our memories (whatever we can remember) very quickly. If we have a strong memory of some event, even from many years ago, we can instantly recall it in our minds. We just think about it and can "see" it playback with sounds and the background just like it happened. Our minds can connect to the "mind plane" and recall things without delay; see "Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)."
- In this "recall process", the brain acts as the intermediary; the brain (actually the mana indriya in the brain) acts like a "transmitter" and a "receiver" in communications with the mental plane. As we age, the brain gets weaker and thus the "recall power" diminishes. Meditation (especially dhamma vicaya or contemplation on dhamma concepts) helps keep the brain healthy.
- It is just that some (few) people are born with the ability to recall ANYTHING from this life, as that post on memory records (HSAM) described. As I discussed in another post, this ability can be also cultivated by developing abhiññā powers.

3. When we "wish or hope for something" that thought will also have a record of that in the mano loka; later, we can recall that we made such a "wish."

- While a "nāmagotta" (I have written this as nāma gotta too) is just a record, a wish has certain energy in it, but if not cultivated by further thinking and doing things relevant to that wish, that energy will soon fade away.
- When we make a "determination" that has more "javana power" than just a "wish" such records are stronger, i.e., they do not fade away quickly.
- Our wishes, determinations, cravings for things, plans, etc are all sañkhāra (moral and immoral). Some of them are strong and become abhisañkhāra. They all lead to "kamma bīja (seeds)" or varying strengths. Some are strong enough to lead to rebirths; others bring vipāka during a lifetime. They can be good or bad.
- Thus "Dhammo have rakkhati dhammacārim" or "dhamma will guide those who live according to dhamma" applies to both "good" and "bad" dhamma. Moral people will be guided upwards, and immoral people will be guided downward. Mother nature is neutral; each one chooses which way to proceed. However, the results are ALWAYS according to kamma or actions; see, "Paticca Samuppāda - "Pati+ichcha"+"Sama+uppāda"."

4. Records of both past "nāmagotta" and the mental energies associated with "plans for the future" ("kamma bīja") are in the mind plane. The difference is that past "nāmagotta" are permanent and have no energy to do anything. On the other hand, the energies for "future plans" ("kamma $b \bar{i} j a ")$ are in flux and can get stronger or fade away.

- However, even a determination (whether or not fulfilled yet) will be recorded in the mind plane, because just after passing away it is in the past and that thought becomes a record in "nāmagotta." For example, if one determines to kill another person, that thought will be recorded in the mental plane as a nāmagotta. In addition, there will be a tentative record of a "kamma bïja" associated with the future. The more he thinks and plans, the stronger the "kamma bīja" gets. Suppose, somehow, he comes to his senses and discards that thought. In that case, the "future" imprint (and associated energy) will fade away, and there will not be a "kamma bïja" associated with it anymore.
- Note: A record of any sensory event gets added to nāmagotta in viññāna dhātu - via the mana indriya in the brain. Thus, our memories are "store d" in viñ̃āāna dhātu (or nāma loka) and not in the brain.
- When thinking about a good or a bad act, it has not acquired the "full kammic potential", i.e., it is said that the "kamma patha" is not complete. Suppose that person ended up killing the other person. In that case the "kamma patha" is complete and there will be a "kamma bïja" established that will be there up to 91 mah $\bar{a} k a p p \bar{a}$ (a mahā kappa is the lifetime of a universe, roughly 30 billion years).
- If that strong "kamma bīja" brings about a bad rebirth thus depleting its energy, at that point, that result (new birth) now becomes a "nāmagotta" or just a record.
- This is a simple overview of what happens; if one contemplates it, one should be able to get an idea of the concept.

5. Depending on the nature of the deed, a "kamma bïja" may be in different types of"bins," called "kamma bhava."

- For example, if someone cultivates rūpa samāpatti, the associated kamma bīja will be in the "rūpa loka bhava" or simply, "rūpa bhava." Suppose another cultivates arūpa jhānā (one of the highest four
$j h a \bar{n} \bar{a}$ ). In that case, the associated kamma bīja will be in "arūpa bhava" and when that kamma bīja releases its energy, he/she will be born in the arūpa loka.
- All other (abhi)sañkhāra will bring about vipāka in the kāma loka (deva, human realms, and the four lowest realms). We will discuss this in more detail in the next post.
- To summarize: When we do a kamma (abhisañkhāra), we generate certain energy called a kamma $b \bar{y} j a$. Those energies will be in the appropriate "bhava" in the mind plane. That energy is spent when the vipāka associated with a kamma bīja is experienced. Only a record of that (nāmagotta) survives in the mind plane.

6. Here is a chart that summarizes the above:


We have been trapped perpetually in the cycles indicated by the pink arrows.

## Mind Plane Drawing

Click to open and print the above chart:WebLink: Mind Plane Drawing

- As the chart shows, we make "kamma bīja" of varying strengths in various "bhava" during a lifetime that will lead to more rebirths and uncountable kamma vipāka during those rebirths.

6. Another important point is that there are two ways to "bypass" a strong "kamma bïja" associated with such a "kamma patha" of, say, killing of a human.

- He could realize the enormity of the deed, ask for forgiveness in his mind (genuinely), and start engaging in moral deeds, then he may be able to "wear out" some of the energy of that "kamma bïja." More importantly, if he can cultivate Ariya Mettā $\operatorname{Bh} \bar{a} v a n \bar{a}$, he may be able to wear it out completely (unless it is one of the ānantariya kamma, like killing a parent); see, "5. Ariya Mettā Bhāvanā."
- The other way is of course to attain Arahanthood. Unless that particular "kamma seed" brings about the vipāka before that Arahant passes away, it will become null at the death of the Arahant.
- Furthermore, if that "kamma seed" is not that strong and does not bring vipāka within 91 mahā kapp $\bar{a}$, it will become null and void too. Only the "nāmagotta" are permanent, "kamma bīja" are waiting for appropriate conditions to bring vipāka and are changing with time. However, "nāmagotta" just records, but "kamma bīja" have the energy to bring about results (vipāka).

7. There are special cases where a "kamma bīja" (and associated "kamma bhava") WILL NOT change. An ānantariya kamma establishes a "kamma bïja" (and "kamma bhava") that WILL bring about vipāka at the end of the current life without exception.

On the immoral side, five $\bar{a} n a n t a r i y a ~ k a m m a ~ W I L L ~ b r i n g ~ r e b i r t h ~ i n ~ t h e ~ a p a \bar{y} \bar{a}$ at the end of this life (i.e., when one dies). These are, killing mother, father, or Arahant, injuring a Buddha, and causing a schism in Sañgha. See, "WebLink: suttacentral: Parikuppa Sutta (AN 5.129)."

- On the "moral side," all stages of Nibbāna are "anatariya kamma." For example, when one attains the Sotāpanna stage, he/she WILL be born only according to that "Ariya bhava" or that special kammic energy; thus, a rebirth in the lowest four realms WILL NOT happen.
- Another interesting point is that when a Bodhisattva cultivates "paramita" to become a Buddha, what he is doing is establishing a very strong "kamma bïja" over innumerable lives. But at some point that "kamma bïja" gets fully established. At that point, the Bodhisattva gets "niyata vivarana" (confirmation of attaining the Buddhahood or "Buddha bhava") from a Buddha at that time.

The above concepts are looked at differently in, "Memory, Brain, Mind, Nāma Loka, Kamma Bhava, Kamma Vipāka." Of course, they are consistent!

In the next post, we will discuss how different types of "bhava" are fueled by our actions: "Gati and Bhava Many Varieties",

### 3.5.2 Gati and Bhava - Many Varieties

Revised February 27, 2019; July 16, 2022; September 10, 2002 (\#11)
Humans have many gati (gathi) or character qualities. These character qualities lead to one's future existence (bhava). It is that important.

1. We see that there are three major "bhava" or existence corresponding to the three major levels of existence that the 31 realms can be divided into: kāma bhava, rūpa bhava, and arūpa bhava.

- Each can now be subdivided into the 31 realms; see " 31 Realms of Existence."
- These living beings with kāma bhava live in kāma loka: four apāy $\bar{a}$, one human, and six deva realms. Those with rūpa bhava live in rūpa loka made of 16 rūpāvacara brahma realms. Those with arūpa bhava live in the four arūpāvacara brahma realms in the arūpa loka.

2. The following chart shows the division of the 11 k $\bar{a} m a$ loka realms into the four $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$, the human realm, and six deva realms.

3. Ultimately there are infinite number of "bhava" according to one's "gathi".
4. Within each bhava, there are numerous kamma beeja (seeds). Within "unhealthy bhava" there may be a kamma beeja for cancer, back pain, etc.
5. Same person may have different bhava (e.g., rich/poor) at different times.

Click to open and print the above chart: "WebLink: PDF Download: Bhava, Gati, Kamma Bija Chart."

- The human realm (or bhava) can now be subdivided into an infinite number of smaller subdivisions, corresponding to the vast number of varieties that "human gati" can give rise to: healthy/unhealthy, rich/poor, happy/angry, etc. as shown in the chart. Now we are getting into personal gati. We inherit most major ones (rich/poor, healthy/unhealthy, etc.) from the kamma $b \vec{y} a$ responsible for this birth.

3. Most human activities are associated with the enjoyment of sensual pleasures in the kāma loka. Instead of enjoying jhānic pleasures like a few of us (see below), most of us normally enjoy sensual pleasures associated with the five physical senses.

- We like to see eye-pleasing views, hear ear-pleasing sounds, taste tongue-pleasing flavors, smell nosepleasing odors, and touch body-pleasing objects.
- All five sense faculties are there only in the kāma loka.
- Rūpa loka Brahmā do not have noses or tongues, and in arūpa loka there is only the mind.

4. When we are unable to satisfy some sense desires, we as humans tend to do immoral things to fulfill such sense desires; these are the apuñ̃̄ābhisañkhāra associated with strong "kamma patha" that will generate "bad kamma bīja" to bring about bad consequences or vipāka that could lead to rebirth in the lowest four realms of kāma loka; see the previous post, "Namagotta, Bhava, Kamma Bija, and Mano Loka (Mind Plane)."

- For example, a married man, not satisfied with sex with his wife, may have sex with another woman or, even worse, with a child. His tendency to do that may even come from previous lives, or he may have slowly built up that "gati" over time, increasingly engaging in sexual activities outside the marriage. Either way, such acts are done by animals; they engage in sex without discrimination. Thus such activities will generate kamma bïja (or kamma bija) in the animal bhava; see the above chart.
- Or, one may be engaging in fishing or hunting both for the pleasure of it or even to make a living. Either way, it is an "animal gati"; animals kill for food. Thus one is building up kamma seeds in animal bhava.

5. If one is greedy, one may build up kamma bīja appropriate for "hungry ghosts" in the peta loka. If one is lazy and depends on others for their livelihood, one may build up kamma seeds in the asura bhava; see the chart. We can thus think about how the desire for sense pleasures can lead to the generation of "bad kamma $b \vec{j} a$ " in three of the four lowest realms.

- "Bad kamma bīja" in the lowest realm of niraya (hell) are generated by strong hate or $v y \bar{a} p \bar{a} d a$. As we have discussed, attachment to sense pleasures (greed) can turn to hate when someone else gets in the way. Most heinous crimes, including killing other humans, are done with a such strong hate.
- As one follows the Path, one will gradually lose an animal, peta, asura, and niraya gati, and one day will attain the Sotāpanna stage.
- Thus birth in the lowest realms of the kāma loka is not just due to kāma rāga, but strong versions of greed (lobha) and hate (dosa); see "Sorting out Some Key Pāli Terms (Tanhā, Lobha, Dosa, Moha, etc.)."

6. If you think about it for a minute, you will realize that most of the abhisañkhāra that we do, are done targeting one or more of those sense-pleasing activities (and they are normally not even immoral, i.e., but they are still apuñ̃̄äbhisañkhāra, but with less kammic energy). But these do not lead to births in the apāyā.

- Since we crave those things, we are attached to those things, and according to "pati+ichcha" (or bonding with liking or desire), leading to "sama + uppāda" (births accordingly).
- Thus the more we engage in these activities with zest (Arahant does some of these too, but without any cravings), we make kamma bīja in the kāma bhava; we keep strengthening "kāma gati."

7. On the other hand, some people get dissatisfied with the sensory pleasures and cultivate $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$ to enjoy "mind pleasures" either in the rūpa loka or arūpa loka.

- Thus, those who have kāma rāga will generate kāma bhava;
- Rūpa rāga and arūpa rāga (in \#2 above) lead respectively to rūpa bhava and arūpa bhava.
- Thus we can see how "bhava" are prepared and strengthened by habitually doing things one likes according to one's gati.
- Doing things involve kāya sañkhāra; speaking and thinking about them involve vacī sañkhāra. This is why sañkhāra lead to a "defiled mindset" or viññāna, which in turn leads to the corresponding bhava via those steps in Paticca Samuppāda.

8. Thus, "bhava" is an energy that we build up ourselves through our actions. Even if someone does not like to be born a dog, if one keeps doing things normally done by dogs, then one is preparing bhava to be born in the "dog bhava."

- One time I heard over the radio on the news that a person was arrested for engaging in sex with a female dog. Even though he was still in the human realm, he got "born" in the "dog bhava" for a while. Since he is willingly does that, he will likely be born a dog at death. This is a good example for both "pavutti kamma bhava" and "uppatti kamma bhava."
- This is also a good example of how one can become morally blind (kāmacchanda nīvaraṇa) when greed or lust rises to a high level.

9. One thing that should have become clear is that even if we do not do any immoral deeds, we are bound to be reborn in the k $\bar{a} m a$ loka (sense realms of the four apa$y \bar{a}$ and the human and Deva realms) as long as we crave sense pleasures. But such sensual cravings, by themselves, do not lead to birth in the ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$; birth in the apāyā is due to apuññābhisañkhāra or immoral sañkhāra (see \#5 above).

- As long as we like sense pleasures (and do not realize the dangers in them), we will have "kāma gati," and thus we will have "kāma bhava," i.e., we will keep generating both good and bad kamma bïja that belong to the kāma bhava.
- So, what are the dangers of remaining in kāma loka? Even though we may not do immoral deeds in this birth (because of our circumstances of being born in a good family, good country, etc.), we are bound to be reborn in a bad environment where we may have to do immoral deeds to survive. Then we will make kamma bīja suitable for rebirth in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$.
- We all likely already have such bad kamma bïja, because we have no idea what kind of deeds we have done in our past lives.

10. The mundane way to escape from the $k \bar{a} m a \operatorname{loka}$ is to cultivate anāriya jhānā (either rūpa jhānā or arūpa jhānā), and seek rebirth in rūpa or arūpa loka. But the problem is even then we will not be "really free" from rebirth in the kāma loka in the future. This is because after the kammic energy of that rūpa bhava or arūpa bhava is worn out, that anāriya person will be reborn in kāma loka again.

- This is why the Buddha admonished the bhikkhus to strive hard to attain at least the Sotāpanna stage of Nibbāna. He said if we knew the dangers of rebirth in the kāma loka, we would make haste like a person who will try to find a way to put out a fire that is engulfing oneself.
- Some people think these are depressing thoughts. But the facts cannot be avoided by not thinking about them. When one realizes the true nature of this world and makes some progress to be free from that predicament, one will start feeling relieved and happy; this is the nirāmisa sukha of Nibbāna.

11. Generally, as we have referred to before, "bhava" means existence somewhere in "this world." It is even better to say that "bhava" means the "potential for existence" somewhere "in this world of 31 realms."

- When someone cultivates "rūpa loka" jhānā, one generates a kammic energy in a kamma bïja that can lead to "existence in the rūpa loka." That means, even while in the human realm, he/she can get into a $j h a \overline{n a}$ and "effectively live in the rūpa loka," because that is what a being (a Brahma) in the rūpa loka experiences; this is called "pavutti kamma bhava" (NOT "kāma bhava," which we will discuss below).
- Furthermore, the more one practices that jhāna, the one makes that kamma bīja strong, and when one dies, one will be born in that rūpa loka, because that kamma bïja will be the one he/she will "upādāna" or grasp at the moment of death; this is "uppatti kamma bhava." Note: If one loses the ability to get into (anāriya) jhāna before death, they will not be grasping a Brahma birth. That happened to Devadatta.
- Thus, that kamma bīja is said to be in "rūpa loka bhava."

12. Similarly, another person practicing arūpa jhānā will be cultivating a kamma bīja in "arūpa loka bhava." Furthermore, he/she is likely to display qualities or "gati" of an "arūpa Brahma" even while leading a human life.

- Therefore, when one has a certain bhava, one has the potential to be born in that bhava for a short time during the current life (called pavutti kamma bhava) or to be born in that realm at death (uppatti kamma bhava).

13. The strength of a kamma bīja comes from the javana of the citta while one is engaging in the activity. The worst consequences and strong kamma bïja are generated by a mind that enjoys the evil act. This is why the "somanassa sahagata ditthi sampayutta citta" or the "thought (act) done with pleasure and with wrong views that arises automatically" is the strongest immoral citta. Such a thought arises automatically when one has "gati" compatible with such acts.

- For example, when one engages in unlawful and immoral sexual activities, the more one enjoys such acts, and "gets used to such activities" by building up that habit or "gati." The likelihood of such a thought arising automatically will be higher. Then one will have higher and higher levels of kāmacchanda (one of the five $n \bar{v} v a r a n a$ that covers the mind); thus, one will not think twice before committing such an act. The only way to break out of that vicious cycle is to contemplate the consequences (possible rebirth in the animal or worse realms) and commit to stopping such activities.
- The danger in building up bad habits (gati) is that one could progressively get into worse habits. A teenager who starts drinking could start using drugs; that could lead to hanging out with even worse friends and getting into drug dealing or even killings. As we saw in the previous post, "Dhammo ha ve rakkati dhammacāri" or "Dhamma will guide one in the direction of the type of dhamma one associates with" can work both ways, moral or immoral.

14. To break away from bad gati, one needs to decide not only to stop such bad activities but also to build up the opposite good gati, and start heading in the right direction. We must follow the mundane Eightfold Path and Noble Eightfold Path in that sequence; see "Buddha Dhamma - In a Chart."

- Once firmly on the mundane eightfold path, the next steps are to do the correct $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p a \bar{n} a \quad b h \bar{a} v a n a \bar{a}$ (" $\underline{6}$. Ānāpānasati Bhāvanā (Introduction)") and the Satipatṭhāna bhāvana ("Mahā Satipatthāna Sutta").

15. Also, it is impossible to grasp all this with a mind that is not purified. As I emphasized many times, what matters in making progress is not the "book knowledge" but cleansing the mind and grasping the key Dhamma concepts.

- No matter how intelligent or educated, any person cannot grasp the dangers of the rebirth process UNTIL the mind is cleansed of defilements to a certain extent by both staying away from highly immoral acts AND learning Dhamma.

16. Some people worry about whether they can get rid of certain bad habits they have. They just try to suppress them quickly by sheer willpower. That does not work most of the time. One has to be patient and follow the Path while learning and grasping the key Dhamma concepts.

- The Buddha gave the following example: When a farmer cultivates his plot, he just needs to make sure to provide enough water, get rid of weeds, fertilize, etc. There is no point in worrying about "when am I going to get the harvest?." The crop will grow in time and bring a good harvest IF the necessary work is done.
- In the same way, if one follows the Path by leading a moral life and learning Dhamma, one will be guided in the right direction. And just like the farmer could see that the crop is growing well, one will be able to experience the progress, but not the result in a single step.

17. In the previous post, "Namagotta, Bhava, Kamma Bīa, and Mano Loka (Mind Plane)," we discussed how both nāma gotta, and kamma büja (and bhava) are "located" in the mind plane. Nāma gotta are just records without any embedded energy; when one thinks, speaks, and bodily acts, a trace of those thoughts, speech, and actions are recorded (like a tape) in the mind plane.

- On the other hand, the kammic energies associated with those activities are also recorded in the mental plane as kamma bi $\bar{j} a$, and those have kammic energies associated with them. Those kamma bīj $\bar{a}$ are in different "bins" or "categories" called bhava.


### 3.5.3 Gati to Bhava to Jāti - Ours to Control

## Revised November 15, 2018

## Introduction

One's character (gati) determines one's future births. The ability to figure that out is called the "nāmarūpa paricceda ñāna."

1. We have discussed the background material in the previous two posts: 'Namagotta, Bhava, Kamma Bija, and Mano Loka (Mind Plane)" and "Gati and Bhava - Many Varieties." Now I want to bring it all together and show that "bhava" is actually something that we create AND maintain on our own with the way we think, speak, and act with our ingrained habits (gati).

- If you have not read the previous two posts, I highly encourage reading them. It is important to get the basic concepts right, and then to rehash them in different (and yet consistent!) ways, so that the ideas sink in.
- We will use those ideas and use the Paticca Samuppāda sequence to trace how we make "bhava" OURSELVES, which in turn give rise to $j \bar{a} t i$ (births) not only in future lives but also during this life.
- There is no one else, or even a "super being", that can either help or hurt you in the long run. One's destiny is up to oneself. The Buddha said, "attā hi attano nātho, ko hi nātho parosiyā" or "One is indeed one's own refuge; how can others be refuge to one?." Even the Buddha could only teach the way.


## What Are Gati?

2. "Gati" is a key word in Buddha Dhamma. There is no perfect English translation but habits, tendencies, and biases convey similar meaning. Gati has a deeper meaning because sometimes one's samsäric gati (habits and tendencies from previous lives) may lie dormant.

- For example, a teenager may not have a "habit" of drinking, but after a few drinks may get "hooked" easier than others if he had a corresponding gati from past lives.
- Also, I get messages from people who never even paid attention to "Buddhism" getting to samādhi (state of calmness) just reading these posts; that is also a "gati" from past lives. They are likely to have been exposed to Buddha Dhamma in previous lives.
- Most of the time we do inappropriate things (immoral abhisañkhāra) because we have a gati or tendency to do so. This is what is embedded in the "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" step most of the time. Our avijja in such a case is not knowing that we have such gati or knowing about it but does not know why or how to get rid of it.
- As I pointed out in "Sutta Interpretation - Uddesa, Niddesa, Patiniddesa," "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" is just a condensed or "uddesa" version. We need to analyze it ("niddesa" and "patiniddesa") to get the idea, depending on the context.

3. When we (repeatedly) do such abhisañkhāra (thoughts, speech, actions), we build-up a viññāna for it. For example, if someone likes to watch porn, the more one does it, the more that " $v i \tilde{n} \tilde{n} \bar{a} n a$ for watching porn" will grow. It will be in the subconscious ready to "pop up." In other words, that "gati" gets more established.

- Then comes "viññāna paccayā nāmarūpa," i.e., it becomes easier to think about clips from previous views or fantasize about them. Here nāmarūpa are the memories (mental pictures) of past activities or "blueprints" for future plans. It is important to realize that nāmarūpa for patisandhi viññāna will be somewhat different; see, "Akusala-Mula Paticca Samuppada."

4. Now the next step is hard to resist: "nāmarūpa paccayā saḷāyatana." Here salāyatana means not all six senses, but the appropriate one(s) for the activity. Here they are cakkayatana (based on the eye) and manayatana (mind).

- It is important to realize that "āyatana" does not mean the sense faculty like the eye; it is rather "using the sense faculty for this purpose", for doing abhisañkhāra (for watching porn and enjoying it, in this particular example). An Arahant has eyes and can see, but will not use them as "āyatana" to "acquire 'san'."
- Then comes, "salāyatana paccayā phasso." Here of course it is not just "phassa" but "samphassa," i.e., generate "san" (according to one's gati) in the process; see, "Difference between Phassa and Samphassa."
- Because it is not just "phassa" but "samphassa," then one generates feelings: "phassa paccayā vedanā." For example, an Arahant watching a porn movie will not generate any joyful feelings, because that would only involve "phassa" and NOT "samphassa."

5. Now comes the last few steps. Because of the sukha vedana $\bar{a}$ (in this particular example), one will get attached to it: "vedanā paccayā tanhhā"; see, "Tanhā - How We Attach Via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance."

- And then, "taṇhā paccayā upādāna," i.e., one grasps whole-heartedly because one really enjoys it, and would like to do it again. "Upādāna" means one likes to keep it close.
- Thus one makes "bhava" for it; one has plans to do it again, and it is a "reality" or future existence at some point: "upādāna paccayā bhava."


## Connection Between Gati, Bhava, and Jäti

6. As we can see, all this is going in our minds. The bottom line is that we just keep thinking and doing things (also called cultivating sañkhāra) that we have become "attached to" or we have formed "gati" for. Each time we go through this series of steps we just make that "bhava" grow stronger.

- Then it becomes easier to be "born in that bhava," i.e. jāti (pronounced "jāti"). Most people think " $j a \bar{a} t i$ " means rebirth; but it is not restricted to rebirth.
- Just like one can be born in a certain realm (animal, human, etc) at death, one can be born in the "drunken state" when one has "bhava to get drunk." If one makes a "bhava" to watch porn, then each time one does it, it becomes easier the next time to be "born in that bhava," i.e., to watch again.
- And it is easy to extend this to any other misdeed. If one forms a habit to drink without control (i.e., "get drunk to the point that one cannot think clearly"), then each time one does it one makes that bhava stronger, if not controlled, one day one could be an alcoholic. And it does not stop in this life. If a strong bhava is formed it can affect future births. In a new birth, one is born to a mother (and to a lesser extent father) with similar gati. Thus an alcoholic in this life is LIKELY to be born to an alcoholic mother if the next birth is in the human realm.
- It must be pointed out that "hateful bhava" for certain things or even for a certain person, also can be carried from life-to-life. There are many mentions in the Tipitaka of how Devadatta clashed with the Buddha (or rather the Bodhisattva) in previous lives.
- One's physical body will change (most of the time drastically) from life-to-life, but one's gati, āsava, and bhava are carried from life-to-life; of course those keep changing all the time too, but significant changes happen when one is human with the most ability to change one's destiny.

7. Thus "bhava paccay $\bar{a} j \bar{a} t i$ " applies both in this life and also for future rebirths. This is the difference between "Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda" and that for paṭisandhi to a new life: "Akusala-Mula Paticca Samuppāda."

- As explained in \#6 above, one's future births are due to one's gati. The realization that one's future births are determined by one's gati - and the ability to figure out the bhava and $j \bar{a} t i(j \bar{a} t h i)$ according one's gati - is called "nāmarūpa paricceda ñāna" or "nāmarūpa paricceda ñāna." This basically means "rūpa" are according "nama" (literally, one's body is according to one's thinking).


## What Are $\bar{A} \boldsymbol{s} a v \bar{a} \bar{s}$ (Cravings)?

8. To make the final connection to Nibbāna, we see that one's gati are intimately connected to one's $\bar{a} s a v \bar{a} s$ (cravings). Just like gati, $\bar{a} s a v \bar{a} s$ are deep-seated and ingrained in one's lifestream and most can be traced back numerous lives in the past; see, "Āsava, Anusaya, and Gati (Gathi)."

- While there can be an infinite number of gati, there are four basic categories of $\bar{a} s a v a \bar{s}: ~ d i t ̣ t h a \bar{s} a v a$, kāmāsava, bhavāsava, avijjāsava; see below.
- This logical connection is clearly shown in the Sammā Ditthi sutta. It was Ven. Sariputta who delivered that sutta after being asked by the Buddha to explain "Sammā Ditthi" to other bhikkhus on one occasion. He went through the steps of the Paticca Samuppäda backwards and eventually the
bhikkhus asked, "Is there a cause for $a v i j j \bar{a}$ ?." He explained that indeed $\bar{a} s a v a \bar{s}$ contribute to $a v i j j \bar{a}$, and vice versa.
- In fact, as we see in the Abhidhamma section, four of the eight "basic units of matter" in a suddhatthaka arise due to $a v i j j \bar{a}$ and the other four due to tanh $\bar{a}$ (which arise due to $\bar{a} s a v a$ ). Avijj $\bar{a}$ and taṇhā are called "bhava-mūla" for this reason.

9. One way to explain Nibbāna or "complete cooling down" is to say that it is attained by getting rid of all $\bar{a} s a v \bar{a} s$. When one follows the Noble Eightfold Path, "āsavakkhaya" is achieved in steps.

- At the Sotāpanna stage, the first component of āsava or diṭthāsava (craving for various ditṭhis or wrong worldviews) is removed. This all important component of ditthāsava is solely due to not knowing the true nature of this world of 31 realms: anicca, dukkha, anatta. Most people carry certain dittthis all their lives, most even coming from previous lives. The most prevalent ditthi is the belief that there is no rebirth process.
- When one truly comprehends that consequences of immoral acts can be much harsher than we normally believe (birth in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$ ), that itself removes the causes for rebirth in the apa$y \bar{a}$.


## Connection to the Four Stages of Nibbāna

10. A Sotāpanna would still have the other three āsavās: kāmāsava (craving for sense pleasures), bhavāsava (craving for living somewhere in the 31 realms), and avijjāsava (cravings due to not knowing anicca, dukkha, anatta fully).

- Kāmāsava is reduced at the Sakadāgāmi stage and is removed at the Anāgāmi stage.
- Bhavāsava and avijjāsava are removed only at the Arahanthood.
- Of course, all four āsavās keep getting reduced at each stage of Nibbāna. Thus a Sotāpanna, for example, would have reduced the other three $\bar{a} s a v a \bar{s}$ to some level.
- It is also clear that comprehension of anicca, dukkha, anatta gradually increases at each stage and is complete only at the Arahant stage.

11. It is nice to see the self-consistency, and the fact that one can analyze a given situation in different ways.

- One may have a Ph.D. or one may be able to recite the whole of the Tipiṭaka; yet one would not be even able to get to the Sotāpanna magga without comprehending anicca, dukkha, anatta to some level.
- Ditṭhāsava cannot be removed until one is well on the way on the mundane eightfold path, because one's mind needs to be cleared of the strongest defilements. As I keep saying, this is not about "book knowledge"; it is all about cleansing one's mind.
- Of course, ditthāsava gives rise to various gati, and thus removal of such gati is the key to attacking diṭthāsava. The foremost is the tendency to "cling to a certain belief' and not even willing to consider the counter arguments.
- If one has the ditṭhi that there is no rebirth, one needs to carefully examine the evidence for and against.
- Another is the refusal to believe anything "that cannot be proven" by a "scientific method." Thus, just over 400 years ago, people looked around and asked "where are those infinite number of universes and infinite number of living beings that the Buddha was talking about?." Even now, science is only aware of a minute fraction of our physical universe, not to mention pretty much nothing about the mind; see, "Dhamma and Science" for details.

12. The bottom line is that whether one will be a human, a deva or an animal in the next life will depend on what kind of gati we develop, and NOT what we wish/pray for. Furthermore, one can become a Sotāpanna in this very life by cultivating the "gati of a Sotāpanna" or "Ariya gati." The key is to develop Sammā Dittthi by learning and comprehending Dhamma (the correct world view).

Next, "Memory, Brain, Mind, Nama Loka, Kamma Bhava, Kamma Vipāka", ........

### 3.5.4 <br> Memory, Brain, Mind, Nama Loka, Kamma Bhava, Kamma Vipāka

There are many confusing terms like citta and mano which have been differently interpreted in different books. In order to clarify these concepts, I am writing a few posts in "Dhamma Concepts" section under "Mind and Consciousness" starting with: "1. Thoughts (Citta), Consciousness (Viññāna), and Mind (Hadaya Vatthu) - Introduction."

1. Think about a past event that is still vividly there in your mind. You can visualize the whole "event" just like watching a movie; you can recall what those people looked like, what they said, etc.

- Suppose a 40 -year old recalls an event where she was a 10 -year old playing with her mother. She will recall the event just as it happened 30 years ago: she was young and her mother was 30 years old; it took place in her parents' house which does not even exist now. But in the "playback" that exact same time sequence is played back with the 10 -year old playing with her 30 -year old mother in the same house that they lived in. It is not just a "summary" of what happened, rather an exact playback showing her young mother's features at that time, what she said, etc.
- Recently, it has been reported that some individuals have an astounding capability to instantly recall past events (during this life) in vivid detail; see, "Recent Evidence for Unbroken Memory Records (HSAM)."

2. Most scientists and philosophers believe that the memories are kept in the brain. Is this a realistic picture? They do not have any evidence to back this claim.

- How can all those details be "stored" in a biological membrane, ready to be retrieved at a moment's notice? No one has explained a plausible mechanism yet.

3. Whatever we do with body, speech, and mind, a "record" (nāma gotta) gets established ("bihiwelā pihitanava" in Sinhala) in the kamma bhava: In the word "bhava", "bha" means "appear and gets established"; thus the act we did, i.e., kamma, gets recorded in the kamma bhava exactly the same way it happened. We cannot "see" bhava but we can see the results of bhava as "jāti."

- Not only potent kamma, but ALL memories are stored intact in the nāma loka. Basically, the thought stream is recorded continuously like a movie recording and thus can be "played back"; see, "What Reincarnates? - Concept of a Lifestream."
- Thus while the "fruits of kamma" are embedded in kamma bīja (seeds) in the nāma loka as kamma bhava, the movie like sequence is recorded in the nāma loka as nāma gotta.
- Therefore, while kamma seeds in the kamma bhava can bring their results in the future, the nāma gotta are just records without substance: see, "Difference Between Dhamma and Sañkhāra (Sankhata)." Thus unlike anything else in this world (sañkhāra or sañkhata (sankata in Sinhala)), nāma gotta are PERMANENT.
- This is why the Buddha Gotama could recall the exact scene that happened billions of years ago, when he received the first confirmation ("niyata vivarana") of his future Buddhahood by the Buddha Deepankara. At that time he was an ascetic by the name of Sumedha and the Buddha Gotama described the whole event that took place in detail; see, WebLink: WIKI: Dīpankara Buddha.
- In the same way, the kamma bïja stored in the nāma loka are instantly activated when proper conditions are realized; see, "Anantara and Samanatara Paccaya." However, unlike nāma gotta, kamma seeds fade away with time unless brought to bear fruit under right conditions.

4. Thus, memories (whatever the portion that is remembered) are played back in a "movie-like" manner, like in a dream. It is like a segment of a "movie recording." It is not just a "gist" or a summary; we can recall the whole "sequence of events" like in a movie.

- This is why when someone describes an event by memory he/she always tends to tell the story sequentially: The person listening may not want to hear the whole story and could become impatient waiting for the narrator to "get to the point", but for the narrator recalling the event, it is easier to go sequentially as the event is "played back" in his/her mind.

5. We cannot say where that memory is "located", because they are not stored in the "physical space" or the "material world"; they are in the "nāma loka" or "mental world." In contrast what we experience through our five senses is the "rūpa loka" or the "material world" that consists of 31 realms.

- This is also why scientists will not be able to describe the mind in terms of matter; see, "The Double Slit Experiment - Correlation between Mind and Matter?." Mind and matter belong to two distinct domains.
- As I will clarify in detail in the future, this is related to the fact that there are six fundamental entities (six dhātus): pathavi (hardness), āpo (cohesiveness), tejo (vitality), vāyo (motion), ākāsa (space), and viññāna (consciousness). The viññāna dhātu is associated with the "nāma loka" and the other five dhātus are associated with the "rūpa loka" or the "material world." But we don't need to worry about that right now. You will see other pieces falling into place in a "big jigsaw puzzle" as all these seemingly unrelated aspects come together to form a cohesive, complete picture of the "wider world."
- This could be related to the possibility of higher "curled up" dimensions that is being discussed in String Theory in physics; see, "What Happens in Other Dimensions?."

6. We can normally access our own "information" from this life but some people, especially some young children, have the ability to recall nāma gotta from past lives. Those who have abhiññā powers can access such "information" or "nāma gotta" of other people as well; however, even they cannot read another's "thoughts" or "kamma bī̀a" or "kamma bhava."

- We can retrieve this memory by thinking about it. There is a mechanism for that memory to be retrieved; the mind initiates the process, but the brain acts as the "receiver" for the incoming information.
- When we think about something that happened in the past, the mind sends mind rays out and they bounce off that specific target in the "nama loka" and the memory is reflected back. That retrieval process does not change the memory record, and the record stays intact. Thus one can go back and recall it again.
- When the retrieved information comes back, that signal is processed by the brain. Our whole body is prepared by the kamma seed that led to this human existence to limit/facilitate certain capabilities; thus what we can actually remember depends on the status of our brain. Our human bodies are generally setup (by kamma vipāka) to be able to retrieve only the strong memories from the early days of this life and cannot access memories of previous lives. But few people can, and so can some children. Furthermore, if the relevant parts of the brain gets damaged, then the retrieval capability may be lost.
- Some beings in preta loka can remember past lives to impart more suffering on them. They can remember the bad deeds done by them that led to the birth in the preta world, and how long they will have to suffer to "pay back the debt."

7. How much of that memory one actually recalls depends on two things: the health of the brain and the purity of the mind.

- If the brain is not functioning well, only bits and pieces of the memory will be actually experienced. When people get old, the brain's efficiency goes down and thus memory will not work well. The brain is like a playback device and if it is defective, the display will be blurry or at worst no display will result.

8. Secondly, even a person with a healthy brain, may not be able to recall memories if the mind is "covered" by the five hindrances (panca nivarana); see, "Key to Calming the Mind - The Five Hindrances."

- When there is kāmachanda or vyāpāda, the mind is too much focused on those objects of thought (ārammana). When there is thina middha, the mind is now "stuck" lazily at something (sleepy or just distracted), and will not retrieve the memory. With uddhacca kukkucca, the mind is normally
"intoxicated" with power, money, beauty etc is stuck at a "low level." With vicikicch $\bar{a}$ (which is due to micch $\bar{a}$ diṭthi or not knowing the true characteristics anicca, dukkha, anatta), one engages in inappropriate acts and thus the mind is not "sharp."
- Thus, any, some, or all of these five factors can affect the memory of even a person with a healthy brain. When we purify our minds of the pañca nivvaraṇa, its ability to pinpoint a given "memory location" is improved.
- Furthermore, when the mind is purified, that can make one's brain to function better by changing the conditions for better kamma vipāka to come to fruition; see, "Anantara and Samanatara Paccaya." This "mind effect" on the brain and the body in general is being re-discovered by scientists; see, for example, 'The Biology of Belief' by Bruce H. Lipton.

9. Most scientists and philosophers believe that our memories are stored in our brains. There are key problems with that assumption:

- If that is the case, then the "state of the mind" should not be a factor in recalling a memory, because then it is like retrieving a sound track from a disc; the playback should be good as long as the "playing device" (i.e., the brain) is in good condition.
- It is astounding how much one can recall from the memory. And it comes out like a video clip; we can visualize and even recall the conversations that took place a long time ago in case of poignant memories. Can all those details be "stored" in a biological membrane?
- Even if it is possible to encode all that information (exact features of the 10 -year old child and her 30year old mother, what they spoke at that time in the same tone, etc. in the hypothetical example of \#1 above), how can it be recalled instantaneously?

10. Here is an article which discusses these unresolved scientific issues: WebLink: VIEWZONE: Are your memories really in your brain?

- Here is a good site if you need to dig in deeper: WebLink: HUMAN-MEMORY: MEMORY STORAGE


### 3.5.5 Bhava and Jāti - States of Existence and Births Therein

Revised September 7, 2016; Revised May 7, 2017; October 25, 2018; January 18, 2020; May 28, 2022 (added \#13); re-written August 12, 2022

Bhava and jāti are related but are different concepts. Bhava is of two types: kamma bhava and uppatti bhava. There can be many $j \bar{a} t i$ (births) within a uppatti bhava.

## Introduction

1. In both Pāli and Sinhala, $j \bar{a} t i$ means birth. Bhava means "ชిద๑わ ออ" (tibena bava) in Sinhala, or "existence."

- There are two types of bhava: kamma bhava and uppatti bhava. Kamma bhava is "potential for existence." Uppatti bhava is one's current existence.
- Various types of kamma bhava are created via akusala-mūla Paṭicca samuppāda. At the patisandhi moment of grasping a new existence, one of those kamma bhava becomes uppatti bhava.
- When one gets a "human existence" or a human bhava, that can last thousands of years. Within that uppatti bhava, one can be born (jäti) with a physical human body many times.
- By the way, $j \bar{a} t i$ is pronounced " $\bar{a} \bar{t} h i$ " with "th" sound as in "three." There is a universally-adopted convention of writing Pāli words with English letters to keep the sentences short; see Ref. 1.
- First, let us clarify "bhava."


## What Is Kamma Bhava?

2. Here, "bha" means "establish." When we act with a defiled mind, we create kammic energies that lead to future existence (bhava.) That simple statement embeds the essence of Buddha Dhamma: "Manopubbangamā Dhammā.."

- When we have strong feelings about something, we generate deep desires/cravings. Those are potent abhisañkhāra; they create kammic energies or kamma bīja (seeds.) Those are different names for "kamma bhava."
- For example, craving tasty food may lead to immoral thoughts/actions. If one does not have enough money, one may resort to stealing, possibly leading to violence. Such immoral actions lead to the generation of kamma bīja (or kamma bhava.)
- Therefore, the generation of kamma bïja (or kamma bhava) happens based on our gati (habits/character). Each person likes certain kinds of experiences/activities.


## Kamma Bīja, Kamma Bhava, and Gati

3. When one develops a habit (gati) by repeatedly doing related things, that bhava or the kamma bïja gets stronger. It leads to the creation of kamma bhava via "taṇhā paccayā upādāna, upādāna paccayā bhava."

- Thus, one who started stealing may cultivate a habit of doing it. Each time they steal, kammic energy is added to that associated kamma bïja or kamma bhava.
- An innocent child may not have any desire to drink alcohol. But growing into a teenager, he may start drinking under the influence of friends. If he starts liking that experience, he will repeatedly engage in drinking and will start building up a "drunkard bhava." That is a "kamma bhava" built up with a new habit (gati) of drinking.


## Kamma Bhava Becomes Uppatti Bhava

4. All kammic energies accumulate in the kamma bhava. Some kamma bhava can get strong enough to become "uppatti bhava," leading to rebirth in a "good existence" (Deva, Brahma) or a "bad existence" (animal, peta, etc.).

- At the cuti-patisandhi moment (grasping a new bhava), the strongest kamma bhava available becomes "uppatti bhava," leading to the new existence.
- At the cuti moment, one will be presented with an ārammana compatible with that bhava. For example, suppose one had killed an enemy and thus created a kamma bhava suitable to bring a niraya birth. Then at the cuti (dying) moment, one may visualize that same past scenario where the enemy was confronted.
- If one attaches willingly to that $\bar{a} r a m m a n ̣ a ~(i . e ., ~ u p a ̄ d a ̄ n a), ~ a ~ s i m i l a r ~ n i r a y a ~ b h a v a ~ w i l l ~ r e s u l t: ~ i . e ., ~$ pati+ichcha leading to sama+uppāda or Paṭicca Samuppāda. That is the "upādāna paccayā bhava" step in grasping a new uppatti bhava. However, if that person had attained a magga phala, they would not have upād̄̄na for such an $\bar{a} r a m m a n ̣ a$. That is why anyone above the Sotāpanna Anugāmi will not be reborn in an apāya.

5. Note that the "upādāna paccayā bhava" step comes BOTH in creating a kamma bhava (in \#3 above) and grasping one of those as uppatti bhava (in \#4 above.) Let us consider a few examples.

- One who enjoys torturing animals/humans is creating a kamma bhava with those actions. They may be born in niraya (hell), where constant torture occurs via grasping that as a uppatti bhava at a patisandhi
moment. That is an example of kamma bhava contributing to a uppatti bhava. In that case, he may be born in the niraya repeatedly (many $j \bar{a} t i$ ) until the kammic energy for that niraya bhava wears out.
- An alcoholic contributes to the kamma bhava by habitually drinking and acting like an animal. That can lead to creating a kamma bhava compatible with animal existence. Thus, they could grasp that kammic energy as a uppatti bhava in a future patisandhi moment and be born an animal. For example, one who behaves like a dog after getting drunk (displaying inappropriate sexual acts, threatening others, etc.) may cultivate the disgraceful qualities of a dog and may acquire a "dog bhava."


## Good Habits Lead to Good Bhava

6. All the above is valid for "good bhava" or "good habits," too.

- Thus, one with the compassionate qualities of a Deva (i.e., deva bhava) could acquire "Deva bhava" and be born a deva. One who has cultivated jhāna may acquire "Brahma bhava" and be born a Brahma.
- (Note that Deva and Brahma bhava each have only one jāti. Once born in the final form with an opapātika birth, they live until the end of bhava. There is no "gandhabba state" as is the case for humans and animals.)
- It is the universal principle of "pati+ichcha sama+uppāda" working to yield an existence similar to the actions one willingly engages in. See "Paticca Samuppāda."

7. To cultivate a good or bad bhava, one must frequently engage in corresponding activities.

- It is easy to see from the above discussion why it is essential to instill good habits in children and break any bad habits as they grow. It is much easier to stop forming "bad" bhava or habits (gati) in the early stages; once a habit/addiction takes hold, it becomes harder to lose.
- Also, see "How Character (Gati) Leads to Bhava and Jāti."
- Modern science agrees with that too. According to modern science, repeated actions will strengthen the neural connections in the brain for that habit; see, "How Habits are Formed and Broken - A Scientific View").


## Human Bhava Is Rare - But Many Human Jāti (Births) Occur Within a Human Bhava

8. Human bhava is hard to get; see "How the Buddha Described the Chance of Rebirth in the Human Realm."

- However, a human bhava or a human existence can last thousands of years. A human birth ( $j \bar{a} t i)$ with a human body lasts only about 100 years. Therefore, within a human bhava, there can be MANY births with a human body or $j \bar{a} t i$.
- In between births with physical human bodies, a human lives as a gandhabba (with just the mental body) in the nether world or para loka. This para loka co-exists with our human loka, but we cannot see those gandhabbā without physical bodies. For details, see "Gandhabba Sensing the World - With and Without a Physical Body," "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception," and "Cloning and Gandhabba."
- A good visualization of gandhabba is in "Ghost 1990 Movie - Good Depiction of Gandhabba Concept." It is an "energy field" that we cannot see.

9. In rebirth stories, there is always a "time gap" between successive human births (jāti). They separate by many years or at least a few years. Between those successive lives, that lifestream lives as a gandhabba, without a physical body.

- In most rebirth stories, the previous human life was terminated unexpectedly, like in an accident or a killing. Therefore, the kammic energy for human bhava may not be exhausted. In that case, the gandhabba just came out of the dead body and waited for another womb to enter.
- The Buddha has described that it is extremely difficult to get a human existence (bhava); see "How the Buddha Described the Chance of Rebirth in the Human Realm." If "bhava" means "birth," then all those rebirth stories cannot be true.


## A Sotāpanna May Have Many Jāti, But Only Seven Bhava

10. As a Noble Person moves up in magga phala, less kamma bhava (i.e., accumulated kammic energy) will be able to contribute to uppatti bhava. There will be no uppatti bhava at the Arahant stage since an Arahant will not have any more uppatti. Even though the kamma bhava for that Arahant will still be there, it will not become a uppatti bhava.

- From the WebLink: suttacentral: Ratana Sutta (KN Kp 6); "..Na te bhavam aț̣hamamādiyanti" means, "(A Sotāpanna) will not be born in an eighth bhava." But there could be many rebirths within those seven bhava.
- For example, King Bimbisāra, a Sotāpanna, died and had 14 rebirths; see "WebLink: suttacentral: Janavasabha Sutta (DN 18)."


## A Physical Human Body Versus Manomaya Kāya (Gandhabba)

11. According to the Tipiṭaka, a full-pledged human appears via a series of steps: "jāti sañjāti okkanti abhinibbatti khandhānaṃ pātubhāvo āyatanānam paṭiläbho." See "WebLink: suttacentral: Vibhañga Sutta (SN 12.2)" and "Manomaya Kaya (Gandhabba) and the Physical Body." [sañjāti : [f.] birth; outcome; origin.]

- Here, $j \bar{a} t i$ is the patisandhi moment, when the kammaja kāya (with hadaya vatthu and pasāda rūpa) for the new bhava appears in a thought-moment. Moments later, that kammaja kaya is augmented by the cittaja kāya, meaning citta will start arising. Then kammaja kāya and cittaja kāya start generating suddhätthaka-size matter giving rise to the utuja kāya (aura,) and a manomaya kāya (gandhabba) results. That is the sañjāti moment.
- When that gandhabba goes into a suitable womb, that is the okkanti moment. In many sutta, that is described as the "viñ̃ñạa of a boy or a girl descending into a womb." Note that by the time descending into a womb, the sex is already determined.
- The following steps describe the evolvement of the human baby inside the womb to end up with the fullyformed six ayatana.
- There is no place in the Tipitaka that says patisandhi happens in a womb. Rather it says, "... gandhabba okkanti hoti." That may happen even after the birth of the gandhabba.


## Reference

1. "Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars - Part 1" and ""Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars - Part 2."

## Cuti and Maraṇa - Related to Bhava and Jāti

## August 17, 2022

Cuti is the end of a uppatti bhava, and marana is the end of a $j \bar{a} t i$ within a uppatti bhava. There can be many $j \bar{a} t i s$ (births) within a uppatti bhava for humans and animals.

## Introduction

1. There can be many jātis within a uppatti bhava. See "Bhava and Jāti - States of Existence and Births Therein." That holds particularly for the human and animal realms. There usually is one $j \bar{a} t i$ within a uppatti bhava in the Deva and Brahma realms.

- A uppatti bhava starts at a patisandhi moment and ends at a cuti moment. For example, if a Deva dies and gets a "human existence (bhava)," the cuti of that Deva bhava is immediately followed by a patisandhi to grasp the human bhava.
- That human uppatti bhava can last many thousands of years. At the moment of patiisandhi to the human bhava, only a manomaya kāya (human gandhabba) is born. That human gandhabba will get into many wombs during that time and will be born with physical human bodies many times. A human baby's birth ( $j \bar{a} t i$ ) ends in physical death (marana) within about 100 years.
- At the end of the human bhava, that human gandhabba's life will end (cuti), and patisandhi to a new existence will occur unless that lifestream had attained the Arahant stage. Marana (death of a physical body) usually does not end the human bhava. See Ref. 1 for details.
- If the above is not clear, please ask questions at the forum. With that summary, we can now discuss the details.


## Bhava and Gati

2. The Buddha divided all existences into five main categories based on predominant gati. The "WebLink: suttacentral: Gati Sutta (AN 9.68)" lists those five main categories: Hell (niraya), the animal realm (tiracchāna,) the hungry ghost realm (peta,) humans (manussa,) and Deva. Many suttas (including Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta) sometimes lump the Devās in the six Deva realms and Brahmās in 20 Brahma realms into one category as Devās.

- When a lifestream is in a specific existence, it will predominantly have the gati associated with that realm. While in Deva realms, that living being mainly displays "Deva gati" per their particular realm. For example, Devās in the lower six realms still crave sensual pleasures, i.e., kāma rāga. Brahmās in the higher 20 realms don't have cravings for sensual pleasures. But neither will engage in akusala kamma during their life as Deva/Brahma.
- While in a niraya realm, a lifestream will have the gati of a "hell being." During such an existence, no kind thoughts arise, for example, and mostly a painful and angry mindset will persist. This bhava has dosa (extreme anger/hate) as the base; of course, moha is there too.
- In a hungry ghost (peta) realm, the mindset/gati will be that of one constantly in hunger pains. This gati is based on lobha (extreme greed) and moha.
- The animal realm has "all three defiled gati," i.e., lobha, dosa, and moha.

3. Human (manussa) existence is unique in many ways.

- A human can cultivate gati corresponding to any of the 31 realms, not just the primary five categories mentioned in the Gati Sutta.
- We can see some humans who behave like Devās: Some engage in giving, helping others, etc., and cultivate gati to be born in the six Deva realms. Others develop (anāriyalAriya) jhāna corresponding to various Brahma realms and will be reborn in the corresponding Brahma realms.
- Some humans cultivate "apāyagāmi gati," which leads to births in the niraya, peta, asura, and animal realms. Those who develop extreme anger/hate (and thus kill, rape, and abuse others) will be born in the niraya (hell.) Some cultivate extreme greedy gati (and steal, take bribes, etc.) and become destined to the peta realms. An animal bhava has developed with both greed and hate. An animal bhava has a mixture of both. Since ignorance is also there, they will have all three "san" (that is the root of the
word "tirisan = three sans" for an animal in Sinhala.) See \#3 of "Lobha, Dosa, Moha versus Rāga, Patigha, Avijjā."
- Humans can, of course, cultivate "human gati" that will allow another human bhava in the future. "Human gati" is similar to the gati of Devās in the lower six realms but with an enhanced craving for sensory pleasures.


## Connection to Aggañ̃̃a Sutta

4. To make some connections, let us digress to the introductory post "Buddhism and Evolution - Aggañña Sutta (DN 27)".

Per "WebLink: suttacentral: Aggañña Sutta (DN 27), at the beginning of a "new Earth" (after a "loka vināsaya" or the "destruction of the existing Earth"), only the realms above the Ābhassara Brahma realm are populated. Destruction of Earth (and Sun) would have led to the destruction of lower realms. As explained in that post, all sentient beings would have moved up to or above the $\bar{A} b h a s s a r a$ Brahma realm by the time of "loka vināsaya."

- When a new Earth forms after billions of years, an uncountable number of $\bar{A} b h a s s a r a ~ B r a h m a \bar{s}$ would be at the end of their lifetimes, and they will first be reborn in the human realm with "Brahma-like" subtle bodies. Then over millions of years, those "Brahma-like" bodies will evolve into the denser physical bodies we have today.
- After millions of years (especially after evolving into denser bodies,) some will start engaging in akusala kamma when the "old habits (gati)" return. They had been hiding as "anusaya." First, some will be reborn in the animal realm; then, the other three lower realms will start populating as more humans leave the human bhava and "proceed downward." Before the arrival of the animals, plant life will gradually come into existence. See Ref. 2 for more details on gati and anusaya.

5. The point is that the human realm is the "base station." This is where the seeds (kamma bija/kamma bhava) to be born in all other realms are cultivated.

- That point can be clearly illustrated with an Abhidhamma analysis, which I hope to do. But the following is a summary.
- Only a human mind can generate all 89 (121) types of citta. On the other hand, arupāvacara Brahmās mainly generate only eight types of citta. The human realm is like a training school. Those humans taking a "downward path" by engaging in akusala kamma end up in apāyās; those who cultivate arupāvacara $j h a ̄ n a ̄ s$ are born in an arupāvacara Brahma realm, etc.
- Those uncountable number of "Brahma-like" humans at the beginning of a "new Earth" will slowly start populating all other realms, mainly the lower realms. Of course, some will even move up to realms higher than the $\bar{A} b h a s s a r a ~ B r a h m a ~ r e a l m . ~$

6. Almost all the living beings in the apāyās now had been "Brahma-like" humans at the beginning of the mahā kappa, i.e., at the beginning of this Earth when it was first formed.

- It is worthwhile to contemplate that. There are less than eight billion people on Earth right now. But in the backyard of a house, there can be more small insects, ants, worms, and other tiny creatures. Scientists estimate that there is one quadrillion (one million billion) ants on earth. There are even more living beings in the oceans compared to the land.
- Therefore, when the Earth formed several billion years ago, there must have been an accountable number of humans with "Brahma-like" subtle bodies. Most of them took "downward paths." Of course, we can see only the animals, not those born in the other realms in apāya.
- Thus, Buddha's above explanation is exactly the opposite of the currently-accepted Darwin's theory of evolution. However, the theory of evolution will be proven to be incorrect in the future.
- Of course, science's position of the whole universe coming to existence in a "Big Bang" is also not consistent with Buddha Dhamma, as I discussed in "Buddhism and Evolution - Aggañña Sutta (DN 27)." So far, several of the Buddha's original teachings - which were thought to be incorrect by science a few hundred years ago - have now been confirmed by science. See Ref. 3.


## Series of "Cuti Suttä"

7. It is informative to look at a series of suttas on what happens at the end of a human bhava, i.t, the "cuti moment" of leaving the human bhava. Remember that (per \#1 above) grasping of a new existence happens only at the "cuti moment" at the end of the human bhava, not at "marana" or the death of a physical human body.

- There is a sutta that says (upon exiting any existence) that getting a human existence is very rare; see "WebLink: suttacentral: Nakhasikha Sutta (SN 20.2)."
- Then there are a series of suttas specific to different types of originating and destination bhava.

8. The series of specific suttas start with the "WebLink: suttacentral: Manussacutinirava Sutta (SN 56. 102)" which says, ".those who die as humans (not the physical death, but cuti) and are reborn as humans are few, while those who die as humans and are reborn in hell are many ...."

- Then the following suttas say that those who die as humans and are reborn in the animal and hungry ghost realms are many: "WebLink: suttacentral: Manussacutitiracchāna Sutta (SN 56. 103)," and "WebLink: suttacentral: Manussacutipettivisava Sutta (SN 56. 104)."
- The "WebLink: suttacentral: Manussacutidevanirayādi Sutta (SN 56. 105-107)" says those who die as humans and are reborn in Deva realms are few, but born in niraya are many. Then the "WebLink: suttacentral: Devacutinirajādi Sutta (SN 56. 108-110)" states, "who die as Devās and are reborn as Devās are few, while those who die as Devās and are reborn in hell, animal realm, or the hungryghost realm are many."
- Note that "Manussacutiniraya Sutta" is "Manussa cuti niraya Sutta" and indicates a human grasping a niraya bhava at the cuti moment. The other suttas have similar names.
- Many such combinations are shown in the rest of the series. It is a good idea to click through the rest of the suttas.


## Summary

9. Cuti is the end of a uppatti bhava, and marana is the end of a $j \bar{a} t i$ within a uppatti bhava. There can be many $j \bar{a} t i s$ (births) within a uppatti bhava for humans and animals.

- Devās and Brahmās have only a single $j \bar{a} t i$ (birth) to that uppatti bhava.
- All uppatti bhava end at the cuti moment.
- It is only for humans (and animals) that "marana" takes place at the death of a physical body; that is not the end end of the human (animal) bhava. On the other hand, Devās and Brahmās are born ( $j \bar{a} t i)$ at patisandhi and reach the end of that existence at the cuti moment.
- It is extremely difficult to get a uppatti bhava at or above human bhava. Most cuti-patisandhi transitions grasp a bhava in the four lowest realms or the apāyās. It is critical to keep that in mind.


## References

1. "Gati, Bhava, and Jāti"' and "Cuti-Patisandhi - An Abhidhamma Description."
2. "The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Āsava)" and "p. Key to ĀnāpānasatiHow to Change Habits and Character (Gati)."
3. " 31 Realms Associated with the Earth." Also, see the last two subsections in "Dhamma and Science."

### 3.5.7 Anusaya, Gati, Bhava - Connection to Manomaya Kāya (Gandhabba)

August 21, 2022; September 12, 2002 (\#6)
The concepts of anusaya, gati, and bhava are associated with a mind, i.e., manomaya kāyalgandhabba of a lifestream.

## Kammic Energy Creates Hadaya Vatthu (Seat of Consciousness)

1. Our views and perceptions about this world are highly influenced by modern science, which has made significant progress within the past hundred years. However, that progress is limited to studying the inert (lifeless) matter.

- Modern science's materialistic worldview cannot explain the origin of consciousness. Some scientists have proposed that consciousness arises in the brain, but there is no proof for that claim. And there will NEVER be such proof.
- Consciousness arises in hadaya vatthu created by kammic energy. Kammic energy creates hadaya vatthu, the "seat of consciousness" where consciousness or citta arises.
- The Buddha declared that the "mind is at the forefront of everything in this world" or "Manopubbangamā Dhammā..."


## What Creates Kammic Energy?

2. Conversely, hadaya vatthu creates kammic energy! A specific type of cittā, javana cittā (that arises in hadaya vatthu,) creates kammic energy.

- It is a cyclical process: Kammic energy creates hadaya vatthu, and hadaya vatthu creates kammic energy! That cycle is broken only at Nibbāna.
- That is why there is no beginning to life per the Buddha. Citta creates kammic energy, which, in turn, creates future hadaya vatthu where cittā arise.
- I have a detailed analysis of it in the "Origin of Life" series.


## Cyclical Process of Rebirth - Sainsāra

3. Let us do a quick summary. A hadaya vatthu created by kammic energy has a finite lifetime, that of a given existence (uppatti bhava.) Before that hadaya vatthu dies, it creates kammic energies (kamma bhava) that can power up more hadaya vatthus, corresponding to different types of bhava in the future.

- For example, a human has a hadaya vatthu (part of manomaya kāya) that will die after many thousands of years. But within that time, that human will generate kammic energy to "power up" many more hadaya vatthus corresponding to different realms. Unfortunately, most of them correspond to the four lowest realms. That is why only a few humans will get another human or higher bhava.
- Pațicca Samuppāda explains the creation of a manomaya kāyalgandhabba (with a hadaya vatthu) via the "bhava paccaya jāti" step in a process that starts with "avijjā paccaya sañkhāra."
- Read the two posts "Bhava and Jāti - States of Existence and Births Therein" and "Cuti and Marana Related to Bhava and Jāti"' before reading the rest of this post.


## No "Soul" - Concept of a Lifestream

4. The concept of a "lifestream" explains the difference between "a soul/ātman moving from life to life" and the Buddhist explanation of a life arising due to previous causes via Pațicca Samuppāda. See "What Reincarnates? - Concept of a Lifestream." Thus, a future life is not a "reincarnation" of an "unchanging essence" (soul/ätman) associated with the current life.

- Any life among the 31 realms of this world has the following essential elements (Ref. 1): a hadaya vatthu and a set of pasāda rūpa.
- Thoughts (citta) arise not in the brain but in the hadaya vatthu in the manomaya kāya (gandhabba.)
- The hadaya vatthu is essential. There can be no "lifestream" in the rebirth process without it. The hadaya vatthu (and any pasāda rūpa) are created ONLY by kammic energy. It is a natural process.
- When a manomaya kāya (with a hadaya vatthu and a set of pasāda rūpa) dies, a new one takes over at the cuti-patisandhi moment via the "upādāna paccayā bhavo" step in "Akusala-Mūla Upapatti Paticca Samuppāda."


## Manomaya Kāya Is Primary, Not the Physical Body

5. "WebLink: suttacentral: Dhammapada Verses 33-43" in the Citta Vagga provides some critical clues.

- Verse \#37 says, "The mind travels far, wandering alone; incorporeal (not composed of matter) it hides in a cave." That verse refers to the manomaya kāya, which can travel far at high-speed, as confirmed by many NDE accounts: "Near-Death Experiences (NDE): Brain Is Not the Mind." The "cave" (where it takes temporary shelter) is the physical body.
- Verse \#41 states: "All too soon this body will die; bereft of consciousness, tossed aside like a useless $\log$." Here it says that the physical body will be a useless log upon death. The English translation in the link is good, and reading that series of verses is a good idea.
- But the death of the physical body does not end the human bhava. The manomaya $k \bar{a} y a / g a n d h a b b a$ will come out and wait to be pulled into another womb to make another material body.
- A human or animal bhava is long, even though they are less than Deva or Brahma bhava. A person with a physical body lives only about 100 years, but that human bhava will last many thousands of years. The gandhabba/manomaya kāya will make many physical bodies during that time. Same for an animal. A fly lives only a few weeks, but that "fly bhava" may last millions of years. Note that only the manomaya kāya of a human or an animal is called a gandhabba.
- In Deva and Brahma realms, the manomaya kāya is the only kāya. A birth from the womb or an egg with a separate (physical) body is not involved. See "Body Types in 31 Realms - Importance of Manomaya Kāya."


## A Hadaya Vatthu Defines a Bhava in Rebirth Process

6. Therefore, the easiest way to describe the rebirth process is as follows. A lifestream is ALWAYS an associated specific manomaya kāya (with a particular hadaya vatthu) created by kammic energy. In other words, a manomaya kāya results from one particular kamma. For example, a strong puñ̃̃a kamma can create a human or Deva manomaya kāya. On the other hand, a strong apuñña (pāpa) kamma creates a manomaya kāya of an animal, for example.

- The essential component of a manomaya kāya is hadaya vatthu, where cittta (thoughts) arise, and both will last through the end of a bhava.
- When a manomaya kāya (with a hadaya vatthu) dies at the end of a bhava, the lifestream grasps a NEW manomaya kāyalhadaya vatthu compatible with the new bhava at the cuti-patisandhi moment. The new hadaya vatthu inherits all anusaya (hidden defilements.) However, that happens via viññāna dhātu; nothing "moves materially" from one existence to the next.
- For example, suppose a Deva bhava ends, and a human bhava is grasped. At the end of the Deva bhava, the hadaya vatthu (and a set of pasäda rūpa) associated with that Deva existence will die. A moment later, a human gandhabba will appear in the human realm with a NEW hadaya vatthu (and a set of pasāda rūpa.)
- It is essential to understand the following. Nothing from the Deva bhava (hadaya vatthu/pasāda rūpa) "travels" to the human realm. Human's manomaya kāya (hadaya vatthulpasāda rūpa) is created in the human world by kammic energy.


## There Can be Many Births (with Physical Bodies) Within a Human Bhava

7. Suppose the human bhava started (with a human gandhabba) in the year 1900 in the above example. Suppose that gandhabba was born as "John Smith" in 1950, lived for 50 years, and died in 2000. During his life, he would not remember anything about a previous life since it was in a Deva realm. When John Smith dies, the gandhabba comes out and is again pulled into a womb, born in 2005 and given the name "Peter Pan." When a few years old, Peter Pan may be able to recall his past life where he lived as "John Smith."

- Thus, with the above mechanism, we can explain the phenomenon of accounts of previous lives by many children worldwide.
- How would they explain rebirth accounts if anyone does not believe in the gandhabba state? I am yet to hear back from those who say the gandhabba concept is not in Buddlha Dhamma. They should read the post "Gandhabba State - Evidence from Tipitaka."


## Two Adjacent Bhava Are Shielded from Each Other

8. Consider a lifestream transitioning from a Deva bhava to a human bhava. Deva bhava ends with the death of its manomaya kāya, and that is the cuti moment for that Deva bhava, and Deva disappears from that Deva realm.

- At the next moment, kammic energy creates a new manomaya kāya of a human (with a new hadaya vatthulpasāda rūpa), which appears in the human realm (among humans.) Now, that is a human gandhabba without a physical body. It may be several years before that gandhabba is pulled into a matching womb.
- That human gandhabba will not have any memory of the previous Deva existence. One bhava is separated from another.
- Even though some can remember previous lives within the human bhava, it is improbable that a human could recall life in a different bhava, say an animal or Deva bhava. I know of only one account discussed at the forum: "WebLink: puredhamma forums: Remembering Past Lives in the Era of Buddha."
- However, those with abhiññ̄a powers may recall lives in several bhava. A Buddha can recall as many as he wishes.


## Pubbe Nivāsānussati Nāạna and Cutūpapāta Ñāna

9. Only some people can recall their past lives; typically, it is just the previous life. In rare cases, a person may be able to recall a few past lives (in the same human bhava.)

- However, those who cultivate the (Ariya or anāriya) fourth jhāna may be able to recall several past lives. That ability varies from person to person and increases with further cultivation of the jhāna.

During the night of Enlightenment, the Buddha attained three types of higher knowledge:
i. Ability to recall past lives in human births (pubbe nivāsānussati ñāna),
ii. The ability to see any living being's cuti (end of bhava) and patisandhi (grasping of a new bhava). This is the cutūpapāta ñạna.
iii. The attainment of the Buddhahood with āsavakkhaya ñāna. That involved grasping the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path to Nibbāna.
10. The first one allowed him to recall past lives in the human bhava (of him or anyone else.) Note that "nivāsa" means a "house." That refers to the fact that a gandhabba needs to "build a house" (i.e., a physical body) by entering a womb; see \#5 above. The pubbe nivāsānussati ñāna allows a Buddha to see all previous human lives.

- The next $\tilde{n} \bar{a} n \boldsymbol{a}$ that he attained was the cutūpapāta $\tilde{n} a \bar{a} \boldsymbol{n}$. Here, the word cutūpapāta comes from "cuti" (death) and "uppatti" (birth.) That refers to the ending of one bhava and the start of a new bhava. The "cuti-patisandhi moment" is when a lifestream ends one bhava and starts a new bhava. This cutūpapāta ñāna allows a Buddha to look at how any lifestream evolved from bhava to bhava as far as he likes.
- Those two types of $\tilde{\boldsymbol{n}}$ āna allowed him to figure out Pațicca Samuppāda, i.e., how a lifestream moves from bhava to bhava based on the kinds of kamma done. That led to the arising of the āsavakkhaya $\tilde{n} \bar{a} n \boldsymbol{a}$ and the Buddhahood.
- The difference between the first two types of $\tilde{\boldsymbol{n}} \bar{a} \boldsymbol{a} \boldsymbol{a}$ is that the first one is ONLY about births with physical human bodies. The second one is an "expanded version" of the first one, showing the complete evolution of a lifestream. There is no need for the first $\tilde{n} \bar{a} n a$ without the gandhabba mechanism.
- Those who don't believe in the gandhabba concept can not explain the difference between those first two ñāna.


## Anusaya Gets Transferred from Bhava to Bhava

11. Any anusaya ("ingrained defilements") associated with the dying manomaya kāya gets "transferred" to the next one. We can say that the anusaya of the dying hadaya vatthu gets transferred to the new one.
Hadaya vatthu is THE critical element in manomaya kāya, the "essence of a lifestream."

- Hadaya vatthu defines a given existence as a human, Deva, Brahma, or one in an apāya.
- Thus, it is critical to understand that all anusaya associated with a lifestream gets transferred from one hadaya vatthu to the next.
- Of course, anusaya will keep changing over time. It will disappear at the Arahant-phala moment.


## Anusaya in Terms of Samyojana

11. The strength of anusaya is related to the number of samisāric bonds or sainyojana.

- An average human has all ten samyojana.
- The first three samyojana of sakkāya dittthi, vicikicchā, and silabbata parāmāsa are broken at the Sotāpanna stage.
- Two more samyojana (kāma rāga and patigha) are reduced in strength in the Sakadāgāmi stage and removed at the Anāgāmi stage.
- The last five are broken at the Arahant stage.
- See "Dasa Samyojana - Bonds in Rebirth Process"" and "Āsava, Anusaya, and Gati (Gathi)" for details.

All related posts at "Gati, Bhava, and Jāti."
Difference Between Taṇhā and Upādāna
October 25, 2018; revised November 4, 2019; December 5, 2019; March 30, 2021; September 8, 2022

## Introduction

1．The difference between taṇh $\bar{a}$ and upa$d \bar{a} n a$ is subtle，and it is critical to understand that difference．It is the key to understanding how one can get rid of bad gati and cultivate good gati．That is the way to Nibbāna．
－That understanding is also critically important to get the basic idea behind the Satipatṭhāna（and Ānāpānasati）Bhāvanā．

2．Satipatṭhāna（and $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p a ̄ n a s a t i) ~ B h \bar{a} v a n \bar{a}$ are about being mindful and catching new BAD thoughts that arise in one＇s mind．One should stop such thoughts immediately．If the thought is good（say about a Dhamma concept），one should stay on it．
－The English word＂thought＂is too simplified．It includes vedanā，saññ̄a，sañkhāra，and viññāṇa，each of which is complex；see＂Mental Aggregates＂and＂Viññāna－What It Really Means．＂
－Sañkhāra is especially crucial since kammic energy for future vipāka is created by the three types of sañkhāra：mano sañkhāra，vacī sañkhāra，and kāya sañkhāra；see，＂Sañkhāra－What It Really Means．＂
－Therefore，we will stay with those Päli words．

## Mano sañkhāra Arise Automatically Due to Gati

3．If we get interested in sight，sound，etc．，mano sañkhāra automatically arises in our minds due to sensory input，based on our gati．
－We don＇t experience those initial mano sañkhāra，and we only experience them when it comes to the next stage called vacī sañkhāra（＂talking to oneself＂）．
－That is an important point．Even if a single word is not spoken，vacī sañkhārā accumulate if one is ＇thinking to oneself＇about that object．If one gets more interested，one may speak out，and that is still a vacī sañkhāra；see＂Correct Meaning of Vacī Sañkhāra．＂Both types of vacī sañkhāra involve vitakka and vicāra cetasika．
－If the interest builds up，one may take bodily action．Such bodily actions are initiated by kāya sañkhāra．
－All three types of sañkhāra arise in mind．
－The strength of kammic energy created increases in the following order：mano，vacī，kāya sañkhāra．
4．As discussed elsewhere，we get＂attached＂to something AUTOMATICALLY based on our gati．Then mano sañkhāra arise automatically according to gati．That will happen as long as we have tanh $\bar{a}$（either via kāma rāga or patigha；avijj $\bar{a}$ is present in both cases）．We automatically get attracted；see＂Tanhā－How We Attach Via Greed，Hate，and Ignorance．＂
－As pointed out in that post，the term＂taṇh $\bar{a} "$ means getting fused or attached（＂thán＂meaning＂place＂+ ＂h $h$＂meaning getting welded or attached（Ъっ〕〇゚○ in Sinhala）．
－That initial attachment arises AUTOMATICALLY based on our gati．We don＇t have direct control over it．
－To change mano sañkhāra，we need to change our gati over time．

## Importance of Vac̄̄ Sañkhāra

5．If the attachment is strong enough，the mind will now start thinking about it consciously，i．e．，vac $\bar{\imath}$ sañkhāra arise，and we become aware of these vacī sañkhāra．
－As soon as we become aware of this＂attachment＂to something，we CAN BE mindfful，think about its consequences，and move away from it．Therefore，we can stop such thoughts at the vacī sañkhāra stage；see＂Correct Meaning of Vacī Sañkhāra．＂

- However, our minds like to enjoy such vacī sañkhāra. It is easy to do and is very tempting. Many people get their sexual satisfaction from just "daydreaming" about an event in the past or sexual encounters that might occur in the future.

6. In the "WebLink: suttacentral: Na Santi Sutta (SN 1.34)," the Buddha defined "kāma" to be this "daydreaming" or "generating more and more thoughts about it": "Na te kāmā yāni citrāni loke, Sañkapparāgo purisassa kāmo..."

Translated: "World's pretty things are not kāma, a person creates his/her kāma by thinking about those pretty things (rāga sañkappa)..."

- That is a critical point.
- Furthermore, we "daydream" about not just sex, but other sensory pleasures too. See, "What is "Kāma"? It is not Just Sex."
- Even if one did not physically do anything, one could accumulate a lot of bad kamma merely by generating such vacī sañkhāra.
- The world is full of beautifiul things, tasteful foods, sweet smells, etc. Seeing, tasting, and smelling them is not NECESSARILY kāma. For example, the Buddha accepted delicious foods but never generated mano/vacī sañkhāra about them. He had removed all gati.


## Vacī Saìkhāra Responsible for Upādāna

7. Anyone who is not yet an $\bar{A} n \bar{a} g \bar{a} m i$ is likely to generate such mano sañkhāra automatically. Then that leads to generating vacī sañkhāra or "kāma sañkappa" at some level.

- If we "go with the flow" and go along enjoying this "daydreaming" or generating vacī sañkhāra, that is what is called "upādāna."
- Upādāna means "pulling it closer (in one’s mind)" ("upa" + "ādāna," where "upa" means "close" and "ādāna" means "pull"). [ādāna: (nt.), taking up; grasping.]

8. So, we do not control the "tanh $\vec{a}$ " or "initial attachment" step. It happens with mano sañkhāra that arise due to our gati.

- And those gati cannot be removed just by abstaining from experiencing such sensory events.
- First, we need to reduce our gati to attach to that type of sensory input. Stopping vacī sañkhāra as soon as we become aware of them is the way to reduce bad gati. Vacī sañkhāra are really "nutrients" or "food/water" for cultivating those gati.
- If we keep the bad habit of generating vacī sañkhāra, that gati will only get stronger with time. It is essential to stop giving such "mental food" to those bad gati.


## Killing Bad Habits by Stopping Vacī Sañkhāra

9. The Buddha explained it this way: Humans cannot live more than seven days without food AND water. We will die.

- But if We stop taking solid food but take in just water, We can live for several weeks.
- However, one may be tempted to take in a little food. That will break the process and the clock restarts.

10. That is the analogy for killing a habit. One can kill the habit (or the addiction) relatively quickly by doing the following. Stop kāya sañkhāra (actual act, which is like solid food) and vacī sañkhāra (thinking/talking about it, which is like water).

- But if we stop doing the activities (kāya sañkhāra), but keep generating vacī sañkhāra, then it may NEVER be removed entirely.
- So, the analogy is not that good. Vacī sañkhārā are almost as bad as kāya sañkhāra, i.e., vacī sañkhāra are like "snacks" (more than just water in that analogy).
- The more times we break that discipline, the longer it takes to break that habit or gati. That is why we must always be mindful of our thoughts, speech, and actions. That is the key to $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p a \bar{n} n a s a t i$ and Satipatṭhāna Bhāvanā.

11. For example, one can break the drug addiction in a shorter time (say a month) if he has the discipline to stop taking it and also stop thinking about it.

- If he stops taking the drug but enjoys thinking about it (vacī sañkhāra), it will not work. He may go on without using drugs for months and months, but he may lose the resolve and return to drugs one day.
- That happens to many people who are addicted to different things like alcohol, smoking, or even overeating. They may temporarily stop those activities, but months later they break them. That is because they had not stopped generating vacī sañkhāra or engaging in upādāna for that activity.


## Paṭicca Samuppāda Process Starts With a Sensory Input

12. Most Pațicca Samuppāda processes start with a sensory input making one's mind attached to an $\bar{a} r a m m a n a$. The following chart illustrates the processes involved.


## Chart of Taṇhā and Upādāna

For a pdf file for printing: "WebLink: PDF File: Tanhā and Upādāna."

- As we can see, the key is to stop generating vacī sañkhāra. As soon as we become aware of "bad thoughts," we must stop them. Then, over time, that "bad gati" will reduce in strength and eventually disappear.
- Therefore, by being mindful and acting with paññā (wisdom, which is vijjā or the opposite of avijjā), one can reduce upādāna and gradually get rid of bad gati.
- In addition to contributing to bad gati, vacī sañkhāra make one grasp a new "bad bhava" at the cuti-patisandhi moment.


## Basis of Satipaț̣hāna and $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p \bar{a} n a s a t i ~ B h a ̄ v a n \bar{a}$

13. That is the basis of the Satipatthāna (and Ānāpānasati) Bhāvanā; see, " 7 . What is Ānāpāna?" and "Mahā Satipatthāna Sutta."

- If we are mindful, we can immediately become aware of a "bad thought" at the vacī sañkhāra stage. Thereby, we CAN stop the upādāna step, i.e., we can decide not to "pull it closer."
- For example, if we see an attractive person, we may automatically start looking at him/her. But once we become aware of it, we can look away and start thinking about something else.
- In another extreme example, we may get angry with someone and may start saying something harsh. But as soon as we realize that we are going back to our "bad old habit," we can even stop in the midsentence. If we realize our mistake even after saying something bad, we NEED TO apologize for our harsh speech. That may be difficult initially, but that is the only way to eliminate such bad habits.

14. When we start controlling the CRITICAL upādāna step, our gati will slowly change. Then, with time, the first step of "tanh $\vec{a}$ " will reduce and eventually disappear.

- That is the basis of $\bar{A} n a \overline{p a} n a s a t i ~ a n d ~ S a t i p a t t ̣ h a ̄ n a ~ m e d i t a t i o n s . ~$


## Taṇhā to Upādāna to Bad Gati

15. As we have discussed before, a poison bottle sitting on a table will not harm us. It can kill someone only if he/she takes it and drinks.

- It is the same with upādāna. There could be many "pleasing things" out there in the world. But if we understand the anicca nature (that those things will only lead to suffering in the end), our minds will not crave them. That will stop upādāna.
- For example, we know that some flies who are attracted to light get burned. They don't know that even if the shiny light looks attractive, it can kill them. In the same way, a fish sees only the bait. It does not see the hook.
- We don't touch a hot stove that is glowing red because we know that it can burn us.
- But most of us don't realize that sensory pleasures only lead to suffering. Of course, one needs to take care of the extreme sense-pleasures first. As I always say, it is a step-by-step process; see, "Is It Necessary for a Buddhist to Eliminate Sensual Desires?."

16. Gradually controlling upādāna is the way to reduce bad gati, cultivate good gati, and eventually get rid of $\tanh \bar{a}$.

- Removal of tanh $\bar{a}$ is the same as removing anusaya.
- To be more effective, one must also reduce avijjā by learning Dhamma and comprehending Tilakkhaṇa (anicca, dukkha, anatta nature).


## Cultivating Good Gati via Vacī Saṅkhāra

17. Of course, it works in reverse too. We can cultivate "good gati" by continually thinking about related things.

- For example, if a Dhamma concept comes to mind, we should continue with it. Then it will become a habit to think about Dhamma concepts.
- Nowadays, when I get up, the first thing that comes to my mind is a Dhamma concept or a problem that I had been thinking about the previous day.


## Summary

18. Finally, there are two things one must do to make progress on the Path.

- One is to reduce $a v i j j a \bar{a}$ by learning Dhamma.
- The other is to reduce upādāna by controlling vacī sañkhāra as we discussed above.
- If we do both, the progress will be much faster.


### 3.5.9 Pāpa Kamma Versus Akusala Kamma

November 14, 2018; revised November 16, 2018 (\#3 and \#6); August 29, 2022

## Difference Between Akusala and Pāpa Kamma

1. While akusala kammā are "immoral deeds," papa kamma are "highly immoral deeds." That is the main difference.

- In some English translations, I have seen that both pāpa kamma and akusala kamma are translated as, "bad deeds." However, there is a huge difference.
- It is critical to understand that if one has not removed the ten types of miccha dittthi, one can commit pāpa kamma.

2. Moha is the stronger version of avijja. If one has moha, then one also has lobha and dosa, which are stronger versions of rāga (kāma rāga, rūpa rāga, arūpa rāga) and paṭigha; see, "Lobha, Rāga and Kāmacchanda, Kāmarāga" and "Lobha, Dosa, Moha versus Rāga, Patigha, Avijiā."

- We know that akusal-mūla Pațicca Samuppāda cycles start with "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra," and NOT "moha paccayā sañkhāra."
- Before one starts focusing on understanding Paṭicca Samuppāda cycles, one must have reduced moha to $a v i j j a \bar{a}$ level.

3. Paticca Samuppāda (starting with avijjā) describes processes that lead to births in the sugati or "good realms" (human realm and above), as well as births in dugati or "bad realms" or apāyā (the four lowest realms).

- One does need to apply Paticca Samuppāda to determine births done with pāpa kamma, but it is not even necessary: they INVARIABLY lead to births in the ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$.
- Put it in another way, pāpa kammā done with highly potent apuñna abhisañkhāra ALWAYS leads to births in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$.
- The bottom line is that one is capable of doing pāpa kamma (which does not mean one will always do it) as long as one has one or more of the ten types of micchā ditthi. When one gets rid of all those micch $\bar{a}$ ditṭhi, one does not have moha anymore; it is reduced to avijj $\bar{a}$.


## Sutta Descriptions - What Are Pāpa Kamma?

4. Pāpa kamma are described in several sutta, but let us focus on the "WebLink: suttacentral: Pathama Pāpadhamma Sutta (AN 4.207)." I will just provide the translation to save space.
"Bhikkhus, who is a highly immoral person (pappo)? One who is engaged in the destruction of life or initiates, encourages, praises, helps destruction of life (in a habitual way) is a highly immoral person destined to be born in the apāy $\bar{a} . .$. ."

- The rest of the sutta lists six MORE deeds in the same way: Taking what is not given, sexual misconduct, immoral speech, Intoxication (drinking, taking drugs, etc), and micchā diṭthi.
- For example, the full description of the last one is: One who has micch $\bar{a}$ ditthi or initiates, encourages, praises, and encourages others to have such views (in a habitual way).
- It is important to note that just one action does not make one a "pāpo" or a "highly immoral person." There is a second related sutta: "WebLink: suttacentral: Dutiva Pāpadhamma Sutta (AN 4.208)."
(By the way, I just realized that I have been writing micch $\bar{a}$ diṭthi as micch $\bar{a}$ diṭthi in many posts. I will try to make the correction in existing posts. It is not a big error, but it is always good to follow the Tipitaka words as they are written).

5. The "WebLink: suttacentral: Duccarita Vipāka Sutta (AN 8.40)" is another sutta that state eight immoral actions that could make one born in the ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$. "Duccarita" means "highly immoral character" so a "duccarita puggala" means the same as "pāpo" or "a highly immoral person."

Here is the translation of that sutta.
(1) "Bhikkhus, the destruction of life, repeatedly pursued, developed, and cultivated, is conducive to rebirths in hell, to the animal realm, and the sphere of hungry ghosts; when one is born as a human after paying off most of the vipāka, one will also have a short life span.
(2) 'Taking what is not given, repeatedly pursued, developed, and cultivated, is conducive to rebirths in hell, to the animal realm, and the sphere of hungry ghosts; when one is born as a human after paying off most of the vipāka, one is likely to face loss of wealth.
(3) 'Sexual misconduct, repeatedly pursued, developed, and cultivated, is conducive to rebirths in hell, to the animal realm, and the sphere of hungry ghosts; when one is born as a human after paying off most of the vipāka, one will also be exposed to enmity and rivalry.
(4) 'False speech (per Dhamma, not strictly lying), repeatedly pursued, developed, and cultivated, is conducive to rebirths in hell, to the animal realm, and the sphere of hungry ghosts; when one is born as a human after paying off most of the vipāka, one will also be exposed to false accusations.
(5) 'Divisive speech, repeatedly pursued, developed, and cultivated, is conducive to rebirths in hell, to the animal realm, and the sphere of hungry ghosts; when one is born as a human after paying off most of the vipäka, one will also be exposed to being separated from one's loved ones.
(6) 'Harsh speech, repeatedly pursued, developed, and cultivated, is conducive to rebirths in hell, to the animal realm, and the sphere of hungry ghosts; when one is born as a human after paying off most of the vipāka, one will also be exposed to disagreeable sounds.
(7) 'Idle chatter, repeatedly pursued, developed, and cultivated, is conducive to rebirths in hell, to the animal realm, and the sphere of hungry ghosts; when one is born as a human after paying off most of the vipāka, one will also be exposed to others distrusting one's words.
(8) 'Intoxication (drinking, taking drugs, etc), repeatedly pursued, developed, and cultivated, is conducive to rebirths in hell, to the animal realm, and the sphere of hungry ghosts; when one is born as a human after paying off most of the vipāka, one will also be exposed mental problems."

- There are many more suttā that discuss pāpa kamma and their consequences being rebirth in the ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$, for example, AN 10.211 through AN 10. 220.

6. There is also a set of sutt $\bar{a}$ (AN 10.211 through AN 10. 220) that state that dasa akusala (taking a life, stealing, abusing sense pleasures, speaking untruth, slandering, harsh speech, gossiping, greed, ill-will, wrong views or micchā ditṭhi) lead to rebirth in the apāyā.

- Therefore, pāpa kamma are the same as dasa akusala done with micchā ditthi. That means having micchā diṭthi makes one's mind "covered," i.e., one has moha.
- It is important to note that some dasa akusala can be done without micchā ditt thi, and those are done with just $a v i j j \bar{a}$.


## Description of Pāpa Kamma

7. Those immoral actions in \#4 through \#6 above are all pāpa kamma.

- It is important to note the emphasis on "repeatedly pursued, developed, and cultivated."
- For example, those who habitually go fishing and hunting would belong to this category. Also see \#14 below.
- Another way to say that is to say "cultivating (abhi)sañkhāra." One does such an action because it becomes one's gati, i.e., it becomes a habit and contributes to one's character.
- These are essentially the same as the descriptions in \#4 above.

8. I want to emphasize that all of the following four actions contribute to each of the above listed immoral actions in \#4 through \#6 above (If done regularly):

- Doing it.
- Assisting another person to do it.
- Ordering (or instructing) another person to do it.
- Praising someone who is doing it.

9. When one has moha, one can do pāpa kamma without remorse. That means one is not even close to being released from the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$.

- This is a very simple fact that can save many people a lot of wasted time. It is absolutely a waste of time even to try to understand Paticca Samuppāda if one still has any of the ten types of micch $\bar{a}$ dittthi, some of which are commonly held; see "Micchā Ditthi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage."
- I know I will make many people unhappy by making these statements. But it is better to learn the truth as soon as possible. We all have been trapped in this suffering-filled rebirth process for an unimaginable time, simply because we have not been able to understand this key point.
- More information in "Kilesa - Relationship to Akusala, Kusala, and Puñ̃̃a Kamma."


## Nature's Laws, Not Buddha's Rules

10. These are not rules made up by the Buddha. Reducing moha to $a v i j j \bar{a}$ level means one is not ignorant of the wider world of 31 realms. That REQUIRES an understanding of the laws of kamma, which in turn REQUIRES an understanding of the wider view of the Buddha (existence of 31 realms) AND a belief in the rebirth process.

- That is because, without that wider worldview, the laws of kamma can't be effective: If there is no rebirth process, many things cannot be explained; see "Complexity of Life and the Way to Seek "Good Rebirths"."
- Nothing happens without causes and conditions. Explanation of what happens around us REQUIRES the wider worldview. Only a Buddha with a perfectly purified mind can discover these hidden laws of Nature.
- Many people, especially in the Western world, have difficulty believing the above. They think Buddha is just "a better philosopher" who came up with his own "worldview." However, it will become clear if one can spend time examining Buddha Dhamma, including Abhidhamma.

11. Buddha Dhamma is self-consistent. The Buddha did not make up the ten types of micchā dittthi. They go against the nature of this world: kamma (actions) have consequences (vipāka); there is a rebirth process; there is a para loka where gandhabbā live; there are instantaneous births in realms that we do not see, etc.

- Just because those are not amenable to our crude senses does not mean they are not true. As science progresses, more and more teachings of the Buddha are being confirmed; see, "Buddha Dhamma: NonPerceivability and Self-Consistency."


## Sorting Out the Priorities

12. As I have discussed, making progress is a step-by-step process. Before starting on the Noble Eightfold Path, one must complete the mundane eightfold path where one gets rid of the ten types of micchā ditthi; see, "Is It Necessary for a Buddhist to Eliminate Sensual Desires?."

- A critical aspect of attaining the Sotāpanna stage is the comprehension of Paticca Samuppāda, how root causes lead to their effects where conditions (paccayā) play a key role.

13. These days, many people start by trying to understand deep suttā that REQUIRE an understanding of Paticca Samuppāda and Tilakkhaṇa.

- However, many of them (including many bhikkhus) do not believe in rebirth, or that the concepts of para loka and gandhabba are valid. They erroneously believe that gandhabba is a Mahayāna concept, but neither they nor Mahāyānists understand what is meant by antarabhava; see, "Mental Body Gandhabba."
- Getting to the Sotāpanna stage CAN NOT be done by just reading a few posts. One has to make a real effort to understand the key concepts, and live a moral life.

14. Making progress on the Path requires working on two fronts:

- One needs to understand the key basic concepts in Buddha Dhamma like dasa akusala and micchā diṭthi, before tackling Tilakkhaṇa and Paṭicca Samuppāda.
- One needs to live a moral life, and 'the level of morality" will automatically increase as one's understanding gets deeper and deeper.
- Therefore, those two aspects go hand-in-hand. One cannot just focus on one aspect. Both are necessary.

15. It is also a good idea to understand some key details of how the laws of kamma work.

- Just because one kills some insects when doing yard work does not contribute significantly. The intention plays a key role as discussed in: "Details of Kamma - Intertion, Who Is Affected, Kamma Patha."
- Furthermore, killing a human is much more significant than killing many, animals because human life is much more difficult to get; see "How to Evaluate Weights of Different Kamma."


### 3.6 Sorting out Some Key Pali Terms (Taṇhā, Lobha, Dosa, Moha, etc)

- Kāma Tanhā, Bhava Tanhā, Vibhava Tanhā
- Tanhā - How We Attach Via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance
- Lobha, Raga and Kāmacchanda, Kāmarāga
- Lobha, Dosa, Moha Versus Raga, Patigha, Avijijā
- What is Avijija (Ignorance)?
- Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways
- Indriya and Āyatana - Big Difference
- Hetu-Phala, Paccuppanna, and Paticca Samuppāda
- Ditthi (Wrong Views), Sammā Ditthi (Good/Correct Views)
- Correct Meaning of Vacī Sañkhāra
- Panca Indriya and Panca Bala - Five Faculties and Five Powers
- Kāmaccandha and Icca - Being Blinded by Cravings


## Kama Taṇhā, Bhava Taṇhā, Vibhava Taṇhā

## Revised November 9, 2019; July 3, 2022

Kāma taṇhā, bhava taṇhā, vibhava tanhhā are three incorrectly translated key Pāli words.

## Tanhhā is Not Craving

1. Taṇh $\bar{a}$ is "getting attached to things in this world" via greed, hate, and ignorance. Most times, it is incorrectly translated as "craving."

- The word taṇhā comes from "thān" + "hā," where "thān" rhymes like in "thatch" and means "a place; "hā" means getting attached or fused; see, "Tanhā - How we Attach via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance." Note that "tan" in tanhhā pronounced like in "thunder."

2. We attach to things because of the ignorance that they can provide lasting happiness; this attachment first manifests in greed. But when someone or something gets in the way, we generate hate; then we attach via hatred.

- For example, a teenager wants a car, and his desire builds up with time. He is firmly attached to the idea of getting a car. If a parent refuses, then he may generate anger and even hate towards the parent. Now he is attached to two places (to the vehicle via desire and to the parent via anger.)


## Kāma Taṇhā

3. In kāma loka, all five physical sense faculties are present. Getting attach to anything via the five sense faculties is $\boldsymbol{k} \bar{a} m a \tanh \overline{\boldsymbol{a}}$.

- Furthermore, attachment arising from the desire to enjoy taste, smell, and body touch is exclusively restricted to the kāma loka. Those three require a "solid body" as we can imagine.
- In the rūpa lokas, living beings do not have "solid bodies." Yet, they can see and hear without having physical eyes or ears.
- Therefore, in rūpa lokas, taṇh $\bar{a}$ arise only due to sights and sounds. Thus an $A n a \bar{a} a \bar{a} \bar{l}$, who will be born in a rūpa loka has some rūpa taṇhā and sadda taṇhā because he/she may like to see a Buddha statue or listen to a discourse.


## Bhava Taṇhā

4. Bhava tanh $\overline{\boldsymbol{a}}$ arises from attachment to "any existence." Thus bhava taṇhā is present in kāma loka, rūpa loka, and arūpa loka, i.e., all 31 realms.

- Even in the kāma loka, there may be people who do not enjoy the "kāma" or sense pleasures; but they still want to live a quiet, peaceful life. They mostly have bhava tanh $\bar{a}$. They may like to be in a secluded place, cultivating jhāna; that is their desired "bhava." If they develop jhānā, they will be born in rūpa loka or arūpa loka due to their new "gati."
- There are other subtle forms of "bhava" too. Some like to become famous, earn a title, get a high-profile job or a responsibility, etc. These are not associated with sensual pleasures and are also due to bhava taṇh $\bar{a}$.


## Vibhava Taṇha

5. Vibhava tanh $\overline{\boldsymbol{a}}$ arises from the wrong view of materialism (uccheda ditthi in the time of the Buddha; uccheda pronounced "uchchêda"). One believes that one ceases to exist at death. One believes that the mind is a byproduct of the body (brain). And thus, when the body dies, that is the end of story.

- Therefore one believes that one needs to enjoy the pleasures of this life before dying. Such a person would normally have kāma taṇhā as well.
- It is easy to have vibhava tanh $\bar{a}$ in modern society. That is especially true if one has not heard about the Buddha's message about a more complex world with 31 realms and a rebirth process. Our human sensory faculties cannot access such "hidden" aspects of this world. One believes only what one can see.
- It takes an effort to verify that wider worldview, which is needed to EXPLAIN all that we can experience; see, "Complexity of Life and the Way to Seek "Good Rebirths"."
- Many immoral acts are done with uccheda dittthi (or materialism or nihilism) because one believes that everything in this world is for one's enjoyment.
- Even though it is evident that animals cry with pain when being killed, that is not of any consequence in their minds. The logic is that If this birth is the one and the last, there is no possibility that one could face the same fate in the future.

6. The connection of uccheda (or ucceda) ditṭhi to vibhava taṇhā is made in Section 3.2.4 Ucchedavāda in the WebLink: Suttacentral: Brahmajala Sutta (DN 1).

- It is an excellent idea to contemplate the fact that there is a difference between cutting vegetables and killing animals for food. An animal is a living being and feels pain.
- Then how is an animal different from us? The difference is only at the intellectual level. We have higher intelligence only because we have been fortunate to get this temporary human life because of a previous good deed.
- In the next birth, we could be born an animal; it depends on the types of kamma that we have accumulated. It takes time to go through such an analysis, and to convince oneself of the ability of the Buddha Dhamma to provide "good explanations." Many people do not take the needed time to do such an investigation.


## Connection to Magga Phala

7. Let us see how each type of $\tanh h \bar{a}$ decreases as one progresses on the Path.

- When one starts on the Path and makes an effort to understand the message of the Buddha, one starts losing all three types of tanhh $\bar{a}$ gradually. With time one can feel that change and the resulting nirämisa sukha that comes from it. It may take a few days, months, or even a year to see a significant difference depending on the individual.
- Vibhava taṇhā is removed at the Sotāpanna stage. It is essential to realize that one is bound to have vibhava tanha $\bar{a}$ if one does not believe in the rebirth process.
- Kāma tanhhā leads to various levels of attachment that are removed step-by-step in the four stages of Nibbāna. Kāmacchanda removed at the Sotāpanna stage. Kāma rāga is reduced at the Sakadāgām̄̄ stage and removed at the $A n \bar{a} g \bar{a} m \bar{\imath}$ stage. See the next post, "Lobha, Rāga and Kāmacchanda, Kāmarāga."
- As long as one is reborn anywhere in the 31 realms, one has bhava taṇh $\bar{a}$. Thus, bhava taṇh $\bar{a}$ is eliminated only at the Arahant stage.


## Connection to $\overline{\text { Asava/Anusaya }}$

8. Finally, two relevant points:

- It is important to note that these three "tendencies to bind" (k $\bar{a} m a \operatorname{tanhh} \bar{a}$, bhava taṇha,$~ v i b h a v a ~ t a n ̣ h ~ a ~ a ~) ~$ arise due to kāmasava (kāma āsava), bhavāsava (bhava āsava), and vibhavāsava (vibhava $\bar{a} s a v a)$. Tanhhā (attachment) arises due to āsava: One gets "attached" because one has deeplyembedded cravings for worldly things.
- Sometimes vibhavasava is split into two: ditthasava (ditthi āsava) and avijjāsava (avijjā āsava). That is because vibhavāsava arises due to wrong views and ignorance.
- Āsava/Anusaya is discussed in detail in, "Āsava, Anusaya, and Gati (Gathi)."

Next, "Lobha, Rāga and Kāmacchanda, Kāmarāga",

## Taṇhā - How We Attach Via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance

## Revised October 31, 2015; October 7, 2017; August 24, 2019

In the previous post, "Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways," we discussed how feelings arise in two ways, and one type of feelings occur due to our own volition, i.e., due to $\tanh \bar{a}$.

## What is Tanh $\bar{a}$ ?

1. In the post, "Paticca Samuppāda - Introduction," we discussed the origin of the term "taṇhā." It means getting fused or strongly attached. The word tanh $\bar{a}$ comes from "thán" meaning "place" + "h $\vec{a} "$ meaning


- Here we will see how that happens according to the natural process of Paṭicca Samuppāda.


## What Is in the World?

2. Cha Chakka Sutta describes how we experience the world. But in standard translations, the real meaning does not come out; see, for example: "WebLink: suttacentral: Cha Chakka Sutta (MN 148)", where one can also find translations in several languages.

We get to know ANYTHING about the external world via ONLY six ways:

- We see vaṇna rūpa (visual things) with our eyes.
- Sadda rūpa (sounds) heard with our ears.
- We smell gandha rūpa (odors) with our nose.
- Rasa rūpa (food) tasted with our tongue.
- We touch phottthabba rūpa (touchable things) with our bodies.
- Finally, we contemplate or think about dhamm $\bar{a}$ (memories, concepts) with our minds.

That is what the Buddha called "sabba" or ALL. Our whole world is what we experience with our six senses. Take a moment and contemplate this. Is there anything else "in this world" other than those six listed above?
3. It is essential to realize that these INITIAL sense inputs come to us via kamma vipāka. Then based on whether we have āsavalanusaya (or corresponding gati or habits), WE MAY act with avijjā to pursue that sensory input.

- Our greedy, hateful, or ignorant thoughts arise when we make contact with the outside world with one or more of these six senses. Kamma vipäka lead to sensory inputs. But not all sense inputs lead to acting with $a v i j j \bar{a}$. (Please take time to think and contemplate on these ideas as you go along. It is critical to get these ideas to proceed further).
- That critical fact becomes apparent when we do not think along the lines of an "established self" or "noself." There is no "person" who has $a v i j j \bar{a}$ all the time. Avijja arises due to āsava/anusaya depending on the sense input; see, "'Self' and 'no-self': A Simple Analysis."


## How Do We Get Attached?

4. How we get "bonded" to something that we experience? Let us take, for example, someone listening to a new song. In this case, the sound (sadda) impinging on the ear (sota) leads to sound consciousness. Several things happen in a fraction of a second. This VERY FAST sequence is:
(i). "Sotañca paṭicca sadde ca uppajjati sotaviñ̃̃ānami," where, sota is ear; sadde is sound (song), uppajjati means gives rise to, sota viñãāna is hearing consciousness, and patticca here means just the fact that sound makes contact with the ears, and NOT "pati + icca" or "willingly getting bonded. Thus,

- "Due to the sound of the song received by the ear, gives rise to sound consciousness."
- The mind does not generate any sañkhāra in assessing that sound. It just RECEIVES the sound signal.

We need to have a liking for something to be interested in it. Every day, we see a million pictures, sounds, etc., but we remember only a selected number, and these are the ones that lead to tanhä. "Getting interested" step is next:
(ii). "Tiṇnamì san gati phasso";

Here, we need to spend a bit of time explaining the terms: "san" means defilements or fuel for sansāric journey (see, "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Samsāra)"), and "gati" (pronounced "gathi") are sansāric habits (see, "Sansāric Habits and Āsavas"); thus "san gati" means sansāric habits; "phassa" means contact, and "tinṇaì" (pronounced "thinnan") means three. Please go back and read those two links if you do not remember those terms.

- In summary: Those three things (sound, ear, and sound consciousness) lead the mind to make contact with one's sansäric habits. If the sensory input matches with his "gati" or "likings," he will instantly be attached. Within a split second of hearing a few lines of the song, the teenager is "hooked"; his mind becomes absorbed in it.
- It is really at this step that the teenager becomes interested in the song. Then he gets attached to it (via "pati + icca") BECAUSE it matches his gati.

Then comes the next line:
(iii). "Samphassa jā vedanā" (this comes from "san phassa j $\bar{a}$ vedanā"; it rhymes as "samphassa") means this "contact with san gati" leads to feelings.

- As long as one has matching "gati," the corresponding feelings arise automatically. We cannot stop it, at least in the initial cittta or thoughts. But we can certainly stop progressing further and uttering bad speech or doing immoral acts.
- That is why it is essential to get rid of bad "gati." Satipatthāna sutta describes how one becomes a "sampajanno" by figuring out how to get rid of bad "gati"; see, "Kāyānupassanā - The Section on Habits (Sampajanapabba)."
- The way to getting rid of such "bad gati" is to be fully aware of our speech and actions and stop such unsuitable speech or actions. That is what Kāyānupassanā is.

That is a VERY IMPORTANT step. The resulting feeling depends on whether someone will get attached to the subject matter via greed or hate. If it is greed (or liking) as in the case of the teenager listening to a song he likes, he gets a sukha vedana (happy feeling). On the other hand, if it was a heavy metal song, and if his grandfather hears it, the grandfather may instantly form a dukha vedana (unhappy feeling). That is if he has a dislike for heavy metal songs (different gati than the teenager). That is the reason that different people feel differently about the same "event" (a picture, sound, smell, taste, touch, or a thought about something).

## Attachment (Tạ̣hā) Leads to Existences (Bhava)

Let us further analyze the above example:
The teenage could be walking a noisy street, but if he likes the song, he may not even hear any other sound. He will get "attached" to the song and be absorbed in it. Even after the song, he thinks about it in many ways. He may want to find the identity of the singer, may wish to see whether the singer has more albums, how he is going to tell his friends about this, etc. That is the "sansāric wheeling" process, see, "Nibbana - Is it Difficult to Understand?," where we discussed how one becomes an Ariya by taking the wheels off of the sansāric vehicle (riya).

Now the teenager is attached (i.e., forms $\tanh \bar{a}$ ):
(iv). "vedanā paccayā taṇhā, taṇhā paccayā upādāna, upādāna paccayā bhava, ..."

The song became his existence or "bhava" (i.e., total awareness, existence) while he was listening. He does not just listen, enjoy it while it lasts and moves onto something else. RATHER, he wants to hear it again, maybe hear more songs like that too. That is taṇhā. Because of that, he starts craving for it again and again, and also crave songs similar to that. Maybe he would form a liking for anything associated with the song: its composer, singer, and may join the singer's fan club. His mind spends a lot of time "wheeling around" or "thinking about" things associated with the song; temporarily, his existence or "bhava" becomes that song.
(v). Now let us go back to (i) of the sequence:
"Sotañca paticca sadde ca uppajjati sota viñ̃̄ānami," or "Due to the sound of the song received by the ear, gives rise to sound consciousness."

- That is just the ear receiving the sound. The teenage may hear many other sounds on the road. The next step is a critical one for him. Would he get interested in that song?
- "Tiṇnam san gati phasso." Out of all the sounds that come in through the ears, he will be attached only to the one that matches his "gati."

Thus we get attracted to something due to our "old habits" (see, "Habits and Goals"), which are even likely to be habits formed over many lives (see, "Sansāric Habits and Āsavas").
(vi). Now at the step \#iv above, the sequence ends with further strengthening "his tendency (gati)" to listen to this type of music; that is tanh $\bar{a}$. That is a crucial point. If we have an ingrained liking for something, we
will get attached it. Furthermore, repeated attachments will strengthen such an affection or habit or "gati." That is the law of attraction (see, "The Law of Attraction, Habits (gati), and Cravings (Āsavas)"). Thus it becomes a vicious circle. That is why it is hard to break habits (good or bad).

## Summary

5. Please spend some time contemplating the above material. It is best if you can analyze your situations and see how tanh $\bar{a}$ arises via greed (likes) and hate (dislikes). I will discuss more cases before moving on to discuss Paṭicca Samuppāda in detail. It is VERY IMPORTANT to understand these fundamental ideas.

- In the earlier post, "Paticca Samuppāda - Overview," we pointed out that Arahant experiences suffering only due to kamma vipāka. An Arahant does not generate sorrow or happiness via the mechanism discussed in this post; he/she will not have any "immoral or sense craving" gati. In this case, "samphassa $j \bar{a}$ vedan $\vec{a} "$ does not lead to sukha or dukha vedana $\overline{\text {. }}$
- We, on the other hand, generate "self-induced" suffering and happiness via this mechanism. Any happiness generated will not be not long-lasting. This mechanism is, for example, the leading cause for many "sleepless nights" or even depression. Let us discuss this next.

Next, "What is "Kāma"? It is not Just Sex",

### 3.6.3 <br> Lobha, Rāga and Kāmacchanda, Kāmarāga

## Revised April 28, 2018; November 9, 2019; February 23, 2021; October 24, 2021

There are various names for greed in Pāli. Each has a different meaning, and the differences are significant. Let us look at the two terms "lobha" and " $r a \bar{g} a$ " first.

## What is Lobha?

1. Lobha is the stronger term of the two. The word lobha comes from "lo" + "bha" where "lo" implies "strong attraction" (like that of an ant to honey) and "bha" is for "bhava" (existence). One is firmly attached to this world with lobha.

- Lobha is an extreme form of greed. One can do highly-immoral deeds or "pāpa kamma" with lobha. Such pāpa kamma could make one destined to the apāy $\bar{a}$. See, "Kilesa - Relationship To Akusala, Kusala, And Puñña Kamma."
- When someone has lobha, it is exhibited in two ways:
i. One wishes that all the "riches" should come to oneself and not to others (one may be already "rich" but wants more for oneself).
ii. One is unwilling to donate even a little bit to the needy and does not share with even the family. It is said that no matter how much one has, some people want more. However, even poor people can have lobha, especially for the things others have.

2. It is hard to quantify these, but the idea is that "lobha" is the manifestation of an overbearing attachment to worldly things.

- Lobha is one of 52 cetasika (mental factors).
- Abhijjh $\bar{a}$ (extreme greed) is the same as lobha. The word abhijjh $\bar{a}$ comes from "abhi" + "icchä" or "strong liking/craving."


## Rāga is a Weaker Form of Lobha

3. Rāga also arises because one believes there are pleasures to be had in staying in Sainsāra (rebirth process). But one would NOT do highly-immoral things with just rāga. Specifically, kāma rāga needs to escalate to lobha for immoral actions to take place.

- The correct "pada nirutti" (etymology) of "rāga" comes from "ra" + "agga" where "ra" means to "travel (in the samisaric journey)" and "agga" is to "give priority." Thus, "rāga" means to "willingly engage (in the samsaric journey.) [agga : [adj.] the highest; the top-most. (m.), the end; the top.]
- When one is born rich (or acquires wealth) and enjoys life with sensory pleasures, that is not lobha; that is just rāga. Such a person is not harming others. However, that rāga COULD lead to lobha too.
- With lobha, one could do highly immoral deeds (even if one is rich). If one is willing to kill, steal, lie, etc., to gain something one desires, then those are "apāyagām $\vec{\imath}$ " kamma. One does not necessarily have to carry out these actions or speech. Just thinking about it and making abhisañkhāra (planning or even enjoying such thoughts) itself is lobha. Thus even the poorest person can have lobha. [ap $\bar{a} y a g \bar{a} \bar{m} \overline{\boldsymbol{u}}$ : [adj.] going or conveying to the state of misery.]


## What is Kāma and Kāma Rāga?

4. Pleasing things in this world are NOT kāma. Attaching to such things and generating conscious thoughts about them (sañkappa) is kāma. In other words, kāma means attachment to the sensory pleasure available in the kāma loka, i.e., those available to gratify the five senses. The word $k \bar{a} m a$ is closely related to $\tanh \bar{a}$ and icchā.

- Then giving priority to kāma is kāma rāga.
- When one has $\boldsymbol{k} \overline{\boldsymbol{a} m a} \boldsymbol{r a} \boldsymbol{a} \boldsymbol{a}$, one likes to enjoy sense pleasures, but not at others' expense. Thus when husband and wife engage in sexual activity, that is due to kāma rāga.
- Even the devas in deva loka have kāma rāga. They like to enjoy sensory pleasures, but they don't crave what others have. Thus, they do not have lobha.
- Also, see, "Kāma Guna, Kāma, Kāma Rāga, Kāmacchanda" for more details.


## Blinded by Kāma Is Kāmacchanda

5. Then there is kāmacchanda which is stronger than kāma rāga. It is like lobha but focused on kāma.

- Kämacchanda is the highest level of that attachment. Here one is willing to do abhorrent acts (killing, raping, etc.) to satisfy one's desires.
- When one has developed kāma to the kāmacchanda level, one becomes unaware of the bad consequences of one's actions. Kämacchanda comes from kāma + iccha + anda, or "being blinded by sense attractions." Here, "icch $\vec{a} "$ is liking, and "anda" is blind. [andha :[adj.] 1. blind; 2. foolish.]
- It is said that "one loses one's mind" when blinded by attachment to sense pleasures, i.e., one cannot think rationally when one has kāmacchanda.
- Thus, one needs to be mindful not to let one's kāma rāga develop into kāmacchanda, which is one of the five hindrances that "cover the mind."
- Inappropriate sexual activity (affairs outside marriage and rape) is done with kāmacchanda, i.e., when one becomes blind with kāma.
- Kāmacchanda is pronounced "kāmachchanda."


## Connection to Stages of Magga Phala

6. It is also helpful to see how these different levels of greed are removed at various stages of Nibbāna. This will give a better sense of differentiation.

- A Sotāpanna has permanently removed kāmacchanda and also does not have the worst level of lobha. Thus he/she will not engage in "apāyagām $\vec{\imath}$ " acts to gain sense pleasures. A Sotāpanna has not given up all three types of rāga: kāma rāga, rūpa rāga, and arūpa rāga.
- A Sakadāgāmī also has kāma rāga to a lesser extent; this is why he could be reborn in the kāma loka for one more time.
- An Anāgāmī has removed kāma rāga; he will not return to any of the eleven kāma loka realms, including the human and deva realms, and will be reborn in a suddhāvāsa realm in the rūpa loka, and will attain Nibbāna there.
- However, an $A n \bar{a} g \bar{a} m \bar{l}$ may still enjoy (but not attach to) sense pleasures, i.e., still has $k \bar{a} m a$; see \#3 of, "Akusala Citta and Akusala Vipāka Citta." This is a subtle point, but the point is that an Anāgāmī would still have the "four greed-based citta without wrong views," and that is kāma. Those four akusala citt $\bar{a}$ are prevented from arising only for an Arahant.

7. Finally, some have given up the desire to enjoy pleasures in $k \bar{m} m a$ loka, but like jhānic pleasures. They are born in rūpa loka and arūpa loka and have rūpa rāga and arūpa rāga.

- Rūpa rāga and arūpa rāga are removed only at the Arahant stage, as discussed in "Akusala Citta and Akusala Vipāka Citta."

February 23, 2021: I have revised the following related post as well: "Lobha, Dosa, Moha Versus Rāga, Patigha, Avijiā",

## Lobha, Dosa, Moha Versus Rāga, Paṭigha, Avijjjā

Revised January 2, 2019; revised November 8, 2019; February 23, 2021; August 11, 2022

## Lobha, Dosa, and Moha

1. Lobha is extreme greed; see, "Lobha, Rāga, and Kāmacchanda, Kāmarāga." One is willing to do any immoral act to get what one wants. One can become blind by greed, i.e., kāmacchanda can arise.

- Dosa (or $d v e s h a$ in Sanskrit) is the ANGER that arises based on initial lobha. Here, dvesha comes from
 else is in the way of getting what we want.

2. One acts with lobha or dosa because one has moha. Moha comes from "muva" + "ha" which symbolizes a vessel with its mouth closed. Thus one cannot see what is inside. Similarly, one acts with moha because one is unaware that such immoral acts will have horrible consequences. One's mind is blocked and dark (cannot "see" clearly).

- When one has not removed the ten types of micchā ditthi, one could act with moha. The ten types of micchā dittthi are discussed in "Mahā Cattārisaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty)."
- In the pañca nīvaraṇa (five hindrances,) abhijjhā and vyāpāda represent lobha and dosa. Those are synonymous terms for lobha and dosa; see "Key to Calming the Mind - The Five Hindrances."
- The word abhijjhā comes from "abhi" + "icchā" or "strong liking/craving." The word vyāpāda comes from "vaya" + "pāda" or "on a downward path."


## Pāpa Kamma Done With Lobha, Dosa, and Moha

3. Actions carried out with lobha, dosa, and moha are called pāpa kamma. They are stronger versions of akusala kamma. Such pāpa kamma makes one eligible to be born in the lower four worlds.

- Actions done with dosa are the worst with niraya (hell) as the possible destination, and lobha is the cause for rebirth in the preta (peta) loka of hungry ghosts. Acts done with both lobha and dosa have all three "san" (since moha is always there) and thus lead to rebirth in the animal or "tirisan" ("tiri"+"san" or all three "san") realm.
- As one engages in moral actions and gets rid of one's tendency ("gati") to do immoral actions, one starts "cooling down," and one's likelihood of being born in the lower four realms diminishes.


## Rāga, Paṭigha, Avijjā

4. However, Lobha, dosa, moha permanently reduce to rāga, patigha, and avijja levels when one attains the Sotäpanna stage. All pañca nīvaraṇa were permanently removed at the Sotāpanna stage. [Five Hindrances are kāmacchanda, vyāpāda, thīna-middha, uddhacca-kukkucca, vicikicchā]

- Of course, one is now able to "see" the real nature of the world (anicca, dukkha, anatta) to some extent (one is not blind), and thus moha is reduced to avijja level.
- As explained in the previous post, rāga is the craving for sense pleasures. See, "Lobha, Rāga, and Kāmacchanda, Kāmarāga."
- Of course, there are different levels here too, but in general, this level of greed makes one eligible only for birth in the human and deva worlds. Patigha is a lower level of hate, more like "friction." One may get annoyed when someone even says something in return but will never do anything "horrible/drastic" that makes one eligible to be born in the lower four realms.


## Kāma Rāga is One Type of Rāga

5. At the next level of Nibbāna of the Sakadāgāmī level, kāma rāga, and patigha are both reduced to the extent that one will not be reborn in the human level but only deva or higher realms.

- Kāma rāga is the rāga or craving for sense pleasures in the kāma loka. There are two levels of kāma rāga: vatthu kāma (craving for OWNING objects that provide sense pleasures) and keles or kilesa kāma (craving for sense pleasures is there, but not necessary to "OWN THEM"). A Sakadāgāmī has lost the vatthu kāma, but still has kilesa kāma, i.e., he/she still craves for sense pleasures, but has no desire to "own them." For example, a Sakadāgāmī may still like to live in a beautiful house with comforts, but the desire to "own the house" is not there.
- Above the human realm (in Deva and Brahma realms), beings have subtle bodies. They are not "solid" bodies like ours subjected to decay or diseases. Thus they never get sick or visibly old (but of course, death is inevitable to anyone anywhere in the 31 realms). A Sakadāgāmī is said to be healthy forever (after human life).


## Kāma Rāga is Removed at the Anāgāmi Stage

6. When one attains the $\boldsymbol{A n} \overline{\mathrm{a}} \overline{\boldsymbol{a}} \overline{\boldsymbol{m}} \overline{\boldsymbol{\imath}}$ stage, both ka$m a$ rāga and patigha will no longer be present. Thus, one will not even be offended by harsh words/acts and will not retaliate. An Anāgām $\bar{l}$ will never be born anywhere in the kāma loka including the deva worlds; they are reborn only in Brahma realms.

- While a Sotāpanna may still have some tendency to give priority to sense pleasures at certain times, all such habits are reduced at the Sakadāgāmī stage and removed at the Anāgāmī stage.

7. For an $A n a \bar{g} \bar{a} m \bar{u}$, only rūpa rāga and arūpa rāga will be present. That means a desire for jhānic pleasures in the rūpa and arūpa loka (the four rūpa jhānā and four arūpa jhānā). And he/she still has avijjā left to a certain extent, together with māna (some level of pride) and uddhacca (some degree of sense of superiority).

- All these disappear at the Arahant stage. An Arahant is free from even a trace of defilements. Therefore, an Arahant will never be reborn in "this world" of kāma loka, rūpa loka, or arūpa loka (anywhere in the 31 realms).
- Meditating is not very productive before the Sotāpanna stage when one has the wrong view of an unchanging "me." Many people incorrectly interpret anatta as "no-self." Even though a Sotāpanna does not have the wrong VIEW about a "me," they would still have the perception (sañña) of a "me." The feeling of "me" is removed only at the Arahant stage, after the Anāgāmī stage. As long as māna and uddhacca are there, the sense of "me" is still there. See "Vipallāsa (Ditthi, Saññā, Citta) Affect Sañkhāra."


## Key to Getting to the Sotāpanna stage

8. To get to the Sotāpanna stage, one needs to realize the "three characteristics of nature." One is the true meaning of anicca (that there is no point in hurting others to achieve temporary sensory pleasures.) Second, one will be subjected to much suffering (dukkha) without realizing the anicca nature. The third is that until one has that mindset, one is truly helpless in this round of rebirths (anatta). Until one comprehends them, it is POSSIBLE for any of the following to happen in the rebirth process:

- One could act with extreme greed (lobha) to the extent of a hungry ghost (peta). Thus, one could get such a birth.
- Act with extreme hate (dosa) in the heat of the moment, and could even kill a human. That can lead to a rebirth in the niraya (hell).
- One may not realize the unfruitfulness of depending on others. That includes cheating/stealing (without trying to make an honest living for oneself.) Thus, a birth in the asura realm is possible.
- It is even possible to cultivate "animal gati." Those include having sex with young children or being able to kill/hurt others for one's pleasure, etc. In this case, both lobha and dosa could be present. Thus, one is not released from the animal realm.
- Those are the four lower realms. Thus one will be truly helpless (anatta) unless one removes such bad habits ("gati"). Until then, dukkha (suffering) will be there in the long-term, if not in this lifetime. Those are the true meanings of anicca, dukkha, and anatta.


## What is Avijjā (Ignorance)?

1. People engage in immoral actions because they highly value the sense pleasures, and are unaware of a better type of happiness called nirāmisa sukha; see, "Three Kinds of Happiness - What is Nirāmisa Sikha? ."

Therefore, they are willing to do even immoral things in order to gain sense pleasures. They do not realize two drawbacks associated with such actions:

- If they hurt others in trying to get what they want, they will have to pay for the consequences with very high interest (law of kamma); these are the immoral acts that could lead to rebirth in the apāy $\bar{a}$ (lowest four realms)
- Whatever enjoyment one gets from such sense pleasures are temporary.

These facts come out naturally from the true nature of the world that include the non-stop rebirth process that involves 31 realms and the law of kamma and the causal principle of paticca samuppāda. It is not possible for anyone to realize these facts by oneself. One has to learn those from a Buddha or a true disciple of a Buddha.
2. What is $a v i j j \bar{a}$ ? It is basically the ignorance of those two facts, even though there is a whole framework of a "world view" behind them. The key ingredients of this "wider world view" are:

- "This world" is much more complex than what is readily observed with our five physical senses, i.e., there are 31 realms instead of the just the two (human realm and the animal realm) that are apparent to us; see, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma."
- That the true nature of existence in any of the 31 realms is anicca, dukkha, anatta; see, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta - Wrong Interpretations."
- That most suffering is encountered in the lowest four realms (apāy $\bar{a})$.
- And this perpetual birth/rebirth process has no beginning (see, "Infinity - How Big Is It?") and the only way to stop it is to attain the Arahant stage of Nibbāna.
- But by reaching the Sotāpanna stage of Nibbāna, one can be assured that rebirth in the apāy $\bar{a}$ (lowest four realms) is permanently stopped; see, "Why a Sotāpanna is Better off than Any King, Emperor, or Billionaire."

3. The definition of $a v i j j \bar{a}$ is not understanding the Four Noble Truths. But to understand the Four Noble Truths one needs to see the "true nature of the world", the three characteristics of this world: anicca, dukkha, anatta.

## 4. In brief, anicca, dukkha, anatta mean:

- There is NOTHING in this world that can be maintained to our satisfaction in the long run (anicca); thus, after much struggle we only end up with suffering (dukkha); thus, all these struggles are in vain and one is helpless (anatta).
- The above three characteristics are not just for the human realm: One cannot find any panacea by seeking a better rebirth (even though the realms at and above human realm have less suffering), i.e., none of the 31 realms can provide any lasting happiness, and we are truly helpless (anatta).
- In particular, if one does IMMORAL things (killing, stealing, etc) in seeking this illusory happiness, the more one gets trapped in lower realms filled with suffering.
- Unfortunately, the true meanings of anicca and anatta have been wrongly interpreted as "impermanence" and "no-self"; see, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta - Wrong Interpretations," and the follow up posts on the correct interpretations.

5. For anyone willing to dig deeper: anicca, dikkha, anatta, are manifestations of the impermanence nature "of this world" as described in many ways:

- In Abhidhamma, it is explained how this world is "mind based", and how both the mind and the material phenomena CHANGE with incredible speed.
- This "change" is not random, but is dictated by "cause and effect" or paticca samuppāda.
- These and others relevant material is discussed at different sections on the site.
- However, it is NOT necessary to learn all those details to achieve some "cooling down" or "niveema" or even various stages of Nibbāna. One can grasp the concepts of anicca, dukkha, anatta via meditation or contemplation on one's own life experiences.

6. When one does not comprehend this "big picture", one makes bad decisions.

- For example, a fish does not see the string or the hook, only sees the worm, and gets into trouble. If it saw the whole picture, with the string and the hook, it may realize that there is something wrong and would not try to grab the worm.
- Just like the fish in the above example, we only see the pleasures to be had in this human life, but do not realize that because of this "apparent pleasures" we are grabbing hold of a world that also include unbearable suffering in the lowest four realms, not to mention the hidden suffering in this life.
- Only a Buddha can see this "bigger picture" and he has shown us not only that bigger picture, but also the reasons why we should believe in that bigger picture. In this website, I hope to provide this evidence in a systematic way.

7. That complex world view (everything changing moment-to-moment everywhere in those 31 realms) can be grasped only by a Buddha with a highly-purified mind.Other than a Buddha, a normal human being (no matter how intelligent) is incapable of seeing that whole world view; see, "Godel's Incompleteness Theorem."

- Thus avijjā cannot be dispelled by "book knowledge." One needs to comprehend the "true nature of this complex world."
- Even when we are told about it, it is not easy to grasp it, because our minds have been covered with defilements that have been accumulating from an untraceable beginning; see, "Key to Calming the Mind."

8. Another important factor that keeps many people "in the dark" or "in ignorance"is the wrong impression that Buddha Dhamma is a pessimistic world view. With the pure Dhamma hidden for over a thousand years, several important facts about the Four Noble Truths got distorted:

- When the Buddha said "this world" is filled with suffering he meant the wider world of 31 realms. Also, he did not say, there is suffering ALL THE TIME or in all the realms of existence. In higher realms (realms 6-31), there is actually much more happiness than suffering. Even in the human realm (the 5th realm), there is more happiness than suffering for many people. That is why it is hard for many people to get motivated to examine the message of the Buddha.
- Yet most beings spend most of the time in the lowest four realms (apāyā). This is why, ON AVERAGE, the suffering in the samisāra (cycle of rebirths; see, "Evidence for Rebirth") is much higher compared to any kind of happiness that can be experienced in any realm.
- Together with the wider "world view", the concept of an unimaginably long rebirth process got lost; see, "Sansāric Time Scale." The fact that it is not possible to trace a beginning to this rebirth process is not widely known. In the scale of the sansäric time scale, this lifetime of a hundred or so years is negligible. Thus whatever "accomplishment" one achieves, it has a very short duration in the sansāric time scale.
- Also, Buddha was just the messenger who conveyed these dismaying FACTS about nature. He discovered the nature's laws, which clearly illustrate that it is not possible to find any LONG-LASTING happiness ANYWHERE in these 31 realms. But he also pointed out how to find a better and permanent kind of happiness.

9. The most important fact that has been lost for hundreds of years is that there is a happiness of a better quality that also is PERMANENT. This is the Nibbānic bliss or the nirāmisa sukha; see, "Three Kinds of Happiness," "How to Taste Nibbāna," and "Nibbāna - Is it Difficult to Understand?." And one can start experiencing this nirāmisa sukha even before attaining the Sotāpanna stage of Nibbāna; see, "Key to Calming the Mind." For more details, see, "Nirāmisa Sukha."

- Not knowing any of those (and related facts) is avijja (ignorance). If one does not know about those facts, then how can one find a solution to the problem of suffering? Also, since only a Buddha can discover these laws, without hearing the message from another person (or a website!), there is no way anyone can learn all this by oneself, no matter how intelligent one is.

10. The Buddha compared avijjā to darkness. One cannot remove darkness forcefully. The ONLY WAY to get rid of darkness is to bring in a light. In the same way, the Buddha explained, ignorance can be removed only via cultivating wisdom.

- No matter what else one does, one will not get rid of ignorance; one has to cultivate wisdom by learning Dhamma. First, one cultivates wisdom to distinguish moral from immoral, and then comprehend the true nature of the world, i.e., anicca, dukkha, anatta; see, "Buddha Dhamma - In a Chart," and "What is Unique in Buddha Dhamma."

Next, "Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways",

## Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways

Revised September 4, 2016; Revised February 9, 2017; October 17, 2017; November 5, 2018; May 5, 2020 (Same at Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways @ Assāda, Ādīnava, Nissarana); April 28, 2021

## Introduction

 'become aware." When an ārammaṇa comes to the mind (via any of the six senses,) we become aware of it.

## Vedanā can arise in two ways:

a. One type of vedana is a consequence of a previous kamma or previous defiled action, i.e., a kamma vipāka. That kamma could have been done many lives ago.
b. The second is a direct consequence of generating sanikhāra or defiled thoughts (due to our gati at present).

- For example, when one gets a "pleasant feeling" while eating a piece of cake offered by the friend, that is a vipāka vedanā. Then, if we start thinking about how to eat that cake in the future, with such thinking, we generate "pleasant feelings" about such future experiences. Those are "mind-made" or samphassa$j \bar{a}$-vedan $\bar{a}$ associated with greedy thoughts.
- You can find further details on the two types of vedanā at, "Vipāka Vedanā and "Samphassa-jāVedanā" in a Sensory Event." But let us discuss them briefly below.


## Vedanā Arising from Kamma Vipāka

2. Vedanā (feelings) due to kamma vipāka are three kinds : Sukha vedanā (pleasant or joyful feeling), dukha vedanā (unpleasant or painful feeling), and adukkhamasukha (without being painful or joyous, just neutral.) The word adukkhamasukha is a combination of adukkhama and asukha.

- Those three types of vedan $\bar{a}$ are felt only by the body (k $\bar{a} y a$.) All vedana $\bar{a}$ initially coming through the other five sense faculties are neutral.
- Kamma vipāka leading to sukha vedanā and dukha vedanā happen to everyone, including Arahants. While everyone can live mindfully (taking necessary precautions) to avoid some of such dukha vedan $\bar{a}$, others are too strong to be able to avoid.
- For example, the Buddha himself had physical ailments later in his life as kamma vipāka. Moggallana Thero was beaten to death because of a bad kamma that he did many lives before.

3. However, kamma vipāka are not certain to happen. We can avoid some (see, "Kamma, Debt, and Meditation.") Many vipāka can be reduced in strength with time if one starts acting with mindfulness.

- We can avoid some kamma vipāka by preventing conditions for them from arising just using common sense [yoniso manasikāra or thinking according to cause]. For example, going out at night in a bad neighborhood is providing fertile ground for past bad kamma vipāka to appear. Many kamma vipāka CANNOT take place unless the conditions are right. See, "Anantara and Samanantara Paccayā."
- We all have done innumerable kamma (both good and bad) in past lives. If we act with common sense, we can suppress bad kamma vipāka and make conditions for good vipāka to arise.
- Also see the discussion on kamma bīja in, "Sañkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka."
- Now let us look at the second type of vedanā.


## Vedanā Arising from sañkhāra ("Samphassa-jā-vedanā")

4. These are vedana (feelings) that we generate on our own. These are the vedana that do not arise in an Arahant.

- Based on vipāka vedanā, we may generate more types of "mind-made" vedanā called somanassa and domanassa vedanā as we discuss below.
- In \#2 above, we saw that vipāka vedanā are felt only by the body (kāya.)
- Some of the vedanā coming through the other senses feel as "pleasant" or "unpleasant" NOT because of kamma vipāka, but due to another reason. Those are associated with each realm and are "kāma guñ." See, "Kāma Guna - Origin of Attachment (Tanhā)." For example, all humans taste sugar to be sweet. But some people get addicted to eating sweets full of sugar. That second category is "mindmade."
- We may generate "samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedana $\bar{a}$ " starting with initial vedana due to both mentioned above. But most samphassa-jā-vedanā have kāma guṇa as the cause.


## Some Examples of Samphassa-ja-Vedanā

5. Samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedana $a$ arise due to attachment via greed or hate, at that moment (i.e., due to one's gati); see, "Tanhā - How We Attach Via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance."

These are the vedana (feelings) that Arahants do not feel. Since they do not have any "bad gati," they do not commit any (abhi)sañkhāra, an Arahant avoids any kind of feeling arising from sañkhāra. The easiest way to explain this kind of vedan $\bar{a}$ is to give some examples:

- Three people are walking down the street. One has an ultra-right political bias (A), the second has an ultra-left preference (B), and the third is an Arahant who does not have special feelings for anyone (C). They all see a famous politician hated by the political right coming their way. It is a given that the sight of the politician causes A to have displeasure and B to have a pleasurable feeling. On the other hand, sight does not cause the Arahant to generate any pleasure or displeasure. Even though all three see and identify the person, they produce different types of feelings. It is essential to realize that the feelings were created in $A$ and $B$ by themselves.
- Two friends go looking for treasure and find a gem. Both are overjoyed. It seems quite valuable, and one person kills the other so that he can get all the money. Yet when he tries to sell the "gem," he finds out that it was not that valuable. His joy turns to sorrow in an instant. Nothing had changed in the object. It was the same piece of colored rock. What has changed was the perception of it.
- What could happen if an Arahant found the same gem lying on the road? (He would not have gone looking for one.) He might think of donating it to a worthy cause.


## Another Example of Samphassa-jā-Vedanā

6. A loving couple had lived for many years without any problems and were happy to be together. However, the husband slaps his wife during an argument (this is a kamma vipāka). The physical pain from the slap itself did not last more than a few minutes. But for how long would the wife suffer mentally? Those feelings arise due to sañkhāra, i.e., sadness and hate. Even the husband, who did not feel any physical pain, would suffer for days if he loved his wife. In both cases, the real mental pain was associated with the attachment to each other. The wife could have dropped something on her foot and would have suffered about the same amount of physical pain. But she would not have had any lingering mental pain associated with that.

- In all the above cases, the initial sense contact was due to a kamma vipāka. That by itself did not generate any kamma energy.
- However, based on that initial contact, we tend to pursue it with our mind and thus may start generating kamma. For example, if we see our "worst enemy" that is just "seeing." But if we start thinking about how bad a person he is, then we will be generating "bad vacī sañkhāra" and thus "bad kamma."
" A deeper analysis at, "Avyākata Paticca Samuppāda for Vipāka Viñiñ̄āna."


## Samphassa-jā-Vedanā Arise Due to Taṇhā

7. Thus it is clear that in all the above examples, the "extra" happiness or suffering (other than due to kamma $v i p \bar{a} k a$ ) arose from within one's mind. And tanhhā (attachment via greed or hate) was the cause of it. See, "Tanhā - How We Attach Via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance."

- When we generate such "mind-made vedanā," we also do kamma (via abhisañkhāra) that will bring more suffering in the future.
- The Buddha pointed out that when he described dukkha in the Dhammacakka Pavattana Sutta. See, "Essence of Buddhism - In the First Sutta."

8. Thus all these feelings arise due to $\boldsymbol{t a n h} \overline{\boldsymbol{a}}$, some form of attachment: greed (craving, liking) or hate (dislike); all these are due to mano/vaci/kāya sañkhāra. The feelings (or rather, the perceptions that give rise to feelings) reside INSIDE oneself. It does not come from outside. We use external things to CAUSE happiness or suffering by our own volition.

- There is no inherent suffering or happiness in ANYTHING external; the sensory contact with an external thing CAUSES pain or happiness depending on our gati and āsavā. An Arahant, who has removed all $\bar{a} s a v \bar{a}$, will be free of such emotional responses.


## Connection to Paṭicca Samuppāda

9. It is also clear how the accumulation of sañkhāra via Paticca Samuppāda leads to such varied feelings: If we attach to something with a "like" or a "dislike," we generate a mindset accordingly. That is Patticca Samuppāda (pati +icca leading to sama + uppāda; see, "Paticca Samuppāda - Introduction").

- If we attached to something with "greed," we act with that "greedy mindset." We will be happy if we get what we wanted. If we got "attached" to something with anger, we would have an "angry mindset" and would be happy if we remove whatever caused that anger.
- In either case, the strength of the feeling is also proportional to the strength of the "like" or "dislike": Sama uppāda or Samuppāda means both in quality and quantity; the higher the strength of "pati + ichcha," the higher the strength in "sama + uppāda."
- This is how we form habits ("gati") too. A teenager drinking alcohol with friends gets attached to that setting and looks forward to having the same experience again. The more he repeats that activity, the more he gets "bonded" and thus forms a drinking habit. See "Habits and Goals" and "Samsāric Habits and Āsavā."

The sequel to this post is at, "Feelings: Sukha, Dukha, Somanassa, and Domanassa."
A deeper discussion on vedanā at: "Does Bodily Pain Arise Only Due to Kamma Vipāka?," "How Are Paticca Samuppāda Cycles Initiated?," and "Avyākata Paticca Samuppāda for Vipāka Viññāna."

### 3.6.7 Indriya and Āyatana - Big Difference

May 7, 2016; revised December 4, 2017

1. We have lived in this world of 31 realms forever, because we like to enjoy sense contacts. By understanding how we actually experience these sense contacts, we will be able to see their true nature.

- In English language, we speak about the five physical senses of eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body. We also talk about the mind that is supposed to "reside" in the physical brain, which is supposed to process signals from the five senses and generate "consciousness" or awareness of the external world.
- Above is the conventionally and scientifically accepted theory, especially in the Western World, but mostly in the Eastern World as well.
- In Buddha Dhamma, it is important to realize that our sense faculties have two aspects: physical and mental.

2. Thus there are two versions of sense faculties in Buddha Dhamma: "indriya" and "ayatana."

- The physical sense faculties are referred to as indriya.
- But those indriya CAN BE used as āyatana depending on the situation. We will discuss the difference.
- Furthermore, we will also discuss how we literally "create our own future" by using our sense faculties as not merely as indriya but as āyatana.

3. The five physical senses or the "indriya" are simply "physical instruments" mounted on our physical bodies to extract information (vision, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches) from the external physical world.

- In addition, per Buddha Dhamma, there is another indriya (manindriya) to receive dhamma (concepts, gathi, and bhava are synonyms) from the external world. This "mana indriya" or manindriya is located inside the brain, and has not yet been identified by science.
- This has been is discussed in detail in, "What are Dhamma? - A Deeper Analysis."

4. Now let us see how these indriya can become $\bar{a} y a t a n a$. In simplest terms, indriya become $\bar{a} y a t a n a$ when we deliberately use the indriya to accumulate abhisañkhāra.

- Another way to state the difference is to say that when kamma vipāka brings us sense inputs, the sense faculties act as indriya. Following that we MAY deliberately use sense faculties to generate new kamma; then they work as ayatana.
- Let us consider some examples to illustrate the difference.

5. When we just happen to see a nice house (say, while walking), our eyes were used as cakkhu indriya. But if we like that house and stop and keep looking at it (while making an attachment for it), then we are using our eyes as cakkayatana.

- If we eat something to quench the hunger, and experience the taste of it, then we are using the tongue as jivha indriya. But if we form an attachment to it (and thinking about making some more to enjoy the taste again later), then the tongue is used as jivhayatana.
- When we walk to the bathroom to take a shower (which is something we need to do to stay clean) that involves using the body as kāya indriya. But hitting (or walking to hit) another person involves using the body as an ayatana (kayatana).
- A teacher speaking to students is using the body as kāya indriya (does not involve abhisañkhāra), but telling a lie or a gossip involves kayatana (does involve abhisañkhāra).
- When we are using the mind to remember a forgotten address, we are using the mana indriya (or manindriya). But when fantasizing about a sexual encounter, that involves mana āyatana (or manayatana).

6. Another simple way to look at this distinction is to consider the cakkhu indriya as a totally mechanical device (just like a camera) that just helps to get the image to the brain.

- Cakkhayatana could come into play when that information is sent by the brain to the cakkhu pasāda rūpa and is processed by the hadaya vatthu (mind). Based on the personal character (gati) of the
person, that person may generate greed or hate towards that visual. Then cakkayatana (and possibly more other a yatana) may be used to take further actions.
- The cakkhayatana never arises in an Arahant, because there is no anusaya or āsava (defilements) remaining that can trigger greed or hate, i.e., there are no kāma gati, rāga gati, dosa gati, moha gati, etc left.
- The same kind of analysis can be done on any other sense faculty.

7. Now we can also look at this from a different angle and see that while indriya can be considered as PHYSICAL devices that help "extract sense signals" from the outside world, āyatana are MENTAL.

- The six āyatana (the six are collectively called "salāyatana") may be created at a given moment depending on the situation and also depending on the gathi of the particular person.
- In the "Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda," salāyatana arise via, "nāmarūpa paccayā salāyatana." When we trace steps backwards, we see that nāma rūpa arise via "viññāna paccayā nāmarūpa." Going further back, "sañkhāra paccayā viññāna", "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra." Thus saḷāyatana arise as a series of mental actions starting with $a v i j j \bar{a}$.
- When one of the six indriya brings in a sense input, that sense input MAY induce greed or hate due to $a v i j j \bar{a}$ and through the above series of paticca samuppāda steps to CREATE one or more of the salāyatana to arise.

8. Thus our indriya do not change from moment-to-moment, but āyatana do.

- For example, our eyes (cakkhu indriya) may not change significantly for years; of course an accident can instantly change them or they can degrade with old age.
- But cakkayatana change from moment-to-moment. We can be instantly attracted to an eye-pleasing object.

9. In another example, suppose an alcoholic is walking around inside an airport waiting for a flight. If he sees a bar, he may decide to stop and take a good look at it, think about for a minute and just go in to have a drink.

- The initial sense input (seeing the bar with cakkhu indriya), triggered his deeply-ingrained craving ( $\bar{a} s a v a$, anusaya) for a drink to come to the mind. Then acting with avijjā, at least two of the six ayatana arose in his mind: thinking about having a drink (manayatana), walking inside and ordering a drink (kāyātana).
- Many other people saw the same bar, totally disregarded it and kept walking. The sense input from the cakkhu indriya did not lead to the arising of any of the salāyatana for them.
- This is why even in a normal human, the sense faculties do not work as ayatana all the time.

10. If we live in this world, we have to use the sense faculties in order to live; here we use them as indriya.

- But when we use them as ayatana, we are in a sense making future bhava (especially if those actions are strong).

11. Now we can also figure out what is really meant by the "indriya bhāvanā." It simply means making sure that the indriya do not become āyatana.

- Of course, we need to focus on the most egregious acts first. For example, when one sees an eyecatching object in a shop, stopping there and thinking about how nice it would be to be able to take it home is making ayatana. But that is hard to avoid for a normal human who has not yet attained a magga phala.
- However, if the attraction to the object becomes strong, that could lead to ayatana other than the cakkayatana come into play: one may decide to steal it. This is of course far too dangerous. As soon as that mindset comes to play, one has to think about the consequences and forcefully stop it.
- Thus "indriya bhāvana"" is nothing but special application of the Satipatthāna bhāvanā. In fact, "indriya bhāvan $\bar{a} "$ is to be practiced not in a "sitting down" meditation session, but while one is doing normal day-to-day activities.

12. Thus only Arahants use their sense faculties as indriya ALL THE TIME. They do not form attachments to body touches, tastes, odors, sounds (music), pictures, or any type of concepts (thoughts).

- Even a normal human does not use eyes as ayatana all the time. We may see numerous things even during a short walk. Most of the things we see we just ignore, because they don't interest us. This is another way of saying that those things don't trigger any anusaya or āsava in us or we don't have the gati to form a liking for them.

13. Finally, it must be noted that there are other types of indriya that come into play in different contexts.

- For example, "pañca indriya" in 37 Factors of Enlightenment refer to very different types of indriya: sati, samādhi, paññā, viriya and saddhā; see, "37 Factors of Enlightenment" and "Two Versions of 37 Factors of Enlightenment."
- There are five indriya in "pañca indriya," whereas there are six indriya in reference to sense faculties.

These mind-made pleasures experienced with āyatana are called assāda (or āsvāda in Sinhala). For an in-depth analysis, see, "Assāda, Ādīnava, Nissarana."

## Hetu-Phala, Paccuppanna, and Paṭicca Samuppāda

July 2, 2016; Revised July 5, 2016
The existence of anything in this world (i.e., a sañkhata (sankata in Sinhala)) can be explained in a stepwise process with three "steps": (i) there must be root causes, (ii) there must be suitable conditions, and (iii) whatever that arises due to those two steps will have characteristics (gathi) that can traced back to those causes and conditions.

- The title is pronounced as :


## Weblink: Listen to the Title being pronounced

1. Nothing happens without causes in Buddha Dhamma. This is why there CANNOT be a beginning to the rebirth process. That is a logical impossibility, and is THE main argument against creation by a "Super Being" or a Creator.

- CAUSE AND EFFECT is the backbone of science. In order for a scientific theory to be accepted, that theory HAS TO have explanatory power to describe HOW a given effect takes place.

2. It may be hard to fathom initially, but there are only 6 primary causes (roots) that causes anything and everything in this world to arise: lobha, dosa, moha (three immoral roots or hetu), and alobha, adosa, amoha (three moral roots).

- The word "hetu" comes from the Sinhala words, "hayen ethu" which means "wrapped with six." Thus all causes are ultimately due to one more of the six roots mentioned above.
- Also, "phala" in Pāli and Sinhala ("pala") means "harvest" or the "result."
- Thus anything and everything in this world arises due to those six root causes.

3. The three immoral roots mainly give rise to the four lowest realms (ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$ ) and the three moral roots mainly give rise to the other 27 realms.

- When one cultivates the three moral roots, one stays away from the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$ and be able to be born in the higher 24 realms. Furthermore, one also cleanses one's mind so that one can begin to comprehend anicca, dukkha, anatta (the true nature of the world); see, "Buddha Dhamma - In a Chart."
- However, in most cases, we can see only the "immediate causes." For example, a wet floor is the immediate cause for someone to slip and fall. But if one was mindful (aware) of the wet floor, the fall could have been avoided.

4. Such immediate causes (that derive from those six) are easier to see or to deduce. The causes for a tree to come to life are embedded in a seed. When the seed is planted that causes a tree (or a plant) to grow.

- What causes an explosion from a bomb is in the explosive material in the bomb. There will not be an explosion unless the bomb has potent explosive material in it.
- How those are connected to the six root causes is a bit more involved, and needs a good knowledge of Abhidhamma to fully explain.

5. Now, let us analyze how causes lead to corresponding effects. Just because there are causes, corresponding effects do not necessarily appear. There must be appropriate CONDITIONS present to bring out the effects.

- A seed has embedded in it the causes to bring about a full-grown tree. But if that seed is in a cool, dry place, no tree will come to life because of it.
- But if the seed is planted in a good soil with exposure to sunlight, it can germinate and grow to be a healthy tree.
- The bomb will not explode unless it is triggered but a spark. If it is laying somewhere for many, many years, the explosives may degrade and lose their explosive power.

6. This is called "paccuppanna" or "pacca" + "иррапna," where "pacca" is for "paccaya" or conditions. "Uppanna" means to come to life or birth.

- Anything in this world (i.e., a sañkhata (sankata in Sinhala)) is a paccuppanna, i.e, is born when suitable conditions become available. But, of course, the root causes MUST also be there.
- Thus even if there is a field out there with good soil and sunlight, nothing will grow unless some seeds are planted.
- Thus paccuppanna means "conditional arising." This term "conditional arising" is used today INCORRECTLY as the translation of pațicca samuppāda. As we will see below, pațicca samuppāda also describe the nature of things that arise due to paccuppanna.

7. You can put this "theory" to test by considering anything in this world.

- Any given living being is born due to a kammic energy that was created in the past. And that kammic energy was created by a good act with moral roots or a bad act with immoral roots.
- Even non-living things (vegetation, mountains, rivers, etc) are also there due to causes and conditions. The analyses are a bit deeper and we will discuss some in the future.

8. The last step (in the three-step process that we started off with) says, whatever that arises due to those two preceding steps will have corresponding characteristics (gathi). This is nothing but paticca samuppāda; see, "Paticca Samuppāda - "Pati+ichcha"+"Sama+uppāda"."

- In the example that we discussed above, a given seed will not give to rise to any tree or a plant. A rice seed will give rise to a rice plant. An apple seed will not give rise to a rice plant but an apple tree, etc.
- The same is true for living beings. A chicken will be born of a chicken egg, not a turtle. Note that the other two conditions are satisfied here too: there was a being with "chicken sañkhāra" who came into that egg as a gandhabba, and that egg needs to be incubated correctly to be hatched and for that hatchling to come out.

9. Actually, the steps paccuppanna and paticca samuppāda are not in a time sequence, but related. The necessary conditions (paccaya) in paccuppanna are analyzed in detail in the paticca samuppāda steps.

- When an animal (say a dog) is born, the conditions that led to that birth can be traced in the "akusalaMūla Paticca Samuppāda" cycle.
- First, "bhava paccayā jathi" step says, that dog was born due to a "dog bhava." The step, "upādāna paccayā bhava" says that "dog bhava" arose due to a human grasping it at the dying (cuti-patisandhi) moment; the step, "taṇhā paccayā upādāna" says that grasping was done due to craving for it, and so on.
- Note above that the human did not really crave to be a dog. Rather he/she enjoyed acts that are normally done by dog. And that process started off with "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra," where due to ignorance of their consequences, he was cultivating "dog sañkhāra": For example, thinking, speaking, and doing things that are done by dogs, for example, having indiscriminate sex (sometimes with even family members).

10. We will discuss this more depth in future posts, but I hope the main ideas can be grasped from the above description.

## Diṭ̣hi (Wrong Views), Sammā Diṭṭhi (Good/Correct Views)

## Revised April 2, 2016 and August 3, 2016; February 6, 2020

## Wrong Views About the World

1. Ditthi means dogmatic belief in something(s) in the sense of "this alone is true, and everything else is false regardless of the facts." Even though micch $\bar{a}$ ditṭhi (pronounced michchā diṭ̣hi) is the correct term ("dittthi" means "views" and "micchä" is "wrong"), in Pāli literature "ditṭhi" is used frequently instead of "micchā diṭthi"; the immoral cetasika is ditṭhi.

- In the Buddha's time, 62 such dogmatic views that were the topics of frequent discussions. They are in the Brahmajala Sutta DN 1.
- The ditthāsava (āsava for the 62 wrong views) is eliminated by ditthi vissuddhi, i.e., cleansing of the wrong views at the Sotāpanna stage.

2. Some of these dogmatic views that the Buddha had to deal with frequently were the following. There is a self, there is no-self, reincarnation, no reincarnation, things exist, things do not exist, there are no laws of kamma, there are laws of kamma, AND they are deterministic.

- The Buddha refuted those all. Unfortunately, some of those wrong views are back in most versions of "Buddhism" today, most importantly the "no-self" (anātma in sanskrit) concept.
- We have discussed some (the first four items were presented in several posts, for example, "What Reincarnates? - Concept of a Lifestream," and "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta"), and we will discuss others in detail in the future.


## Having Wrong Views Is an Akusala Kamma

3. Dittthi (or micchā ditṭhi) is also one of the ten immoral actions or dasa akusala. Micchā ditthi arises in mind, i.e., it is an akusala done by the mind. It also leads to corrupt speech and deeds. See, "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)."

- You can see that such thoughts arise due to dogmatic beliefs, i.e., when one is not willing to even consider the possibility that one could be wrong and to critically examine the evidence. For example, some people refuse to even examine the existing evidence for rebirth with an open mind and that is ditthi.
- And one needs to know the "big picture of the 31 realms", concepts of kamma, anicca, dukkha, anatta, etc., to make a decision on rebirth; it is not enough to just to look at the accounts or evidence for rebirth as presented in, "Evidence for Rebirth."


## Three Levels of Micchā Ditṭhi

## 4. There are three layers in which micchāditthi is established and accumulates bad kamma:

- Suppose one kills one's parents with the ditt thi that a parent is not a unique person, and that such kamma does not have consequences. That is the coarse level. It can be compared to a fire that burns down a house.
- The second level is when one vehemently defends such a wrong view in a debate and do not even consider the facts presented by the other side. One may genuinely believe in that position, BUT that is because one is not aware of the "bigger picture" on existence. The problem is that "not knowing the facts" is not an excuse. One could jump off of a building, not knowing how gravity operates but will suffer injury/death. This middle level is analogous to a fire that ignites when the match stick strikes a hard surface.
- The third level is the anusaya level, where these views lay dormant as $\bar{a} s a v \bar{a}(d i t t t h i ~ a ̄ s a v a) . ~ T h i s ~ s u b t l e r ~$ level is analogous to a box of matches that has the potential to start a fire.


## Two Levels of Sammā Diṭthi

5. Someone is said to have micch $\overline{\boldsymbol{a}}$ ditṭhi when one has wrong views at any of the three levels in \#4 above. On the other hand, Sammā Dittthi, can be two kinds:

- One knows that bad kamma (actions) have adverse consequences and can lead to bad rebirths. One wants to live a moral life and strive for a "good rebirth." That is "mundane or conventional Sammā Ditṭhi." Thus these are still defiled views (have "kilesa" in them) since they lead to extending samisāra, and one has not yet eliminated the possibility of a future rebirth in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$ (four lower realms).
- But when one comprehends to "true nature of this world," one realizes that there can be no lasting happiness anywhere in the 31 realms of existence. This Samm $\bar{a}$ Dittthi is realized when one truly comprehends anicca; see, "Why is Correct Interpretation of Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta" is so Important? ."
- That is the "transcendental or lokuttara Sammā Ditṭhi" that leads to Nibbāna; it is free of defilements or "kilesa" (or "keles" in Sinhala). This view becomes complete at the Arahant Stage. Kilesa are discussed in, "What Are Kilesa (Mental Impurities)? - Connection to Cetasika."


## Mundane or Conventional Sammā Ditṭhi

6. Thus conventional Sammā Ditṭhi means the view to "do good things." One understands kamma and knows the consequences of evil deeds; see, "Buddha Dhamma - In a Chart."

- As we discussed in "Foundation of Dhamma," "doing good things" is better. Still, most of those things are done with the wrong intention of achieving something in return (good rebirth, winning a lottery, pass an examination, etc.). This kind of Sammā Diṭthi will perpetuate the samisāric journey, but is a required first stage to comprehend anicca.
- The danger in stopping at the conventional sammā ditthi is that we do not know what one will do in a future life (say another human birth.) One could be born under circumstances where one is not exposed to Buddha Dhamma, may associate with wrong people, and may commit kamma that will lead to rebirth in the apa $\bar{a} \bar{a}$ (lowest four realms). The other danger is that we do not know what kind of kamma we have done in previous lives, and we may already have some bad kamma seeds that could lead to a birth in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$.


## Transcendental or Lokuttara Sammā Diṭ̣hi

7. By lokuttara Sammā Ditṭhi is meant the true understanding of the nature of "this world" of 31 realms and the round of rebirths.

- For example, that 'there is a self" and 'there is no-self' are both incorrect, and things (both animate and inanimate) exist if the conditions for their existence are present (Pațicca Samuppāda).
- Even though one partially comprehends Sammā Diṭthi at the Sotāpanna stage, the understanding becomes complete only at the Arahant stage.

8. If one cultivates the "lokuttara" Sammā Dițthi and becomes a Sotāpanna, then one will be free from rebirths in the apāy $\bar{a}$.

- The four greed-based immoral thoughts that arise due to wrong views ("diṭthi sahagatha lobha citta") do not arise In a Sotāpanna, do not occur. See, "Akusala Citta - How a Sotāpanna Avoids Apāyagāmī Citta."

Next, "How do we Decide which View is Ditthi (Wrong View)?"

### 3.6.10 <br> Correct Meaning of Vacī Sañkhāra

November 8, 2016; revised September 25, 2018; October 16, 2020
July 12, 2021: It is critically important to understand what is meant by "sañkhāra." I just started a new section "Basic Framework of Buddha Dhamma" to discuss the relationship among the Noble Truths, Tilakkhaṇa, and Paṭicca Samuppāda. I am including this post in that section.

- Pronunciation of Pāli words like vacī, vitakka, and vicāra can be found in "Pāli Glossary - (L-Z)."


## Conscious Thoughts Are Also Vacī Sañkhāra

1. Many people believe that only speech involves vacī sañkhāra. However, vacī sañkhāra are defined as "vitakka vicārā vacī sañkhāra," which means "vacī sañkhāra are vitakka and vicārāa." This is in, for example, "WebLink: suttacentral: Cūlavedalla Sutta (MN 44)."

- In the following, we will see that vacī sañkhāra are our conscious, deliberate thoughts in addition to speech.
- Furthermore, this post explains how our minds initiate all our actions and speech via javana citta.

2. Vitakka is the cetasika that points the mind to a given thought object (ārammana). Vicāra cetasika keeps the mind engaged on that thought object, i.e., generating new thoughts about it. Abhidhamma gives the following analogy. A bee flying to a certain flower is like vitakka (going to a new ārammaña) and then buzzing around that nectar is like vicāra (engaging with that ārammaṇa.)

- Similarly, when we focus the mind on a certain object, and then keep the mind there, we generate many thoughts about that object. These are conscious, deliberate thoughts, and not mano sañkhāra that arise automatically.
- For example, if we start thinking about an enemy, we could be spending a many minutes or even hours thinking bad thoughts (vacī sañkhāra) about that person. We do most of that in our minds, just talking to ourselves. But we may also get some of those thoughts out as actual words.


## Savitakka/Savicāra Are Present in "Good Thoughts"

3. However, vitakka and vicāra involve defiled thoughts or at least thoughts about getting things done to live this life.

- When one generates thoughts that specifically do not involve $\boldsymbol{k} \overline{\boldsymbol{a}} \boldsymbol{m a} \boldsymbol{a} \boldsymbol{a} g \boldsymbol{a}$ or other akusala - but the opposites (nekkhamma/kusala) - those are called savitakka and savicāra.
- That is how one gets into jhāna: By eliminating (or suppressing) vitakka/vicāra and cultivating savitakka/savicāra.
- This is clearly seen in any sutta that describes jhāna. For example, in "WebLink: suttacentral: Tapussa Sutta (AN 9.41),": "..So kho ahaì, ānanda, vivicceva kāmehi vivicca akusalehi dhammehi savitakkaì savicāraì vivekajaì pītisukhamं paṭhamaì jhānaí upasampajja viharāmi." When one is a jhāna, vitakka/vicāra with kāma rāga/akusala are absent, and only savitakka/savicāra will be present.
- In the above verse, "vivicceva kāmehi vivicca akusalehi dhammehi" means kāma rāga/akusala are absent in the mind while in jhāna.


## Mano Sañkhāra Arise Automatically Per Our Gati

4. In contrast, when we first thought about that person in the example of \#2 above, only mano sañkhāra were AUTOMATICALLY generated according to our gati. We don't have any control over mano sañkhāra other than by changing our gati over time.

- This is a key point to grasp, and is discussed in detail in the posts, "How Are Gati and Kilesa Incorporated into Thoughts?" and "Suffering in This Life and Paticca Samuppāda" as well as other posts in the "Living Dhamma" section.
- My goal in this post is to point out this critical difference between mano and vacī sañkhāra. Our nonautomatic, conscious thoughts - as well as speech - involve vacī sañkhāra.


## Kāya Sañkhāra Direct Bodily Actions

5. Kāya sañkhāra involves kamma done with bodily actions. So, one can come to the wrong conclusion that speech also is $k \bar{a} y a$ sañkhāra, since body parts (tongue, lips, and associated facial muscles) are moved during the speech.

- I automatically came to that wrong conclusion when I first analyzed these terms, without contemplating deeply on them. The key is that speech originates via types of rūpa that are different from that $r \bar{u} p a$ that lead to other bodily movements (like walking or moving arms).
- To understand this, one needs to know how our body parts move according to our thoughts.

6. Our physical body parts are really mechanical parts. There is no "life" in them unless a gandhabba controls that body. Gandhabba is an important concept in Buddha Dhamma. It has been neglected simply because it is not discussed in the infamous Visuddhimagga and other literature by Buddhaghosa, who singlehandedly distorted. Buddha Dhamma; see, "Incorrect Theravāda Interpretations - Historical Timeline."

- The concept of Gandhabba is an essential element in Buddha Dhamma; see, "Gandhabba State Evidence from Tipitaka."
- Without the concept of Gandhabba, it is not possible to explain the difference between bhava and $j \bar{a} t i$ : "Bhava and Jāti - States of Existence and Births Therein," and not believing it a micchā dittthi: "Micchā Ditthi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage."
- Tirokudda sutta is a famous sutta that describes the gandhabba as "tirokudda"; see, "Antarabhava and Gandhabba" and posts referred to there.


## Gandhabba (Mental Body) Controls the Physical Body

7. Let us briefly discuss how the mind of the gandhabba controls a physical body. The physical body comprises 32 body parts, just like a robot is made out of its various parts. What gives life to this physical body is the gandhabba, a very fine body smaller than an atom in modern science.

- Even though the gandhabba is negligibly small in "weight," it has this fine body that spreads over the physical body like a fine mesh; it is more like an energy field. A fine nervous system is associated with the gandhabba that overlaps the physical nervous system consisting of billions of nerve cells.
- Gandhabba also has the seat of the mind (hadaya vatthu) and five pasäda rūpa (that receive signals from the five physical senses via the brain) located close to the physical heart; see, "Brain - Interface between Mind and Body" for details.


## The Role of the Brain

8. How can such a negligibly small gandhabba move a heavy physical body? Gandhabba is more like a signal source that gives appropriate commands. The brain (which is a very sophisticated computer) that translates those commands into actual signals given to the physical nervous system.

- The energy to move those body parts comes from the food that we eat.
- The post, "Ghost in the Machine - Synonym for the Manomaya Kāya?," and other related posts that in more detail. But let us discuss the concept using an example, without getting into those details.

9. When someone decides to move his arm, it is actually the mind that resides in the gandhabba that makes that decision that makes that decision (and generates corresponding vacī sañkhāra). Then that signal goes to the brain, and the brain converts that "mental signal" into chemical signals. They, in turn, transmit through the nervous system to the muscles in the arm and move the arm.

- The energy produced by the digestion of our food goes into energizing the brain and moving body parts.
- So, the gandhabba uses a negligible fraction of the energy that is needed to move body parts. That is similar to keep the brain functioning. This can be compared to the tiny amount of energy spent by a computer in controlling a fighter jet. Jet fuel provides energy to move the heavy jet. In the same way, the food we eat provides the energy to move our physical bodies.
- We generate that small energy in our thoughts - via javana citta - as we discuss below.


## Kāya and Vacī Viññatti Rūpa

10. The commands from the gandhabba are signals or tiny amounts of energy, and these come in two varieties: kāya viññatti rūpa and vacī viñnatti rūpa. These are two of the 28 types of rūpa in Abhidhamma.

- The kāya viññatti rūpa control bodily movements, and vacī viññatti rūpa control speech.
- Javana citta generate these "rūpa" or "energy signals." Again, more information can be found in the Abhidhamma section.

11. Speech - done with vacī viññatti rūpa - is different from moving body parts. Speech involves complex muscle movements that are not yet understood by science. Moving body parts - done with kāya viñnatti rūpa - is simpler.

- What is behind vacī viññatti rūpa are vitakka and vicāra cetasika that are in those javana citta responsible for speech. However, when we just "talk to ourselves," the javana citta responsible are weaker than those responsible for actual speech. But those two cetasika are in both types of javana citta.
- Those javana citta that are responsible for physical action (like raising an arm or walking) involve kāya viñnatti rūpa, and the javana citta that generate those are even stronger.
- Therefore, both vacī sañkhāra (whether talking to oneself or actually speaking) and kāya sañkhāra (bodily actions) involve javana citta. All kamma that can be controlled directly by us are done via javana citta; see, "Javana of a Citta - The Root of Mental Power."


## Votthapana Citta - Decision to Take Action

12. The initial decision to generate vacī or kāya sañkhāra actually happens at the votthapana citta, which comes just before the seven javana citta in a citta vithi, which has 17 citta in total; see, "Citta Vithi Processing of Sense Inputs," and other related posts in the Abhidhamma section.

- That "initial reaction" to a sense input comes AUTOMATICALLY in the votthapana citta, and the nature of that reaction depends on one's gati. Thus, the AUTOMATIC mano sañkhāra are generated in that votthapana citta.

13. If you are not familiar with Abhidhamma, don't be discouraged by these details. This post provides undeniable evidence that vacī sañkhāra controls not only during speech but also while "talking to oneself."

- But for those who are familiar with Abhidhamma, the relationship between terminology and concepts could become much clearer with this discussion.


## Kammaṭthāna (Meditation Recital) Can Be Silent

14. Now, let us take a couple of examples to illustrate this without Abhidhamma. When one is doing a kammatthāna (i.e., meditation recita), one could either say the phrase(s) out loud or one could recite in one's head. Both involve vacī sañkhāra.

- A kammaṭthāna can be done in either of those two ways, and both involve vacī sañkhāra.
- Furthermore, the more one understands the concepts behind the meditation phrase's concepts, the more powerful those javana citta will be, and thus more effective the meditation session becomes.
- When one is starting on meditation, it is better to say the phrases out loud because it is easier to keep the mind on that topic. When one gets better at it, one could just recite it internally, without getting the words out.
- This is an example of a puññābhi sañkhāra (meritorious deed) that involves vacī sañkhāra.


## Need to Be Careful With Silent Vacī Sañkhāra

15. Now let us consider an apuññabhi sañkhāra (immoral deed) that involves vacī sañkhāra, where one starts generating bad thoughts about an enemy or a person that one dislikes. One could be generating a lot of such vacī sañkhāra internally, without saying a single word. However, when the feelings get strong, the words may just come out because the javana power of those javana citta could become uncontrollable.

- Even though the javana power involved in "silent vacī sañkhāra" are less than those involved in speech, one could be generating much more of those "silent vacī sañkhāra" and thus could be generating more kamma vipāka.
- Just like in the earlier example, the "power" behind those javana citta with vacī sañkhāra will be higher when the degree of hate associated with that person is higher. That is why it is harder to control oneself, when one is dealing with a person that one really hates.


## Sammā Sañkappa Involve Vacī Sañkhāra

16. In the Noble Eightfold Path, Sammā Sañkappa deals with only one component of vacī sañkhāra, those conscious thoughts without speech. Getting rid of all vacī sañkhāra involve both Sammā Sañkappa and Sammā Vācā.

- "Sañkappa" in Pāli or "sankappana" in Sinhala means conscious thoughts that involve "san" or things that contribute to the sansāric journey (rebirth process). Here "sankappanä" comes from "san" + "kappana," where "kappan $\bar{a} "$ means conscious thoughts. When one keeps thinking about something, those thoughts are called "sankappanā."
- Of course, "san" is a key Pāli term in Buddha Dhamma; see the subsection posts, "San." Sammā means to get rid of, as discussed in the same section.
- Therefore, Sammā Sañkappa or Sammā sankappanā means removing bad conscious and deliberate thoughts, and cultivating moral thoughts.
- Sammā vācā involves stopping immoral speech and generating moral speech.

17. The main point to be extracted from this discussion is that one needs to be very carefil about generating hateful (or greedy) conscious thoughts for long times. When one becomes aware of such thoughts, one CAN stop them. This is the basis of both Ānāpāna and Satipatṭhāna Bhāvanā.

- We always think conscious thoughts (vacī sañkhāra of the first kind) before acting on them, either via speech (vacī sañkhāra of the second kind) or via bodily actions (kāya sañkhāra)!
- This is discussed in detail in, "How Are Gati and Kilesa Incorporated into Thoughts?," "Suffering in This Life and Paticca Samuppāda," "Satipatthāna Sutta - Relevance to Suffering in This Life," as well as other posts in the "Living Dhamma" section.
- Experiencing pleasing sense objects (called kāma guna) is not kāma. Generating vacī sañkhāra (or kāma sankappanā) about them is kāma; see, "Kāma Guna, Kāma, Kāma Rāga, Kāmacchanda."

Further details at "Vitakka, Vicāra, Savitakka, Savicāra, and Avitakka, Avicāra"

## Kāmacchanda and Icca - Being Blinded by Cravings

November 29, 2018

1. Kāmacchanda is a Pāli word which has roots in the key word "icca" (pronounced "ichcha"),

- There is no need to look for Sanskrit roots to find meanings hidden in Pāli words, and this is a good example.
- Kāmacchanda is one of the five hindrances (pañca n̄̄varaṇa); see, "Key to Calming the Mind - The Five Hindrances."

2. Kāmacchanda ("kāma"+"icca"+ "andha") means the POSSIBILITY to be blinded by sense desires. We will analyze it below. First let me explain the pronunciation of the key words "icca" and "anicca."

- The Pāli word that is spelled in English as "icca" is pronounced as "ichcha", and has the meaning of liking/craving.
- " $N a$ " + "icca" is "anicca," which basically means "(in the long term) it is not possible to get what one craves, likes, or wants."
- "Na" + "icca" is "anicca," just like "na" + "āgām $\vec{\imath} "$ is "Anāgāmī". [ $\overline{\boldsymbol{a} g} \boldsymbol{a} \boldsymbol{m} \overline{\mathrm{c}}$ : (adj.), coming; one who comes.]

Such "combined words" are very common in Pāli. I will just show two examples from the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta:

- "yampiccham na labhati tampi dukkham"" is "yam pi iccham na labhati tam pi dukkham." Here "strong craving" is expressed by adding an extra " h " to go from icca to iccha.

In the present case, "Kāma"+"icca"+ "anda" becomes Kāmacchanda.

- That is similar to "ayamantimā jāti" in the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta coming from "ayam antima jāti."

Here is an audio recording on how these words are pronounced:
WebLink: audio pronounciation of kāmacchanda Download
3. Now let us look at the meaning of the other components of the word kāmacchanda.

- Here "kāma" conventionally means indulging in sense pleasures that belong to the kāma loka: eye, ear, nose, tongue, and the body; "andha" means blind.
- If the attraction for something becomes so strong that one's mind may become "blind to rational thought." Mind can lose any control over what is sensible and what is not sensible (or immoral). Kämacchanda means "blinded by cravings for sense pleasures."
- Anyone who has not comprehending Tilakkhaṇa (for which removal of the 10 types of micchā ditṭhi is a pre-condition), would have kāmacchanda.
- However, one with kāmacchanda MAY not commit any immoral action, unless the temptation becomes "high."

4. When a strong sense input comes, one could be blinded about the possible consequences and may do something immoral.

- For example, if one gets an opportunity to rob or even kill someone without getting caught, that could become very tempting.
- We have heard about situations where well-know people who are considered to be "highly moral" are charged with rape or taking large bribes.

5. This possibility of generating kāmacchanda is removed when one attains the Sotāpanna stage of Nibbāna. Kāmacchanda will be reduced to kāma rāga for a Sotāpanna.

- Having kāma rāga means one still has cravings for sense pleasures, but WILL NOT do anything immoral to get such sense pleasures.
- For example, a Sotāpanna could a happily married person taking care of a family and engaging in sexual activities with the spouse. He/she may like to enjoy other sense pleasures too.
- Kāma rāga is removed only at the Anāgāmi stage of Nibbāna.

6. Now, let us analyze the word "kāma" in a bit more detail. The true meaning of "kāma" comes from the WebLink: suttacentral: Nibbedhika Sutta (AN 6.63):
"Sañkapparāgo purisassa kāmo, Netekāmā yāni citrāni loke; Sañkapparāgo purisassa kāmo,
Tiṭthanti citrāni tatheva loke; Athettha dhīrā vinayanti chandanti."

- Kāma is defined as "sañkappa rāga about sense pleasing material things (citrāni loke)." And "sañkappa" means "generating conscious thoughts."
- For example, Sammā Sañkappa in the Noble Eightfold Path is about "contemplating on fruitful Dhamma concepts with the Nibbāna as the goal."
- Vacī sañkhāra include BOTH sañkappa (conscious thoughts) and vācā (speech); they both depend on the cetasika (mental factors) of vitakka and vicära that arise in the mind based on one's mindset, see, "Correct Meaning of Vacī Sañkhāra."

7. The above explanation provides us with a way to start reducing kāmacchanda even before one gets rid of the 10 types of micchā dittthi.

- It is important to note that "ka$m a$ " is not just engaging in activities to fulfill sense pleasures; "kāma" includes indulging in conscious thoughts about the five sense faculties that belong to the kāma loka: eye, ear, nose, tongue, and the body.
- Most times, people enjoy just thinking about sense pleasures, for example, sex or food.
- Every time one engages in generating conscious thoughts about sense pleasures, one's kāmacchanda will increase. By cutting down on such "day dreaming", one could reduce one's kāmacchanda.
- However, it will be permanently reduced to the kāma rāga level only at the Sotāpanna stage.

8. Even when one has kāmacchanda, one may be able to SUPPRESS it temporarily by focusing the mind on a neutral object, for example, on breath or a kasina object.

- That is how ancient yogis, and even some people today are able to get cultivate $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$ by engaging in breath or kasiña meditations.
- Furthermore, one would need to be abstaining from akusala kamma.

9. This is why in any sutta that describes jhāna has the following verse: "..bhikkhu vivicceva kāmehi vivicca akusalehi dhammehi savitakkaì savicāraì vivekajaì pītisukhaì paṭhamaí jhānamin upasampajja viharati.."

- That means even to get to the first jhāna, one would need to be abstaining from akusala kamma (vivicca akusalehi dhammehi) and kāma sañkappa (vivicceva kāmehi).
- Therefore, it is clear from the above discussion that even a Sotāpanna is not guaranteed to be able to attain $j h a ̄ n a ̄$.
- Jhānā are different from magga phala. We all have cultivated jhānā in our deep past. It is easier to get to $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$ for those who have practiced $j h a \bar{a} \bar{a}$ in recent lives.
- However, one needs to attain a magga phala just once.

10. One can get an idea about that by considering the fact that such "sense pleasing things" are not there in brahma loka.

- A rūpa loka brahma (i.e., a rūpāvacara brahma) has a very fine body and does not have a nose to smell, a tongue to taste, or a solid enough body to feel touch. It can only see and hear.
- Since a brahma cannot taste, smell or touch, a brahma does not engage in those sense pleasures that are available in the kāma loka like tasting food, smelling nice aroma, or engage in sex sex. Brahmā are unisex. However, even a human female who cultivated jhān $\bar{a}$ and is born as a brahma is said to be have "purisa gati" as a brahma: WebLink: suttacentral: Bahdhātuka Sutta (MN 115). That term "purisa" is not used in the sense of "male" (Atthapurisa puggalā include women who have comprehended the Four Noble Truths, i.e., belong to the Sañgha).


## - Kämacchanda involves only those sense pleasures that are available only in kāma loka.

11. Jhānic pleasures are cultivated by at least suppressing kāma rāga; see, "Three Kinds of Happiness What is Nirāmisa Sukha?."

- That involves subsiding the "heating of the mind" due to kāma rāga.
- We don't realize it, but our minds are heated and agitated by the desire for sense pleasures. However, the desire for sense pleasures cannot be removed by sheer will power, and becomes possible normally after the Sotāpanna stage; see, "Is It Necessary for a Buddhist to Eliminate Sensual Desires?."

12. "Tāpa" (pronounced "thāpa") means heat; when we get really stressful we feel a "fire" in the heart. When it gets really bad, people say, "I could feel my heart burn" when they hear an extremely poignant news.

- In the case of getting angry, we can definitely feel this "fire" within; see, "How to Taste Nibbāna."
- Even though we do not realize it, even engaging in kāma sañkappa ("day dreaming about sense pleasures") - let alone engaging in them - leads to a "highly perturbed state of mind."
- And "āt $\bar{a} p i$ " is to remove that "fire" from the heart and the stress from the mind, and calm the mind. This is the "cooling down", "niveema," "nivana" or early stages of Nibbāna.

13. This is actually what is meant by the verse, "āt $\bar{a} p \bar{\imath}$ sampajāno, satim $\bar{a}$ vineyya loke abhijjh $\bar{a}$ domanassam" in the Mahā Satipatṭhāna Sutta.

- It basically means: "get rid of the fire or heat in the mind by being aware of kilesa or defilements and by removing extreme greed (abhijjhā) that leads to a depressed mind (domanassa) through discipline (vineyya)."
- We will discuss this in detail later, but here is the summary: When one gets angry, that is domanassa. When one has strong sense desires that is abhijjhā.
- When one can at least suppress abhijjhā and domanassa, one's mind automatically gets to samādhi.

14. These are just basic principles. Furthermore, one cannot get rid of abhijjhā domanassa quickly just by sheer will power.

- One needs to learn pure Dhamma and understand the basic principles of WHY a mind gets heated, excited, and becomes vulnerable to doing more akusala kamma.
- First thing to realize is that one's actions (kamma) are going to have consequences (vipäka), if not in this life in future lives.
- And that is not possible without rebirth. This is why rebirth is a built-in foundation of Buddha Dhamma.


### 3.7 The Five Aggregates (Pañcakkhandha)

- Five Aggregates - Introduction
- Difference Between Physical Rūpa and Rūpakkhandha
- Rūpakkhandha and Rūpa Upādānakkhandha
- Arising of Five Aggregates Based on an Ārammana
- Memory Records - Critical Part of Five Aggregates
- Pañca Upādānakkhandhā - Introduction
- Five Aggregates - Connection to Tilakkhana
- Five Aggregates and Tilakkhana - Introduction
- Icca, Nicca, Anicca - Important Connections
- "Me" and "Mine" - The Root Cause of Suffering
- Difference Between "Me and Mine" and Sakkāya Ditthi
- Sakkāya Ditthi - "Me and Mine" View
- Atta - Two Very Different Meanings

The following provides a sample of posts on rūpa, vedanā, sañ̃̄̄̄, sañkhāra, viññāna:

## Rūpa: "What Are Rūpa? (Relation to Nibbāna)," "Rūpa (Material Form )" and "The Origin of Matter Suddhatthaka"

Vedanā: "Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways, "Vedanā and Samphassa-Jā-Vedanā - More Than Just Feelings," and "Vipāka Vedanā and "Samphassa jā Vedanā" in a Sensory Event."
Sañ̃̄̄̄: "Sañ̃̃̄̄ - What It Really Means," and "Vipallāsa (Ditthi, Saññā, Citta) Affect Sañkhāra."
Sañkhāra: "Sañkhāra - What It Really Means" and "Sañkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka."
Viññāna: "Viññāna (Defiled Consciousness)" and "Viññāna - What It Really Means" "Kamma Viññāna Link Between Mind and Matter," "Anidassana Viññāna - What It Really Means."

- "Sañ̃ña (Perception)"
- "Vedanā (Feelings)"


## Deeper Analysis:

- Pañcakkhandha or Five Aggregates - A Misinterpreted Concept
- Pancaupadanakkhandha - It is All Mental


### 3.7.1 Five Aggregates - Introduction

## Re-written April 17, 2020; revised April 19, 2020

## Introduction

1. Five aggregates (pañcakkhandha) represent ANY given living-being. In a series of posts, I will try to explain this concept by addressing the following points.

- Most people today, including many scientists, believe that a "person" exists as long as the physical body exists. We are born (due to no apparent reason,) then we live our lives, and when we die, that is the end of the story. Enjoy life while it lasts! That is the "materialist view."
- Then there are people belonging to various religions who believe the following. At the end of this life, one will either go to hell or merge with the Creator (in heaven) for an eternity. For them, there is something in us in addition to the physical body. That is the "soul" that either goes to hell or heaven. We can call this the "soul theory" for simplicity. In Hinduism, it is a little bit different, but primarily the same result. They believe that the "mental body" or the "ātman" goes through many "re-incarnations," but the ultimate destiny is to merge with "Mahā Brahma" and to exist there forever.
- Those are straightforward concepts to grasp. But they do not have a solid "scientific" or logical foundation. Neither "theory" explains how each of us came to existence. The Buddha's explanation is very different and based on the Principle of Causality, which is Paticca Samuppāda. However, it takes a real effort to understand fully.
- This is going to be another way that I will try to explain Buddha Dhamma. It could be simpler than my previous approaches. Of course, they are all self-consistent. The most recent series of posts based on a bit deeper analysis is at "Origin of Life."


## Mind and Matter - Where Is the Connection?

2. How consciousness arises is THE critical issue that no one else but a Buddha can provide a logical and self-consistent answer. Materialists are focusing on the brain as the origin of thoughts or consciousness. However, that is a futile effort since inert matter (atoms and molecules) can NEVER give rise to "mental phenomena" like pain, joy, jealousy, greed. That should be self-evident!

- The proponents of an "unchanging soul" BELIEVE (without any evidence or a proof-of-principle) that consciousness (and thoughts) arise in a "mental body" and that mental body (soul or àtman) detaches from the physical body at death and goes to hell or heaven.
- The Buddha said that there is a "mental body" (gandhabba) that detaches from the physical body, but that mental body is not an unchanging entity like a "soul" or an "ātman." Furthermore, that mental body can take many different forms based on the existence in one of the 31 realms of existence. For example, the mental-body of a human is very different from that of an animal, a Deva, or a Brahma. There is no unchanging "soul" or an "ātman." That should be very clear since, at Parinibbāna of an Arahant, no trace of that Arahant left in "this world of 31 realms." There was NOTHING of the essence, to begin with!


## The Irrelevant Issue of a "No-Self" in Buddha Dhamma

3. So, it should be quite clear that the idea of a permanent "self" is absent in Buddha's teachings. However, the Buddha taught that it is also not correct to say a "self" does not exist for an average human. In other words, a "self" exists until one fully comprehends that the root cause of samisāric suffering is the perception (saññ̄a) of a "self" or "me." See, "An Apparent "Self" Is Involved in Kamma Generation."

- An average human has both the wrong ditṭhi of a "me" and also the sañña (perception) of a "me." It is better to use the word "me" than "self" because that is precisely how the Buddha explained it.
- The wrong ditṭhi of a "me" goes away at the Sotāpanna stage. The false perception of a "me" (or the sense of "me") goes away only at the Arahant stage. More information on ditṭhi and saññā at, "Ditthi (Wrong Views), Sammā Ditthi (Good/Correct Views)," "Sañ̃ña - What It Really Means," and "Vipallāsa (Ditthi, Sañ̃̄̄a, Citta) Affect Sañkhāra." Of course, more relevant posts can be found by using the "Search" box on the top right.
- At the end of the "Origin of Life" series, it was shown that, "Origin of Life - One Creates One's Own Future Lives." Any person creates his/her own future lives! In the present series of posts, I will try to show the same with this simpler analysis.


## A Living-Being - Body and Mind

4. Each living-being (whether we see them or not) has a body and a mind. Some of the "bodies" in other realms are so subtle that we cannot see them. Nevertheless, a living-being has at least a "trace of matter."

- Furthermore, our mind is not working at all times. While we are in a deep sleep, we are "totally out of this world." It is as if we did not exist during that time. That is especially true if one becomes unconscious. That is a critical point to understand.
- We need to realize that we do not have either an "unchanging body" or "an unchanging mind." Even during a lifetime, both those change moment-to-moment. The physical body (part of rūpa) is different from rūpakkhandha.


## Rūpa Versus Rūpakkhandha

5. The Buddha included all types of matter that one has encountered at any time in one huge "collection" or "aggregate." That is the "rūpa aggregate" or "rūpa khandha" or "rūpakkhandha."

- That means what is in the rūpakkhandha are not real (physical) rūpa. Whatever observed becomes just a mental imprint or a memory, moments after observed. I will discuss this in detail in the next post.
- The Buddha divided the mind or "mental aspects" into four categories: vedanā, sañ̃̄̄̄, sañkhāra, and viññāna. These entities arise and fade away, but a record of them exists (going back to an untraceable beginning.) Those "collections" or 'aggregates" are vedanākkhandha, sañ̃̄̄̄kkhandha, sañkhārakkhandha, and viññạ̄akkhandha.


## The Five Aggregates Describe any "Living-Being"

6. As we will see, a living being's existence, together with experiences, can be described entirely in terms of those five aggregates. The Buddha showed that those five entities arise and fade away in a manner fully explained in terms of causes and their effect. There is no hidden "soul" or an "ātman."

- However, at any given time, there is a "person" with a set of gati (habits/character) responsible for the actions done at that time. It is not an automated process. That is why we cannot say that there is no 'self' up to the Arahant stage. There is a "self" doing things on his/her own. Of course, only until seeing the futility of such "doings" or "(abhi)sañkhāra."
- That last bullet point is what we need to understand. We will discuss that systematically, this time with a little bit different approach.


## One Type of Consciousness (Vipāka Viñ̃nāṇa) Arises With an Ārammaṇa

7. We tend to think of the mind as our own. But in reality, our consciousness arises based on two conditions.

- First, we must be awake, and a sensory event must trigger one of the six senses. If someone is unconscious, no matter how loud we talk, he will not hear. No matter how hard we shake him, he will not feel, etc.
- Second, one of our six senses must be stimulated by an external sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, or a memory. The first five come through our five physical senses, and the sixth are the thoughts that come to our mind directly.
- An "external trigger" that initiates a new consciousness is called an ārammaña. Such an
 one of the six consciousness (viññanna) arise. These are vipāka viññāna. They just come in due to prior kamma, as kamma vipāka.
- These types of vipāka viññāna arise via, for example, "Cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhu viññānaìm." See, "Contact Between Āyatana Leads to Vipāka Viñ̃̃āna."


## Second Type of Consciousness (Kamma Viññạ̣̄a) May Arise Based on an Arammana

8. If that external "thought object" or "ārammana" is of interest, then we start generating CONSCIOUS THOUGHTS about that ārammaṇa.

- At this point, our consciousness switches to a new type called a kamma viññanna. That is because this new consciousness is more than just "consciousness" or "awareness." Now we are interested in pursuing what we have seen, heard, etc. and to "accomplish something more."
- For example, a friend may offer a piece of cake, and the taste of that cake is a vipāka viññāna. But if we generate a craving for that cake, we may want to taste it again in the future. We may start thinking about how to either buy it or make it, and ask the friend about those two possibilities. That future expectation is in the new type of kamma viññāna generated via "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra."
- In other words, now we have gone beyond "just experiencing the taste of the cake" or the "vipāka viññāna." Now we have a future expectation to taste it again with a "kamma viññāna" generated via our conscious thoughts (vacī sañkhāra.)
- Stated in another way, we have initiated a Paticca Samuppāda process with "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" and "saṅkhāra paccayā viññāna." That viññāna is a kamma viññạna.


## A Living-Being - Body With a Mind Interacting With the External World

9. What we discussed above in summary form is what our lives are all about. We have a physical body with a mind. The physical body gets sensory inputs from the external world. Then we think about them and pursue some sensory inputs that we like and try to avoid those we do not like.

- In that process, we create new kamma that leads to the arising of a new body when the current body dies.
- Of course, the types of bodies that arise in future lives depend on the types of kamma that we do, based on those sensory experiences. If one kills another person to acquire that person's wealth, then one will be reborn in a bad realm (apāy $\bar{a}$.) If one generates compassionate thoughts about hungry people and offer them food, one may be reborn in a good realm.
- That is how the rebirth process continues.


## Summary

10. We have laid the framework to look at the conscious life and the rebirth process from a viewpoint based on the five aggregates or pañcakkhandha.

- In this analysis, the whole world is divided into just five categories. One is the rūpa aggregate, the "collection of MEMORIES of all $r \bar{u} p a$ " or the rūpakkhandha. That includes memories of all "material
objects," including our physical bodies and all external objects that one has seen in all previous lives. We will discuss that in the next post.
- The other four aggregates or "heaps" or "collections" of four types of mental entities: vedanā (feelings), saññ̄a (perception), sañkhāra (thoughts), and viññāna (vipāka viññāna or kamma viññāna.)
- We will discuss each category in detail in future posts.
- I am re-writing the sub-section on the "Five Aggregates" and will be replacing the old posts there. Of course, now I have many recent related posts to provide more information.


### 3.7.2 Difference Between Physical Rūpa and Rūpakkhandha

Revised October 20, 2018; September 18, 2019; April 24, 2020; re-written April 3, 2021; revised August 4, 2021; August 8, 2022

## Introduction

1. Translation of rūpakkhandha as "form aggregate" may give the wrong impression that it is a "collection of solid objects." It is critical to understand the difference Between rūpa and rūpakkhandha. Innumerable rūpa exist worldwide, and only those experienced by a person are included in their rūpakkhandha.

- Therefore, one person's $r \bar{u} p a k k h a n d h a$ is different from another person's $r \bar{u} p a k k h a n d h a$.
- Instead of memorizing Pāli words, we need to understand what is meant by such Pāli words and use the Pāli words when there is ambiguity. Many key Pāli words do not have equivalent English words.


## What Is a Rūpa?

2. Before we understand the difference between a "rūpa" and "rūpakkhandha," we need to understand what the Buddha meant by a "rūpa." The Pāli word "rūpa" is customarily translated as "form."

- The definition of a rūpa is in many places in Tipitaka, for example, SN 22.56 and SN 22.57. Simply put, "A rūpa consists of the four great elements, derived from the four great elements."
- A rūpa made of the four great elements is not necessarily a solid object like a tree (those are vanṇa rüpa.) Types of energy (like light and sound) are included in the rūpa category. All sensory inputs to the five physical senses are rūpa.
- The Buddha defined rūpa as ALL those that can provide a sensory experience (viññāna.) Therefore, dhammā that we experience with the mind are also a type of rūpa. See, "What are Rūpa? Dhammā are Rūpa too!" That subject is a bit deep. Don't worry about that right now if you are not familiar with it.

3. Therefore, we can see that light, sound, odors, taste, and touch are all types of $r \bar{u} p a$. It is only within the past 100 years or so that scientists admitted that matter and energy are the same.

- In modern-day terms, physical rūpa are "solid matter" (human bodies, trees, houses, etc.) OR "energy" (light, sound, heat, etc.). With Einstein's famous equation $\mathrm{E}=\mathrm{mc}^{\wedge} 2$, modern science acknowledged that matter and energy are intrinsically the same.
- In terms of Buddha Dhamma, all those rūpa are collections of suddhatthaka, the "smallest unit of rūpa." We usually call visible objects "matter." And invisible energy forms (like heat, sound) "energy." Both types consist of suddhatthaka. A suddhatthaka is the smallest unit of energy/matter in Buddha Dhamma. It is unimaginably tiny, billions of times smaller than an atom or even an electron in modern science.
－By the way，dhammā that we detect directly with the mind are rūpa below the suddhatthaka stage（just energy．）
－The 28 types of $r \bar{u} p a$ are listed in＂Rūpa（Material Form）－Table．＂We can see that the ten types of rūpa on the right－hand side of the Table are not what we usually think of as＂matter．＂


## Khandha Is a＂Collection＂or an＂Aggregate＂of Rūpa Experienced

4．Before we discuss $r \bar{u} p a k k h a n d h a, ~ i t ~ a l s o ~ h e l p s ~ t o ~ u n d e r s t a n d ~ w h a t ~ a ~ " k h a n d h a " ~ i s . ~ I n ~ P a ̄ l i ~(a n d ~ S i n h a l a), ~$ it means a＂heap＂or a＂pile．＂In Sinhala，a hill or a＂pile of things＂is called a＂kanda＂（203＇z）．So，aggregate is not a bad translation for khandha（Dっかわin Sinhala for the Pāli word）．
－Rūpakkhandha includes all types of rūpa that one has experienced／expects to experience／is experiencing now，as discussed below．
－We see an object in a series of high－speed＂seeing events．＂Those individual＂snapshots＂don＇t register in our minds．Only the overall effect of a large number of snapshots is registered and added to rūpa khandha．It rhymes like＂rūpakkhandha．＂We have seen such a combination of words（sandhi）in Pāli terms like Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta，the same as Dhamma Cakka Pavattana Sutta．
－Another example is dhammassavana．＂Dhamma savana＂rhymes with dhammassavana．＂Dhamma savana＂is listening to the dhamma（discourse）．＂

## Rūpakkhandha is All Mental

5．It is essential to realize that rūpakkhandha is all mental．It is NOT a＂collection of material things，＂ as the term＂form aggregate＂may imply．Towards the end of the＂WebLink：suttacentral： Mahāhatthipadopama Sutta（MN 28），＂Ven．Sāriputta explains rūpakkhandha．
－Just the presence of an object，a sound，odor，taste，or touch is not enough to be included in rūpakkhandha．For example，if X is sitting in a pitch dark room， X will not see anything there，even though there may be many objects in the room．If X shines a flashlight on a chair，then X can see that chair．If the chair＇s image registers in X＇s mind，then it becomes a part of the rūpakkhandha for X．
－Let us take another example． X and Y are in a room reading books，and X is fully absorbed in reading， but Y has not had much interest in his book． Y hears a dog barking and that sound registers in his mind， i．e．，the＂dog bark＂becomes a part of his rūpakkhandha．However，even though that sound would have reached X＇s ears too，he had his attention entirely focused on the book and did not hear that＂dog bark．＂ Thus，the＂dog bark＂is NOT a part of X＇s rūpakkhandha．
－Now it should be quite clear that each person has their rūpakkhandha．

## Rūpakkhandha is Unimaginably Huge！

## 6．Let us look in more detail to see that these rūpakkhandha are＂mental impressions＂of rūpa and NOT the rūpa out there．

－The critical point is that when we experience a rūpa，that present moment is quickly gone．Most of rüpakkhandha is what one has already experienced．Everything we have experienced in all our past rebirths is in the rūpakkhandha！
－Those $r \bar{u} p \bar{a}$ that one has seen in the past are one＇s atīta ru$p \bar{a}$ ，including anything that one ever saw （including in previous births）．These cannot be physical $r \bar{u} p \bar{a}$ ．They are just memories of a $r \bar{u} p a$ that existed in the past．For example，one may remember a tree in the backyard as a child．That tree is no longer there，but one can still＂see＂that tree in one＇s mind．Same for one＇s dead parents or grandparents who may be no longer alive．

- Any $r \bar{u} p a$ about the future or an anāgata rūpa (for example, a sketch of the type of house one is thinking about building) can change with time. That does not even involve a real physical rūpa.
- Any rūpa that one sees at present (paccuppanna rūpa) goes to the category of atīta rūpa in a split second. Even if we never see that object again, that memory will remain.


## More Types of $\boldsymbol{R} \bar{u} p a$ in $R \bar{u} p a k k h a n d h a$

7. Internal (ajjhatta) rūpa are part of oneself: all body parts, including the ones inside the body. External (bahiddha) rūpa are, of course, anything outside of one's body. Coarse (olārika) rūpa are what we call "solid matter," and fine/subtle (sukuma) rūpa are "energy" (heat, sound, dhammā, etc.).

- There are rūpa that are "bad" (hīna), and there are others that are "good" (paṇīta).
- Some rūpa are far (dūre), and some are near (santike).
- Therefore, we see that there could be some overlaps between these categories.
- Many of these in the $r \bar{u} p a k k h a n d h a$ we have not even seen. For example, we have a mental impression of our hearts, but we have not seen our hearts. We may not have seen some landmarks like the Chinese Great Wall, but only pictures of them. Yet, we do have mental impressions of those.
- Altogether there are 11 types included in rūpakkhandha. The WebLink: suttacentral: Khandha Sutta (SN 22.48) (among many other suttā) summarizes what is included in rüpakkhandha. "Yaï kiñci, bhikkhave, rūpaì atītānāgatapaccuppannaì (atīta, anāgata, paccuppanna) ajjhattaìm vā
 vuccati rūpakkhandho."
- The 11 types are past, future, current, internal, external, coarse, subtle, good, bad, far, and near.


## Difference Between Rūpa and Rūpakkhandha

8. Now we can see the main difference between physical rūpa and rūpakkhandha.

- A physical $r \bar{u} p a$ is either of the following two kinds. A solid object that one sees with one 's eyes or touches with one's body (a person, a person's body or a body part, a tree, a planet, a star, etc.) Those are what we usually call "solid objects." Then, other sensory inputs come through the other three sense doors (smells, tastes, or sounds).
- Rūpakkhandha has MENTAL IMPRESSIONS of all external rūpā that one has EXPERIENCED. Rūpakkhandha is NOT tangible or has any energy in them. One's rūpakkhandha is INFINITE. It has records of ALL one has seen in ALL past lives going back and back in time without "an actual beginning."
- That is why those with iddhi (supernormal) powers can recall events that took place billions of years ago. The Buddha recalled how he received his first "niyata vivarana," or confirmation that he would become a Buddha, trillions of years ago, from Buddha Dīpañkara. See, "Pāramitā and Niyata Vivarana - Myths or Realities?" [vivarana : [nt.] expansion, uncovering, showing, clarifying.]
- Some people can recall ANY event during their current life (for example, what one ate for lunch on a particular day ten years ago.) See "Recent Evidence for Unbroken Memory Records (HSAM)." That confirms that all events are "recorded" and kept intact in viñ̃̄āṇa dhātu. See "Where Are Memories Stored? - Viññān̄a Dhātu."

9. Let us take another example to visualize this difference between actual $r \bar{u} p a$ and $r \bar{u} p a k k h a n d h a$.

- The 2001 terrorist attack destroyed the twin towers in New York.
- If someone had seen those twin towers in New York, those towers would be in that person's $r \bar{u} p a k k h a n d h a$. That person can still recall them in his mind. Those physical structures are not there anymore but are in his rüpakkhandha!
- But those physical $r \bar{u} p \bar{a}$ (twin towers) in New York are no longer there.
- Furthermore, if someone had not seen them before their destruction, those towers would not be in that person's rūpakkhandha.


## Rūpakkhandha Is Personal

10. Since we have seen very different things in our current lives (and in our past lives), our rūpakkhandha are very different. Each person's $r \bar{u} p a k k h a n d h a$ is unique.

When experiencing a rūpa through any of the six sense faculties leads to the generation of vedanā, sañ $\bar{n} \bar{a}$, sañkhāra, and viññāna. That is discussed in many suttā, and we have discussed in detail the Chachakka Sutta (MN 148). See "Chachakka Sutta - Six Types of Vipāka Viññāna."

- We can also see that each has their vedanākkhandha, saññākkhandha, sañkhārakkhandha, and viññānakkhandha.
- They are analyzed in the same way. That is how the pañcakkhandha (five aggregates) arises. Therefore, pañcakkhandha is also unique to each person.
- An important example of crystalizing the concept of rūpakkhandha in "Rūpakkhandha and Rūpa Upādānakkhandha."


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## Rūpakkhandha and Rūpa Upādānakkhandha

May 1, 2020

## Introduction - What Is Rūpupādānakkhandha?

1. In the previous post, "Difference Between Physical Rūpa and Rūpakkhandha," we discussed the difference between $r \bar{u} p a$ and $r \bar{u} p a k k h a n d h a$.

- In simple terms, rūpa are the "visuals, sounds, odors, tastes, and touches due to solid bodies." Note that $r \bar{u} p a$ is a generic term. It indicates any such $r \bar{u} p a$ existing anywhere and does not pertain to any given person.
" On the other hand, Rūpakkhandha has one's "mental impressions" of ALL such rūpa that we have experienced (including in previous lives), experiencing now, and hope to experience in the future. Thus, rūpakkhandha is specific to a given person. Each person has his/her rūpakkhandha.
- The word rūpa upādānakkhandha or rūpupādānakkhandha comes from a combination of three words: rūpa, upādāna, and khandha. Therefore, rūpa upādānakkhandha is part of rūpakkhandha that we crave (i.e., would like to experience again.)
- By the way, rūpakkhandha and rūpupādānakkhandha are conventionally translated as, "form aggregate" and "clinging form aggregate."


## Meanings of Upādāna and Taṇhā

2. Taṇh $\bar{a}$ means "attaching to things in this world" with greed, hate, and ignorance. Most times, taṇh $\bar{a}$ is incorrectly translated as "craving."

- The word taṇh $\bar{a}$ comes from "thán" + "h $\bar{a}$," where "thán" rhymes like in "thatch" and means "a place and " $h \vec{a}$ " means getting attached or fused. That can happen not only with greed but also with anger and ignorance. see, "Tanh $\bar{a}$ - How we Attach via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance." Note that "tan" in taṇhā pronounced like in "thunder." There are three types of tanhha. Vibhava taṇhā is removed at the Sotāpanna stage and kāma taṇhā removed at the Anāgāmi stage. Bhava taṇhā is eliminated only at the Arahant stage. See, "Kāma Tanhhā, Bhava Tanhā, Vibhava Tanhā."
- Upādāna ("upa" + "ādāna" where "upa" means "close" and "ādāna" means "pull") means "pull and keep close." One tries to pull and keep close only things that one desires. See, "Difference Between Tanhā and Upādāna." This post will take some time to digest. But it will help one clearly understand both those terms and the difference between them.
- There are four types of upādāna. Those are diṭthupādāna (wrong views,) sīlabbatupādāna (rituals,) kāmupādāna (for sensual pleasures,) and attavādupādāna (sense of "me" or "mine.") The first two removed at the Sotāpanna stage, third at the Anāgāmi, and the fourth at the Arahant stage of Nibbāna. Note the combination of words. For example, diṭthupādāna is a combination of dittthi and upādāna.


## Upādāna - To "Keep Close"

3. Therefore, upādāna means things or memories that we tend to "keep close" (in mind.) Our way of thinking, speaking, and doing things is dictated by different types of upādāna.

- Therefore, rūpupādānakkhandha means those mental impressions of "visuals, sounds, odors, tastes, and touches due to solid bodies" that we like and would like to experience again. In other words, those are the experiences we desire or crave for. That is a small fraction of one's rūpakkhandha. A given person has no interest in most of the rūpakkhandha.
- The Pāli word that describes "desire" is icca. Sometimes the word "iccha" with the emphasis on the last "cha"" sound is used to mean a "strong desire." As we will see in a few posts, this connection will help us clarify the First Noble Truth on suffering in another way.
- As an aside, you may want to refresh the memory on the fact that Pāli words are written/pronounced differently compared to "standard English." See, "Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars - Part 1."


## Upādāna Is Different from Taṇhā

4. When an ārammaṇa (thought object) comes to our mind, we may FIRST instinctively "attach" to it. Then it is at the upādāna stage that we keep on thinking, speaking, and doing things with the expectations. Those future expectations are either to enjoy something or to avoid things that one does not like. It is at that second stage that we accumulate new kamma, as explained in "Difference Between Tanhā and Upādāna." That leads to "bhava" formation, which in turn, will lead to future rebirth ( $j \bar{a} t i$.

- What I mentioned above are four steps in Pațicca Samuppāda: "vedanā paccayā taṇhā", "tanhhā paccayā upādāna," "upādāna paccayā bhava," and "bhava paccayā jāti." See details at "Paticca Samuppāda."
- It is critical to realize that those things that we do to acquire new kamma are done with sañkhāra. Furthermore, we do sañkhāra both at "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" AND "taṇhā paccayā upādāna." That is discussed in detail with the help of a graphic in the post, "Difference Between Tanhā and Upādāna."
- Most Paticca Samuppāda cycles start NOT with "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra," but with "taṇhā paccayā upādāna," as explained in that post.

5. We normally assign the word "form" or "rūpa" to things we see, including our bodies as well as all external objects and living beings. As I explained above, sounds, odors, tastes, and body touches also arise due to "rūpa." As we discussed in \#7 of the previous post, "Difference Between Physical Rūpa and Rūpakkhandha," the 11 types of $r \bar{u} p a$ included in the rūpakkhandha include paccuppanna rūpa or any $r u \bar{p} a$ that is being experienced at any given moment.

- One important rūpa that one experiences most of the day is one's own body (ajjhatta rūpa.)
- Therefore, one's physical body (more correctly mental impression of it) is part of rūpakkhandha.
- Even though we perceive that these are existing "things," they have momentary existence in a deeper sense. I will give a quick example. A fly lives only a few days (let us say six days.) That fly would age and die in six days. If we see that fly in three days, it would have aged, and its body would be different from that we saw six days ago. When we keep reducing the "time interval," we realize that even a moment later, it is not the same fly.
- The same argument holds for our bodies too. It changes over our lifetime, and that is the cumulative effect of momentary changes. That is why the Buddha said that you could not touch the same person twice! (If anyone remembers the sutta, please let me know: lal@puredhamma.net.)
- As we will see in future posts, "dhamma"" experienced by the mind is also a form of ru$p a$ in Buddha Dhamma. That last category is "anidassanamं, appatighaí" or "cannot be seen or touched."


## We Do Not Attach to "Physical Objects" but to Our "Mental Impressions" or "Rūpakkhandha"

6. A given object, whether it is inert or living, is NOT the CAUSE for attachment (taṇhā and upādāna.) Rather, it is the "way that we perceive that object" based on our gati, that we attach.

- Think about a person that you don't like. As you know, there are many other people, including his/her spouse, children, friends, etc. who may like that person. The reason that you don't like that person is based on your gati. By the way, both you and that person may be considered "good citizens" by most other neutral observers.
- Suppose a guest coming to dinner brings a bottle of alcohol (say, whiskey.) The husband may be happy to see it, but the wife (who may be trying to discourage the husband from having too many drinks) could be irritated. Now, if the guest brought a video game for their child, the child would be delighted. But both parents may become somewhat unhappy thinking that the child may spend too much time playing video games.
- These are the things that we need to contemplate while doing insight mediation (Vipassanā.) That is the best way to understand key concepts in Buddha Dhamma, like Paṭicca Samuppāda. We need to apply what we learn in practical situations.
- Therefore, it is not an external rūpa that makes us attach ( $\operatorname{tanhh} \bar{a}$.) It is our gati (which are related to our anusaya) that make us attach to CERTAIN TYPES of rūpa. The following example illustrates how the same $r \bar{u} p a$ may or may not lead to taṇh $\bar{a}$ even in a given person.


## Rūpakkhandha to R̄̄pa Upādānakkhandha - Instant Change

7. The following is said to have happened many years ago in Sri Lanka. A mother had to go overseas when her son was less than a year old. She had been overseas for many years and came back. She had not even seen any pictures of the boy, who was now a teenager.

- When she came home, she learned that the boy was visiting a neighbor, and she started walking there. On the way, a teenager playing with some friends on the road bumped into her. She became irritated and admonished the boy.
- But then another person on the street said, "Don't you recognize your son? Well. How can you? You have been away all this time." Hearing that, she asked, "Oh, is that my son?" and immediately ran back to hug him.
- He was "just another teenager" until she came to know that he was her son. But the moment she realized that it was her son, the whole situation changed. His figure was not another "rūpa" in her "rūpakkhandha." Now, he became a part of her rūpa upādānakkhandha or rūpupādānakkhandha.


## Summary

8. I hope you can get further clarification on the difference between " $\bar{u} p a$," "rūpakkhandha," and "rūpupādānakkhandha" from the above discussion. You may want to review the previous two posts as well: "Five Aggregates - Introduction" and "Difference Between Physical Rūpa and Rūpakkhandha,"

- Just like the concept of anicca, this again is a fundamental concept to understand, so please try to read through slowly at a quiet time and grasp the concepts. As the Buddha said, "at the end, what matters is understanding a concept, not memorizing words."
- When I first grasped this concept, it was like turning the lights on in a previously dark area that I did not even know existed! That is a good example of what the Buddha meant by "aloko udapādi. "
- We need to realize that rūpakkhandha does not arise by itself. All five khandha or aggregates rise together.
- Each person has his/her rūpakkhandha or the way he/she perceives the material rūpa in the world. That rūpakkhandha has associated with it the other four khandhā (vedanā, sañn̄̄, sañkhāra, and viññāna) and thus comprise the pañcakkhandha. And pañca upādānakkhandha, or what one has cravings for, is a small part of that.
- We will discuss that in the next post.


### 3.7.4 Arising of Five Aggregates Based on an Ārammaṇa

May 7, 2020; revised May 8, 2020

## Introduction

1. Five aggregates (pañcakkhandha) is a critical concept to understand. In the previous three posts, we discussed how the mind makes a "mental imprint" of a ru$p a$, whether it is due to sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, or a dhammā. See, "Five Aggregates - Introduction," "Difference Between Physical Rūpa and Rūpakkhandha," and "Rūpakkhandha and Rūpa Upādānakkhandha."

- Therefore, it is critical to understand that what is registered in the mind is not a $r \bar{u} p a$ but the "mental imprint" of it. That single imprint is part of rūpakkhandha. However, the mind sees not just a single "snapshot," but the whole rūpakkhandha. We will clarify that point in \#9 below.
- Furthermore, based on that rūpakkhandha, the mind generates vedanā, saññā, sañkhāra, and viññāna. Those also involve "aggregates" or "collections," as we will discuss below.
- We NEVER experience a single imprint of a rūpa or a single citta with vedanā, saññā, sañkhāra, and viññāna. The mind ALWAYS deals with all five AGGREGATES. That is a critical issue to understand. Please ask questions if not clear.


## The Role of an ATrammana

2. The mind becomes active only after getting an ārammaṇa. An ārammaṇa is an external rūpa (sight, sound, taste, smell, touch, dhammā) that comes to one of the six senses (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind.)

- A signal representing that external rūpa is "captured" by the sense door (say the eyes) and sent to the brain. The brain processes it and passes it to the mind. That is discussed a bit more in \#5 below. The critical point is that the mind receives a "mental imprint" of that external rūpa. That "mental imprint" or the "signal" or the "image" registers in the MIND.
- The four mental parameters arise with the "image" or the "imprint" of the external rūpa. Therefore, the "mental imprint" is also in the "vipāka viññāna." That is what we "see," "hear," etc. (cakkhu viññāṇa, sota viññāṇa, etc.) We will discuss a second type of "kamma viññāna" below.
- From the above discussion, it is clear that it is not possible to separate such "mental parameters." It is not possible to separate awareness (vedana $)$ from recognition (sañ̃ $\bar{n} \overline{,}$ ) or both those from the overall cognition (viñ̃̄̄ạna) and many kinds of "plans" or 'possible actions" (sañkhāra) that arise in mind.
- The word ārammaṇa is explained in detail in "Chachakka Sutta - Six Types of Vipāka Viññāna."


## Mental Components of Pañcakkhandha (Five Aggregates)

3. Before we start discussing the four mental "aggregates," it is a good idea to review the core entities: vedanā, sañ̃̄̄̄, sañkhāra, and viññāna. They arise in a MIND when an external 'thought-object" or an $\bar{a} r a m m a n a ~ c o m e s ~ t o ~ o n e ~ o f ~ t h e ~ s i x ~ s e n s e s . ~$

- When an external rūpa (sight, sound, etc.) comes to a "sense door" (eyes, ears, etc.), we become aware of it. That is vedanā. A pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral feeling accompanies vedana $\bar{a}$.
- At the same time, we recognize what it is. Whether it is one's mother or a tree, a dog bark or voice of the mother, etc., that recognition of the "thought-object" is sañ $\tilde{n} \bar{a}$.
- Based on the recognition of the "thought-object" to the $\bar{a} r a m m a n a$, we generate our response or reaction to that $\bar{a} r a m m a n ̧ a$. Those responses/reactions are sañkhāra. The initial "reaction' is automatic and generates vedanā and sañ̃̄̄̄a (citta/mano sañkhāra.) That means we immediately feel and recognize that $r \bar{u} p a$. But if we start consciously creating more thoughts, those arise with two more cetasika called vitakka and vicāra. Such thoughts involve vacī sañkhāra. If we then take bodily actions, those require kāya sañkhāra. Therefore, we think, speak, and act with the three types of sañkhāra.
- The overall "state-of-the-mind" is viññāna. It is much more than just "consciousness." Viññanna is complicated but falls into two broad categories. Vipāka viñ̃āạa is the overall sensory experience due to an $\bar{a} r a m m a n ̣ a ~(t h a t ~ v i n ̃ \tilde{n} a ̄ n a ~ m a y ~ b e ~ c a l l e d ~ c o n s c i o u s n e s s) ~ I f ~ w e ~ s t a r t ~ g e n e r a t i n g ~ p l a n s ~ o n ~ w h a t ~ w e ~ s a w,$. heard, etc., then that becomes a kamma viññāna with future expectations. That kamma viññạ̄a is much more than "consciousness."


## What We Experience Is the Cumulative Effect of Many Citta

4. Therefore, those four entities arise together within a split-second, in the first citta.

- But the contents of citta keep changing as they arise in rapidly. Citta $\bar{a}$ (plural) always occur in packets (citta vīthi,), and many of those arise in rapid succession.
- By the time we become aware of the arammaṇa, the initial citta has evolved, and millions of citta may have run through the mind. That is how those parameters get "bundled up" and experienced as "aggregates" or "khandha."
- Let us briefly go through that process step-by-step.


## Creation of a "Mental Imprint" in the Mind

5. The mind must first re-create an image or an imprint of the $r \bar{u} p a$ that triggers the whole process. Let us first clarify how the mind first re-creates an image or an imprint of the ru$p a$ that triggers the entire process of generating vedanā, sañ̃̃ā, sañkhāra, and viñ̃n̄ạna.

- When an ārammaña comes to one of the five physical sense faculties, the brain prepares an imprint of the corresponding rupa. For example, when looking at a tree, the eyes capture an image of that tree. That image then goes to the brain, where it is processed. At that point, there is not even an "image" like a photograph. It is just a "signal" created by the brain. Even scientists do not know what kind of "signal" or "information" the brain generates or exactly how we "see" a tree.
- Similar processes happen with the other sensory inputs. A sound comes to the ear as a "pressure wave" in air. The eardrum vibrates accordingly, and that vibration is somehow "converted" to a sound. That "sound" is heard only by the mind!
- Yes. Eyes cannot see, and ears cannot hear, etc. The brain cannot see, hear either. It is the MIND that experiences all six sensory inputs. Sense faculties and the brain work together to convert those external signals to a form that can be "felt" by the mind. Kammic energy controls all that.


## The Critical Role of the Hadaya Vatthu

6. If you start thinking about it, you will realize how complicated that process is where an external $r \bar{u} p a$ can lead to "thoughts" with "feelings." That is the "hard problem of consciousness" that scientists and philosophers are trying to solve. See, "WebLink: wiki: Hard Problem of Consciousness."

- The bottom line is that it happens only in a hadaya vatthu (seat of the mind.) Only kammic energy can create a hadaya vatthu and the associated pasāda rūpa. Details at "Body Types in 31 Realms Importance of Manomaya Kāya."
- When those signals generated by the brain are transmitted to the hadaya vatthu (seat of the mind,), it can interpret those signals as visuals, sounds, etc.
- That is the solution to the "hard problem of consciousness." Abhidhamma describes the solution in great detail.
- Think about that for a while. When we see a tree, there is no trace of a "picture of a tree" inside the brain! The mind creates that picture, and it goes into rūpakkhandha. That is another way to see the difference between $r \bar{u} p a$ (a tree in the front yard) and rūpakkhandha (the mental imprint of that tree in mind.)


## All Five "Mental Impressions" Arise Together!

7. The registration of that "mental imprint of a $r \bar{u} p a$ " in mind automatically leads to the arising of four mental parameters (nāma dhamma) in mind. Those are vedanā, sañ̃̄ā, sañkhāra, and viñ̃̄āṇa.

- Therefore all five parameters ("mental imprint of a rūpa" and vedanā, sañ̃̃̄̄, sañkhāra, and viññāna) arise together!
- Now let us discuss how the evolution of these into "collections" or "aggregates" or "khandha" within a split-second.


## Those Five "Mental Impressions" Quickly Evolve into Five Aggregates

8. The citta arises and evolves in nine stages during its lifetime of less than a billionth of a second. See, "Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)." It is not necessary to know the details. I am trying to provide the "baseline picture." Those who are interested can look into the details in that post.

- First, only mano sañkhāra arises. The Buddha defined mano sañkhāra as "vedanā and saññā," so sañkhāra in this first citta has only vedanā and saññā and no other cetasika (mental factors.)
- However, if the àrammaṇa is of interest (depending on one's gati,), the mind starts adding more "cetasika." Among the first are vitakka and vicāra. That starts the "deliberation process" in mind about
various aspects of that $\bar{a} r a m m a n ̣ a$. Now, we are at the vacī sankkhāra stage, and based on one's gati (and the specific ārammaṇa) more cetasika (good or bad) may be added in.
- Therefore, by the time we become aware of the $\bar{a} r a m m a n a$, the mind is at the initial stages of $v a c \bar{\imath}$ sañkhāra. We may speak out at this stage if we become interested in the ārammaṇa. By the way, by this time, viññāṇa has changed to a kamma viññaṇa, because, now one is doing "vacī kamma."
- If we become even more interested in the ārammaña, we may start doing things physically with kāya sañkhāra.
- As an example, think about what happens when someone is mugged while walking on the street. In an instant, he would recognize what is happening, who is attacking and may try to fight back. It is always a good idea to analyze a real-life situation to clarify.


## All Five Entities Instantly Become Five Aggregates

9. We started this post to consider what happens when a "mental imprint" registers in the mind due to an ārammaṇa (i.e., external rūpa,) However, not only that "snapshot" but the whole rūpakkhandha contributed to the arising of a citta with vedanā, sañ̃̄̄a, sañkhāra, and viññ̄ạna. Let us clarify that now.

- Let us consider the first citta that arises due to the sight of a tree. As we discussed above, the brain generates a "mental imprint" of that tree and sends it to the hadaya vatthu (seat of the mind.) As we discussed in \#2 above, the mind recognized what kind of a tree it is (to generate sañña $\bar{a}$ ) in the very first citta that received that "mental imprint" of the tree. For that recognition to happen, it must have compared that image with old "memories" of various types of trees and recognized it as an apple tree, for example.
- That means mind was not only dealing with that single "picture" sent by the brain but all of the rūpakkhandha! We remember that rūpakkhandha includes all past $r \bar{u} p a$ that one has experienced. For an average human, the mind will be able to recollect only those $r \bar{u} p a$ that one has experienced in this life.
- Thus, if one has not seen an apple tree (at least a picture of beforehand,), then one would NOT be able to recognize it as an apple tree. That is just a simple example.
- While this much detail is not necessary, it is good to realize how complicated this process of generating a citta is. And that happens in a billionth of a second! That is why the Buddha said that the mind is the fastest entity in the world. See, "Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)."

Let us briefly review the four mental entities that arise in mind together with the "mental impression" of an external $r \bar{u} p a$. That means the arising of the five aggregates or pañcakkhandha!

## Vedanā - Registration of the Experience as "Good," 'Bad," or "Neutral"

 aware of something" when an ārammaṇa (thought object) comes to one of the six sense doors.

- When we sense something, first, we become aware of it. That is vedan $\bar{a}$.
- If the $\bar{a} r a m m a n ̣ a ~ c o m e s ~ t h r o u g h ~ t h e ~ p h y s i c a l ~ b o d y, ~ t h a t ~ c o u l d ~ b e ~ a ~ s u k h a ~ v e d a n a \bar{a}, ~ d u k k h a ~ v e d a n a ~ a, ~ o r ~$ adukkhamasukha vedanā (meaning pleasant feeling, painful feeling, and neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling.) These are the vipāka vedan $\bar{a}$.
- An ārammaṇa coming through any of the other five senses is initially felt as "neutral." However, the mind MAY generate "samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedana $"$ (incorporating "san") following that. See \#11 below.
- We also need to be aware of "kāma guna." For example, humans like certain types of food. Each animal species has its own "favorite foods." Lions and tigers like to eat meat. Cows don't eat meat, and they eat grass. They are a type of vipāka vedanā (plural) that come through all six senses and "feel like"
sukha vedanā. In fact, most "samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedan $\bar{a} "$ have their origins in that type of vipāka vedan $\bar{a}$. That is discussed in, "Kāma Guna - Origin of Attachment (Tanhā)."


## Two Types of Vedana $\bar{a}$

11. Based on vipāka vedanā, we MAY generate "mind-made vedanä" or "samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedanā." This is where DEFILEMENTS (or "san") are incorporated.

- For example, a sukha vedanā COULD awaken our kāma anusaya. Then we may generate kāma sañkappa (or sensual thoughts.) These are somanassa vedanā (pleasant feelings) created by the mind.
- On the other hand, a dukkha vedana $\operatorname{COULD}$ trigger patigha anusaya, leading to domanassa vedana $\bar{a}$ (angry thoughts) generated by the mind. That could happen, for example, if one accidentally cuts his finger while chopping an onion.
- Based on an adukkhamasukha vedanā (coming through any of the six senses,) one MAY generate either somanassa or domanassa vedana out of ignorance (triggered by avijjā anusaya.) For example, one sees his enemy trip and fall, and a somanassa vedana may arise. In the above two cases also avijja anusaya is there.
- Such a "samphassa-jī-vedana"" arises due to san̉khāra generated via avijjī, i.e., "avijja paccayā sañkhāra." They do not occur in an Arahant. In all others, they may arise depending on one's gati (or types of anusaya left.)
- For details, see, "Vipāka Vedanā and "Samphassa-jā-Vedanā" in a Sensory Event."


## Sañ̃̃̄ā-Perception/Recognition

12. Saññ $\bar{a}$ is, at the very fundamental level, the recognition of an external stimulus. But it is more than that. We not only recognize that a given object is, say, a dog. But some people may be able to categorize it to be a bulldog. Thus sañ̃̄̄a about a particular object depends on the person and his/her prior experiences.

- The same is true for the other four senses. When we hear a sound, we recognize what it is, say a bird singing. Some may be able to say what type of bird it is; some may not be. Any smell, taste, or touch works the same way. Without saññ $\bar{a}$, we cannot identify things around us, and also cannot communicate with each other meaningfully.
- One of the 31 realms of existence is the "Asañ̃̃a realm." There, beings have no sañ̃̃ā or perception. Thus in principle, those beings are without any awareness. Nothing registers in mind. If anyone has attained the 7th jhāna, the "Neva saññ̄̄ Na'sañ̃$\tilde{a}$, "then that person knows what it is like to born in the Asañña realm.
- Saññā is described in more detail in, "Saññā - What It Really Means" and "How to Cultivate the Anicca Sañ̃̄ā. "


## Sañkhāra - Our Response/Reaction to the External Stimulus

13. Sañkhāra are our reaction to a given ārammaṇa. Three types of sañkhāra are defined and discussed in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Cūlavedalla Sutta (MN 44)." Let us summarize them now.

- Cittalmano sañkhāra are saññ̄ā and vedanā. Therefore, citta/mano sañkhāra arise with ALL citta.
- Vitakka and vicāra are vacī sañkhāra because vitakka and vicāra arise before speaking can occur.
- Breathing is $k \bar{a} y a$ sañkhāra since ALL bodily activities (whether they have kammic consequences or not) depend on breathing (assāsa passāsā kāyikā ete dhammā kāyappațibaddhā).
- However, in both vacī and kāya sañkhāra what counts for kamma generation is what kind of cetasika (good or bad) arise during those activities. For example, the act of stealing involves "bad" kāya sañkhāra. Here, the greed cetasika is in kāya sañkhāra.

Further details at, "Sañkhāra - What It Really Means" "Vacī Sañkhāra - Sañkappa (Conscious Thoughts) and Vācā (Speech)," and "Kamma, Sañkhāra, and Abhisañkhāra - What Is "Intention"?"

## Viññạna - Vipāka Viññāṇa and Kamma Viññāṇa

14. At the beginning of experiencing an ārammaṇa (external rūpa,) there is the only vipāka viñnāna. Since the ārammaña may come through any of the six sensory inputs, they can be of six types: cakkhu, sota, ghāna, jivhā, and kāya viññāna. They arise via, for example, "Cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññānaæ̈" for "eye-consciousness" when seeing a rūpa rūpa. See, "Contact Between Āyatana Leads to Vipāka Viñ̃̃̄̄na."

- But if we then start generating vacī or kāya sañkhāra, that means we have become interested in that $\bar{a} r a m m a n ̣ a$. Then we will be making NEW kamma with kamma viññana. That takes place in the Pațicca Samuppāda steps, "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra; sañkhāra paccayā viññāna." See, "Paticca Samuppāda."
- Therefore, both those type are in the viññānakkhandha.


## Importance of Comprehending Key Pāli Words

15. Even though this post is a bit long, I hope it includes a lot of critical information that will help clarify the concept of the five aggregates (pañcakkhandha.)

- The above descriptions on vedanā, sañña, sankkhāra, and viñ̃̄̄̄ṇa are just summaries.
- But I hope one can see that it is idiotic/dangerous to use English translations for sañkhāra and viññāna as "mental formations" and "consciousness." One will never be able to understand Buddha Dhamma with such interpretations.
- If one does not understand sañkhāra (especially vacī and kāya sañkhāra,), one would NOT be sanditthhika. (or be able to "see" how one accumulates defilements or "san.") See, "WebLink: suttacentral: Pathamasanditthika Sutta (AN 6.47)" The English translations are not too bad, and one can get a good idea. However, the meaning of "sanditthika"is in the words itself: "san" + "ditthi" or the "ability to see "san."
- There is a subsection on "San" which I highly recommend.
- Furthermore, the terms "form aggregate" and "five aggregates" should be used with an understanding of what is meant by them.


### 3.7.5 Memory Records - Critical Part of Five Aggregates

May 13, 2020; revised September 10, 2022

## The Critical Role of Memories

1. Memory records (nāmagotta) are a critical component of the Five Aggregates (pañcakkhandhā.) Most people would not think of memories as a part of pañcakkhandhā. But as we will see below, we cannot live without our memories!

- As we discussed in the previous posts on "The Five Aggregates (Pañcakkhandha)," each of the past $r \bar{u} p \bar{a}$ that we have ever experienced is in the Five Aggregates. Vedanā, sañ̃̄ $\bar{a}$, sañkhāra, and viññāna - that arose with EACH of those rūp $\bar{a}$ in the past - are also in the Five Aggregates. All of them cumulatively play a critical role in the present moment.
- Let us take some simple examples to illustrate this. Suppose someone gives you a plate with a couple of pieces of pizza. How do you know that it is food and you can eat it? That it is "pizza"?
- You may think that this is a silly question. It is not. Unless you had prior experience eating pizza, you would NOT know what it is.

2. Think about leaving for work in the morning. Unless you REMEMBER where you work and how to get there, you will not be able to "go to work."

- You wake up in the morning and need to go to the bathroom. But if you don't remember where the bathroom is, or even what a "bathroom" is, what would you do?
- By the way, this is why babies need diapers. They have no perception (sañña $\bar{a}$ ) of "going to the bathroom" until their brains develop. They cannot recall their memory records.
- Our lives will be IMPOSSIBLE to live without our memories!
- You see someone coming toward you. How do you recognize that figure as a "man" or a "woman," let alone that it is your mother?
- More examples are in "Amazingly Fast Tỉme Evolution of a Thought (Citta)."


## How Our Memory Works Is a "Miracle"

3. We discussed this process to some extent in the previous post, "Arising of Five Aggregates Based on an Ārammana," You may want to read that post as needed, especially \#2 through \#9. I am not going to discuss some of that here. It is critical to understand those initial posts to get a good idea before we get to the next post. It is a good idea to print all four posts in this series and have them ready to review.

- Now we will look at exactly where these memories reside and how a mind recalls them so quickly. Any situation we considered in \#1 and \#2 above "is not a big deal."
- When we see a pizza, we know exactly what it is, without thinking. We do not stop and plan the trip when we leave for work. We just get in the car and drive or walk to the right bus stop/subway, etc. We "know" what a bathroom is and where it is in the house.


## Difference Between a Human and a Robot

4. However, a robot CAN NOT do any of the above, UNLESS it is pre-programmed in detail. For any robot to do any specific task, a HUMAN must think about all possible scenarios and write a "computer code." That is why "artificial intelligence" WILL NEVER materialize. Scientists will be able to make fancy robots to do REPETITIVE and COMPLEX tasks. But robots will NEVER be able to THINK. They will not be able to recognize anything that has not been pre-programmed into their computer memory.

- A human can recognize an object INSTANTLY. For example, it can "scan" memories of eating pizza and identify what type of pizza it is, and how it would typically taste. And it does that within a split second!
- I highly recommend re-reading the post, "Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)."


## Mind - Hadaya Vatthu and a Set of Pasāda Rūpa

5. That fantastic accomplishment of "instant recognition of things" happens in our minds. The mind is NOT in the brain, even though the brain plays a crucial role in mental phenomena. The mind is associated with the mental body, referred to as manomaya kāya or gandhabba in the Tipitaka. Essentially, that mental body consists of a hadaya vatthu (seat of the mind) and a set of pasāda rūpa.

- That mental body cannot be seen even with the most sophisticated microscope scientists have today. As we know, they can "see" individual atoms. But a gandhabba is a million times smaller (in weight) than an atom.
- Yet, that mental body is the essence of a human (or any living-being.) The physical body is a shell that allows us to taste, smell, and touch.
- In some situations, that mental body (gandhabba) can come out of the physical body. See "Out-ofBody Experience (OBE) and Manomaya Kāya." It can see and hear better outside the physical body but cannot taste, smell, or touch.
- Furthermore, those who cultivate jhāna to the fourth jhānic state can develop iddhi powers and bring their gandhabba out of their physical body. Then they can travel anywhere (including far away Deva/Brahma realms) or go through walls and mountains as described in some sutt $\bar{a}$. See "Mystical Phenomena in Buddhism?"
- That mental body or the gandhabba has the truly ESSENTIAL parts of a human: hadaya vatthu and a set of pasāda rūpa.


## Only Kammic Energy Can Create a Gandhabba

6. Kammic energy controls the creation and function of a hadaya vatthu and a set of pasāda rūpa. We create them in our javana cittā! Each new bhava is associated with a hadaya vatthu and a set of pasāda rūpa. The number of pasāda rūpa vary from five for kāma loka, two in rūpa loka, to none in arūpa loka.

- That is why scientists will NEVER be able to CREATE life. It can only manipulate the conditions for an existing gandhabba to build a physical body. See, "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception" and "Cloning and Gandhabba."
- More precisely, when we do strong kamma, we create energies that will reside in the kamma bhava. Good strong kamma create energies that can lead to the creation of "mental bodies" for "good realms." Similarly, strong bad kamma makes conditions for rebirths in "bad realms."
- Our memories are also in the kamma bhava. All energies decay with time. When "kammic energies" in the kamma bhava decay, they become just "memory records." The Pāli word for such memory records is "nāmagotta."


## Rūpa Loka and "Nāma Loka"

7. There are six "dhātu" that make up our world of 31 realms: pathavī dhātu, āpo dhātu, tejo dhātu, $\boldsymbol{v a}$ yo dhātu, ākāsa dhātu, viññāṇa dhātu. See, "WebLink: suttacentral: Dhātuvibhañga Sutta (MN 140)."

- All internal (in one's body) and external rūpa (not rūpakkhandha) are made of pathavī dhātu, āpo
 (rūpa loka) is associated with the first five types of dhātu.
- We experience all rūpa with the help of our five physical sense faculties (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body) and the five pasāda rūpa. Experience (arising of thoughts) happens in the hadaya vatthu (seat of mind), as mentioned in \#6. Of course, the hadaya vatthu, and the five pasāda rūpa are the essence of the gandhabba, our "mental body."

8. Nāma dhammā (vedanā, saññā, sañkhāra, viññanna) arise in cittā (loosely called "thoughts") at the hadaya vatthu. See \#6 and \#7 of "Arising of Five Aggregates Based on an Ārammana."

- An imprint of a rūpa (in the physical world) arises with viññāna as we discussed in the previous four posts in "The Five Aggregates (Pañcakkhandha)," Furthermore, vedanā, sañ̃n̄̄, sañkhāra, viññāna are experienced as "aggregates" or "collections" or "khandha" and NOT as individual entities.
- As soon as that thought passes through a mind, a RECORD of it gets added to nāmagotta in the viññāna dhātu (via the mana indriya in the brain.) That viñ̃n̄ạa dhātu is also called the "nāma loka." Let us discuss that now.
- It is essential to note that both the rūpa loka and the nāma loka exist in "our world of 31 realms."


## Rūpa and "Nāma"

9. The mental attributes (nāma) and physical attributes (rūpa) are DEFINED, for example, in WebLink: suttacentral: 2.3.3. Suttantikadukanikkhepa of Dhammasañgan̄̄̄ of the Tipiṭaka:

Tattha katamaì nāmaì? Vedanākkhandho, saññ̄ākhandho, sañkhārakkhandho, viññānakkhandho, asaǹkhatā ca dhātu-idà̇ vuccati nāmà்.

Tattha katamaì rūpaì? Cattāro ca mahābhūtā, catunnañca mahābhūtānaí upādāya rūpaí-idaí vuccati rūpaì.

- That means, "Vedanākkhandha, saññākkhandha, sañkhārakkhandha, viññ̄ạnakkhandha are "nāma dhamma."
- "The four great elements (pathavī, $\bar{a} p o, t e j o, v \bar{a} y o$ ) together with upādāya rūpa (those that arise due to upādāna for worldly things made of the great elements) belong to rūpa.
- Such upādāya rūpa arise in our javana citta (or in kamma viññāṇa.) Those are the "subtle rūpa," seeds for future existences (bhava.) They make up the "kamma bhava." They have energies BELOW the suddhatthaka level. See, "The Origin of Matter - Suddhatthaka."
- As we have discussed, hadaya vatthu and each pasāda rūpa is " an energized suddhatṭhaka. Therefore, kammic energies are unbelievably small, yet they have amazing power.


## Kamma Bhava in Nāma Loka

10. A record of ANY experience is captured in the four aggregates of vedanā, saññā, sañkhāra, viññāna. Those are Vedanākkhandha, saññākkhandha, sañkhārakkhandha, viññānakkhandha. That memory record in the "nāma loka" is "nāmagotta." However, if that experience involved kamma generation, then a kammic energy (kamma bhava) would be associated with it.

- Section 1 of the "WebLink: suttacentral: Paticcasamuppāda Vibhañga 6 (1. Suttantabhājanīya)" defines kamma bhava: "Tattha katamo kamma bhavo? Puññābhisañkhāro, apuñnābhisañkhāro, āneñjäbhisañkhāro-ayaí vuccati "kamma bhavo." Sabbampi bhavagāmi kammaí kamma bhavo.
- That says all kamma done with abhisañkhāra will be in the kamma bhava. They can bring kamma vipāka until that energy decays naturally, which could take billions of years.
- Those "bhavagāmi kammaí" (strong kamma that can sustain the rebirth process) will be there in the kamma bhava.


## While R $\bar{u} p \bar{a}$ Will Decay Over Time, Nāma Record (Nāmagotta) Does Not Decay

 the nāma loka. That PERMANENT memory record is "nāmagotta."

- That is stated clearly in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Najīrati Sutta (SN 1.76)" as, "Rūpaï jīrati maccānaì, nāmagottaì na jūrati" or "Physical form (bodies of living beings and inert matter) decay and die, memory records (nāmagotta) do not decay."
- Of course, we cannot RECALL all memories, especially memories from past lives. However, some children can recall their previous life. Those who have cultivated abhiññā powers can recall many past lives.

12. Don't be discouraged if you cannot grasp everything in this post. I will expand on some of them in upcoming posts. But it is necessary to read the recommended posts.

- I have spent the past ten years studying Buddha Dhamma. Even these days, I learn new things that make the "big picture" clearer. Once getting some traction, the process will become easier and more enjoyable.
- It has been an amazing experience and I hope to share it with as many people as possible.


### 3.7.6 Pañca Upādānakkhandhā - Introduction

May 19, 2020

## Pañca Upādānakkhandhā - Key Role of Upādāna

Pañca Upādānakkhandhā is normally translated as "five grasping aggregates." That does not explain much.

1. The concept of Pañca Upādānakkhandhā plays a critical role in Buddha's teachings. In his first sermon, "WebLink: suttacentral: Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta (SN 56.11)," the Buddha summarized dukkha (or suffering) in a single verse. That is, "Saimkhittena pañcupādānakkhandhā dukkhā." The translation appears in most English texts as, "in brief, the five grasping aggregates are suffering." [sañkhittena means being overthrown by defilements]

- That translation does not convey the meaning of the verse until we understand what is meant by "pañcupādānakkhandhā."
- It is easy to see that the word "pañcupādānakkhandhä" comes from the combination of the three words: pañca, upādāna, and khandhā. Here, "pañca khandhā" means "five aggregates" and "upādāna" means "the tendency to keep close." As you will see, "keeping close" is a better translation than "grasping" used in most translations.
- Therefore, that verse indicates that suffering in this world arises due to our tendency to "keep close" certain parts of those five "aggregates."
- We have already discussed some features of those "five aggregates." See, "The Five Aggregates (Pañcakkhandha)."


## Upādāna - Keeping Close "in the Mind"

2. Upādāna means "pulling something closer" ("upa"+ "ādāna," where "upa" means "close" and "ādāna" means "pull").

- It is critical to realize that upādāna happens ONLY in the mind.
- Pațicca Samuppāda describes phenomena that take place in the MIND. We can summarize Paṭicca Samuppāda simply as follows. Attaching to an ārammaṇa is tanhhā (gets "bonded" to it.) That leads to upādāna (keep it close in one's mind.) That is the step, "taṇhā paccayā upādāna." Also, see, "Difference Between Tanhā and Upādāna."
- Furthermore, we saw that even the rūpakkhandha is in the mind. Many people have the perception that $r \bar{u} p a k k h a n d h a$ is "collection of rūpa." But we clarified rūpakkhandha in the post "Difference Between Physical Rūpa and Rūpakkhandha."

3. In that post, we also discussed how some parts of rūpakkhandha become parts of rūpa upādānakkhandha or rūpupādānakkhandha.

- Therefore, "pañcupādānakkhandhä" means "keeping those five aggregates (rūpakkhandha, vedanākkhandha, saññākkhandha, sañkhārakkhandha, viññānakkhandha) "close to one's mind." Then, one will be thinking, speaking, and taking actions based on particularly appealing parts of the five aggregates.
- Again, all of rūpakkhandha, as well as other four khandhā in pañca khandhā, are associated with the mind.
- Thus, ALL of pañcupādānakkhandhā is associated with the mind. Those are what one thinks about and plan accordingly. A good example is to re-create a past sexual experience and to enjoy that. Another is to create a future expected experience in mind and to enjoy that. Both those activities involve pañcupādānakkhandhā.
- As we can see, pañcakkhandhā is enormous, infinite. It has all our experiences from a beginning that cannot be discerned. But pañca upādānakkhandhā is a very small part of that.


## Diṭthi and Taṇh $\bar{a}$ - Root Causes of Upādāna

4. We tend to keep something close to us if we believe it will be beneficial for us to do so. On the other hand, if we think something will be bad for us and can bring suffering, we would try to avoid it and try to keep it far away.

- For example, if we know there is a bomb inside a beautiful object, we would try to get far away from it, even though it looks appealing.
- Sometimes, we do not see dangers hidden in "things that appear to be appealing."
- An example that I often give is a fish biting a worm on a hook. The fish cannot see the hidden hook or the fisherman holding the pole that is attached to the hook with a string. But we can see all that and we know what will happen to the fish if it bites that tasty bait.
- However, we are unable to see the hidden dangers in sensual pleasures. Only a Buddha can figure out WHY attaching to sensual pleasures is dangerous, even if no immoral actions are involved. The question is, why sense pleasures are bad even if immoral actions (dasa akusala) are NOT involved. There are "hidden dangers" in sense pleasures. See, "Kāma Assāda - A Root Cause of Suffering."
- Have you seen ants getting stuck in spilled honey? They start drinking it and get stuck. They don't see the "hidden danger" in a pool of tasty honey either.


## Monkey Not Letting Go Even When the Life is in Danger

5. In the above example of the fish biting a "tasty bait" or the ants attracted to honey at least cannot see the "hidden danger." However, look at what happens to the monkey in the following video:

## WebLink: youtube: How to Catch a monkey

- The monkey could have let go of the grains in its fist, take its hand out, and run away when it saw the hunter coming. (Note; I have set the video to stop early to show only the relevant portion for our discussion. If you play it again, you can see the whole video. The hunter wanted to find where the monkey's water source was. So, he fed the monkey with salty food and let it go, and followed it.)
- But it would not let go of the grains in its fist. It does not want to let go of its "tasty grains" even while seeing the danger. It is HOPING that it would be able to get the hand out WITH the grains.
- That is why even a Sotāpanna has a hard time getting rid of the desire for sensual pleasures, even though he/she can SEE the dangers in them.
- However, a large part of upādāna has been removed for a Sotāpanna. He/she would NOT engage in any immoral deeds to fulfill sensual desires. For example, he/she would not engage in sexual misconduct at any time. The desire for sensual pleasures will keep one bound to the kāma loka. But it is only IMMORAL DEEDS (dasa akusala) done to gain sensual pleasures that will make one eligible for rebirth in an apāya.
- In other words, a Sotāpanna has not removed "kāma upādāna."
- An Anāgāmi has removed "kāma upādāna, " but the last one of "attavāda upādāna" (perception of a "me") goes away only at the Arahant stage. Thus, the four types of upādāna need to be removed in stages.


## Five Aggregates (Pañcakkhandhā) Fall into Two Main Categories

6. From our previous posts in "The Five Aggregates (Pañcakkhandha)," we know that the five aggregates can be separated out into two MAIN categories: past and present.

- There are 11 types of entities in each aggregate. See, "Difference Between Physical Rūpa and Rūpakkhandha." However, all of them belong to three time-frames: past, present moment, and future. The "present moment" is gone in a split second. The other categories (like internal and external or near and far) belong to each time-frame. Thus, effectively we have two MAIN categories in each aggregate.
- Those two are the "past aggregates" and "future aggregates." Put in another way, the five aggregates encompass our "memories" and our "future expectations/hopes."


## Pañca Upādānakkhandhā - Reliving Memories and Making Future Plans

7. Pañcupādānakkhandhā can be thought of as mainly the following. Significant "events" that happened in the past and also a set of events that we would like to see happen in the future. Put in simple terms, pañcupādānakkhandhā or "upādāna of pañcakkhandhā" means the following two cases.

- Our tendency to constantly think, speak, and act to re-create past experiences.
- In addition, we also do the same to fulfill future plans/hopes.

Those activities are done via mano, vacī, and $k \bar{a} y a(a b h i) s a n \dot{k} h \bar{a} r a$. We will discuss that in the next post.

## Upādāna - Why Is It Easier to Recall Somethings Than Others?

8. From our discussion so far in this series of posts, it is clear that records of ALL our past actions (and speech and thoughts) are "stored permanently" in "nāma loka." You may want to refresh memory by reading "Memory Records - Critical Part of Five Aggregates."

- However, we know that it is easier to recall some of the past events than most others. In fact, we cannot recall even some things that happened just yesterday!
- That is because there are events that we tend to "keep close" in our minds. That can happen out of greed, anger, or ignorance. If we eat tasty food, we would like to taste it again. If someone did something "bad," we would like to remember that out of anger. We also tend to remember "funny things" of no significance (dirty jokes, for example) out of ignorance.
- In addition to just "a record" or "nāmagotta," such "memorable" events leave energy in the "nāma loka." Those are kammic energies and are in "kamma bhava." They originate in kamma viññāna in javana citta. Such events involve abhisañkhāra.


## The Difference Between "Nāmagotta" and "Kamma Bīja"

9. A record of any and all events go into "nāmagotta" as soon as that event is done. But some events involve "good" or "bad" strong kamma generated via abhisañkhāra. As we have noted, there are three types of abhisañkhāra: apuñña abhisañkhāra, puñña abhisañkhāra, and āneñja abhisañkhāra.

- Those are the types of $\boldsymbol{a b h i s a n} k \boldsymbol{h} \boldsymbol{a} r a$ in the "avijjā paccayā sañkhārā" step in Pațicca Samuppāda. See, "Kamma, Sañkhāra, and Abhisañkhāra - What Is "Intention"?."
- We can put it in another way by saying that such actions lead to the formation of kamma bi$\vec{j} a$. They have the potential to bring kamma vipāka. Especially strong kamma vipāka can lead to rebirth.
- However, if such kamma bīja do not get a chance to bring their vipāka, their energies run out over long times. At that point, they become just "nāmagotta" without any associated energy.
- A kamma bīja, on its own, can bring us an ārammaṇa to the mind (i.e., bring back the memory of the event) even if we are not trying to recall it.
- While a kamma bīja can bring an ārammana to the mind on its own (due to its energy,) a "nāmagotta" NEEDS TO BE recalled. We will discuss that later.
- Furthermore, it is easier to recall those events associated with strong kamma bïja. Such events are of importance to us, and thus, it is easy to recall them. Nämagotta, on the other hand, are more difficult to recall. However, there are a handful of people who can do that in amazing detail (see below.)


## Proof That All Nāmagotta Remain Intact

10. Strong evidence is beginning to emerge that there is indeed a "complete record" of one's past just like a videotape. These studies started with Jill Price, who contacted a team of scientists in the early 2000's about her ability to recall anything from 1974 onward. Here is a video of her with Diane Sawyer on an ABC News program:

## WebLink: youtube: The woman that never forgets - Jill Price First Interview!

- Note that she says she can "see" in her mind what happened on any day from 1974. It is not like she is recalling a "summary" or the gist of what happened. She can actually recall the whole episode in detail. Even the day and date come out effortlessly.
- Note that she can remember ONLY those things SHE had EXPERIENCED. That means just the portion of HER pañcakkhandhā from 1974. For example, if she had not watched the TV series "Dallas," she would not be able to say on which day "JR was shot."
- Since then more people have provided similar accounts. See, "Recent Evidence for Unbroken Memory Records (HSAM)."
- This is why some children can recall their previous life. The ability to recall a previous life means that the memories could NOT have been in the brain, and were 'stored" outside the physical body. See, "Evidence for Rebirth" and "Boy Who Remembered Pāli Suttas for 1500 Years."
- Ancient yogis who could get to the eighth jhāna could see all past lives in the present eon or kappa. But the Buddha could see numerous eons within a short time.


### 3.7.7 Five Aggregates - Connection to Tilakkhaṇa

In this section, we will look at the relationship between the five aggregates and suffering. Within this discussion, we will be able to clarify the three key Pāli words anicca, dukkha, anatta. Those terms describe the Three Characteristics of Nature or Tilakkhaṇa.

Five Aggregates and Tilakkhana - Introduction
Icca, Nicca, Anicca - Important Connections
"Me" and "Mine" - The Root Cause of Suffering
Difference Between "Me and Mine" and Sakkāya Ditthi
Sakkāya Ditthi - 'Me and Mine" View
Atta - Two Very Different Meanings

### 3.7.7.1 Five Aggregates and Tilakkhaṇa - Introduction

May 27, 2020
We start a series of posts on the five aggregates and Tilakkhana (anicca, dukkha, anatta.)

## The Five Aggregates describe any Living Being's "World"

1. The five aggregates (pañcakkhandhā) represent any living being together with its "external world." It is not correct to say that the five aggregates are in one's own "physical body." Everything about a living being, including ALL past experiences and future expectations, is embedded in pañcakkhandhā. Furthermore, one's gati, anusaya, etc., are all in pañcakkhandhā. Please read the previous posts in "The Five Aggregates (Pañcakkhandha)."

- What I summarized in those few posts is the material in many sutt $\bar{a}$ in the WebLink: suttacentral: Khandha Sainyutta (SN 22.1 ~ 22.159) in the Saimyutta Nikāya. There are also suttā in other parts of the Tipitaka.
- In those suttā, the Buddha describes any given living being in terms of pañcakkhandhā: rūpakkhandha, vedanākkhandha, sañ̃̄̄̄kkhandha, san̈khārakkhandha, viññānakkhandha.
- Those are the five aggregates loosely translated as form, feelings, perceptions, mental formations, and consciousness. As we have discussed, such translations are misleading. It is better to use the Pāli terms and learn their true BROADER meanings. For example, viññāṇa can be of two different types of kamma viñ̃̃āṇa and vipāka viññāṇa.


## Pañca Upādāna Khandhāa (Five Clinging Aggregates) Is There Until Becoming an Arahant

2. We also discussed what is meant by pañca upādāna khandhā (loosely translated as "five clingingaggregates") in the section "The Five Aggregates (Pañcakkhandha)."

- Until attaining the Arahant stage, all living beings have pañca upādāna khandh $\bar{a}$. A living Arahant has pañca khandhā but not pañca upādāna khandhā.
- An Arahant's pañca khandhā will also cease to exist at the death of the physical body. That means an Arahant will not be reborn anywhere in the 31 realms.


## The Definition of an "Ignorant Living Being" or "Satta"

3. The Buddha explained what is meant by a "satta" or a "living being" to Rādha in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Satta Sutta (SN 23.2)." "Rūpe kho, Rādha, yo chando yo rāgo yā nandī yā taṇhā, tatra satto, tatra visatto, tasmā sattoti vuccati. Vedanāya ... saññāya ... sañkhāresu ... viññāne yo chando yo rāgo yā nandī yā tanhāa, tatra satto, tatra visatto, tasmā sattoti vuccati"

Translated (just the meaning): "Rādha, when there is desire (chanda), rāga, and a perception of high value (nand $\bar{\imath}$ ) of material form (rūpa), there is clinging (satto), strong clinging (visatto) for form, and then an ignorant living-being (satto) is spoken of. Similarly, when there is desire (chanda), rāga, and a perception of high value (nandī) of vedanā ... saññā ... saṅkhāra ... viññ̄āna, then a living-being is spoken of."

- Other translations at "WebLink: suttacentral: Sentient Beings (SN 23.2)."
- Note that the Pāli word "satta" means "clinging" or "attach." A strong version of clinging is "visatta."
- In other words, as long as there is upādāna for pañcakkhandh $\bar{a}$ (i.e., as long as there is pañcupādānakkhandh $\bar{a}$ ) there is an "ignorant living being" or a "satta." That living being has not comprehended the "real nature of this world" or "yathābhūta ñāna."


## Difference Between a "Satta" and "Puthujjano"

4. We also need to see the difference between the terms "satta" and "puthujjano." The name "puthujjano" applies to a human being who has not heard and comprehended yathābhūta ñāna. The term "satta" applies to any living being (includes Devā and Brahmā who have not attained any magga phala.)

- I use the term "ignorant person" to differentiate an Ariya puggala (Noble Person) who is also a "person," but has started cultivating yathābhūta ñāna.
- WebLink: suttacentral: Assāda Sutta (SN 22.129) defines the word "puthujjano" as, "an ignorant person ("puthuijano") does not truly understand the pleasures, the drawbacks/dangers, and the liberation when it comes to the five aggregates."
- An Ariya puggala overcomes the "satta" status at eight levels (Sotāpanna Anugāmi, Sotāpanna, Sakadāgāmi Anugāmi, Sakadāgāmi, etc.)
- Also, a Bodhisatta is still a "satta," but proceeding towards "Bodhi" or the "Buddhahood." We remember that a Bodhisatta can be born even in some higher animal species, but not in the other three apāy $\bar{a}$.
- Note that "satta" pronounced "saththa.") See, "Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars - Part 1" and the second part referred to in there.


## Overcoming the "Satta" Status With the Comprehension of Tilakkhana

5. Using the analyses of the five aggregates and the "five clinging-aggregates," we can get some insights into Buddha's explanation of "suffering inherent in this world of 31 realms." That explanation comes via the understanding of the Tilakkhana or anicca, dukkha, anatta. We now look at the connection between the five aggregates and Tilakkhaṇa.

- The fourth characteristic of asubha appears in some suttā.
- However, in most suttā, only the three characteristics of anicca, dukkha, anatta are discussed.
- The essence of those characteristics is that craving for worldly things (rūpa) with the perception of a "me" will only perpetuate the rebirth process leading to more suffering. We will discuss that in detail in upcoming posts.
- However, we can get an idea by just looking at the key concepts that we have learned. Let us briefly discuss anatta and anicca.


## Does "Anatta" Mean "No-Self"?

6. The representation of any living being with the five aggregates makes it clear that a permanent "soul" or a "ātma" cannot exist.

- As we have discussed, none of those five aggregates has any "essence." They all keep changing, even momentarily. In particular, they all undergo drastic changes when a living being moves from one realm to another. Such transitions have taken place an uncountable times in our deep past. We all have been born in the 26 realms (out of 31 realms, only $A n \bar{a} g \bar{a} m \bar{u}$ can be born in the five realms reserved for them.)
- All of us have been born in the highest nevasaññānāsaññāyatana Brahma realm as well as in the lowest niraya realm.
- If there were an unchanging "core" or "essence" as a soul was there, an Arahant would not be able to attain Parinibbāna. As we know, there is no trace of an Arahant in any of the 31 realms after Parinibbāna.
- However, until one reaches the Arahant stage, it is also NOT correct to say that a "self" or a "me" does not exist. There is an ever-changing "lifestream" thinking, speaking, and doing things based on the view and perception of a "me" or "self" with a set of ever-changing "gati."
- Starting at the Sotāpanna Anugāmi stage, one can begin to "see" that all those actions are based on Paṭicca Samuppāda. There is still a "self" with "gati" generating "abhisañkhāra" via "avijjā." But that "avijja" will decrease with higher magga phala. "Sammā Ditṭhi" becomes complete, and the perception of a "me" goes away only at the Arahant stage.


## Does "Anicca" Mean "Impermanence"?

7. It is quite common these days to see the Pāli word "anicca" translated as "impermanence." We can see the error in such a translation by looking at a simple sutta.

- For example, the "WebLink: suttacentral: Nandikkhava Sutta (SN 22.51)," among others, state: "Aniccaññeva, bhikkhave, bhikkhu rūpaì aniccanti passati. Sāssa hoti sammāditṭhi." or "A bhikkhu who sees rūpa (form) as anicca has seen the anicca nature. He has Sammā Ditthi."
- Most English translations INCORRECTLY translate that verse as "A bhikkhu who sees form as impermanent has seen the anicca nature. He has Sammā Diṭthi."
- Any reputable scientist knows that NO MATERIAL OBJECT in this world has permanent existence. See the following Scientific American article: "WebLink: The Only Thing That Remains Constant Is Change." Does that mean those scientists all have "Sammā Ditṭhi" and have attained Nibbāna? Of course not. Therefore, it must be clear that "anicca" CANNOT mean just "impermanence."
- We will discuss the real meanings of anatta and anicca in detail in this series in future posts.


## The Need to examine the Tipiṭaka Without Biases

8. We need to be able to resolve such issues by using common sense rather than mechanically repeating such incorrect translations as "the truth." Just because such statements are in "reputable books" or are "the opinions of reputable bhikkhus/scholars" does not mean they are compatible with the Tipitaka. We need to remind ourselves that Devadatta was a bhikkhu with abhiññā powers. Nagarjuna and Buddhaghosa are considered "scholars" by those who do not even believe in rebirth (and thus have micchā ditthi.)

- Their intentions may be good, but one needs to be able to accept errors in one's thinking when clarified with substantial evidence.
- It is dangerous to teach "wrong Dhamma" which will have corresponding consequences. Ignorance of mundane laws is not an excuse in a court of law. In the same way, ignorance of "the true teachings" is not an excuse, especially when the correct teachings are clear with evidence from the Tipitaka.
- "Impermanence" is only a small part of the broad meaning of anicca. A single English word CANNOT convey the meaning of the word "anicca." One needs to understand the meaning of the Pāli word and use that word.


## Why Do Living Beings Crave Sensory Pleasures?

9. To "enjoy" sensory pleasures, the following two conditions must be met.

- There must be a "me" or a "self" to "enjoy any pleasure."
- There must be contacts with five types of external rūpa via the five physical senses. They are rūpa rūpa or "vaṇna rūpa" (material objects), sadda rūpa (sounds), gandha rūpa (odors), rasa rūpa (tastes), and photthabba (body touches.) Furthermore, those rūpa must be stable to provide long-lasting pleasures.

So, the average human makes the very best effort (and undergoes suffering) in seeking out such pleasures.

- Those struggles only lead to more suffering, since both of the above assumptions are wrong in ultimate reality.


## Both Those Assumptions Are Wrong Per Buddha

10. The Buddha pointed out the following regarding those two features.

- There is no "me" or an "unchanging self" in ultimate reality. Any living being has a limited lifetime and subject to unexpected changes during its existence. There is no "core" or "substance" to any existence (like a "soul" or a "ātma.") A given lifestream can be a Brahma, a Deva, or a human in some existences and an animal, a hungry ghost, or a "hell being" in other existences. Where is the "core"?
- Any type of external rūpa in this world also has a limited lifetime. It will also undergo unexpected changes during its existence. Thus, all those material "things" that we acquire with great effort do not last long. Furthermore, they become a burden since one needs to continually struggle to maintain them in good condition (think of houses, cars, one's own physical body, etc.)

Therefore, both requirements for perceived happiness (an "unchanging self" and "stable external $r \bar{u} p a$ ") are illusory.

- That is one way to state the "previously-unheard Dhamma" ("pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu") that the Buddha taught.


## "Self" and "External Rūpa" Have a Common Name - Saṅkhata

11. Sañkhata is a key Pāli word. It comes from "san" + "kata." As with many critically important Pāli words, the root "san" is there. A sañkhata is prepared via "san" or our tendency to "accumulate" things that only have a transient existence. A living being and what it enjoys are both sañkhata.

- Both arise (the Pāli word for "arise" is "samudaya") due to our fruitless actions based on those two wrong views about nature per \#9 and \#10 above. The key Pāli word "samudaya" comes from "san" + "udaya" or "arising due to "san." You may want to refresh memory with "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Samisāra)" and "List of "San" Words and Other Pāli Roots."
- Both types of sañkhata arise (samudaya) via the universal process of Paṭicca Samuppāda, which starts with "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra."
- As we have discussed in many posts, the root cause of all suffering is $a b h i(s a \dot{n} k h a \bar{a} a)$ that arise in our minds due to $a v i j j \bar{a}$. Therefore, one way to explain the origin of suffering is ignorance (avijia) of real nature or Tilakkhana. That is the connection between the five aggregates and Tilakkhaṇa (and suffering.)


## A Buddha Does Not Speculate on Anything

12. A Sammasambuddha, like Buddha Gotama, does not teach anything that he had not experienced/verified firsthand.

- Several suttā in the Tipitaka discuss that. See, for example, the WebLink: suttacentral: Vimaminsaka Sutta (MN 47).
- There are many suttā in the Tipitaka that describe visits by the Buddha and some of his disciples to Brahma and Deva realms. I have discussed one of those, the "WebLink: suttacentral: Brahmanimantanika Sutta (MN 49)," in the post, "Anidassana Viññ̄ña - What It Really Means."
- There are many aspects in the teachings of the Buddha that are not discernible to an average human (puthujjano). Many of these phenomena can be verified by those who make progress on the path. They are also consistent with new findings by modern science. I have discussed some of them in "Mystical Phenomena in Buddhism?"
- Many people do not see the uniqueness of a Buddha. For them, he is just another philosopher. That assumption is wrong. A Buddha does not speculate on anything. But of course, each person needs to
verify that．That is why I make an effort at puredhamma．net to show the self－consistency within the Tipitaka and with many new findings in science．

In upcoming posts，we will continue the discussion on the connection between the five aggregates and Tilakkhaṇa（and suffering．）

## 3．7．7．2 Icca，Nicca，Anicca－Important Connections

June 2，2020；revised June 3，2020；August 25， 2022

## Icca，Nicca，Anicca

1．We will discuss the critical relationships among icca，nicca，and anicca．That will help us understand the true meaning of anicca．
－The pronunciations of those in that order：
WebLink：mp3：Icca，Nicca，and Anicca
－It is important to note that the Pāli words in the Tipitaka are NOT written how they are pronounced． See＂TTipitaka English＂Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars－Part 1＂and＂Tipitaka English＂Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars－Part 2．＂
－Very briefly，the meanings are as follows．Icca means desire．If we believe that it is possible to fulfill that desire and be happy，that is the perception of nicca．The opposite of nicca is anicca．
－Buddha taught us that our world is of anicca nature．That means we will never be content with＂any existence in this world．＂We may be able to fulfill some expectations in this life，but all that will have to be given up at death．Then we start all over in new birth．
－We note that the word＂icca＂plays a key role in Patticca Samuppāda．The word＂Pațicca＂comes from ＂pati＂＋＂icca．＂Future existences in the rebirth process have origins in＂attaching to worldly pleasures with desire（icca）．＂See，＂Paticca Samuppāda－＇Pati＋ichcha＇＋＇Sama＋uppāda＇．＂

## Icca and Anicca Sometimes Written as Iccha and Aniccha

2．The word＂iccha＂with the emphasis on the last syllable indicates＂strong icca＂or＂strong desire．＂In the same way，＂aniccha＂with the emphasis on the last syllable，emphasizes the＂anicca nature．＂
－In the Sinhala language，the words icca，anicca，and iccha，aniccha are written as ๑อも そชอもด and ๑อ题みふెอ
－In the Tipitaka，mostly iccha，nicca，and anicca appear．Note that iccha is normally used in Pāli as ＂icchā．＂Thus，the＂strong version＂is used only with iccha．But there are a few exceptions．We saw one such exception in＂icca＂in \＃1；another for＂aniccha＂in \＃14 below．
－The five words icca，anicca，iccha，icchā，and aniccha are pronounced：
WebLink：mp3：Icca，Anicca，Iccha，Icchā，Aniccha

## Icchā and Taṇhā Closely Related

3．The＂WebLink：suttacentral：Kalahavivādasuttaniddesa（Mnd 11）＂of the mahāniddesa of the Tipiṭaka states，＂Icch $\bar{a} v u c c a t i ~ t a n ̣ h \bar{a} "(s e e ~ s e c t i o n ~ S C 88) ~ o r ~ " I c c h a ̄ ~ m e a n s ~ t a n ̣ h \bar{a}$ ．＂That is because icchā leads to taṇh $\bar{a}$ ．
－When we attach（ $\tanh \bar{a}$ ）to something due to our liking for it（icch $\bar{a}$ ），we tend to keep it close in our minds（upādāna．）Paṭicca Samuppāda describes how that leads to future suffering．See，＂Icchā （Cravings）Lead to Upādāna and to Eventual Suffering．＂
－The use of many Pāli terms could be confusing to some．It may be helpful to print the relevant posts mentioned and refer to them as needed．

## What Do We Desire (Icchā)?

4. Our desires belong to two categories. First, we want a healthy and robust body (stay young forever!.) We would also like anything we own or related to us to be similarly long-lasting and not subject to unexpected calamities.

- We have that perception that such desires (icch $\bar{a}$ ) for "stability of long-lasting happiness" can be achieved. That perception is nicca.
- With that perception of a "nicca nature," we work hard to acquire "things" that we perceive to provide sensory pleasures.
- While doing our best to achieve such pleasures, knowingly or unknowingly, we engage in activities that lead to future births filled with suffering.


## Icch $\overline{\boldsymbol{a}}$ - A Root Cause of Suffering

5. The Buddha's described the Noble Truth on Suffering in his first discourse, "WebLink: suttacentral: Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta (SN 56.11)."

- The complete verse in that sutta is as follows. "Idam kho pana, bhikkhave, dukkhain ariya saccamjātipi dukkhā, jarāpi dukkhā, byādhipi dukkho, maranampi dukkham, appiyehi sampayogo dukkho, piyehi vippayogo dukkho, yampicchain na labhati tampi dukkhami-samkhittena pañcupādānakkhandhā dukkhā." [sañkhittena means being overthrown by defilements]
- I have discussed the description in plain bold in the post, "Essence of Buddhism - In the First Sutta."
- We discussed the verse, "Sainkhittena pañcupādānakkhandhā dukkhä" in recent posts in "The Five Aggregates (Pañcakkhandha)." As explained there, the Buddha succinctly attributed future suffering to "upādāna" for the five aggregates (pañcakkhandhā.) We learned that "upādāna" means "keeping close in one's mind." [saṅkhittena means being overthrown by defilements]
- Here, we will discuss how that "upādāna" relates to "icchā," simply translated as "desire." Then we will discuss the connection to anicca, which is often INCORRECTLY translated as "impermanence." That connection is in, "appiyehi sampayogo dukkho, piyehi vippayogo dukkho,yampicchain na labhati tampi dukkhaim."
- Let us discuss that verse in two steps.


## Appiyehi sampayogo dukkho, piyehi vippayogo dukkho

6. That means: "having to associate with things that one does not like is suffering, and having to separate from those one likes is suffering."

- One WOULD LIKE to keep a young person's body (say, 15 to 25 years of age), without getting old or sick, and never die. But we will NEVER get it.
- Even with human birth, we have to suffer when we get old, when getting sick, and finally when dying. There is no way to dissociate from those things that we do not like.
- We have no choice but to associate with those three things we do not like highlighted above.
- Worst of all, we will have rebirths in realms we do not like. That will happen until we comprehend anicca nature.

Yampicchaì na labhati tampi dukkhaín - Most Important Verse
7. "Yampiccam nalabhati tampi dukkham" captures the essence of anicca nature how it leads to suffering. It provides the key to understanding the Buddha's message and led to the attaining the Sotāpanna stage by the five ascetics.

- "Yampicchaí na labhati tampi dukkham" is a shortened version of the verse "Yam pi icchā̀in na labhati tam pi dukkham.".
- "Yam pi icchātio" means "whatever is liked or craved for." "Na labhati" means "not getting." "tam pi dukkhaim" means "that leads to suffering."
- Therefore, that verse simply says: "If one does not get what one craves or likes, that leads to suffering."

8. That is a more general statement and applies in any situation. What we discussed in \#6 above is summarized in the short verse, "yampicchain na labhati tampi dukkham.".

- We can see that in our daily lives. We like to hang out with people we love, and it is stressful to be with people we do not like.
- The more one craves something, the more suffering one will endure in the end. We tend to do immoral deeds to "get what we crave." But kammic energies we generate in such wicked deeds lead to rebirths that we do not like.
- Thus, we end up with two types of suffering. Our expectations are not fulfilled (whatever happiness gained is temporary.) Furthermore, we end up getting unfortunate rebirths.


## Icchā Keeps One Bound to "This World"

9. There are many suttā in the Tipitaka that discuss icchā. The "WebLink: suttacentral: Icch $\bar{a}$ Sutta (SN 1.69)" summarizes the importance of icch $\bar{a}$. One time, a deva came to the Buddha and asked:
"Nassau bajjhatī loko, "By what is the world bound? kissa vinayāya muccati;

Kissassu vippahānena, sabbaim chindati bandhanan" $t i$. By the removal of what one is freed? What is it that one must abandon To cut off all bondage?"

The Buddha replied:
"Icchāya bajjhatī loko, icchāvinayāya muccati; Icchāya vippahānena, sabbaì chindati bandhanan" $t i$.
"By cravings, one is bound to the world;
By the removal of desire one is freed
Craving is what one must give up
To cut off all bondage."

## Our Actions Based on Iccha (Taṇhā) Lead to Suffering

10. Pațicca Samuppāda process describes how our actions based on icchā (taṇhā) lead to future births and suffering. We have discussed that in detail in two main sections. See, "Paticca Samuppāda" and "Paticca Samuppāda - Not 'Self' or 'No-Self."

- In brief, the Buddha pointed out that our perception of a "nicca nature" where we can fulfill our desires is an illusion.
- No matter how much we strive, attaining long-lasting happiness in the rebirth process is impossible. If one believes that there is no rebirth process, one may not worry about such suffering beyond the present life.
- That is why one first needs to get rid of the ten types of wrong views (micchā ditthhi) before trying to comprehend that our perception of nicca nature is incorrect.
- Thus, the reality of this world is not "nicca" but the opposite. That is anicca.


## Inability to Fulfill Iccā/Icchā Means Anicca/Aniccha Nature

11. The inability to get what one desires is the opposite of "icca" or "na icca" or "anicca." That is the same way that "na āgāmi" becomes "Anāgāmi" ("na āgāmi" means "not coming back"; but in the context of Anāgāmi, it means "not coming back to kāma loka or the lowest 11 realms. Both these are examples of Pāli sandhi rules (connecting two words).

- In some suttā, like the "Girimānanda Sutta (AN 10.60)," we see the word aniccha, as we will discuss below. As mentioned above, icch $\bar{a}$ is a strong version of icca, and the words niccha and aniccha are the corresponding strong versions" of nicca and anicca.
- Other than in such specific cases, we will stick to the words nicca and anicca.
- The intrinsic nature of this world is "anicca," i.e., we will never get what we crave for, and thus the end (at least at death), we will leave all this behind and suffer, that is dukkha.


## Impermanence Is a Significant Part of Anicca

12. Anicca does NOT mean just "impermanence" is clear in the definition of anicca in many suttā. For example, the "WebLink: suttacentral: Anicca Sutta (SN 22.12)" states: "rūpaì, bhikkhave, aniccaí, vedanā aniccā, sañña aniccā, sañkhārā aniccā, viññannaì aniccaì."

- The English translation at Sutta Central "WebLink: suttacentral: 12. Impermanence" is: "form, feeling, perception, choices, and consciousness are impermanent."
- Is it not evident that especially the mental qualities (vedana, sañ̃̄̄, sañkhārā, viññanna) are impermanent? They change even moment-to-moment. That is a BAD translation. Of course, the other translation at Sutta Central and in many other texts is the same.
- The correct translation is that all five entities are of anicca nature, i.e., they cannot be maintained to one's expectations.
- No single word in English can express the meaning of anicca. Impermanence is just one aspect of anicca nature.
- The Pāli words for permanence and impermanence are dhuva and addhuva. For example, the "WebLink: suttacentral: Vepullapabbata Sutta (SN 15.20)" says, "Evaì aniccā, bhikkhave, sañkhārā; evaì addhuvā, bhikkhave, sañkhārā; evaì anassāsik $\bar{a}$, bhikkhave, sañkhār $\bar{a}$ " meaning, "sañkhārā" are anicca and impermanent (addhuvä), they should not be taken in ("na"+ "assāsikā.") By the way, this also shows that "assāsa" does NOT mean "breathing in." For details, see, "Is Ānāpānasati Breath Meditation?"


## Gimānanda Sutta - Anicca Nature of Sañkhāra

13. In the "WebLink: suttacentral: Girimānanda Sutta (AN 10.60)" the Buddha described the perception of anicca nature to Ven. Ānanada as follows. "Katamā ca Ānanda, anicca saññā? Idha Ānanda, bhikkhu araññagato vā rukkhamūlagato vā suññāgāragato vā iti patisañcikkhati: 'rūpaì aniccaìn, vedanā aniccā, sañn̄ā aniccā, sañkhārā aniccā, viñnānaín aniccan'ti. Iti imesu pañcasu upādānakkhandhesu aniccānupassī viharati. Ayaì vuccatānanda, aniccasaññā.

- The parts highlighted in bold say that all five entities "rūpa, vedanā, sañña, sañkhārā, viññāna are all anicca" and that "one lives contemplating the anicca nature of the 'five clingingaggregates' (pañca upādānakkhandha.)"
- The first part is the same as that we discussed above. The second part is even more clear. As we know, pañca upādānakkhandha is all mental. See, "Pañca Upādānakkhandhā - Introduction."
- There is nothing "permanent" there anyway. The Buddha meant to contemplate the "fruitlessness of clinging to one's memories or to future expectations."

14. In a subsequent verse in the sutta, the Buddha clarifies that "unfruitfulness" in vivid detail: "Katamā ca Ānanda, sabbasañkhāresu anicchā saññā? Idhānanda, bhikkhu sabba sañkhāresu atț̄̄yati harāyati jigucchati. Ayamं vuccati ca Ānanda, sabba sañkhāresu anicchā saññā. [atṭi : wounds. yati : [aor. of yatati] exerted oneself; strived. (m.), a monk. atțīyati : wounds inflicted by oneself. harāyati :[deno. from hiri] is ashamed, depressed or vexed; worries. jigucchati: [gup + cha; gu is doubled and the first gu becomes j$]$ shuns; loathes; is disgusted at.]

- The first highlighted part in bold says, "all sañkhāra make one tired at the end, just like a dog does not get any nutrition by chewing on a bone but only gets tired (attī̄yati.) One should be ashamed (harāyati) of engaging in such fruitless endeavors. One should reject them like feces and urine (jigucchati.) Note that the word "iccha" is in "jigucchati" which comes from "ji" +" $g u$ " + "iccha" or "liking urine and feces."
- I have discussed that verse in detail in "Anicca - The Incessant Distress ("Pilana")." Other meanings of anicca are discussed in "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta."
- Therefore, the word anicca has a much deeper and more expansive meaning than just "impermanence." The cause of anicca is related to impermanence, but anicca means a perception that needs to be cultivated. The above verse provides further aspects associated with the key idea of the "inability to maintain anything to one's satisfaction."
- Impermanence is not directly connected to any of the three meanings of anicca in that verse.
- At the end of the verse, we see the word anicch $\overline{\boldsymbol{a}}$ used to emphasize anicca nature.


## Grasping of Anicca Removes Micchā Diṭ!hi

15. Grasping of anicca characteristic of nature requires getting rid of ALL of one's wrong views.

That is clearly stated in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Micchaditthipahana Sutta (SN 35.165)": "Cakkhum kho, bhikkhu, aniccato jānato passato micchā ditṭhi pahīyati. Rūpe aniccato jānato passato micchā diṭthi pahīyati. Cakkhuviñ̃āṇamं aniccato jānato passato micchā diṭthi pahīyati. Cakkhusamphassaì aniccato jānato passato micchā diṭthi pahīyati ... pe ... yampidaì manosamphassapaccayā uppajjati vedayitaì sukhaì vā dukkhaì vā adukkhamasukhamं vā tampi aniccato jānato passato micchādiṭṭhi pahīyati. Evaì kho, bhikkhu, jānato evaì passato micchā diṭthi pahīyatī"ti.

We can make two critical deductions from this verse.

- First, whereas only five entities are listed in \# 12, this verse enumerates many more related entities, and they all have the anicca nature. Anything and everything in this world have an anicca nature.

16. Then, the second part of the verse says the following. If one comprehends the anicca nature of all those entities, one has removed micchā diṭthi. The first level of micch $\bar{a}$ ditṭhi to be removed is the ten types of micchā ditṭhi.

- Ten types of micchā ditṭhi include not believing in the rebirth process. See, "Micchā Ditthi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage." Therefore, IF anicca means impermanence, THEN one would have removed all wrong views IF one has understood that everything in this world is impermanent.
- As discussed in the previous post, any scientist knows that nothing in this world is permanent. See "Five Aggregates and Tilakkhana - Introduction."
- By that definition of anicca, those scientists SHOULD NOT have any of the ten types of micchā dițthi. That is a contradiction since most scientists do not believe in rebirth.


## Summary

17. Future suffering cannot be stopped until one's cravings for worldly things (icchā, tanhhā, upādāna) are lost.

- Those cravings cannot be removed from one's mind until one realizes the futility and danger (future suffering) associated with such cravings.
- Those cravings may be TEMPORARILY suppressed by engaging in the mundane "breath meditation."
- However, by understanding the true anicca nature, one can realize the futility and danger (future suffering) associated with such cravings. A deeper analysis of, "Icchā (Cravings) Lead to Upādāna and to Eventual Suffering."
- That is why comprehending the anicca nature is a REQUIREMENT for attaining Nibbāna. Furthermore, anicca is closely related to dukkha and anatta, as we will see in future posts.
- As always, anyone is welcome to correct me (with evidence from the Tipiṭaka.)


### 3.7.7.3 "Me" and "Mine" - The Root Cause of Suffering

June 9, 2020; revised June 4, 2022; August 27, 2022

## Brief Summary of Pañcakkhandhā

1. The five aggregates (pañcakkhandh $\bar{a}$ ) are unique to each person. Yours is different from anyone else's.

- Pañcakkhandhā includes one's past experiences with rūpa in this world and anticipated future experiences with $r u \bar{p} a$ ( $r u \bar{p} a k k h a n d h \bar{a}$.)
- Those, of course, include mental qualities (vedanā, saññ̄a, sañkhāra, viññạ̄a.) They are in the four "mental aggregates" or vedanākkhandha, sañ̃̄ākkhandha, sañkhārakkhandha, viñ̃̄āṇakkhandha.
- Thus all five components of pañcakkhandhā are, in effect, our past experiences and future expectations. They are unique to each person.


## Brief Summary of Pañcupādānakkhandhā

2. We have upādāna for only a tiny fraction of pañcakkhandhā. That part is pañcupādānakkhandhā.

- Pañcupādānakkhandhā arises based on past experiences that we liked. For example, if X saw an attractive person last week, X would remember that person and have formed a particular set of feelings, perceptions, and sañkhāra about that person. Those then lead to possible expectations (asking for a date, for example) and that is part of viñ̃̃āna upādānakkhandha.
- It is critical to realize that all these are "mental." They arise BASED ON the external world, but they are one's own mental experiences/expectations.
- If another person (Y) saw the same person simultaneously, Y's mental impressions would differ from X's. Furthermore, Y may not even remember that person. If so, that event is not even a part of Y's upādānakkhandha.
- Pañcupādānakkhandhā arise based on the perception of "me" and "mine."
- It is a good idea to read the posts in "The Five Aggregates (Pañcakkhandha)" until the above facts are understood.


## Major Components of the Five "Clinging" Aggregates (Pañcupādānakkhandhā)

3. First, we need to see which parts of the five aggregates that we "cling to" (or "keep close" or upādāna.) Then we will see how that upādāna for the five aggregates CAN LEAD TO suffering.

- Something that we experience during every waking moment is our body and mind. Therefore, the physical body and all mental entities that arise contribute to the feeling of "me" or "mine."
- Then there are parents, a spouse, and children. They are precious parts of "me." Then there are relatives, friends, etc.
- Of course, one may own a house, cars, other real estate, businesses, etc.
- Then the list expands to include the neighborhood, city, country, and different things in the world.
- Each person may have their order differently, but you get the idea.


## Significant Components of Pañcupādānakkhandhā Centered Around "Me" or "Mine"

4. Think about what you mainly think, speak, and do. They all are related to what we mentioned in \#3 above. They all involve "me" and "mine."

- Of course, anger towards someone has origins in the view/perception of that person. They must have done something opposing "me" or related to "mine."
- An average human spends a significant portion of time watching useless movies, playing video games, getting drunk, etc. One would say those things, "keep me entertained." However, it is not that much different from a fish biting into a tasty bait on a hook in a deeper sense. One cannot "see" the harmful consequences of such apparently "harmless" actions.
- That last one is a more profound point that will gradually become clear as one starts comprehending Tilakkhaṇa.
- That way of "seeing" (ditthhi) and perception (sañña $\bar{a}$ ) arises because one is unaware of the true nature of this world or yathābhūta ñanna. We can express that in several different ways. Being unaware of the Four Noble Truths, not comprehending Tilakkhaṇa, not understanding Paṭicca Samuppāda, etc.


## Yathābhūta Ñāṇa - Understanding of the Reality About the World

5. All our actions based on greed, anger, and ignorance arise because we do not have the "yathābhūta $\tilde{n} \bar{a} n a . "$ That means not knowing the "true nature of this world."

- "Good and bad things" happen due to corresponding actions (kamma.) And kammā are done based on sañkhāra (the way we think.) Strong kamma (that can bring good and bad outcomes and future rebirths) happen due to (abhi)sañkhāra.
- Paticca Samuppāda describes the principle of cause-and-effect in Buddha Dhamma.
- However, the results of most kamma appear only later, sometimes in future lives. It is hard for many to believe in kamma/kamma vipāka. Also, it is impossible to progress on the path until one can see the truth of the rebirth process.
- Until that true nature (yathābhūta ñāṇa) is comprehended, there is a "satta" or a "living being" generating sañkhāra based on avijjā.
- Note that "satta" is pronounced "saththa."


## The Definition of a "Living Being" or "Satta"

6. The Buddha explained what is meant by a "satta" or a "living being" to Rādha in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Satta Sutta (SN 23.2)." "Rūpe kho, Rādha, yo chando yo rāgo yā nandī yā tanhhā, tatra satto, tatra visatto, tasmā sattoti vuccati. Vedanāya ... saññāya ... sañkhāresu ... viññāne yo chando yo rāgo yā nandī yā tanhā, tatra satto, tatra visatto, tasmā sattoti vuccati"

Translated (just the meaning): "Rādha, when there is desire (chanda), rāga, and a perception of high value ( $n a n d \bar{l}$ ) of material form ( $r \bar{u} p a$ ), there is clinging (satto), strong clinging (visatto) for form, and then a living-being (satto) is spoken of. Similarly, when there is desire (chanda), rāga, and a perception of high value (nand $\bar{l}$ ) of vedana $\ldots$.. sañña $\bar{a}$.. sañkhāra ... viññāna, then a living-being is spoken of."

- Other translations at "WebLink: suttacentral: Sentient Beings (SN 23.2)."
- Note that the Pāli word "satta" means "clinging" or "attach." A robust version of clinging is "visatta."
- Therefore, any living being (a Deva, Brahma, or a human) is a "satta" as long as the futility of craving for sensory pleasures is not understood. A "satta" has the perception of "me" and "mine."

7. In other wordls, as long as there is upādāna for pañcakkhandh $\bar{a}$ (i.e., as long as there is pañcupādānakkhandhā), there is a "living being" or a "satta."

- Also, note that one transcends the "satta" status when one becomes an Ariya puggala." A pugggala has overcome the "satta" status at eight levels (Sotāpanna Anugāmi, Sotāpanna, Sakadāgāmi Anugāmi, Sakadāgāmi, etc.)
- Also, a Bodhisatta is still a "satta," but proceeding towards "Bodhi" or the "Buddhahood."
- Note that "satta" is pronounced "saththa.") See "Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars - Part 1"and the second part referred to there.
- Let us see how what we discussed above ties up with Paticca Samuppāda.


## Paṭicca Samuppāda Process Only Depends on Avijjā

8. Paticca Samuppāda process does not care WHO is doing (abhi) sañkhāra. The results are determined by WHAT KIND of sañkhāra is involved. That sañkhāra generation is associated with pañcupādānakkhandhā or one's cravings/desires/expectations (related to anusaya, āsava, gati, etc.). Results are according to actions. Doing a particular type of action (kamma via sañkhāra) will lead to the fruits (kamma vipāka.)

- There is no need to invoke a "me" or a "self" in Paticca Samuppāda. But, of course, such (abhi) sañkhāra are generated BECAUSE there is a sense of "me" or "self." The critical step is to realize the fruitlessness of acting with a sense of "me."
- In other words, actions arise based on one's gati (habits/character.) See "The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Āsavā)."
- Instead, these days, people spend countless hours debating whether there is a "self" or not. One would better spend that time if one tried to understand WHY acting with the view and perception of a "me" will lead to suffering.
- There is a perception of a "me" and "mine" as long as one has defiled gati.

9. The ultimate truth is that there is no "self." That is easy to see because Arahant is not reborn after death. If there were an "unchanging self," they would still have to exist in one of the 31 realms after death.

- However, until one FULLY comprehends that fact (at the Arahant stage,) one does not FULLY realize that there is no "self" involved in this whole process. Until the Arahant stage, the perception of a "me" and "mine" will be there.
- Therefore, there will be a "self" generating (abhi)sañkhāra and making conditions for future suffering until the Arahant stage.
- Another way to say that is there will be a pañcupādānakkhandh $\bar{a}$ associated with any living being (satta.) An Arahant will have pañcakkhandhā until death but would have no upādāna left for it. Thus, there is no pañcup $\bar{a} d \bar{a} n a k k h a n d h \bar{a}$ for a living Arahant.


## Saǹkhāra Lead to Pañca Upādāna Khandhā (Pañcupādānakkhandhā)

10. There is nothing wrong with recalling past events. The problem arises when we attach to them and start re-creating those events in our minds to generate abhisañkhāra.

- Kammā (which lead to kamma vipāka) generated in three ways: mano kamma, vacī kamma, and kāya kamma. They are done via mano saǹkhāra, vacī saǹkhāra, and kāya sañkhāra. See "Sañkhāra - What It Really Means."
- Mano kamma (our spontaneous thoughts) arise automatically according to our gati.
- Vacī kamma ('talking to ourselves" and speech) arise due to conscious thoughts (done with vitakka/vicāra.)
- Kāya kamma also arise due to conscious thoughts and have the highest javana power because they involve moving bodily actions; see, "Javana of a Citta - The Root of Mental Power."
- Many think "talking to ourselves" or "daydreaming" is not bad because we don't physically do anything. Even though they are less potent than kāya kamma, vacī kamma can add up and lead to potent kamma vipāka, as we discuss next.


## "Thinking to Oneself" Is Vacī Sañkhāra

11. When we "talk to ourselves" (i.e., consciously think about something,) we mostly recall a significant past event. Then we analyze that event with vitakka/vicāra and either "re-live" that experience or "make plans for the future" based on that previous event. Vitakka/vicāra means analyzing it in detail and incorporating our desires. That leads to generating more and more vacī sañkhāra on that event; see, "Correct Meaning of Vacī Sañkhāra." Of course, if we "really get into it," we may do kāya sañkhāra too.

- Also, one could make up a "future event" that one would LIKE TO experience and that also becomes a part of pañcakkhandha (this is the "anāgata" or "future" component of the 11 components of any of the five aggregates).
- All the above involve "pañcupādānakkhandha" (pañca upādāna khandha). In other words, one is now "pulling that event back, close to one's mind" and consciously generating more vacī (and possibly kāya) sañkhāra.
- That is why "upādāna" is such a critical step in a Paticca Samuppāda cycle. The two stages of "taṇh $\bar{a}$ paccayā upādāna" and "upādāna paccayā bhava" really involve many, many Paticca Samuppāda cycles running inside them. See, "Tanhā Paccayā Upādāna - Critical Step in Paticca Samuppāda."


## Status of an Arahant - Wrong Point to Start

12. Many people are afraid of Nibbāna, thinking it will lead to the "extinguishment" of oneself. See "Yamaka Sutta (SN 22.85) - Arahanthood Is Not Annihilation but End of Suffering."

- We go through so much suffering in the rebirth process BECAUSE of our wrong view/perception of a "me" and "mine." Inevitable temptations lead to highly-immoral actions (pāpa kamma) that trap us in the four lower realms (apāyā) with unimaginable suffering.
- Such pāpa kamma are stronger versions of akusala kamma. See, "Kilesa - Relationship To Akusala, Kusala, And Puñña Kamma."
- The first step is to see "anicca nature." Accumulating things perceived as "valuables" makes no sense in two ways. We have to struggle to maintain those and will have to abandon them at least when we die. See "Icca, Nicca, Anicca - Important Connections."
- The second point is that if we do immoral deeds to get them, those deeds will lead to bad rebirths and suffering.
- We can see only one part of the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$, the animal realm. We mostly see our pets, not the unimaginable suffering that animals (in forests, jungles, and oceans) go through. There are no "old animals" there. Any old animal is eaten alive as soon as it becomes old and slow.


## Buddha Did Not Teach Anything That He Did Not Verify by Himself

13. Some of the above discussions may not be clear to everyone. It is a "previously unheard worldview" that only a Buddha can discover. However, learning Dhamma and living a moral life will gradually clarify those things.

- There are several suttā where the Buddha stated that he did not declare attaining the Buddhahood until he verified the "real nature" of this world. For example, he verified the existence of the 31 realms and how a given being dies in one realm and rebirth occurs in another. Furthermore, he saw how that happens via the natural Paticca Samuppāda process.
- As we learn Dhamma, more and more will become clear. One would have developed "unbreakable faith" in Buddha Dhamma at some point. That is when one has "saddhā." That will become solidified when one starts understanding that all suffering has roots in the perception of a "me" and "mine."
- Also, see "Mystical Phenomena in Buddhism?"


### 3.7.7.4 <br> Difference Between "Me and Mine" and Sakkāya Diṭ̣hi

June 16, 2020

## Getting Rid of "Me and Mine" Is a Step-by-Step Process

1. In the previous post, we discussed that the perception of "me" and "mine" is the root cause of suffering. See, "Me" and "Mine" - The Root Cause of Suffering."

- We discussed that one would not be able to remove that perception of "me" until attaining the Arahanthood.
- Therefore, that should not be the focus at the beginning of one's practice.
- First, one needs to get rid of the ten types of wrong views (micchā diṭthi.) Until one comprehends the truth of kamma/vipāka, the existence of the rebirth process, the creation of a "mental body" (a gandhabba in the case of a human bhava) at the cuti-patisandhi moment, etc. one cannot get on the path to Nibbāna. See, "Micchā Ditthi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage."
- The second step is to remove sakkāya ditt!hi. We will discuss that in this post.


## Diṭthi, Sañ̃̃̄a, and Citta Vipallāsa - Three Obstacles in Getting Rid of Any Bad Habit

2. Vipallāsa means "distortions" in mind. If we do not have a clear understanding of the relevant concepts, we may take unwise actions based on our wrong views. Let us take an example to clarify.

- Consider an alcoholic, a person addicted to drinking. The addiction comes from the perception that it is good to have a drink to forget about any problems one may have, or just to enjoy that "drunken state of mind."
- Urged on by a good friend, that person starts to learn about the consequences of drinking. It can affect one's health adversely. Furthermore, it can make one do immoral deeds while drunk, and that can bring bad rebirth. Now he fully understands that he had wrong views about drinking, i.e., he had ditthi vipallāsa about drinking. Now diṭthi vipallāsa about drinking are absent in his mind.
- Yet, he finds that the temptation to "have a drink" is still there. While he would not get drunk as before, the desire to "have a drink" can popup once-in-a-while. For example, if a friend is having a drink, he may join in. Thus, sañ $\tilde{n} \bar{a}$ vipallāsa is still there. To get rid of that, he needs to keep contemplating the adverse consequences of drinking and also keep resisting the urge to have another drink.

3. Then, if that person keeps up with that practice, he will lose that sañña vipallāsa too. But a trace of the desire may be left as citta vipallāsa. Under extreme temptation, he may think about "having a drink." That is citta vipallāsa. Now, another effect of "continued practice" will take care of that too in a bit different way.

- With time, his body would not even tolerate a single drink. Instead of getting satisfaction from that drink, he might get a headache. That is when he would voluntarily give up even a single drink.
- That is because our bodily functions can be affected by the "state of mind." That starts happening from the very beginning, even while one is trying to comprehend Tilakkhana (anicca nature.) But the effects become clear after one has made significant progress.
- That is a simple explanation. More details at "Vipallāsa (Ditthi, Saññā, Citta) Affect Sañkhāra."


## Only Ditṭhi Vipallāsa Removed at the Sotāpanna Stage

4. At the Sotāpanna stage, one would only "see with wisdom" that it is unfruitfiul to consider anything as "me'" or "mine." As we saw in the previous post mentioned above, it is one's body that one considers being "one's own."

- The Buddha dissected what we consider to be "me" into five parts. One physical and four mental entities. That comes from our perception of "me" as "my body" and "my mind." Mind phenomena separate into four parts: we feel things happening (vedanā) and recognize them (sañ̃̃̄̄.) Based on that, we think about how to respond (sañkhāra) and act with certain expectations (viññāna.)
- We have discussed those five entities or aggregates in detail. See, "The Five Aggregates (Pañcakkhandha)."
- Our craving for those five aggregates (pañca khandhā) is pañcupādānakkhandhā.
- We crave those because we have the wrong view that those five aggregates are fruitful and provide longlasting happiness. That wrong view is sakkāya ditṭhi.


## Sakkāya Means Pañcupādānakkhandhā

5. As stated in the WebLink: suttacentral: Cūlavedalla Sutta (MN 44), sakkāya means pañcupādānakkhandhā (or pañca upādāna khandhā.)

- We can see that by looking at the meaning of sakkāya, which comes from "sath" + "kāya." Here "sath" means "good" and "kāya" means "collection."
- In the five aggregates, we have five aggregates or 'collections" or "piles." For example, as we remember, the $r \bar{u} p a$ aggregate includes one's internal ru$p a$ and external ru$p a$. Those include the present $r \bar{u} p a$, past $r \bar{u} p a$, and our visualizations of "future $r \bar{u} p a$."
- Out of them, the most important is our own body or "internal rūpa" (its present status, our memory of its past, and our expectations of its future status.) Invariably, those "internal rūpa" are in the rūpa upādāna khandhā.
- That rūpa upādāna khandhā will also include external rūpa that we like or crave for. That may include one's family, friends, possessions, etc.
- Then the other four aggregates would include our mental attributes involving $r \bar{u} p a$.
- Since we assume all five upādāna khandhā to be good for us or fruitful, i.e., they are sath kāya (which rhymes as sakkāya.)
- More details at "Tanhā Paccayā Upādāna - Critical Step in Paticicca Samuppāda."


## Sakkāya Diṭ̣̆hi Means the View That Pañcupādānakkhandhā Are Fruitful

6. Now we have a good idea of what is meant by sakkāya dittthi. It just means we like/crave those parts of the five aggregates because we have the view that they are fruitful and will bring long-lasting happiness.

- We become happy when all those that we crave provide us pleasure. That means they stay exactly as we want them to be.
- If things do not proceed the way we want, then we worry and suffer.
- The Sakkāyaditṭhi Sutta (SN 22.155) summarizes what we discussed in \#5 and \#6.

7. "WebLink: suttacentral: Sakk $\bar{a} y a d i t t h i ~ S u t t a ~(S N ~ 22.155) " ~ s t a t e s, ~ " r u ̄ p e ~ k h o, ~ b h i k k h a v e, ~ s a t i, ~ r u ̄ p a \dot{m}$ upādāya, rūpaì abhinivissa sakkāyadiṭthi uppajjati. Vedanāya sati ... sañn̄āya sati ... sañkhāresu sati ... viññāṇe sati, viññāṇamं upādāya, viññāṇaì abhinivissa sakkāya ditṭhi uppajjati."

Translated: "When one is attached to various rūpa (especially one's body), places a high value on them, sakkāya diṭthi (identity view) arises. When one attaches to vedanā, sañn̄̄, sañkhāra, and viññāna associated with such $r \bar{u} p a$, and places a high value on them, the identity view arises."

- In other words, one has sakkāya dittthi if one sees this world as fruitful and can lead to long-lasting happiness.
- With that wrong view, one is under the impression that it is possible to have total control of one's future by making sure to accumulate "enough stuff" thereby ensuring long-lasting happiness.
- That perception of "having full control" is also expressed by "atta." Note that the mundane meaning of "a person" is usually expressed by "att $\bar{a} "$ with a "long a."
- Therefore, there are two meanings of the Pāli word "atta." The ultimate or absolute (paramattha) meaning of "having full control" is expressed by "atta." The ordinary or relative meaning (vohāra) is "att $\vec{a} "$ with a "long a" that refers to a "person."
- Let us discuss this further.


## Atta Can Have a Mundane (vohāra) or an Absolute (Paramattha) Meaning

8. Even though a "person" does not exist in the paramattha sense, any living person has to use "me" and "mine" in interactions with others. Even the Buddha talked about "HIS" previous lives. He often started a discourse by saying, "let ME explain this concept."

- Furthermore, the Buddha emphasized that one should abide by the accepted standard rules of society. It is unwise to try to enforce the fact that in ultimate reality, there is no "me" or a "self."
- There were many wealthy people, and even kings, who had attained magga phala and still engaged in their mundane "householder" activities. Of course, at the Arahant stage, one has to become a bhikkhu.
- Throughout the Tipitaka, the word "atta" appears with several different meanings. It is important to be able to use the appropriate meaning in a given context.
- That is no different from using the word "right" in the following two contexts with entirely different meanings: "turn right" and "you are right." In the first, it refers to the direction, and in the second, it means "correct."


## Atta Meaning "Me" in Mundane Usage

9. There are many Tipitaka verses, where "attā" means a "person." The following are several examples.

- "Attānaim damayanti paṇ̂itā" in Dhammapada verse 6.80 means "The wise persons control themselves."
- "Attano sukhamicchati" in Dhammapada verse 21.291 means "one seeks one's own happiness." Also, note the word iccha (desire) in "sukhamicchati" is "sukham" + "icchati."
- In the Attadīpa Sutta (SN 22.43), "attadīp $\bar{a}$ viharatha" means "make an island of yourself," meaning "one has to seek one's own refuge."
- We will discuss the absolute or paramattha meaning of "attā" in the next post.


## What is in "Me" $(A t t \bar{a})$ ?

10. From ancient times, people have wondered about how to define "me" (or "att $\bar{a}$ " in Pāli.) Of course, one's body is the priority. But one's identity is also related to one's mental activities. Thoughts, feelings, perceptions are unique to each person.

- Anything that one can think of as a part of "me" or 'self" or "att $\bar{a}$ " is included in the five entities of $r \bar{u} p a$, vedanā, saññā, sañkhāra, and viññāna.
- It is only a Buddha that can do a thorough analysis and describes a person with those five "parameters." That analysis is taught by all Buddhas.
- Of course, each Buddha figures that out each time, on his own.
- Normally there is at most one Buddha in a given eon. But our current eon is a special one with five Buddhas. Remnants of the teachings of the previous Buddha (Buddha Kassapa) prevailed through Vedic teachings and were there when Buddha Gotama was born.


## That Terminology Was There Even Before Buddha Gotama - How Is That Possible?

11. Many people have the perception that Buddha Gotama "adopted" that five-fold analysis from the Vedas because those terms appeared in Vedic literature before Buddha Gotama.

- There was Buddha Kassapa on this Earth before Buddha Gotama. Buddha Kassapa's teachings (especially the true meanings of key concepts) were lost with time. But many terms, including the concepts of kamma, kamma vipāka, five aggregates, and many others, were incorporated into Vedic teachings and transmitted through many generations. Of course, the Vedic teachings used the Sanskrit language, which was derived from Pāli or Magadha language. Sanskrit means "derived from" ("san" +

- The Pāli words like kamma, Nibbāna, Paticca Samuppāda were made "more impressive-sounding" by mostly adding the " r " sound. Those three Pāli words became karma, nirvāna, and Pratītyasamutpāda, respectively, in Sanskrit.
- The same is true for the concept of five aggregates or pañca khandha. The Vedic teachings adopted them as five skandhas.

12. A full account requires possibly a whole book. But there are several instances in the Tipitaka where Buddha Gotama explained to various Brahmins that many of their teachings originated with Buddha Kassapa.

- For example, in the WebLink: suttacentral: Māgandhiva Sutta (MN 75), Buddha Gotama has a conversation with a Brahmin who quoted a verse from the Vedas. Buddha Gotama then says that verse was initially uttered by Buddha Kassapa and that it come down through generations in the Vedas without the true meaning. I have discussed that in the post, "Arogyā Paramā Lābhā.."
- When Prince Siddhartha was born, such Vedic teachings were there. We have a somewhat similar situation right now, with many vital concepts misinterpreted.
- I mentioned the above because I see in online forums many people wonder whether Buddha Gotama "adopted" Vedic concepts. Those concepts originally came from Buddha Kassapa. But any Buddha discovers them by his own efforts.
- Then the question comes up as to the "evolution of humans." There was no evolution of humans. Humans existed on Earth (with Brahma-like bodies) at the beginning of the Earth. This is why it would take a book to discuss all these things. I have given a brief account of the "beginnings" in "Buddhism and Evolution - Aggañña Sutta (DN 27)."

We will discuss the concept of sakkāya diṭthi further in the next post.

### 3.7.7.5 Sakkāya Diṭ̣hi - "Me and Mine" View

June 23, 2020

## The View of "Me and Mine"- Only For About a Hundred Years

1. An average human has the wrong view that it is beneficial to consider mind-pleasing things in this world as "me" or "mine." As we discussed in the previous few posts, the most valuable $r \bar{u} p a$ in the world is one's physical body. Then there are parents, spouses, children, friends, etc that are considered to be "mine." See,

## "Five Aggregates - Connection to Tilakkhana."

- It is critical to realize that all those things last only about 100 years.
- Upon death, even if one is reborn human, it will be a different body and a different set of humans that will become "me" and "mine." We would not even know who we were in our previous life. We would not know what happened to all those "loved ones" we had in the previous life.
- That is the "big picture" that we need to focus on. That big picture can be discovered only by a Buddha.
- It would be impossible for any other human to discover the "real nature of the wider world of 31 realms" where a given living-being goes through the birth/death process.
- But once explained by a Buddha or a true disciple of the Buddha, one can see the truth in his teachings.


## "Me and Mine" View Can Lead to Immoral Actions

2. Based on that wrong view of "me" and "mine" we are sometimes forced to do immoral actions. Think about it carefully. If we lie, steal, or hurt others, such actions can always be traced back to "taking care of me or mine."

- It is critical to understand that this wrong view of "me and mine" (sakkāya ditṭhi) is different from the perception of "me and mine." Ditṭhi means "view."
- Even after getting rid of the wrong view of "me and mine" that wrong-perception will still be there. That perception of "me" or the innate feeling of "me" will go away only at the Arahant stage.
- However, just "seeing" that it is is not fruitful to act on the basis of "me and mine" is enough for the mind to stay away from doing highly-immoral deeds. That "seeing" happens when one becomes a Sotāpanna.
- Of course, it may not be easy to comprehend. That is why the Buddha said, "this Dhamma has not been known to the world."


## "Me and Mine" View Cannot Be Removed by Will Power - It Is Lost via Understanding the "True Nature"

3. The logic of Buddha Dhamma cannot be understood without the underlying principles. Those underlying principles are the rebirth process, laws of kamma, how Patticca Samuppāda to give rise to new births, etc. For that, one first needs to get rid of the ten wrong views and learn basic concepts like gati, anusaya, etc. See, "Micchā Ditthi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage."

- It is not easy to put all that together and see the truth of the "wider world-view." Yet, without that foundation, it is not possible to see that big picture and realize the truth of it.
- It may be hard to believe, but just that "understanding of the big picture" will lead to the removal of $99 \%$ of the "gunk" that has been accumulated in our minds in a rebirth process that has no discernible beginning.
- I recommend reading the recently compiled English text of discourse on this subject by the late Waharaka Thero: WebLink: PDF file: How to Attain Nibbāna as a Buddhist Layman - Part 1


## That "Big Picture" Must be Learnt From a Buddha

4. If one has not heard the above from a Buddha or a true disciple of the Buddha, that person - no matter how intelligent - would not be able to figure that out by him/herself.

- The Buddha called such a person "assutavā puthujjano." That means "an ignorant person who had not heard this Dhamma."
- Of course, many people cannot and will not agree with that "new Dhamma." They do not have the capability to grasp it. They may not be willing to discard the wrong views that they have. There is nothing we can do about that.
- I have come this far in the rebirth process because I also had been incapable of grasping that in my previous lives.
- So, all we can do is try our best to understand. Even if one cannot understand, one needs to live a moral life and engage in meritorious deeds, so that the understanding can come in future life.


## Who Is an Assutavā Puthujjano?

5. There are many suttā where the Buddha described an "assutavā puthujjano."

For example, the "WebLink: suttacentral: Patipadā Sutta (SN 22.44)" states, "Katamā ca, bhikkhave, sakkāya samudayagāmin̄̄ paṭipadā? Idha, bhikkhave, assutavā puthujjano ariyānaì adassāvī ariyadhammassa akovido ariyadhamme avinīto, sappurisānaì adassāv̄̄ sappurisadhammassa akovido sappurisadhamme avinīto, rūpaì attato samanupassati, rūpavantaì vā attānaì; attani $v \bar{a}$ rūpaì, rūpasmìi vā attānaì. Vedanaì ...
saññaì ...saǹkhāre ...viññ̄ạnaì attato samanupassati"
Translated: "And what, bhikkhus, is the path leading to the origination of identity view? Here, bhikkhus, an ignorant person who has not heard Dhamma ... regards form as self ... vedan $\bar{a}$ as self ... saññ̄ $\bar{a}$ as self ... sañkhāra as self ... viññā $\bar{n} a$ as self ${ }^{\text {c }}$

- "Rūpaim attato samanupassati" means, "regards form (meaning one's body) as "me" in one of four ways. In the same way, that person may consider each of the other four aggregates as "me" in one of four ways.
- Thus, considering each of the five aggregates in four ways "to be mine", leads to the "self-view" or 'identity view." That is "twenty-types of sakkāya ditṭhi" or "vīsativatthukā sakkāya ditṭhi." See, "WebLink: suttacentral: Nayasamutthāna (Ne 36 / Netti 5)" of Nettipakaraṇa.
- Anyone who has not heard the correct explanation of sakkāya dittthi is an "uninformed/ignorant" human or assutavā puthujjano. That is why most people today belong to this category. Even when explained, some people have a hard time grasping this "previously unheard Dhamma."


## Sutavā Ariyasāvako - One Who Has Heard and Comprehended Dhamma

6. The opposite of an assutav $\bar{a}$ puthujjano is a sutavā ariyas $\bar{a} v a k o$, who has heard and comprehended the correct teachings of the Buddha. Such a person knows the dangers in attaching to worldly things.

- There are many sutt $\bar{a}$ in SN 35 (especially SN 35. 1 through SN 35. 12) that discuss a sutav $\bar{a}$ ariyasāvako. For example, "WebLink: suttacentral: Ajjhattāniccātītānāgata Sutta (SN 35.7)" says: "Cakkhumi, bhikkhave, aniccaì atītānāgataì; ko pana vādo paccuppannassa. Evaì passaì, bhikkhave, sutavā ariyasāvako atītasmim cakkhusmim anapekkho hoti; anāgataì cakkhum nābhinandati; paccuppannassa cakkhussa nibbidāya virāgāya nirodhāya patipanno hoti. Sotaỉ aniccaì ... ghānaì aniccaì ..."

Translated: "Bhikkhus, the eye of the past and future (let alone the present) is of anicca nature, . Seeing this, a learned noble disciple doesn't attach to the eye of the past, he doesn't look forward to enjoying the eye in the future, and he practices for non-attachment, dispassion, and cessation regarding the eye of the present. The ear ... nose ..."

- Note that translating "anicca" as "impermanent" does not make any sense. The "eye of the past" has already been destroyed. There is no need to talk about the impermanence of it. What the verse says is that it is not beneficial to recall one's past and think fondly about it, hoping to enjoy such an eye in the future.


## An Assutavā Puthujjano Has Sakkāya Dițthi

7. Thus sakkāya ditthi (identity or self-view) arises because one takes one's body as "me." Of course, one may take one's vedana $, \operatorname{san} \tilde{n} \tilde{a}, \operatorname{san} k h \bar{a} r a$, and viñ $\tilde{a} n a_{a}$ as self too. In other words, anyone who views one or more of the five aggregates as "mine" has sakkāya ditṭhi.
"WebLink: suttacentral: Sakkāyaditthi Sutta (SN 22.155)" the Buddha says, "rūpe kho, bhikkhave, sati, rūpai் upādāya, rūpaì abhinivissa sakkāya diṭthi uppajjati. Vedanāya sati ... saññāya sati ... sañkhāresu sati ... viññāne sati, viññāṇà் upādāya, viññāṇaì abhinivissa sakkāya diṭthi uppajjati.

- OR, "When one focuses on $r \bar{u} p a$ when one is "immersed" in $r \bar{u} p a$ and keep them close (in one's mind), identity view arises. The same can happen with vedanā, sañ̃̄̄a, sañkhāra, and viñ̃̄̄̄ṇa.

Then the Buddha asks, "Taí kim maññatha, bhikkhave, rūpaí niccaím vā aniccaín vā"ti?

- OR, "bhikkhus, are those rūpā of nicca or anicca nature?"
- Anicca and nicca are complex Pāli words with multiple (but related) meanings. See, See, "Anicca True Meaning."
- Those two words are related to "icca" or "icchä" meaning liking or desire. See, "Icca, Nicca, Anicca Important Connections."
- We will discuss the correct meaning of "Taï kimं mañnatha, bhikkhave, rūpaím niccaín vā aniccaìm $v \bar{a} " t i$ ? in \#9 below. First, let us look at the common INCORRECT meaning of it.


## Critical Error in Equating "Nicca and Anicca" in Pāli as "Nitya and Anitya" in Sanskrit

8. The INCORRECT translation of "Taì kim maññatha, bhikkhave, rūpaì niccaì vā aniccaì vā"ti? is, "bhikkhus, are those $r \bar{u} p \bar{a}$ permanent or impermanent?"

- That is the English translation that appears in most current English texts. It is WRONG!
- The Pāli word "nicca" DOES NOT mean "permanent" and "anicca" DOES NOT mean "impermanent."
- However, the Sanskrit words "nitya" and "anitya" DO MEAN "permanent" and "impermanent."
- That grave mistake of confusing Pāli words with wrong Sanskrit words has kept so many people from grasping the correct Buddha Dhamma.
- Pāli words for "permanent" is niyata AND dhuva. Impermanence expressed as "aniyata" or "addhuva."
- For the life of me, I do not understand why all these "learned bhikkhus and scholars" refuse to take a bit of time to go through the Tipitaka and figure this out. They should keep in mind that teaching wrong Dhamma is an offense. The Buddha admonished that dealing with Dhamma is like handling a snake. If you get hold of the wrong end, you will be in danger.


## Correct Translation of "Taím kim mañnatha, bhikkhave, rūpaín niccaín vā aniccaì $\boldsymbol{v} \overrightarrow{\boldsymbol{a}} \boldsymbol{t} \boldsymbol{i}$ ?

9. In fact, there are more suttā in this series that probe deeper into how the root causes of suffering are tied up to the view of "me" and "mine" based on the high-value for world objects.

For example, WebLink: suttacentral: Annanda Sutta (SN 22.159) further clarifies what we discussed in \#6 above. In that sutta, the Buddha explains to Ven. Ānanda how attachment to rūpa with VIEW of "me and mine" leads to suffering and, thus, is the wrong view. The conversation goes as follows.

- "Taì kimं maññasi, ānanda, rūpaì niccaì vā aniccaì vā"ti?
- "Aniccam், bhante."
- "Yaín panāniccaì dukkhaì vā taì sukhaì vā"ti?
- "Dukkham, bhante."
- "Yaì panāniccaì dukkhaì viparin̄āmadhammaí, kallain nu taì samanupassitum: 'etain mama, esohamasmi, eso me attā'" $t$ i? [kalla : [adj.] 1. clever; able; 2. healthy; sound; 3.ready; 4. proper.]
- "No hetami, bhante."


## Translation:

- "What do you think, Ānanda? Can anyone maintain rūpa to one's liking?"
- "One cannot (aniccaì), Bhante."
- "If one cannot maintain something to one's liking, does the lead to suffering or happiness?"
- "Suffering, Bhante."
- "If something cannot be maintained to one's liking, leads to suffering, and is subject to unexpected changes, is it wise to regard that as: 'This is mine, I am this, this is my self or identity'?"
- 'No, Bhante."

Then the Buddha asks about the other four aggregates (the mental aggregates) of vedanā, sañ̃̄ā, sañkhāra, and viññāna.

- Venerable Ānanda agrees that those are also unfit to be "taken as mine or my identity."


## Is It Wise to Take the Five Aggregates As "Me and Mine"?

10. The key point is that these suttā only talk about whether it is SUITABLE or WISE to take any of the five aggregates as me or mine.

- That pertains only to one's view of a "me." Getting rid of that VIEW is getting rid of sakkāya diṭthi.
- One may still have the feeling/perception of a "me." That goes away only at the Arahant stage.
- Yet many people today try to start with "I do not exist" (with the incorrect translation of anatta as "noself'). It is ridiculous to say, "I do not exist." It is obvious that we all exist.
- We will discuss the concept of anatta in the next post. That basically says one will be helpless in the rebirth process with the wrong view and wrong perception of a "me." That "me" will go through uncountable "bad births" with that wrong view/perception of a "me."


## One Could Be Reborn a Human, Deva, Brahma, Animal, Hell-Being Which One Is "Me"?

11. Think about that. Is "me" a human, animal, a Brahma, (or any of the many births possible)? This is why one cannot comprehend Buddha Dhamma without understanding the "big picture" of the Buddha about this world.

- That "big picture" is the non-stop rebirth process within the 31 realms of this world.
- It also includes the laws of kamma and Paṭicca Samuppāda. Here, Paṭicca Samuppāda explains how different existences (bhava) arise due to abhisañkhāra (strong kamma.)
- It is those abhisañkhāra (done with $a v i j j \bar{a}$ ) that lead to different existences as a human, Deva, Brahma, animal, hell-being, etc.
- Any living-being will be "preparing one's own future births" via generating corresponding abhisañkhāra (or good bad kamma) due to ignorance (avijj $\bar{a}$.) That was the conclusion of the series of posts on "Origin of Life." See, "Origin of Life - One Creates One's Own Future Lives."
- That $a v i j j \bar{a}$ will reduce by a huge fraction when one gets rid of sakkāya ditthhi. It will completely go away at the Arahant stage with the removal of "asmi māna."


### 3.7.7.6 Atta - Two Very Different Meanings

July 1, 2020
First, "atta (attā)" is pronounced with the "th" sound, as in "metta (mettā)." See, \#12 of ""Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars - Part 1."

## Words With Double Meanings in English

1. A number of English words are spelled the same way and pronounced the same way, but have different meanings. For example, let us consider the word, "mine."

- The word mine is a possessive adjective. For example, "That house is mine" means the house belongs to me.
- Mine is also a noun. It can refer to a place where minerals (coal, gold, etc) are dug out of the earth.
- A mine (or landmine) also refers to a bomb that is buried underground. It can explode when someone steps on it or drives over it. They are used in war.
- There are many other words like that. We need to know which meaning to use based on the context (how it is used). Another simple word is right. It means a direction in "turn right at the traffic light." But it means something entirely different in, "you are right" meaning "you are correct."


## Atta (and Attā) - Two Very Different Meanings

2. Many Pāli words have double meanings. In addition, many Pāli words have a mundane meaning and a deeper meaning. We need to know which one to use depending on the situation.

- One becomes good at figuring out which meaning is relevant in a given context, only after having a good understanding of Buddha Dhamma. A good understanding comes especially with practice, not merely by reading about Buddha Dhamma.
- That is why it is not a good idea to resort to Pāli dictionaries alone. See, "Pāli Dictionaries - Are They Reliable?"
- Pāli word "atta" has two frequently used meanings. One is the mundane meaning of "person" or "self." Let us discuss that first.


## Atta Meaning "Person" or "Self" in Mundane Usage

3. There are many Tipittaka verses, where "atta" means a "person." The following are several examples.

- "Attānaì damayanti paṇ̂itā" in Dhammapada verse 6.80 means "The wise persons control themselves."
- "Attano sukhamicchati" in Dhammapada verse 21.291 means "one seeks one's own happiness." Also, note the word iccha (desire) in "sukhamicchati" is "sukham"" + "icchati."
- In the Attadīpa Sutta (SN 22.43), "attadīp $\bar{a}$ viharatha" means "make an island of yourself," meaning "one has to seek one's own refuge."


## Various Wrong Views based on "Person" or "Self"

4. Humans always wondered what it is that feels like "me." What defines a "me" or a "self" or "attā?" Based on such thinking, they come to various wrong conclusions or wrong views about a "self."

- In the WebLink: suttacentral: Brahmajāla Sutta (DN 1) the Buddha described 62 types of wrong views that people have.
- All these wrong views can be divided into primarily two categories (the other views are variations of these two.) In the terminology used today, we can list those two categories as follows.

Permanent Soul (Sassata Vāda): A given person has a permanent soul in Abrahamic religions (or ātma or atman in Hinduism.) When the physical body dies, "the soul" or "ātma" gets hold of another existence. In Abrahamic religions, that next existence is forever in either heaven or hell. In Hinduism, one may go through many "incarnations" and would finally merge with Mahā Brahma to attain a permanent existence.

Materialistic View (Ucceheda Vāda): When the present life ends, no more future lives or existences. The material body is solely responsible for generating our thoughts (in the brain.) Many scientists today belong to this category.
5. The verse describing sassata vāda: "Tatra, bhikkhave, ye te samaṇabrāhmaṇā sassatavādā sassataì attānañca lokañca paññapenti .."
means, "when those ascetics and brahmins assert that the self and the cosmos are eternal .."

- Sassata means "eternal."

The verse describing uccheda vāda: "Tatra, bhikkhave, ye te samaṇabrāhmaṇā ucchedavādā sato sattassa ucchedain vināsaì vibhavaì paññapenti .." meaning, "they assert the annihilation of an existing being.."

- Uccheda means to "break off" or "cut off." Materialists believe that we just live this life.


## With the Mundane Meaning of Atta, Anatta is Not Used as Its Opposite

6. Therefore, in ALL of the above cases, the word "atta" refers to what we traditionally call a "self."

- In simple terms, materialists have the wrong view that a "self" has only this life.
- People in the other camp have the wrong view that a "soul" is forever.
- The Buddha pointed out that both views are wrong. A "self" would come to existence as long as appropriate causes and conditions are there. But there is no "permanent self" like a soul. An Arahant would not be reborn. He/she would have removed those causes and conditions for rebirth.
- In both cases, the word "anatta (or anatt $\bar{a}$ )" is NEVER used to indicate the opposite of att $\bar{a}$. The word "anatta" is NEVER used to indicate that a "self is absent." For example, in the WebLink: suttacentral: Annanda Sutta (SN 44.10) Vacchagotta comes to the Buddha asked "Master Gotama, is it correct to say that there is a "self"?" He used the phrase, "atthi att $\overrightarrow{\boldsymbol{a}}$ " to ask whether there is a "self." Then he phrased it the opposite way and asked, " is it not correct to say that there is a "self"?" There he used the phrase, "na atthi att $\overrightarrow{\boldsymbol{a}}$ " to ask whether a "self" does not exist. See, "Anattā (Mundane Interpretation) No "Unchanging Self."

Now, let us discuss the absolute or paramattha meaning of "attā." Here, the opposite of att $\bar{a}$ (or "anatta") indicates two facts: (i) Any worldly thing does not have an essence. (ii) One would become helpless at the end if one attaches to those worldly things. These meanings need to be used in the context of the three characteristics of nature or Tilakkhaṇa.

## Anatta As a Characteristic of Nature - No Essence in Worldly Things

7. This usage of the word "anatta" indicates "no refuge" or "no essence" to refer to THINGS IN THIS WORLD. It could also mean one would become "helpless" at the end if one pursues worldly things with greed or cravings. This involves the deeper meaning of "atta" being "with refuge" or "with essence."

- One would be safe and protected by overcoming the anatta nature. That is Nibbāna. Only Nibbāna has the "atta" nature.
- In this context, the three words anicca, dukkha, and anatta describe CHARACTERISTICS of this world. They have NOTHING TO DO with the context of a "self" directly.
- In brief, anicca means that "worldly things" cannot be maintained to anyone's satisfaction in the long-run. Those "worldly things" include not only material things but also mental attributes, among them vedanā, saññā, sañkhāra, and viññāna.
- IF someone craves them and attaches to them, then that person will be subjected to future suffering. That comes in two parts. First, one would become distressed because those desires will not be fulfilled at the end. Secondly, if one does immoral actions to get them, then one will have to face bad consequences of such actions (including rebirths in bad existences.)
- Thus, in the end, attachment to worldly things will be of "no essence." Those struggles would be in vain and are fruitless. One would become helpless by pursuing such efforts.


## Anattha and Attha Are Strong Versions of Anatta and Atta

8. I have explained in a previous post that the words "iccha" and "aniccha" have the same meanings as "icca" and "anicca" but with stronger emphasis. See, "Icca, Nicca, Anicca - Important Connections."

- In the same way, "atta" and "anatta" in the present context have stronger versions indicated by "attha" and "anattha."
- In the WebLink: suttacentral: Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta (SN 56.11), the Buddha described a person engaged in kāmasukhallikānuyoga or attakilamathānuyoga as "anatthasamihito."
- The verse at the beginning of the sutta is, "Yo cāyaì kāmesu kāmasukhallikānuyogo hīno gammo pothujjaniko anariyo anatthasamito, yo cāyamं attakilamathānuyogo dukkho anariyo anatthasamhito."
- Here, the word "anatthasamhito" (anattha + san + hito) means an anariya or an ignorance average person is helpless because of the wrong views.

9. Furthermore, "attha" also indicates "truth" ("artha" in Sinhala) and "anattha" indicates "untruth or useless" ("anartha" in Sinhala) depending on the context. None of these words are used in the context of a "self."

- The above verse could also be explained as an anariya engaging in useless activities (either indulging in sense pleasures or going to the other extreme of self-mortification.) Either activity does not have any meaning or essence.


## Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta - Closely Related Characteristics of This World

10. Anicca, dukkha, anatta are CHARACTERISTICS of this world. The word "anatta" in that context DOES NOT mean "no-self" or anything like that. However, a given person can BECOME anatta (helpless) by attaching to things of anicca nature that lead to suffering (dukkha.) But a person with magga phala has overcome that state of "helplessness" and has become an Ariya with refuge (atta.)

- The opposites of anicca, dukha, anatta (ie., nicca, sukha, atta) are characteristics of Nibbāna. See, "Tilakkhana - English Discourses."
- One gets to Nibbāna by renouncing "this world of 31 realms."
- One attains Nibbāna by first realizing the anicca, dukkha, anatta NATURE of this world. Only then that one would have understood the Four Noble Truths.
- Only then it is possible to grasp that the Fourth Noble Truth of "the path to Nibbāna" is the Noble Eightfold Path. That Noble Path starts with Samma Ditthi, which is the "clear vision" that this world is of anicca, dukkha, anatta NATURE of the world with 31 realms.


## "Previously Unheard Dhamma" of the Buddha

11. That is a very succinct description of Buddha Dhamma, the "previously unheard teachings that can only come from a Buddha."

- The common perception is that one can find long-lasting happiness in this world. That there are so many "mind-pleasing things" in this world worth pursuing. If one makes a determined effort, one can "succeed in life" and "be happy."
- The Buddha agreed that there are many "mind-pleasing things" in this world.
- But the Buddha taught that there is suffering hidden in those apparent 'mind-pleasing" things. That hidden suffering is hard to see, and that is why not everyone can understand Buddha Dhamma. Without making a determined effort, it may not be possible.


## An Analogy - Assutavā Puthujjano Is Not Different From a Fish Biting Into a Tasty Bait

12. The Buddha gave the following analogy. A fish bites into a tasty bait, because it cannot see the hook hidden in it. The fish only see the "tasty bait" and cannot see the hook, string, fishing pole, and the person holding that pole. If it could see the "whole picture" it would not even go close to that bait.

- In the same way, it is only a Buddha who can "see" the "bigger picture" with the 31 realms with the four suffering-filled realms and the rebirth process. Due to the ignorance of that "wider worldview," livingbeings spend most of the time in those four lowest realms.
- An "assutava puthujjano" or an "ignorant average human" is unable to see that hidden suffering. That is why most living-beings spend most of their samsaric journey within the four lowest realms. They get trapped there and become helpless. They become "anatta" or "without refuge" at the end. See, "Sakkāya Ditthi - "Me and Mine" View."
- I have discussed those three words in many posts in the section "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta" and also in the recently revised section on "The Five Aggregates (Pañcakkhandha)." It was also discussed with another approach in the "Origin of Life" section. Each person is different and one of those could be appropriate for a given person. In the end, they all converge to the same point and one would be able to see that they are all self-consistent.


## Evidence That Anatta Does Not Mean "No-Self"

13. There are many suttā in the Smayutta Nikāya that discuss anicca, dukkha, anatta, and the relationships among them. Specifically SN 22, SN 23, and SN 35.

- For example, WebLink: suttacentral: Kotthikaanatta Sutta (SN 35.164) states, "Cakkhu kho, kotṭhika, anatt $\bar{a}$; tatra te chando pahātabbo. R $\bar{p} p \bar{a}$ anatt $\bar{a} ;$ tatra te chando pahātabbo. Cakkhuviññānamin anattā; tatra te chando pahātabbo. Cakkhusamphasso anattā; tatra te chando pahātabbo. Yampidamं cakkhusamphassapaccayā uppajjati vedayitaím sukhamं vā dukkhaì vā adukkhamasukham vā tampi anattā; tatra te chando pahātabbo ..."

Translated: "The eye, sights, eye-consciousness, and eye "san-contact" (samphassa) are without essence: you should give up the desire/cravings for them. The pleasant, painful, or neutral feeling that arises conditioned by eye "san-contact" (samphassa) is also without essence. You should give up the desire for it."

- That statement is then repeated for the ear, tongue, nose, body, and mind. It applies anything and everything in this world!


## Can Eye-Consciousness Have a "Self"?

14. Most other translations state all those entities that I highlighted above are "not-self." See, "WebLink: suttacentral: With Kotthita on Not-Selp" which states, "The eye, sights, eye-consciousness, and eye contact are not-self.."

- How can eye-consciousness possibly have a "self"? How can eye contact have a "self"? What does it mean to say they have "no-self"? Even a child should be able to see that statement does not make any sense!


## Anything In This World Has Anatta Nature

15. In fact, as stated in the sutta in \#13 above (and MANY other sutt $\bar{a}$ ) ANYTHING that exists in this world is of anatta nature. They are all without any essence.

- It starts with the anicca nature of ALL worldly things. That means no one can maintain anything in this world to one's satisfaction over the long run.
- But people try to do that impossible task because they crave many things in this world. But in the end, they would only suffer. That is partly because they do immoral deeds to acquire those "things" and end
up having to face bad kamma vipāka. The verse "yad aniccaím taim dukkhaim" or the verse, "Yam pi icchamं na labhati tam pi dukkhaì" expresses that fact.
- That process will gradually move anyone to more and more suffering. One will eventually end up in the apay $\bar{a}$ with much suffering, and at that point, one would be truly helpless (anatta.) That is what is meant by, "Yaim dukkhaim tad anattā."
- That verse, "yad aniccaì taì dukkhaín, yaím dukkhaí tad anatt $\vec{a}$ " appears in numerous suttā in the Tipiṭaka. That is how living-beings become helpless in the rebirth process (by engaging in immoral deeds) in their quest of seeking "sensory pleasures."
- That is the "previously unheard Dhamma" of the Buddha.


### 3.7.8 Saññā (Perception)

Saññ̄ $\bar{a}$ is, at the very fundamental level, the recognition of an external stimulus. But it is more than that. We not only recognize that a given object is, say, a dog. But some people may be able to categorize it as a bull dog. Thus sañ̃ña about a particular object depends on the person.

Same is true for other four senses. When we hear a sound, we recognize what it is, say a bird singing a song. Some may be able to say which bird it is, some may not be. Any smell, taste, or touch works the same way. Without sañ̃n̄̄ we cannot identify things around us, and also cannot communicate with each other meaningfully.

One of the 31 realms of existence is the "Asanna realm." There, the beings have no saññ̄ $\bar{a}$ or perception. Thus in principle, those beings are without any awareness. Nothing registers in the mind. If anyone has attained the 7th jhāna, the "Nevasanna Na'sanna," then that person knows what it is like to born in the Asanna realm.

Saññā is described in more detail in, "Saññā - What It Really Means" and "How to Cultivate the Anicca Saññā."

Next, "Vedanā (Feelings)",

### 3.7. Vedanā (Feelings)

## Revised November 6, 2018; August 31, 2019

In this and follow-up posts, we will discuss six types of vedan $\bar{a}$ (feelings) and how they arise. There are other types of vedan $\bar{a}$, but these are the important ones to understand for the Sotāpanna stage. Three of these occur due to kamma vipāka, and the other three arise due to sañkhāra (defiled thoughts).
 aware of something." When we sense something via our six senses, we become aware of it; that is vedanā.

## Two Ways Vedanā (Feelings) Can Arise

$V e d a n \bar{a}$ (feelings) can arise in two ways:

1. First, as a consequence of a previous kamma (i.e., a kamma vipāka), possibly done many lives ago. Those usually are not avoidable.

- Unavoidable vedanā (feelings) are three kinds : Sukha vedanā (pleasant or joyful feeling), dukha vedanā (unpleasant or painful feeling), and adukkhama asukha (without being painful or joyful, just neutral), where we are just aware of it. This adukkhama asukha vedanā is also called upekkha vedanā.

2. Second, s a direct consequence of a sañkhāra (one could say an ongoing action or a way of thinking). These are absent in Arahants.

- Three types of other vedanā are avoidable: somanassa (pleasant), domanassa (unpleasant), and upekkha (neutral) vedanā. They are solely mind-made and are due to defiled thoughts (sañkhāra). The details discussed below.


## Vedanā Arising from Kamma Vipāka

Kamma vipāka can happen to everyone, including Arahants. While everyone can avoid some kamma vipäka, others are too strong to be able to be avoided.

- For example, the Buddha himself had physical ailments later in his life as kamma vipāka. Because of a bad kamma that he committed many lives before, Moggallana Thero was beaten to death.
- However, kamma vipāka are not sure to happen. Some can be reduced in power by Mettā Bhāvanā; see, "Karaniya Metta Sutta - Mettā Bhāvanā."
- All kamma vipāka reduce in power with time and some eventually die out if they did not get a chance to come to fruition within 91 Mahā kappas. Many can be avoided by not providing conditions for them to arise (see, the discussion on kamma bīja in, "Sañkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka").
- One could also feel sukha vedanā (pleasant feelings) due to good kamma vipāka. These are also bodily feelings that arise due to "pleasant bodily contacts" like a getting a good massage or lying on a luxurious bed.
- These types of vedanā are not DIRECTLY relevant in Pațicca Samuppāda. For example, when Devadatta injured the Buddha, the Buddha did not generate "vedana paccaya a tanha $\vec{a}$ " in Patticca Samuppāda.


## Vedanā Arising from Sañkhāra

These are the vedanā that Arahants do not feel. Since they do not commit any abhisañkhāra (those strong sañkhāra done with greed, hate, and ignorance), an Arahant avoids any feeling arising from abhisañkhāra. The easiest way to explain this kind of vedan $\bar{a}$ is to give some examples:

1. Three people are walking down the street. One has an ultra-right political bias (A), the second has an ultra-left preference (B), and the third is an Arahant who does not have special feelings for anyone (C). They all see a famous politician hated by the political right coming their way. It is a given that the sight of the politician causes A to have displeasure and B to have a pleasurable feeling.
2. On the other hand, the sight does not cause the Arahant to generate any pleasure or displeasure. Even though all three see the same person, they generate different types of feelings. It is critical to realize that $A$ and $B$ created the feelings by themselves.
3. Two friends go looking for treasure and find a gem. They are both overjoyed. It seems quite valuable, and one person kills the other so that he can get all the money. When he tries to sell the "gem", he finds out that it was not that valuable. His joy turns to sorrow in an instant. Nothing had changed in the object, the piece of stone. It was the same piece of colored rock. What has changed was the perception of it (saññā).
4. A loving couple had lived for many years without any problems and were happy to be together. However, the husband slaps his wife during an argument. The physical pain from the slap itself did not last more than a few minutes. But for how long the wife would suffer mentally? Even the husband, who did not feel any physical pain, would suffer for days if he really loved his wife. In both cases, the attachment to each other led to real suffering. The wife could have dropped something on her foot and would have suffered about the same amount of physical pain. But she would not have had any lingering mental pain associated with that.

Thus all these second kind of feelings arise due to greed, hate, or ignorance. They are due to (abhi) sañkhāra. The feelings come from INSIDE oneself. They do not come from a kamma vipāka. We use external things to CAUSE happiness or suffering by our own volition.

- These types of vedana (also called samphassa j $\bar{a}$ vedan $\bar{a}$ " or "vedanā generated via samphassa") are the ones relevant in Paticca Samuppäda.

Deeper analyses can be found at Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways
Next, "Viññ̄āna (Consciousness)",

### 3.7.10 Viññāṇa (Defiled Consciousness)

Originally written in 2014; re-written September 8, 2018; revised December 25, 2018; July 18, 2022

Viññāna is normally translated as consciousness or awareness. But it is much deeper and can be many different types. An overview is given below, and there are several posts on different types of viññāna in different sections of the website.

- Viññāna is very complex and is the key to Nibbāna. One should read the posts mentioned below; more posts can be found using the "Search box" on the top right.
- First, it is very important to get a basic understanding of Pāli terms like citta, viñãāṇa, and nāma gotta: "Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)" and "The Amazing Mind - Critical Role of Nāmagotta (Memories)."


## Six Types of Viñnãāna

1. There are six types of viñ̃ñana corresponding to the six sense inputs (vision, hearing, taste, smell, touch, mind): cakkhu, sota, jivhā, gandha, kāya, and mano viññāna.

- When we experience a sense input (say, see an object), we get a happy, unhappy, or neutral feeling (vedanā), recognize it (saññ̄ $\bar{a}$ ), and automatically generate mano sañkhāra.
- Viññāna provides the overall sensory experience that includes vedanā, sañ̃̄ā, and sañkhāra. Those latter three combined is called "nāma."
- However, in addition to just providing a "sense experience" (which is all "nāma"), viñ̃ñ̄ṇa can also act as the bridge between "nāma" and "rūpa" to "nāmarūpa." These nāmarūpa are the seeds for the creation of matter ( $r \bar{u} p a$ ). That is a separate type of viñ̃āṇa - called kamma viññanna - as we discuss now.


## Two Types of Viññ̄ạa -Vipāka Viññāna and Kamma Viññāṇa

2. Vipāka viñ $\tilde{n} a ̣ n a ~ i s ~ a w a r e n e s s ~ o r ~ c o n s c i o u s n e s s . ~ T h e ~ f i v e ~ t y p e s ~ o f ~ v i \tilde{n} \tilde{n} \bar{a} n a$ associated with the five physical senses are ALWAYS vipāka viñ̃ñạa. Mano viññāṇa also could be a vipāka viññāna. When one "sees" something that is cakkhu viññāna and when one smells something that is a ghāṇa viñ̃̄āṇa, etc. Six types of vipāka viññāna arise when sense inputs come through the six sense doors (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, touch, and the mind). These are the six types listed above in \#1.

- The second major type is kamma viññạ̄a or defiled viññāna. Kamma viññāna are those that arise via "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" in Pațicca Samuppāda.
- It is to be noted that kamma viññāna are always mano viññāna, i.e., kamma viññanna arise in mind without going through the five physical sense doors.
- Therefore, mano viññāṇa can be vipāka viññāna or kamma viññāna.

3. Kamma viññāna are created via our defiled thoughts (sañkhāra) which are three types: mano, vacī, and kāya sañkhāra.

- When we automatically generate thoughts due to sensory input those are mano sañkhāra; then we consciously think about it and may even talk out loud about it (with vacī sañkhāra); if we get engaged, we may physical do things (with kāya sañkhāra); see, "Sañkhāra - What It Really Means."
- It is also important to realize that "talking/thinking to oneself silently" without speaking is included in $v a c \bar{\imath}$ sañkhāra; see, "Correct Meaning of Vacī Sañkhāra."

4. We can see that what is called the "awareness" or "consciousness" is vipāka viñ̃̄āṇa; it is one's experience at a given moment.

- On the other hand, kamma viñnān̄a is what is called the "subconscious." A hope or desire lies hidden and comes to the surface from time to time. For example, if we plan to buy a car, that idea (hope/desire) remains in our subconscious. When we see a car like the one that we want to buy, that viñ̃̃āna is "awakened," and we start thinking about it. But once we buy the car, that viññāna will be gone, i.e., we will not think about it anymore.
- We are reborn mainly because we desire to live and enjoy life. But we do not get our exact wish most of the time; if we do dasa akusala to get what we want in this life, we are likely to be born in the apayy $\bar{a}$, regardless of what we wish for.


## Mechanisms for Generating Vipāka Viñ̃̄āṇa and Kamma Viññạ̣̄a

5. Kamma Viññāna are generated in Paṭicca Samuppāda cycles; see, "Paticca Samuppāda." As we saw above, kamma viññāṇa arise due to sañkhāra: "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" and "sañkhāra paccayā viñ̃ān̄a."

- Therefore, we accumulate such kamma viññāna by doing (abhi) sañkhāra due to our ignorance (that striving to get sense pleasures can lead to long-lasting happiness), i.e., we do not comprehend the anicca nature.

6. Vipāka viñnāna arise via six ways due to sense inputs via the six sense faculties: "cakkhuñca paticca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññānam̀", "sotañca paṭicca sadde ca uppajjati sotaviñ̃ān̄am̀,"..."manañca paṭicca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviññāṇam்."

- In English, that means we see an object when our eyes capture light coming from that object; we hear a sound that comes to our ears, ... we get a thought in our mind.
- An example of a mano viññāna is, for example, something that happened on a previous day just popping into the mind.
- This process of the arising of the six types of viññ̄ana is discussed in, "Do I Have "A Mind" That Is Fixed and "Mine"?"


## Based on Vipāka Viññāṇa, We Initiate Kamma Viññāna

7. Everything that we INITIALLY EXPERIENCE is due to a kammā vipāka, i.e., it comes to us as a vipāka viññāna. They make us see, hear, smell, taste, experience bodily sensations, and bring new thoughts to mind.

- Based on those sense inputs, we MAY initiate new kamma viññāna if those sense inputs are either attractive (leading to greed) or repulsive (leading to hate/anger). This happens via "sañkhāra paccayā viññāna" as mentioned above.

8. If we start doing sañkhāra consciously, then we start generating NEW kamma via the process, "sañkhāra paccayā viññāna." Then we would give rise to a new kamma viññ̄ṇa. If those abhisañkhāra
are strong enough, corresponding kamma viññāna can give rise to a special type of vipāka viñãāṇa called paṭisandhi viñ̃̄āṇa (responsible for rebirth).

- A paṭisandhi viñ̃ān̄na, which is the state of mind at the moment of grasping a new bhava (new existence) is a vipāka viññāna; we cannot control it.
- Paṭisandhi viññāna is A RESULT of a past kamma that we did with a kamma viññanna at the time of doing that kamma. For example, someone kills a human being with a kamma viññāna, and that gives rise to a kamma bīja (kammic energy). That kamma bïja can bring in a vipāka viññāna in the form of a pațisandhi viññaṇa in the future.

9. This vicious cycle of "vipāka" leading to "kamma" leading to more "vipāka" is the process that binds us to the sainsāra of endless rebirths, with (mostly) suffering.

- The Buddha describes this as, "kammā vipākā vaddanti, vipāko kamma sambhavo, tasmā punabbhavo hoti, evan loko pavattati."
- That means, "kammā lead to vipāka, vipāka, in turn, lead to kammā and thus to rebirth (punabbhavo), and that is how the world (existence) is maintained."
- There, "sambhava" is "san" + "bhava," or "adding more existences." Also, "loka" is the world, and "pavatta" means "maintain."

10. Breaking this vicious cycle is the key to Nibbāna, as we point out next.
"Yam kiñci dukkham sambhoti, Sabbam viññānapaccay"̈" ("Whatever suffering that arises, It
arises due to viñ̃āana")
11. Many suttā clearly state that Nibbāna is attained by stopping the arising of viññāna (defiled consciousness), i.e., via "viññāna nirodha." A clear statement can be found in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Dvavatānupassanāsutta (Sutta Nipata 3.12)":
"Yaì kiñci dukkhamं sambhoti,
Sabbaì viññānapaccayā;
Viññānassa nirodhena,
Natthi dukkhassa sambhavo."
Translated: "Whatever suffering that arises, all that arises due to viñ̃āạa; With not arising of viññạ̄a, there is no existence with suffering."

- The viññāṇa referred to here is kamma viññāna. For a discussion, see "Viññāna - What It Really Means."

12. Of course, the way to stop kamma viññāna from arising is to stop doing abhisañkhāra, i.e., stop kamma viññāna in the step, "sañkhāra paccayā viññāna." That involves two steps:

- First, one needs to cultivate paññā and get rid of avijjā, so that the "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" step can be avoided. One needs to comprehend this world's anicca, dukkha, anatta, and asubha nature.
- Secondly, one also needs to be mindful and stop such abhisañkhāra from arising to stop the rebirth process or even to stop bad kamma vipāka in the future.
- Both of those two steps are essential; they feed on each other. The more one understands the anicca nature, it is easier to stop such abhisañkhāra, AND the more abhisañkhāra one stops, it becomes easier to comprehend anicca nature.


## Key Points to Remember

13. Kamma viññāna are sañkhata that we create ourselves; they are also called "kamma bïja." We create them by doing mano, vacī, and kāya sañkhāra due to our ignorance. That process is described by patticca samuppāda.

- We can stop generating kamma viññāna by being mindful and not doing abhisañkhāra, especially apuñña abhisañkhāra or immoral deeds.

14. The type of rebirth (or other kamma vipāka) that arise due to abhisañkhāra is described by paticca samuppāda: they are according to the type of abhisañkhāra done: "pati icca leading to sama uppāda"; see, "Paticca Samuppāda - "Pati+ichcha" + "Sama+uppāda"."

- Then they bring vipāka or results in the future via vipāka viññaṇa. As long as one lives, one will experience vipāka viññanna, even if one is an Arahant.
- However, an Arahant will not grasp a new bhava at the moment of death (at the cuti-patisandhi moment) because the "upādāna paccayā bhava" step will not work for an Arahant: $\mathrm{He} / \mathrm{she}$ will not grasp any bhava, i.e., no upādāna.

15. This is a highly condensed overview. Don't be discouraged if you cannot understand some things. One needs to spend some time reading relevant posts and contemplating them. Any questions can be discussed at the discussion forum: "Forums."

### 3.7.11 Rūpa (Material Form)

## Revised February 3, 2018

Please see, "What are Rūpa? Relation to Nibbāna" for an introduction.
Most people have many misconceptions about rūpa. So, we will systematically look at different kinds of rūpa. R $\bar{u} p a$ are basically everything that the five physical senses sense: we see vanṇa rūpa (physical objects that bounce light off, also called "rūpa rūpa"), we hear sadda rūpa (sounds), we smell gandha rūpa (odors), we taste rasa rūpa (food), and we touch pottabba rūpa (physical objects). Our internal senses that sense those external ru$p a$ are also fine $r \bar{u} p a$ that are controlled by the mind. Those that are sensed by the mind are dhamma (concepts), and mind is not a $r \bar{u} p a$.

- Here is a simple way to figure out the five types of rūpa: If we take a toasted slice of bread that is rūpa rūpa or a vaṇna rūpa; if it is freshly toasted, when we break it, it will make a sound, which is a sadda rūpa; the smell of that bread is a gandha rupa; when we taste it, we taste the rasa rūpa in the bread; when we touch it, we touch the pottabba rūpa in the bread.

There are many ways that $r \bar{u} p a$ can be analyzed. The basic "building blocks" of all rūpa are the four great elements (mahā bhūta): pathavi (element of extension with the characteristic of hardness), $\bar{a} p o$ (The element of cohesion with the characteristics of cohesiveness and fluidity), tejo (the element of heat or heat energy with the characteristics of hotness and coldness), and $v \bar{a} y o$ (the element of motion or kinetic energy with the characteristics of pushing and supporting).

- It must be noted that in many cases, the Buddha took existing terms and redefined them to be consistent with Buddha Dhamma. The terms pathavi (earth), $\bar{a} p o$ (water), tejo (fire), and $v \bar{a} y o$ (wind) were thought to be the basic building blocks for matter in the pre-Buddha era, including the Greeks.
- But those names have deeper meanings too; for an in-depth discussion see, "The Origin of Matter Suddhatthaka."

There are 28 types of basic rūpa, and the other 24 are derivatives (upadaya rūpa) of the four mahā bhūta.

1. Rūpa can be put into two categories regarding whether they are internal (ajjhattika) and external (bāhira). The internal rūpa are the five pasäda rūpa associated with the physical body: eye
(cakkhu), ear (sota), nose (ghāna), tongue (jivhā), and body (kāya). Internal rūpa also include our physical body (including the physical eyes, ears, etc). Here are a few things to note: [bāhira : [adj.] external; outer; foreign. (nt.), outside.]

- These five internal or pasāda rūpa are essential for experiencing the outside world. Without them, people will not be different from inanimate logs. Those internal rüpa associated with the physical body become inert (and external) when the gandhabba leaves the body.
- It must be emphasized that pasāda rūpa are NOT the physical organs that we see. These are fine rūpa (matter) that stop being regenerated at death. Thus cakkhu is NOT the physical eye.
- From the moment of death of the physical body, cakkhu is not there anymore; it is gone with the gandhabba. However, the physical eye is there and can be even used in another person's body within 24 hours or so.
- Therefore, those physical senses are internal only as long as the gandhabba is associated with the physical body. As soon as gandhabba leaves at the death of the physical body, they become external rūpa.

2. Out of all the external (bāhira or bahiddhā) rūpa, seven are called gocara rūpa or objective rūpa because those are the ones that can be sensed by the five internal (pasāda) rūpa.

- These are: visible (vaṇ̂a) rūpa, sound (sadda) rūpa, smell (gandha) rūpa, taste (rasa) rūpa, and tangible rūpa (phott $\mathrm{t} h a b b a$ ). There are no separate rūpā called photṭhabba rūpa; they are pathavi, tejo, and $v \bar{a} y o$, three of the four great elements (mahā bhūta). Thus things we see with our eyes are the visible (vanṇa) rūp $\bar{a}$; they are only part of the class of $r \bar{u} p a$.
- It is important to note that the gocara rūpa or objective $r \bar{u} p a$ are the only $r \bar{u} p a$ that we EXPERIENCE with our five physical senses. For example the remaining great essential, $\bar{a} p o$, is not experienced by our senses.
- The five pasāda rūpa and the seven gocara rūpa that are sensed by them are collectively called the olarika (gross or coarse) rūpas because they can touch (strike) each other. The other 16 rūpas are subtle or fine (sukhuma) rūpa.

3. There are several fine $r \bar{u} p \bar{a}$ that are associated with our body.

- Hadaya vatthu (heart base) - together with the five pasāda rūpa - are located close to the heart.
- Jivitindriya rūpa (vital force of kammaja rūpa) is spread throughout the body.
- There are two bhava rūpa that determine whether it is a male or a female: itthi bhava (femininity) and purisa bhava (masculinity). One kind is spread throughout a body.
- Āhāra rūpa (oja) are nutritive essence that sustains the body. It is extracted from the food we eat.

4. So far we have discussed five pasāda rūpā, seven rūpā that constitute the external rūpa (vanṇa, sadda, rasa, gandha, pathavi, tejo, vāyo) that are sensed by the pasāda rūpa, and the five other rūpa (hadaya, jivitindriya, two bhava rūpa, and oja) in \#3.
5. The remaining mah $\bar{a} b h \bar{u} t a$ or the great element is $\bar{a} p o$. It is the r $\bar{u} p a$ that holds any structure together, but it is not sensed by the body (kaya) rūpa. With the $\bar{a} p o r \bar{u} p a$, up to this point we have discussed 18 types of rūpa. These 18 types of rūpa are called nippanna rūpa (concretely produced rūpa) because they are caused and conditioned by one or more of four things: kamma, citta, utu (tejo) and $\bar{a} h \bar{a} r a$ (food); thus they are suitable for contemplation by insight.

- The five pasāda rūpa, two bhava rūpa, hadaya vatthu and jivitindriya rūpa (9 in all) are produced by kamma and kamma alone.
- Sadda (sound) rūpa are produced by citta and utu (tejo). Vocal sounds such as speech, laughter, whistling, etc are produced by citta. Non-vocal sounds, such as thunder and music from instruments are produced by $u t u$.
- The different ways that kamma, citta, utu, and $\bar{a} h a \bar{a} a$ produce the 24 types of rupa is summarized in the Tables and Summaries Section; see, "Rūpa - Generation Mechanisms."

6. The remaining 10 rūpa are more abstract in nature. They are called anippana rūpa (nonconcretely produced $r \bar{u} p a$ ).

- Akasa dhātu (space element) is not so much "space", but more like the inter-atomic space or intraatomic space. It occupies whatever is not occupied by any other $r \bar{u} p a$. Thus it is everywhere, even in the deep inter-galactic space where there is no "detectable matter." Scientists are beginning to suspect that there is much more energy in the vacuum (zero point energy) than the energy that we experience. It is like the deep ocean and what we see are only the ripples.
- We communicate using two fine $r \bar{u} p \bar{a}$ : vinnatti ru$p a$ or material qualities of communication. We use both the mouth and and the body to communicate with each other. Kāya vinnatti (bodily intimation) is gestures by hand, head, physical eye, leg, etc, to indicate one's intentions to another. Vacī vinnatti (vocal intimation) is the movement of the mouth to produce vocal speech.
- There are three vikara (mutable) rūpa that helps with the movements of the body. The lahuta (lightness or buoyancy) rūpa suppresses the heaviness of a body. This make it possible for up jump, for example. Imagine trying to toss up an equivalent weight! Muduta (elasticity) removes the stiffness in the body. Kammannata (weildiness) gives strength to hold up body parts. All these make possible our body movements.
- Finally, there are four lakkhana (material qualities) rūpa that are common characteristics of all rūpas: Upacaya and santati ruppa are associated with the arising of a rūpa, jarata rūpa is associated with the decay, and aniccata rūpa is the dissolving stage. See the lifetime discussed below.

7. The four great elements (mahā bhūta) are the primary rūpa. Each of the four has its own character: pathavi element of hardness; the $\bar{a} p o$ element of fluidity and cohesion; tejo of heat; vāyo of motion and pressure.
8. The mahā bhūta can never be detected separately. The eight rūpa of pathavi, $\bar{a} p o, ~ t e j o, ~ v \bar{a} y o$, are always found together with vaṇna, gandha, rasa, oja in inseparable units called pure octads or suddhattthaka, which are the fundamental units of matter. These eight $r \bar{u} p \bar{a}$ are inseparable and indivisible, and thus are known as avinibbhoga rūpa; for an in-depth discussion see, "The Origin of Matter Suddhatthaka"
9. It is not necessary to memorize all these details about different $r \bar{u} p a$. But it is good to have a reference base to look up if needed. Abhidhamma goes to much more detail and shows how the mental energy can form different kinds of $r \bar{u} p a$.

If you have not read about sañkhāra (the remaining one of the five aggregates):
"Sañkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Vipāka, Kamma Bīja", ......

## Pañcakkhandha or Five Aggregates - A Misinterpreted Concept

December 25, 2015; revised September 29, 2018; September 10, 2022
First, many people have the impression that rūpakkhandha is one's own body OR that pañcakkhandha is "in one's own body." The problem with this critical mistake can be seen with the description of rūpakkhandha (and the other four khandha as 11 types).

## Eleven Types of Rūpa in the Rūpakkhandha (Same for Other Khandhā)

1. This is clearly described in many sutta $\bar{a}$, even though the true meaning has been hidden all these years. In particular, the WebLink: suttacentral: Khandha sutta (SN 22.48) summarizes what is included in each aggregate.

- Eleven types of rūpa (mental impressions) are in the rūpakkhandha: past, present, future, near, far, fine (sukuma), coarse (olārika), likes (paṇìta), dislikes (appaṇīta), internal (ajjhatta), and external (bahiddha). Here internal rūpa means (mental impressions) of one's body parts, and external $r \bar{u} p a$ are (mental impressions) of external objects.
- Thus, it is quite clear that rūpakkhandha encompasses anything that we ever saw (including previous births) we are seeing now and hope to see in the future. The record of what belongs to the past is permanent and is called namagotta. Any rūpa about the future (for example, a sketch of the type of house one is thinking about building) can change with time.
- The other four $k h a n d h \bar{a}$ have the same 11 types.
- An acceptable English translation of the Khandha sutta is available online: "WebLink: accesstoinsight.org: Khandha Sutta: Aggregates."
- It does not explain the concept discussed above. But one can see the 11 components of each khandha are there. Also, note that it is NOT Skandha sutta; it is Khandha sutta. This is why I say that skandha is a WRONG TERM.

2. We can see that Buddha Dhamma has become so contaminated over the past thousands of years. Fortunately, we still have the Tipitaka in close to its original form. The Buddha stated that his Buddha Sasana would last for 5000 years, and the way he made sure that will happen, was to compose the sutt $\bar{a}$ as I described in the post, "Sutta Interpretation - Uddesa, Niddesa, Patiniddesa."

- Furthermore, Abhidhamma and Vinaya sections, as well as three original commentaries, are still intact in the Tipitaka; see "Preservation of the Dhamma" and other posts in "Historical Background."
- The main problem even with the Theravāda version of "Buddhism" is that instead of using the Tipitaka as the basis, the tendency is to use the Visuddhimagga written by Buddhaghosa, who had not attained any magga phala and stated that his "wish" was to become a deva in the next life from the merits he gained by writing Visuddhimagga!
- Even when using the Tipitaka, most people use the wrong interpretations of keywords such as anicca, dukkha, anatta, khandha, and Patticca Samuppāda. This problem is apparent in the Sinhala translation of the Tipitaka, which was done with the sponsorship of the Sri Lankan government several years ago.


## Rūpa and Rūpakkhandha - The Difference

1. Contrary to popular belief, pañcakkhandha or panca khandha (five aggregates) is all mental, and realizing this fact can help get rid of the "ghana sañ̃ $\bar{a}$, ," the perception that the world around us is "solid and permanent"' I will write more on this later.

- It is sometimes erroneously called pancaskhandha, and I will explain why that is incorrect.

2. For example, there is a huge difference between $r \bar{u} p a$ (material form) and $r \bar{u} p a ~ k h a n d h a$, the aggregate of material form. Rūpa khandha is commonly written as rūpakkhandha by connecting the two terms to one word, by adding an extra " k " (a common way of connecting words or "sandhi" in Pāli). The same is true for the other four aggregates. The correct interpretation makes many other concepts easier to understand.

- Rūpa is matter (and energy) and is made of the satara mahā bhūta (pathavi, apo, tejo, vāyo) and their derivatives.
- Rūpa khandha is all MENTAL.
- Similarly, there is a difference between vedanā (feelings) and vedanākkhandha (the aggregate of feelings), even though here both kinds are mental; we will discuss the difference below. The other three khandha of sañ̃̄̄a, sañkhāra, and viññanna are similar to that of vedanā.
- This is very important to understand, and I will proceed slowly to clarify the concepts.

3. The key to clarifying what rūpakkhandha is to examine why the Buddha added "khandha" to the rūpa. He could have labelled past rūpa, future rūpa, sukuma rūpa, olārika rūpa, etc. to describe the 11 types of them as discussed above. What was the need to add "khandha"? That is because rūpakkhandha is all MENTAL, and to see how it comes about we need to examine how each of us experiences "the world." Each of us does it differently.

- Each person has his/her own rūpakkhandha or how he/she perceives the material rūpa in the world. That rūpakkhandha has associated with its other four khandhas and thus comprises the pañcakkhandha. And panca upadanakkhandha, or what one has cravings for, is a small part of that.
- Just like the concept of anicca, this again is a very important concept to understand, so please try to read through slowly at a quiet time and grasp the concepts. As the Buddha said, "at the end what matters is understanding a concept, not memorizing words."
- When I first grasped this concept, it was like turning the lights on in a previously dark area that I did not even know existed! This is a good example of what the Buddha meant by "aloko udapādi."


## What is a Khandha?

1. One of the main problems we have today is that many key terms are in Sanskrit rather than the original Pāli. The meanings get distorted. A good example is paṭicca samuppāda, for which the Sanskrit term is pratittyasamutpada, which does not convey the meaning; see, "Paticca Samuppāda "Pati+ichcha"+"Sama+uppāda."
2. Similarly, the Sanskrit term "skandha" is commonly used in the place of khandha, the original Pāli term. Khandha is a heap and the Sinhala term is kanda, which is even used today to denote a heap or a pile.

- When we experience the world, we do that with our six senses, and that experience is registered as thoughts (citta). But a single citta is born and gone in a small fraction of a second. What we EXPERIENCE are the aggregates of numerous citta that go through our minds even in a fraction of a second.
- We experience a rūpa (sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, dhamma) with a citta AND based on that generate mental qualities of vedanā, sañ̃̄̄̄, sañkhāra, and viññāna. In each citta, the mind analyzes all these, and that citta is gone in a fraction of a second.
- The manasikara cetasika that is in each citta puts together the contents in all these "packets" including our past impressions - and provides us with an overall experience that includes a "sketch of what we see, hear, ..", and those feelings, perceptions etc that arise due to that sense impression.
- This can be compared to connecting individual links in a metal chain. In the old days, blacksmiths used to make chains by manually connecting one link to the next by hand. He can only see himself linking two of them at a time, but if he looks back he can see the whole chain. In the same way, the five aggregates or heaps keep building up with each passing second.

3. In another example, it is like a movie recording that keeps recording non-stop from our birth to death. And when we die it does not stop, it just starts recording the new life. And these five heaps or aggregates that have accumulated over ALL previous lives are in the namagotta, a permanent record; see, "The Amazing Mind - Critical Role of Nāmagotta (Memories)."

- Of course, we remember only a fraction of it, even in the present life. But some people remember more things than others; see "Recent Evidence for Unbroken Memory Records (HSAM)."
- But we also make plans for the future. And those heaps about the future are also in the pañcakkhandha, but not in the namagotta, which only records what has already happened. As soon as the present moment passes, more of the five heaps are added to the namagotta.
- Thus pañcakkhandha includes past, present, and future, whereas namagotta includes only that portion of the pañcakkhandha that has gone to the past.
- Even though I have discussed these concepts in the introductory posts in the Abhidhamma section, I will go through a simpler version to get the ideas across here. Those interested can then also review the posts in Abhidhamma section; see "Essential Abhidhamma - The Basics."


## What We Experience Comes in "Packets" or "Heaps" or "Khandha"

1. A simple view of how we sense the outside world is as follows: The five physical senses receive images, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches from the outside. Those sense inputs are sent to the brain via the nervous system. The brain analyzes such "signals" and helps the mind (hadaya vatthu) to extract the "meanings" conveyed by those images, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches.

- Let us take an example of looking at a cake. The eye is like a camera; it captures an image of the cake just like a camera does. That image is sent to the brain and the brain analyzes that picture and sends it to the mind (hadaya vatthu), which matches it with previous experiences (manasikāra cetasika does this) and identifies it as a chocolate cake made by grandma. The brain and mind working together this way can analyze many such pictures in a fraction of a second.
- This is basically what scientists believe happens too. Still, the difference is that scientists believe that the brain compares the current image of the cake with zillions of images "stored in the brain," which I say is an impossibility. The brain needs to scan through "its depository of images" and not only identify that it is not a loaf of bread or a piece of wood, but also what kind of a cake it is, and whether it is made by grandma or bought from a store. And this is done within a fraction of a second. Think about it! This is real vipassana meditation! What we are trying to do is to understand how nature works.

2. In Buddha Dhamma, the brain is in constant communication with the "hadaya vatthu" which is the seat of the mind. All our past experiences are "stored" in the mental plane (mano loka), and hadaya vatthu can access that information; these are what we call "namagotta." A record of each sensory event gets added to nāmagotta in viñ̃̃āna dhātu - via the mana indriya in the brain.) See, "Our Two Worlds: Material and Immaterial."

The Abhidhamma section discusses how the brain constantly communicates with the hadaya vatthu and other details. Those details are not important as long as one can picture this process in one's mind.

- This image sent by the eyes (and the brain) to the hadaya vatthu generates an imprint or a record. That record gets added to nāmagotta in viññāna dhātu - via the mana indriya in the brain. Thus, our memories are "stored" in viññāna dhātu (or nāma loka) and not in the brain.
- That record is now part of the rupakkhandha. It is not material but a record.
- If a smell is analyzed, then a record of that smell is made. Thus the rūpakkhandha here is a record of that particular smell. In this way, rūpakkhandha are just records or imprints. All five physical senses help generate $r \bar{u} p a k k h a n d h a ;$ remember that sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch are all $r \bar{u} p a$.
- The mind receives a set of static frames in a given second. Many such records for various sensory inputs go through our minds in second. The mind can make this appear as a continuous movie, with pictures, sounds, tastes, etc flowing smoothly.


## Animation Video

1. Just to give the flavor of what happens, we can look at what happens when we watch a movie. The movie is a series of static pictures or frames. When making a movie, what is done is to take many static pictures and
then play them back at fast enough speed. If the playback speed is too slow, we can see individual pictures, but above a certain "projection rate", it looks like real motion. Here is a video that illustrates this well:

## WebLink: YOUTUBE: Animation basics: The optical illusion of motion

2. When we experience (see, hear,...) the outside world, what happens is very similar to the above. At the end of the video it is stated that the "movie" we see is an illusion, and as the Buddha explained, that holds for real life as well. In real life when we see someone coming towards us, what we actually see is a series of "static pictures" or citta projected at a very fast rate in our minds, giving us the illusion of a "movie like experience."

- Even though in the above video it is suggested that the brain put together all the information from the "previous static frames," that is true only to a certain extent.
- The brain puts together the individual frames, but without actual "memories," it is impossible to get the details about what is seen.
- We not only "see" the video, but we also RECOGNIZE what is seen (we identify a given actor, we can even remember previous movies with that actor, we KNOW all about the scenes in the background, etc); to have all that information instantly available to the brain is not possible. This is a point that needs a lot of thought.
- What happens, according to Abhidhamma, is that the brain periodically sends packets of acquired data put together by the cortex in the brain to the hadaya vatthu (the seat of the mind.) Citta vith $h$ arise in hadaya vatthu accepting that information from the brain, and it is the mind that does all the compiling (with the help of the manasikāra and cetanā cetasika.) That is how we EXPERIENCE any sensory input.
- For those who are interested in more details, see, "Citta and Cetasika - How Viññāna (Consciousness) Arises."

3. When the mind analyzes those packets of information sent by the brain with citt $\bar{a}$, it generates feelings (vedan $\bar{a}$ ), perception (sañña), and follow-up thoughts (viññanna); if the mind likes/dislikes that sense input it may decide to act on it by generating sañkhāra.

- Thus we can see that depending on the nature of the sensory input, the mind will generate a "packet" of vedanā (i.e., vedanākkhandha), a "packet" of sañña (saññākkhandha), a "packet" of sañkhāra (sañkhārakkhandha), a "packet" of viññāna (viññānakkhandha), in addition to the rūpakkhandha that was involved in the sensory input. All these five khandhā are generated within the same series of citta.


## Our Experience is Stored in Those Khandhā

1. Thus, our experiences are stored in five types of "heaps" (rūpa, vedanā, sañ̃̄̄̄, sañkhāra, viñ̃̄āna) in the mental plane (mano loka). Some of these "clips" or "packets" from those five heaps or aggregates can be recalled and played back in our minds just like a movie is played on a screen. When we do that, we can recall that particular experience with sights, sounds, etc.

- It is the sum of all such packets of a given kind called a khandha, for example, a rūpakkhandha. All these are memories of what we see, hear, smell, taste, touch, and think.
- The ability to recall past experiences, we call memory. Some have better memories than others. Some people can "playback" basically one's life day-by-day for many years into the past; see, "Recent Evidence for Unbroken Memory Records (HSAM)." It is amazing to see how much they can recall.
- Yet, one can recall not only memories from this life, but also from past lives by developing abhiñ $\tilde{a} \bar{a}$ powers. Thus the Buddha Gotama vividly described the scene, eons ago, when the Buddha Dīpañkara stated that he was to become a Buddha in the future.
- But let us get back to the main discussion.

2. The brain analyzes multiple sense inputs of different kinds in a second. When we watch a movie, we see the picture, hear the sounds, and if we are eating popcorn we can smell and taste popcorn too; see, "What is a Thought?." Even if you are unfamiliar with Abhidhamma, you can get a good idea of what happens by reading that post. Just try to get the overall picture of what happens instead of trying to analyze in detail.

- Thus our perception of an object is due to the sum of many thoughts (citt $\bar{a})$ that arise per second. And each citta has "embedded in it", our feelings (vedanā), perceptions (sañña), our decisions on how to act (sañkhāra), and our overall sense experience (viññanna). In the case of a visual, auditory, ... event, we also have the corresponding "imprints of them" in our mind.
- In other words, all our sensory experiences can be described by five heaps or khandhas. The totality of our experience or "our world" is panca khandha (pañcakkhandha). And it has nothing to do with our physical bodies.
- Thus it is important to understand that "rūpa" can be used in the sense of "matter" and also in the sense of "records of such material rūpa."

3. These mental components are what the Buddha called khandhas. Rūpakkhandha does not include actual material objects, sounds, smells, tastes, or touches. Rather rūpa khandha includes only the mental records or imprints of those sense inputs.

- We continuously accumulate $k h a n d h \bar{a}$ or bundles of heaps of sense imprints during our life. Thus a ru$p a$ $k h a n d h a$ or rupakkhandha (note how the two words were connected by inserting an additional " $k$ ") is not an actual rūpa but our mental images of such $r \bar{u} p a$.
- Similarly, we keep accumulating bundles of vedanā (vedanākkhandha), saññā (saññākkhandha), sañkhāra (sañkhārakkhandha), and viñ̃āṇa (viññānakkhandha).

4. These khandh $\bar{a}$ are all that we have ever experienced, and would like to experience in the future. The five $k h a n d h \bar{a}$ encompass our (changing) identity, and our sense of the whole world out there. They have embedded in them all our past experiences and also future hopes.

- That is why pañcakkhandha (the five aggregates) represent our whole world.
- And these records can go back to beginning-less time! Some people can recall more records than others, but by gradually developing abhiññ̄a powers, one can recall more and more past lives.


## Part 2: Pañcupādānakkhandha - It is All Mental

## Pañcaupādānakkhandha - It is All Mental

January 1, 2016; revised November 2, 2017, June 28, 2019
Rupa and R $\bar{u} p a k k h a n d h a$ are two different things. There are ru$p a$ made up of "physical matter " (suddhatthaka) in the rūpa loka. Rūpakkhandha consists of each person's memories, hopes, and desires for some of the rūpa in the rūpa loka. Since the other four khandha (vedanā, sañ̃n̄̄, sañkhāra, viññāna) are all mental anyway, all five are MENTAL.

1. In the previous post, "Pañcakkhandha or Five Aggregates - A Misinterpreted Concept," we discussed a deeper meaning of the pañca khandha or the five heaps or the five aggregates that define a given living being. Each person's pañca khandha or the "world" is different from another's.

- Of course, in the 31 realms of existence there are rūpa, or material (and energy). But our experiences are all mental (which also has energy). Please read the previous post again if you think rūpakkhandha is material. Rūpakkhandha consists of our thoughts, memories, perceptions, desires, etc. on rūpa that we have experienced, are experiencing now, and hope to experience in the future. We have those "imprints of $r \bar{u} p a$ " in our minds even if we cannot recall all of them.
- We experience the "material world" only at the "present time" (in a citta vithi), then it is gone. We actually experience not a single citta - or even a single citta vīthi - but the overall effect of many citta vithi that run in the blink of an eye.

2. This "overall experience of seeing" within a short time is what we actually call seeing (ditta). Same for hearing (suta). For the other three physical senses (muta), it can be there as long as we are actually experiencing them.

- For example, when we are eating a meal, the sense contact is there until we finish eating. When we have a headache (an actual dukha vedan $\bar{a}$ ) or while getting a massage (an actual sukha vedana $\bar{a}$ ), the sense experience is there for a while.
- But thinking about them (vinnāta) — via the sixth sense, the mind - can be experienced at any time; we can recall a past experience or conjure up an enticing future experience.
- Ditta, suta, muta, vinnata include everything that we experience. They are re-categorized as rūpa, vedanā, saññā, sañkhāra, and viññāna or the five heaps.
- It is not necessary to memorize terms like ditta, suta, muta, vinnata. I am merely naming them to avoid any confusion, since those terms are in the sutt $\bar{a}$. With time, one will remember.

3. Upādāna ("upa" + "ādāna" where "upa" means "close" and "ādāna" means "pull") means "pull and keep close." One tries to pull and keep close only things that one really desires: pañca upādāna khandha or pañcaupādānakkhandha. We can translate the term, pañcaupādānakkhandha, as "five clinging aggregates."

- Thus out of an infinite variety of "things (material and mental)" one has experienced (not only in this life, but in all of existence countless rebirths) - pañcakkhandha -, those that one really have bonding with, and have the desire to "keep close" are pañca upādāna khandha or pañcaupādānakkhandha. It is important to realize that "rūpakkhandha" is mental too; see, "Difference Between Physical Rūpa and Rūpakkhandha." Same for the other four khandhas.
- Thus pañcaupādānakkhandha is what we desire, and is ALL MENTAL too. It is a small fraction of pañcakkhandha.

4. First, let us dig a bit deeper into the concept of pañca khandha (five heaps) or pañcakkhandha. Then one can see connections to other concepts at a deeper level.

- As we recall, the five heaps include everything that one has experienced (rūpa, vedanā, sañña, sañkhāra, viññāna) in the past, one is experiencing right now, and one hopes to experience in the future and in each of these three categories, they can be subdivided into other categories like paneeta (likes) and appaneeta (dislikes); see the previous post.
- Since each person's experience is unique, one's pañcakkhandha is unique, and is different from that of another living being. That is because even if the external rūpa are the same, the mental impressions are different.

5. A new born baby, does not have much of an experience in this life (other than some while in the womb). But he/she still have an infinite things from the past in those five heaps or aggregates.

- As the baby grows, its pañcakkhandha grows each day, adding to the five heaps not only with what is experienced, but also expectations and desires about the future.
- We, of course, remember only a fraction of what is in our pañcakkhandha even from our present life. Each day, we experience many things and forget most of it by the next day.

6. However, some of deeper desires and habits and character remain, sometimes even unknown to us, beneath the surface as our gathi and āsavas (by the way, those will be reflected in the cetasika that automatically arise with our citta). As that baby grows, depending on its parents, friends, and other environmental factors, some of those (good and bad) gathi resurface and even grow.

- This is why each person is good at some things. If one has musical talent from the past lives, that child can flourish in an environment that provides suitable conditions. If that baby grows in a family that does not provide "a musical environment", then that gathi is kept hidden.
- Similarly, one who had the tendency to like alcohol, may be kept out of that habit in a family environment that looks down upon drinking. We can think about zillion other character features that can be suppressed or brought to surface to flourish depending on the environment.
- This is why some people, who have not shown any talent for anything for many years, suddenly "take off and thrive" in a new venture. Stated in another way, one may not realize that "one has upādāna" for certain things, unless exposed to it.
- We all have good and bad things that we have "upādāna" for. We should stay away from bad ones (forcibly if needed to) and find and cultivate good ones. This is why parent and teachers can play a big role in a child's future.
- Eventually, we need to lose "upādāna" for everything, but that comes much later in the Path when one has attained the Anāgāmī stage, or at least the Sakadāgāmī stage of Nibbāna. First we need to lose "upādāna" for the highly immoral activities. At the Sotāpanna stage, one realizes the perils of "upādāna" for only the worst habits that makes one eligible to be born in the apa$y \bar{a}$. It is a gradual process.

7. The tendency to recreate past experiences and future desires need to be clearly distinguished from the ABILITY TO RECALL past experiences. The Buddha was able to recall things that happened trillions of years ago, but did not either enjoy them or had a revulsion to them.

- As we discussed in the section, "Assāda, Ādīnava, Nissarana," kāma (or more precisely kāma rāga) is the tendency to enjoy such mind-made pleasures from the past or future.
- Each person's set of pañca upādāna khandha has embedded in them the certain types of things and events they give priority to, i.e., one's gathi and anusaya. They automatically come out as particular set of cetasika (hate and fearlessness of doing immoral things, for example) in our citta or thoughts.
- Those kāma rāga that correspond to gathi in the apāy $\bar{a}$ can lead to rebirth in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$.
- Rūpa rāga and arūpa rāga are the tendencies to enjoy jhānic pleasures corresponding to rūpa and arūpa realms.

8. Thus now we can see Nibbāna in terms of pañcaupādānakkhandha. As one sheds "upādāna" for gathi corresponding to the apāy $\bar{a}$, higher k $\bar{a} m a ~ l o k a$, and rūpa or arūpa loka successively, one attains the Sotāpanna, Anāgāmī (via Sakadāgāmī stage), and the Arahant stage respectively.

- As one keeps shedding layers of pañcaupādānakkhandha, one proceeds to higher stages of Nibbāna, and upon attaining the Arahant stage loses all "upādāna" and thus pañcaupādānakkhandha. However, the pañcakkhandha remains, and upon the death all of it will stay in the nāma loka as nāma gotta.
- Thus anyone with sufficient abhiññā powers can examine those nāma gotta. That is how the Buddha Gotama described the lives of many previous Buddhas, and we learn about them today.

9. Unless one has attained the Sotāpanna stage, it is possible for "apāya gathi" to come to the surface (as cetasika like greed, shamelessness in doing immoral things, etc in our citta or thoughts), especially under extreme conditions. We all have been in the apāy $\bar{a}$ uncountable times, so it is not something to be speculated; we have had those gathi, and it is possible that they can resurface. This is the danger that we need to realize.

- Even if we manage to avoid such "extreme conditions" in this life because we have been fortunate to be born under good conditions, we have no idea where we will be born in the future. This is why the Buddha said, "..appamadena sampadeta" or "make haste and sort out 'san' or what to do and what not to do."

10. As we mentioned in the beginning, each one's pañcakkhandha is unique. Each has his/her own feelings, perceptions, mental attributes (good and bad), and viññāna regarding any sense event. We make our decisions accordingly. Our character (gathi) is in pañcakkhandha (the way we see and comprehend the world) and even more so in our pañcaupādänakkhandha (our desires for the worldly things).

- And ditṭhi (our world views) is a critical part of both pañcakkhandha and pañcaupādānakkhandha. Our decisions depend critically on our diṭthi. There are many posts at the site on the importance of ditṭhi. The first step to Nibbāna (the Sotāpanna stage) is sammā ditt!hi.
- Unless one comprehends the true nature of this world of 31 realms (anicca, dukkha, anatta), one cannot attain samma dittthi at least to some extent.

11. When one acts with avijja (due to not comprehending the true nature of the world), one does (abhi) sañkhāra, and keeps adding to the pañcaupādānakkhandha.

- When we start with the "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" step, it leads to "upādāna paccayā bhava." Thus according the types of (abhi) sañkhāra one does, one makes "bonding" or "attaches to" certain types of "bhava" or existence.
- Pațicca samuppāda explains how we make bhava according to the level of avijjā (as indicated by our gathi, anusaya, etc) that is embedded in our pañcaupādānakkhandha.
- Thus, one's pañcaupādānakkhandha has embedded in it the "cravings and desires" of oneself, and where one is destined to have rebirths.

12. Therefore, we can see that no matter how we analyze things, they all converge to the same fundamentals. Before we embark on the journey to safety (Nibbāna, or at least the Sotāpanna stage), we need to figure out the "lay of the land." That is anicca, dukkha, anatta, the nature of this world.

- Only then that our minds will willingly give up the ditṭhis or wrong views.
- Only then that our minds will see the dangers of sense pleasures, starting at the excess levels of kāma chanda and $v y \bar{a} p \bar{a} d a$, which could lead to rebirth in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$.
- If you could not grasp everything, that is fine. Come back and read the post again later, especially after reading other relevant posts. Each time you read, you may be able to grasp something that was not unclear. It happens to me all the time. When the minds starts grasping at least partly, it will become much easier.

13. It is very important to see the difference between the "physical world" which is made of "satara mah $\bar{a}$ bhūta" and the pañcakkhandha which is all mental.

- The physical world out there is the same for all of us. But our mental impressions of it (pañcakkhandha) are different for each of us. It is easy to see that our feelings, perceptions, and sañkhāra that we create upon seeing the same person are different.
- Our pañcaupādānakkhandha, or the fraction of the pañcakkhandha that we have attachment for, is even more personal, unique for each person.


### 3.8 Nāma \& Rūpa to Nāmarūpa

May 26, 2017; revised October 3, 2022
This important subsection will discuss the link between mind ( $n \bar{a} m a$ ) and matter ( $r \bar{u} p a$ ). These are deeper analyses. The "mind to matter" transition is described in sequence.

- Kamma Viññāna is not strictly mental and is responsible for the Nāmarūpa Formation leading to the arising of rūpa.


## Mental Aggregates (Except Kamma Viñãāna)

- Vedanā - What It Really Means (Being replaced with Vedanā and Samphassa-Jā-Vedanā - More Than Just Feelings)
- Does Bodily Pain Arise Only Due to Kamma Vipāka?
- Sañ̃ña - What It Really Means
- Future Suffering - Why It Arises
- Vipallāsa (Ditthi, Sañ̃ña, Citta) Affect Sañkhāra
- Sañkhāra - What It Really Means


## Kamma Viññāna

- Viñ̃̃āna - What It Really Means
- Kamma Viññāna - Link Between Mind and Matter
- Anidassana Viññāna - What It Really Means


## Nāmarūpa Formation

- Kamma Viñ̃̃āna and Nāmarūpa Pariccheda Ñāna


## Rūpa Aggregate

- What are rūpa? - Dhammā are rūpa too!


### 3.8.1 Mental Aggregates

What is Saññā (Perception)?

- Sañ̃̃̄a - What It Really Means
- Future Suffering - Why It Arises
- Vipallāsa (Ditthi, Saññā, Citta) Affect Sañkhāra

What Is Vedanā (Feelings)?

- Vedanā - What It Really Means

What Are Saṅkhāra (Mental Formations)?

- Sañkhāra - What It Really Means


### 3.8.1.1 What is Saññ̄ā (Perception)?

Saññā - What It Really Means

## Vipallāsa (Ditthi, Saññā, Citta) Affect Sañkhāra

### 3.8.1.1 Saññā - What It Really Means

## December 31, 2017; revised August 22, 2019; November 1, 2021

1. Saññā is usually translated to English as "perception" and sometimes as "recognition"; it is both and more! Sañ̃̃̄ $\bar{a}$ has a much deeper meaning and, at the same time, a more straightforward definition.

- Sañ̃̄̄ $\bar{a}$ is pronounced "sangnā" and gives an encoded meaning in Pāli and Sinhala with that pronunciation (click to play the audio):


## WebLink: Listen to the Pāli word "sañ̃̃ā"

- It means "sign" or even closer, "the embedded message." That latter expresses it well since it is how one "instantaneously gets the idea of what is meant by an external signal."

2. When we understand what is meant by sañ $\tilde{n} \bar{a}$, we can clarify many things, including how humans can communicate with beings in other realms via sañ̃̃ $\bar{a}$.

- Sa $\tilde{n} \tilde{n} \bar{a}$ is the "universal language." To give an analogy: if there is a sign that reads, "winding road ahead," only those who know English can understand what that sign says.
- But those universal signs - showing a picture of a winding road — provide the "sañña" that the road ahead will be curvy.

- A second example (on the right above) shows a sign with a hand. That conveys the "sañña" to stop.

3. At the fundamental level, sañ̃̃ā means "recognition" of an object, person, or concept; getting "full comprehension" of what it is AND what it means.

- Whether one says "fire" in English or "ginna" in Sinhala or "feu" in French, that will convey the same idea. However, a person MUST know how to associate any of those words with "fire." That is the sañ̃̃̄a that comes to one's mind when one hears either the word "fire," "ginna," or "feu."
- If a person does not speak those three languages, those words do not mean anything. However, with the following picture, anyone will have the idea that it is about a fire or a flame:


4. Therefore, sañ̃̄̄̄a is the "full picture that comes to mind instantaneously."

- When we think about a fire, that "sense of what a fire is" arises automatically. The mind can visualize a fire.
- Therefore, regardless of the language, one speaks, everyone who has seen a fire generates the same feeling about a fire in one's mind. That is a crucial point to contemplate and will be valuable in comprehending the "anicca sañña."

5. Our mental body (gandhabba) can register only pure saññā. When two gandhabbā are communicating, they cannot use words OR pictures. So, the process is much simpler. What one gandhabba X thinks about what to say to gandhabba Y, that message or saññā is automatically transmitted to Y, if Y points attention to X .

- When gandhabba X wants to see what is happening at a given location, it just needs to point to that direction and see that location. We will not discuss the details here, but essential point is that a gandhabba does not "see" things using light as we do.
- In the same way, a gandhabba does not hear using an ear. Sound waves propagating through the air are not needed.
- That is how most beings - who don't have physical bodies like us - communicate and interact with the external world, as emphasized briefly in the previous post, "Our Mental Body - Gandhabba."
- When someone gets to the fourth $j h \bar{a} n a$ and attains $a b h i n ̃ \tilde{n} \bar{a}$ powers, they will be able to see and hear without eyes and ears. These capabilities are dibba cakkhu or "divine eye" and dibba sota or "divine ear." One will be using one's own mental body (gandhabba). Then seeing and hearing are not limited to short distances.

6. However, when trapped inside a physical body, a gandhabba does not have those capabilities. Then one needs to rely on the sensory faculties located in the physical body (physical eyes, ear, etc.) to capture that information. The brain converts those signals to "sañ̃̃ $\bar{a}$ " and transmits them to the gandhabba inside.

- If you are not clear on this point, please re-read the previous post, "Our Mental Body - Gandhabba."
- In that post, we compared a gandhabba trapped in a physical body to a human operator enclosed in a military tank. That is a good analogy.

7. At conception, the gandhabba takes hold of a single cell called a zygote formed by the union of a mother and a father. That single cell grows to a baby inside the womb, and a grown adult after birth. See "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception."

- In an average human, the physical body shields the gandhabba. Thus, it cannot receive direct saññā. Pictures and sounds come through the eyes and ears not as sañ $\tilde{n} \bar{a}$ but as video and audio signals. Those signals need to be converted to sañña that the gandhabba can grasp.
- When a baby grows, the eyes and ears (as well as nose, tongue, and body) need to develop to capture those sensory inputs. The brain also needs to build the circuitry for converting that information to a "sañña" that can be transferred to the gandhabba to grasp what object, person, or concept it is.
- Once those capabilities develop, the signal transmission goes from the brain to the hadaya vatthu located close to the heart via "kirana" or in the language of modern science electromagnetic waves. That was discussed briefly in the post, "Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya) - Introduction."

8. When a baby is growing up, it learns to associate words and pictures with each object, person, concept that it experiences. That requires many parts of the brain. That is why it takes a newborn baby several years to become fully functional in the world.

- So, when a person hears someone yelling "fire," the brain matches that with a visual of a fire, converts it to the correct "saññ̄" of a fire, and transmits that signal to the gandhabba.
- The association of a word with its meaning happens in the brain (which is acting like a computer). Then only the meaning is conveyed to the gandhabba, where thoughts arise.
- As I have discussed in the posts on the gandhabba, a human gandhabba is born at a cuti-patisandhi moment. It could have a lifetime thousands of years. It could be born many times with a physical human body. See, "Bhava and Jāti - States of Existence and Births Therein."

9. If the relevant parts of the brain are damaged later in one's life, one may not be able to recognize one's surroundings. That is what happens to people with Alzheimer's disease.

- When a person gets old, the brain starts degrading, and then again, one's ability to interact with the external world could become limited.
- When that person dies, the gandhabba comes out of the dead body if there is leftover kammic energy for the human bhava. When a suitable womb becomes available, it can start another human body. That is how there can be several births during a given human bhava.

10. Now, we move to the next level of sañña $\bar{a}$, which is more than just recognition. For example, when two people hear the name of a person X, they will have the picture of that person (or "sañ̃̄ $\bar{a} ")$ coming to their mind automatically. But not only that, they would register some qualities that they had attached to that person through their interactions with X. One may say. "It is my Dad. I love him so much." Another would say, "Oh, he is a crook."

- Then based on that sañña $\bar{a}$, each will generate different feelings (vedana $\bar{a}$ ) about X . That could lead to creating good or bad thoughts (mano sañkhāra) automatically. If one keeps thinking about X some more, one will be consciously generate more thoughts about X , and may even speak out (vaci sañkhāra). If the feelings get strong, kāya sañkhāra may arise (leading to bodily actions.)
- Therefore, based on the same thought object, different people can get different sañ̃̃̄̄ and thus can respond differently.

11. In general, how we make decisions about interacting with others or responding to external stimuli depends on our "world views." That is what is called "ditthi" in Buddha Dhamma.

- When one has wrong world views or ditthis, one could make the bad decisions based on "distorted saññā."
- When one's mind is free of greed, hate, and ignorance, it is easier to sort out wrong ditthis. The meanings of greed and hatred are apparent. Ignorance here is ignorance about the message of the Buddha. That message, of course, can be grasped only in stages.
- First, it is crucial to realize that one MUST live a moral life and follow that mundane Eightfold Path by abstaining from dasa akusala as much as possible.
- Then it will become easier to cultivate the "anicca sañ̃ña," start grasping the Tilakkhaṇa and become a Sotāpanna. We will discuss the anicca saññā in upcoming posts.


### 3.8.1. <br> Future Suffering - Why It Arises

## January 22, 2017; revised July 19, 2022

In the subsection "Living Dhamma - Fundamentals," we mentioned that there are two types of suffering that can be eliminated according to Buddha Dhamma. In that subsection, we discussed and explained how some suffering in this life could be stopped from arising. With this post, we will start a discussion on the second type suffering associated with future rebirths - which is even more important - can be stopped from arising.

1. Let us first review the existing ideas from other religions and philosophies. First, let us discuss the dominant religious view.

- Most major religions have a worldview based on three "realms" of existence: the human realm, the heavenly realm, and hell. If one lives according to the religious teachings, one will be happy in the heaven forever; if not, one will suffer in hell forever.
- It does not explain how one is born into the human realm. It could be that the Creator created Adam and Eve, and their descendants are just born. In this view, the sentient beings in this world started off at just two and will grow with time. How is that possible?
- In Hinduism, the "eternal realm of happiness" is not heaven but the Brahma realm (there is only one, where one merges with Mahā Brahma). Also, there is no permanent hell, as I understand.

2. In Christianity, based on whether one lives according to the "particular religious teachings" or not, one will be born in heaven or hell FOREVER.

- Of course, these religious teachings will vary from one religion to another.
- Furthermore, even within one religion, they can be changed by a decree from the "head of the Church."
- Since all those making those decisions are human, It seems illogical that they can decide on their fate.

3. Turning to philosophy, many people today - especially those who believe that the above religious reasoning is illogical - take the materialistic view that one is born out of inert matter only to die and be recycled back to the Earth. They are the so-called atheists.

- In this case, the logic would say that one could live immorally since immoral actions to benefit oneself would not have consequences.
- Still, most who belong to this category live moral lives. They have an innate feeling that morality must be adhered to, but cannot quite explain why.

4. I have discussed the above points in several posts:

- On religion, see "The Language of God" by Francis Collins" and "What Does Buddha Dhamma Say about Creator, Satan, Angels, and Demons?."
- On the belief in a materialistic view, see "Why Does the World Exist?" by Jim Holt" and "Waking Up" by Sam Harris."
- In the commonly-used sense of the word "religion" Buddha Dhamma is not a religion; see "Is Buddha Dhamma (Buddhism) a Religion?" and "What is Unique in Buddha Dhamma?."
- I would welcome any comments/criticisms on my points above. I can go into more details if needed, and I believe the above points cannot be logically refuted.

5. Buddha Dhamma (true and pure Buddhism) does not belong to the above two categories.

- The complex world view of Buddha Dhamma is explained in the subsection "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma." Still, a brief introduction is in the post, "What Reincarnates? - Concept of a Lifestream."
- Briefly, one is born in one of 31 realms of existence. From the beginning-less time, we all have been undergoing this rebirth process. But most times, we are born in the lower four realms filled with suffering; thus, the long-term solution is to stop the rebirth process. This is done in four steps, and at the Arahant stage, one stops the rebirth process.
- This is not a nihilistic or pessimistic view; see "Nibbāna "Exists", but Not in This World."

6. So, that is the background for our discussion. Let us discuss how one can get to Nibbāna or stop future suffering.

- Some Buddhists believe that Nibbāna can be attained by living a moral life and doing meritorious deeds (puñña kamma).
- We will now discuss why just living a moral life and doing puñña kamma will not lead to Nibbāna, even though they are necessary parts of the process.

7. We are born in one of the 31 realms due to six root causes (hethu): lobha, dosa, moha and alobha, adosa, and amoha. This categorization can be used to look at births in different realms in another way.

- Deeds (kamma) done with lobha, dosa, moha lead to rebirth in the apāy $\bar{a}$ (lowest 4 realms). For these deeds, moha is always present with either lobha (pretha and asura realms births) or dosa (niraya or the lowest realm). Births in the animal realms can be due to either.
- Those deeds are done with one or more alobha, adosa, or amoha, leading to rebirth in the higher realms, starting with the human realm.

8. As discussed, for example in the Dutiyasikkhāpada Sutta (AN 4.236), a verse that summarizes the results of meritorious deeds and immoral deeds is: "Atthi, bhikkhave, kammaì kaṇhaì kaṇha vipākaì; kammaì sukkaì sukka vipākaín.."

Here the word kanhha means bad or dark. Sukka means pure or white.

- So, the word "kanhaim" in the above verse refers to immoral deeds done with lobha, dosa, moha and other asobhana cetasika. "Sukkaì" implies meritorious deeds done with alobha, adosa, amoha, and other sobhana cetasika.
- How different types of cetasika contribute to either defile or purify our minds is discussed in the subsection, "Living Dhamma - Fundamentals."

9. In this beginning-less rebirth process, this is how we have been born in almost all of the 31 realms because we keep accumulating both kaṇha vipāka and sukka vipāka.

- Furthermore, we have accumulated enough of both kinds to bring about many, many future births in all those realms.
- Even if we do not commit a single kanha vipāka in this life, we have done enough of them in the past to bring about births in the apāy $\bar{a}$ in the future. This is a point that not many people understand. Many people have said, "I don't harm anyone, so I hope to get a good rebirth." Unfortunately, they are wrong.

10. Puñña kamma with "sukka vipāka" leads to two important results in this and future lives that make suitable conditions for attaining Nibbāna:

- Rebirth in the "good realms" (human realm and above). Attaining Nibbāna - or even working towards it - is possible only in the good realms, especially in the human realm.
- If done correctly, merits acquired through puñ̃̃a kamma can lead to a long life (āyusa), flawless sense faculties (vanna), healthy life without much physical suffering (sukha), and necessary resources to live without hardships (bala). These benefits make suitable conditions for one to focus on attaining Nibbāna. For example, if one is sick or is very poor, it is not easy to follow the Path.

11. On the other hand, "kaṇha vipāka" or results of immoral deeds lead to births in the ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$ where the suffering is intense.

- We have been born in the human realm due to a good upapatthi sukka vipāka.
- But in this unique human realm one is subject to both kaṇha vipāka and sukka vipāka as pavutti kamma vipāka that bring results during the lifetime.
- The way those six root causes lead to rebirths among the 31 realms is discussed in "Kilesa - Relationship To Akusala, Kusala, And Puñña Kamma."

12. Births in the human realm could be a tihethuka ("ti" + hethu," meaning all three of alobha, adosa, amoha), dvihethuka ("dvi" + hethu," meaning alobha and adosa), or ahethuka.

- Those humans with tihethuka births can attain magga phala in this life if they strive enough.
- Those with dvihethuka births cannot attain magga phala in this life. Since they do not have the amoha root cause, their wisdom level (pañ̃̄ $\bar{a}$ ) cannot grow beyond a certain point. However, they can do puñña kamma and be eligible to be reborn a human with a tihethuka birth in future lives.
- Even though the word ahethuka means "without causes", here it means a weak version of dvihethuka. Here ahethuka means "without sufficiently good hethu" to be able to follow the Path. They are born with mental deficiencies.

13. It is very important to realize that no one (at present) can distinguish between tihethuka and dvihethuka births. On the surface, both types appear the same. For example, there could be people with higher education who are dvihethuka, and some with no education who are tihethuka.

- So, the thing to do is to strive to the best of one's ability. No matter whether one is tihethuka or dvihethuka, the efforts will pay off in the long run. Furthermore, being tihethuka does not take one automatically to Nibbāna; one has to strive.
- Furthermore, no one should be discouraged and believe they are dvihethuka, if the efforts are not paying off quickly. One prominent example in the Tipitaka is the story about the Culapanthaka Thero. He almost disrobed because he could not even memorize a single gätha after trying hard for months. But with Buddha's help, he was able to attain Arahanthood in a day, and even developed abhiñ̃̄̄̄ powers: "WebLink: suttacentral: Cūlapanthaka."

14. Therefore, by thinking good thoughts, doing good deeds, and by living a moral life, we can improve our chances (but not guarantee) of a good future rebirth. In fact, this is the goal of all major religions (to be born in heaven and live there forever).

- However, nothing in this world of 31 realms is everlasting. Furthermore, we do not have control over where we will be born in the next life, regardless of how well we live this life.
- It is important to realize that one or more past bad deeds (kamma vipāka) may still lead to a bad rebirth, and it will be very difficult to again get a good rebirth.
- This is one aspect of the anicca nature, the futility of believing that there is happiness to be achieved somewhere in this world.
- The opposite belief that somehow happiness is to be achieved somewhere in this world gives rise to deeply-embedded nicca sañña (a sense of hope) in our minds.
- One cannot avoid future suffering until one comprehends first that immoral deeds with the nicca saññ̄ $\bar{a}$ lead to kaṇha vipāka and will bring much suffering. Even though moral deeds with the nicca saññā lead to sukka vipāka with happiness, one cannot avoid immoral deeds in the long run, BECAUSE OF this nicca saññā.

15. Therefore, until we change our wrong view (and the corresponding wrong perception or sañña $\overline{\text { }}$ ) that there is happiness to be had in this world.

- This is the unique message of the Buddha. We will discuss how we can get rid of this nicca saññā and cultivate the anicca sañña $\bar{a}$ in the next post.


### 3.8.1.1 Vipallāsa (Ditṭhi, Saññā, Citta) Affect Sañkhāra

January 28, 2017; re-written October 15, 2019; revised January 20, 2021 (\#13); added \#14 March 9, 2022; June 23, 2022

The word vipallāsa (used in plural) means "confusion." One gets confused because one has the wrong views (ditthi). That leads to distorted perceptions (sañña), which affect the way one thinks (citta). That is how we generate (abhi)sañkhāra that leads to future suffering. This is just another way to analyze the origin of suffering.

- You may want to read the previous posts on saññ̄ā and sañkhāra. See, "Sañ̃ña - What It Really Means" and "Sańkhāra - What It Really Means."
- This post is a re-write of an old post, "Ditṭhi, Saññ̄ā, and Sañkhāra - How They Relate."


## Wrong Views Come First

1. One's perceptions (saññ̄a) are closely associated with one's views (ditṭhi), and both of those affect how we think (citta), and generate sañkhāra.

Most of our world views are based on ideas from our families, friends, and religions that we are born into. Those inputs play a major role in our world views. In turn, they mold our perceptions and how we think and thus generate sañkhāra.

- It is not possible to get rid of the wrong or distorted perceptions (viparīta sañña) without getting rid of the erroneous views (micchā dittthi or simply dittthi). [viparīta : [adj.] reversed; changed; wrong.]
- Some dominant world views must be removed before one can even hope to get an idea about anicca saññā. We will discuss some of these critical factors first.


## Wrong Views on Heaven, Hell, and Human Realms

2. Most people believe in eternal heaven after death. That perception is based on the world view of three "major categories or realms." Those are hell, the human world, and heaven. This worldview and the corresponding perception of sañña come from families taught that worldview through generations via religious teachings.

- That world view also says that a Creator created the Earth. That Creator resides in the heavens, and those who live by those teachings will join the Creator. Those who disobey those teachings are supposed to be born in hell for eternity.
- Even though modern science rejects that cosmic worldview, most people still go by that wrong view. The heavens comprise trillions of planetary systems, just like our Solar system.
- It is astonishing to see that even some prominent scientists are willing to disregard scientific facts. They believe (i.e., have the perception) that a Creator created the Earth and the whole universe. I am not sure where they think that Creator resides among those trillions of star systems.


## Wrong Views About Animals

3. Another example is killing animals for sport, which includes fishing. That is based on the view that animals are not sentient and were created by the Creator for human consumption. That is such an ingrained ditt thi that many people who live otherwise moral lives fail to see the suffering endured by these animals.

- While fish cannot cry out, the severe pain felt by a wriggling fish caught on a hook is quite apparent. It is feeling the pain in the mouth due to the hook. It is also suffering due to a lack of oxygen since it cannot breathe as we do.
- Higher animals are capable of showing their pain, among other emotions. Anyone who has a pet dog or cat knows that they do have emotions as we do.
- But we tend to disregard such easy-to-see things because of our ditt $h \overline{\text {. }}$. The underlying reason is the religious view that animals are here for our consumption.

4. However, we all have had animal births and deva and Brahma births. Comprehension of this fact can help change one's perception of animals.

- However, even in Buddhist countries, there are fishing villages where fishing is the livelihood of many who have done it for many generations.
- Some may say that those people need to make a living to sustain their families. But that argument is no better than the argument that a drug addict needs to inhale another dose to get through the day: the longterm consequences are infinitely worse.
- It is customary for the older generations to teach their children or grandchildren how to fish or hunt animals for sport. That custom passes through generations.
- Still, we cannot equate animal lives to human lives, as some animal rights activists believe. When one comprehends Buddha's Dhamma, one can avoid going to either extreme.


## Wrong Views Lead to Wrong Perceptions (Sañ̃ña)

5. The above are several prominent examples of major micchā ditthi. One can remove distorted perceptions (viparita sañ̃̄̄̄) by removing such wrong views (micchā diṭthi). Learning Buddha Dhamma helps get rid of wrong views.

- The key reason that those dittthi propagate through generations is the inability to "breakthrough" such ingrained beliefs by contemplating on facts.

6. Another wrong view (and hence the wrong perception) that we have is about the high value placed on our physical bodies' "beautification." This perception is predominant in Western countries but is growing in other countries.

- People spend billions of dollars a year trying to make their physical bodies "more beautiful." They don't realize - or don't even contemplate - the following fact. No matter how much money one can spend, one's body will not stay in peak condition for too long.
- That wrong perception leads to an enhanced level of suffering at old age when one's body becomes frail and not so appealing. That can lead to severe depression.
- For those who have comprehended the anicca nature, old age is a fact of life. While the brain is working optimally, one needs to spend one's "peak years" not trying to beautify one's body but making progress on the Path. When the body starts degrading at old age, the brain deteriorates. So, one must exercise and eat healthy to keep both the body and the brain in good condition as long as possible.
- That happens to everyone, regardless of how powerful or wealthy they are. At President Trump's inauguration, this was quite obvious by looking at the ex-Presidents.
- Think about any famous, beautiful, or wealthy person who has grown old to convince the truth of this anicca nature.


## Characteristics of Anything (Sañkhata) In This World

7. Anything in this world - living or inert - has that anicca nature. A sañkhata is born (uppāda) and destroyed (vaya.) In between it is in existence but is still subjected to unexpected change (thitassa añ̃athattaim.) Those are the three stages of a sañkhata; see, for example, "WebLink: suttacentral: Ānanda Sutta (SN 22.37)."

- Some things in this world (sañkhata) last a short time: for example, a fly or a flower. Other things can last for tens of years: for example, humans or a car. Some things/beings live much longer: for example, a Brahma or a star system like our Solar system.
- But eventually, anything in this world - a sañkhata - decays and is destroyed at some point.
- Even though those things that reach the peak condition can provide/enjoy sense pleasures, they do not last long.
- The overall effect or the net effect is suffering when one considers the rebirths in the 31 realms in the long term.


## Three Types of Vipallāsa (Confusions)

8. The Buddha stated that there are four types of vipallāsa or distortions nicca, sukha, atta, and subha. See, WebLink: suttacentral: Vipallāsa Sutta (AN 4.49). We have discussed the first three in detail on this website. Asubha (not fruitful) is the opposite of subha (useful or beneficial).

- No matter how appealing those sense pleasures or sense objects can be, they all make one get trapped in the rebirth process. That is why they are asubha.
- The three types of vipallāsa are diṭthi vipallāsa, saññā vipallāsa, and citta vipallāsa.
- Those are the distortions associated with views, perceptions, and the way we think. We think (and speak and act) with sañkhāra, and especially puñ̃̃a abhisañkhāra and apuñña abhisañkhāra; see, "Sañkhāra - What It Really Means."


## Confusion About a Nicca Nature Is the Key - They Lead to Sañkhāra

9. Let us consider the dittthi, saññ̄a, and citta vipallāsa about the anicca nature as an example.

- We have the wrong view that things in this world have nicca nature, i.e., that they can provide happiness. That is the ditṭhi vipalläsa about the actual anicca nature.
- Because of this wrong view, we develop the sañ̃̄̄a vipallāsa about the anicca nature of things: We tend to perceive (sañ̃̃̄a) that worldly things can provide happiness.
- We tend to think (citta) that things in this world can provide us with happiness because of the wrong perception. Thus we do (abhi) sañkhāra that prolong the rebirth process for puñña abhisañkhāra. Even worse, they make one suffer mightily in the future rebirths through apuñ̃̃a abhisañkhāra.
- Therefore, we constantly generate mano sañkhāra (automatic thoughts about worldly sense objects), vacī sañkhāra (conscious thoughts or speech), and act accordingly (kāya sañkhāra).


## Sañkhāra Lead to Future Suffering

10. All three types of such sañkhāra lead to suffering in this life and in future rebirths. These are the sañkhāra that arise due to $a v i j j \bar{a}$ (not realizing the true nature of this world): "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra."

Those sañkhāra eventually lead to bhava and jāti via Pațicca Samuppāda. Here jāti means both future rebirths and "births during this life," see, "Suffering in This Life and Paticca Samuppāda."

- That is why it is essential first to learn Dhamma and first realize that suffering in this life can arise due to our conscious thoughts and actions. Not only that, but that suffering CAN BE stopped from arising.
- Once one comprehends this fact and lives accordingly, one can experience the nirāmisa sukha when one removes this type of suffering.
- Furthermore, this helps one build true faith (saddhā) in Buddha Dhamma. It will convince one of the truth about the much worse type of suffering in future rebirths.
- More details in the first few subsections in the "Living Dhamma" section.

11. At that stage, one may comprehend the anicca nature of the rebirth process. The truth of the rebirth process is that nowhere in the 31 realms can one find happiness.

- Moreover, one will "see" that unimaginable suffering levels are present in the lowest four realms (apāyā). That will help get rid of the diṭthi vipallāsa about dukkha. Instead of the wrong view that there is happiness in human, deva, or Brahma realms, one will "see" that any pleasure to be had is only temporary. Furthermore, there is much more suffering inevitable if one stays in the rebirth process.
- One will also "see" that one is genuinely helpless if stayed in this rebirth process (samisāra). Thus one will get rid of ditṭhi vipallāsa (that this world is of atta nature) and truly "see" the "anatta nature."
- One will also "see" that - in the long run - things in this world are not subha, i.e., they are not beneficial or fruitful. Attachment to anything in this world will lead to suffering in the long run. Thus a Sotāpanna will have removed the diṭthi vipallāsa "distorted views" about subha nature as well.
- That is how one gets rid of diṭthi vipallāsa. That leads to Nibbāna via dissociating from the material world, see, "Nibbāna."


## Saññā Vipallāsa

12. Saññā (pronounced "sangnā") comes from "san" + "gnāna," which means "wisdom" about "san." But regular humans have only viparīta sañ̃ña or saññā vipallāsa: they do not see "san" as bad.

- Removal of saññā vipallāsa requires getting rid of ditṭhi vipallāsa which in turn requires attaining samm $\bar{a}$ ditṭhi. Then, one will perceive the benefits or the harm in each speech or action that one is about to make.
- When one has the right vision and perceives things as they are, one will start thinking along those lines. Then one will begin removing citta vipallāsa.


## Removal of Vipallāsa

13. For completion, we will end with the following technical details. All three types of vipallāsa about anicca and anatta disappear at the Sotāpanna stage. However, only the diṭthi vipallāsa about dukkha and asubha goes away. [See Ps 1.8 Treatise of Distortions - Vipallāsakathā]

- That is why even though a Sotāpanna can "see" that things in this world can eventually lead to only suffering, he/she will still tend to enjoy sense pleasures. That is due to the remaining sañña and citta vipallāsa about dukkha and asubha. However, those do not involve apāyagāmi deeds.
- Sañ̃ñ vipallāsa about dukkha and asubha is lessened at the Sakadāgāmi stage are completely removed at the Anāgāmi stage. Even though an Anāgāmi has removed the desire for sense pleasures in the kāma loka, he/she will still tend to enjoy jhānic pleasures.
- All vipallāsa go away entirely only at the Arahant stage. An Arahant does not make apuñña abhisañkhāra that leads to heat (or tāpa) in mind and makes one eligible to be born in the apāy $\bar{a}$. He does not make puñña abhisañkhāra that make one eligible to be born in the "good realms" either. He makes only kammically neutral sañkhāra or kiriya to maintain life until Parinibbāna or death.

14. Removal of saññā and citta vipallāsa respectively at the Anāgāmi and Arahant stages can be understood as follows. Saññā and citta vipallāsa regarding sukha and subha arise due to "kāma."

- Most apāyagāmi deeds are done with kāmacchanda n̄̄varaṇa "covering a mind," and it is removed at the Sotāpanna stage. Kāmacchanda appears when "kāma" - craving for sensual pleasures optimizes and "makes one blind."
- However, a Sotāpanna has "kāma rāga" meaning a Sotāpanna still craves sensual pleasures.
- An Anāgāmi has removed "kāma rāga," and thus, saññ̄a vipallāsa for sukha and subha.
- It is only at the Arahant stage that even a trace of vipallāsa for kāma is removed with the removal of all "citta vipallāsa." This is explained in, "WebLink: suttacentral: Samāropanahāra vibhañga (Ne 19)." [Read in this book (with English translation) Samāropanahāra vibhañga (Ne 19)]
- The following charts provide a summary (much merits to Seng Kiat Ng for the charts and the above link):

| Characteristics | anicca | dukkha | anattā | asubha |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | nicca | sukha | attā | subha |
| Sañ̃̄ā Vipallāsa | Sotāpatti | Anāgāmi | Sotāpatti | Anāgāmi |
| Citta Vipallāsa | Sotāpatti | Arahatta | Sotāpatti | Arahatta |
| Dițthi Vipallāsa | Sotāpatti | Sotāpatti | Sotāpatti | Sotāpatti |


| Vipallāsa abandonment by | tanh $\bar{a}$ |  | ditthi |  |
| ---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Vipallāsa abandonment by | kāya | vedanā | citta | dhammā |
| Characteristics | asubha | dukkha | anicca | anatt $\bar{a}$ |
| Abandonment of | subha | sukha | nicca | attā |
|  | Anāgāmi | Anāgāmi | Sotāpatti | Sotāpatti |
| Citta Vipallāsa | Arahatta | Arahatta | Sotāpatti | Sotāpatti |
| Ditṭhi Vipallāsa | Sotāpatti | Sotāpatti | Sotāpatti | Sotāpatti |

## ${ }^{\text {3.8.1.1 }}$ Ps 1.8 Treatise of Distortions - Vipallāsakathā <br> .3.1

Paṭisambhidāmagga<br>1 Mahāvagga

Ps 1.8 Treatise of Distortions - Vipallāsakathā

## 1.1 <br> [Same as] the previous origin (cause).

Purimanidānaì.
1.2
'Bhikkhus, there are these four perversions of perception, perversions of thought, perversions of view.
"Cattārome, bhikkhave, saññāvipallāsā cittavipallāsā diṭthivipallāsā.
1.3

What four?
Katame cattāro?
1.4

Bhikkhus, [seeing] what is not getting according to desire impermanent as getting according to desire permanent is a perversion of perception, a perversion of thought, a perversion of view.
Anicce, bhikkhave, niccanti saññāvipallāso cittavipallāso diṭthivipallāso.
1.5
[Seeing] the painful as pleasant is a perversion of perception, a perversion of thought, a perversion of view.
Dukkhe, bhikkhave, sukhanti saññāvipallāso cittavipallāso diṭthivipallāso.
1.6
[Seeing] what is helpless/not in control net self as protection/in control self is a perversion of perception, a perversion of thought, a perversion of view.
Anattani, bhikkhave, attāti saññāvipallāso cittavipallāso diṭthivipallāso.
1.7
[Seeing] the unfruitful foul as fruitful beatift is a perversion of perception, a perversion of thought, a perversion of view.
Asubhe, bhikkhave, subhanti saññāvipallāso cittavipallāso ditṭhivipallāso.
1.8

These, bhikkhus, are the four perversions of perception, perversions of thought, perversions of view.
Ime kho, bhikkhave, cattāro sañ̃n̄avipallāsā cittavipallāsā ditṭhivipallāsā.
2.1
'Bhikkhus, there are these four non-perversions of perception, non-perversions of thought, non-perversions of view.
Cattārome, bhikkhave, nasaññāvipallāsā nacittavipallāsā nadiṭthivipallāsā.
2.2

What four?
Katame cattāro?
2.3

Bhikkhus, [seeing] what is not getting according to desire impermanent as not getting according to desire a mermanent is a non-perversion of perception, a non-perversion of thought, a non-perversion of view.
Anicce, bhikkhave, aniccanti nasaññāvipallāso nacittavipallāso nadiṭthivipallāso.
2.4
[Seeing] what is painful as painful is a non-perversion of perception, a non-perversion of thought, a nonperversion of view.
Dukkhe, bhikkhave, dukkhanti nasañn̄āvipallāso nacittavipallāso nadiṭthivipallāso.
2.5
[Seeing] what is helpless/not in control net self as helpless/not in control net self is a non-perversion of perception, a non-perversion of thought, a non-perversion of view.
Anattani, bhikkhave, anattāti nasaññāvipallāso nacittavipallāso nadiṭthivipallāso.
2.6
[Seeing] what is unfruitful as unfruitful fert is a non-perversion of perception, a non-perversion of thought, a non-perversion of view.
Asubhe, bhikkhave, asubhanti nasaññāvipallāso nacittavipallāso nadiṭthivipallāso.
2.7

These, bhikkhus, are the four non-perversions of perception, non-perversions of thought, non-perversions of view.
Ime kho, bhikkhave, cattāro nasañn̄āvipallāsā nacittavipallāsā nadiṭthivipallāsā"ti.
3.1

Perceive what is not getting according to desire
"Anicce niccasaññino,
3.2

As getting according to desire permanent, and what is pain as pleasure, dukkhe ca sukhasaññino;
3.3

As well as the helpless/not in control not self as protection/in control self,
Anattani ca attāti,
3.4

And fruitful beauty too in what is unfruitful feut; [81]
asubhe subhasaññino;
3.5

All beings are killed by wrong views,
Micchādiṭthihatā sattā,
3.6
their minds are confused and their thoughts are twisted (maddened).
khittacittā visañ̃̃ino.

Such beings, bound to Māra's yoke, Te yogayuttā mārassa,

## 4.2

Go where is no surcease of bonds;
ayogakkhemino janā,
4.3

They travel round the roundabout
Sattā gacchanti samisārain,
4.4

Where birth and death each hunt the other down.
jātimaraṇagāmino.
5.1

Now when Enlightened Ones appear
Yadā ca buddhā lokasmimi,
5.2

And bring the light into the world, uppajjanti pabhañkarā;
5.3

They promulgate the True Idea,
Te imaì dhammaì pakāsenti,
5.4

Which leads on to release from suffering.
dukkhūpasamagāminaì.
6.1

The wise, on hearing what they tell,
Tesain sutvāna sappaññā,
6.2

Apply their minds to seek the truth: sacittaim paccaladdhu te;
6.3

They see the not getting according to desire impermanent as it is,
Aniccaì aniccato dakkhum,
6.4

And pain they see as only pain,
dukkhamaddakkhu dukkhato.
7.1

They see what is helpless/not in control not self as such,
Anattani anattāti,
7.2

And likewise too they see the unfruitful foul;
asubhaí asubhataddasum்;

## 7.3 <br> Such views as they adopt are right, <br> Sammādiṭthisamādānā,

7.4

And they it is escape from suffering'. [WebLink: suttacentral: Vipallāsa Sutta (AN 4.49)] (A ii 52)
sabbaì dukkhaì upaccagun"ti.
8.1

In a person who possesses [right] view [by his being a stream enterer] are these four perversions abandoned or unabandoned?
Ime cattāro vipallāsā diṭthisampannassa puggalassa pahīnā, appahīnāti.

## 8.2

Some are abandoned, and some are unabandoned.
Keci pahīn̄, keci appahīn̄a?
8.3

The perversion of perception, perversion of thought, and perversion of view, [that see] what is not getting according to desire impermanent as getting according to desire permanent are abandoned in him. Anicce niccanti saññāvipallāso cittavipallāso diṭthivipallāso pahīno.
8.4

The perception [that sees] what is painful as pleasant arises, and so does the thought, but such perversion of view is abandoned in him.
Dukkhe sukhanti saññā uppajjati, cittai் uppajjati, ditṭhivipallāso pahīno.
8.5

The perversion of perception, perversion of thought, and perversion of view, [that see] what is helpless/not in control self as protection/in control self are abandoned in him.
Anattani attāti saññāvipallāso cittavipallāso diṭthivipallāso pahīno.
8.6

The perception [that sees] the unfruitful foul as fruitful beautifill arises, and so does the thought, but such perversion of view is abandoned in him.
Asubhe subhanti saññā uppajjati, cittain uppajjati, ditṭhivipallāso pahīno.
8.7
3. In two instances [ - the first and third - ] six perversions are abandoned.

Dvīsu vatthūsu cha vipallāsā pahīna.
8.8

In two instances [ - the second and fourth-] two perversions are abandoned and four perversions are unabandoned.

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Dvīsu vatthūsu dve vipallāsā pahīnā, cattāro vipallāsā appahīna.
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## 8.9

In [all] four instances eight perversions are abandoned and four perversions are unabandoned. ${ }^{1}$
1 At the beginning the perversions are reckoned as four ('instances'), namely, seeing the not getting according to desire impermanent as getting according to desire permanent, the painful as pleasant, the helpless/not in control not self as protection/in control self, and the unfruitful foul as fruitful beatiful. Here at the end they are reckoned as three, namely, perversion of perception, perversion of thought, and perversion of view; hence the total of 'twelve' ('eight' and 'four') in the 'four instances'. [See below chart.]
Catūsu vatthūsu attha vipallāsā pahīnā, cattāro vipallāsā appahīnāti.

| Characteristics | anicca | dukkha | anatt $\bar{a}$ | asubha |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | nicca | sukha | attā | subha |
| Sañn̄ Vipallāsa | Sotāpatti | Anāgāmi | Sotāpatti | Anāgāmi |
| Citta Vipallāsa | Sotāpatti | Arahatta | Sotāpatti | Arahatta |
| Diț̣hi Vipallāsa | Sotāpatti | Sotāpatti | Sotāpatti | Sotāpatti |

8.10<br>End of Treatise on Perversions.<br>Vipallāsakathā niṭthitā.

### 3.8.1.1 Samāropanahāra vibhañga (Ne 19)

Samāropana hāra is a method of understanding a sutta - not in isolation - but in combination with other aspects as well.
Specifically, the purport of a sutta is considered in terms of its basis, its synonyms and also the manner in which it pertains to the practice of developing and abandoning.

The following is a verse explaining this hāra.
Ye dhammā yaì mūlā, ye cekatthā pakāsitā muninā;
Te samāropayitabbā, esa samāropano hāro 'ti.
Those phenomena which are of a (the same) root, and those phenomena which are shown by the Sage to be of same meaning -
those (phenomena) are to be combined - this is the Samāropana hāra.
The above is a brief introduction to Samāropana hāra.
The ensuing is the original text elucidating the Samāropana hāra using examples.

Netti
Paținiddesavāra
Vibhañga 16

## Ne 19 Analysis of Mode of Conveying the Combining - Samāropanahāravibhañga

## 1.1

Therein, what is the samāropana hāra?
Tattha katamo samāropano hāro?

## 1.2

(It is explained in the verse) "Those phenomena which are of a (the same) root, and those phenomena which are shown by the Sage to be of same meaning. ..'
"Ye dhamm $\bar{a}$ yaimmūlā, ye cekatthā pakāsitā muninā"ti.
2.1

In one basis, how many other basis are accessed, all of them are to be combined.
Ekasmim̀ padaṭthāne yattakāni padaṭthānāni otaranti, sabbāni tāni samāropayitabbāni.
2.2

Just as in $\bar{a} v a t t a ~ h a ̄ r a ~(m o d e ~ o f ~ c o n v e y i n g ~ c o n v e r s i o n), ~ m a n y ~ b a s i s ~ a r e ~ a c c e s s e d . ~$
Yathā āvatṭe hāre bahukāni padaṭ! hānāni otarantīti.
2.3

Therein, combining is of four types - padatthāna (basis), vevacana (synonym), bhāvana (developing) and pahāna (abandoning).
Tattha samāropanā catubbidhā padaṭthānaí, vevacanaim, bhāvanā, pahānamiti.
3.1

Therein, what is combining with basis (padattthāna)?
Tattha katam $\bar{a}$ padaṭthānena samāropanā?

## 4.1

"The non-doing of all evil,
"Sabbapāpassa akaranam̀,
4.2
taking up the wholesome,
kusalassa upasampadā;
4.3
purifying one's own mind, Sacittapariyodāpanaín,
4.4
this is the teaching of the Buddha's."
etain buddhāna sāsanan"ti.
5.1

What is its basis?
Tassa kim padaṭthānaì?
5.2

There are three good conducts -
Tiñi sucaritāni-
5.3
good conducts of the body, good conducts of speech, good conducts of mind.
kāyasucaritaì vacīsucaritaì manosucaritaì-
5.4

This is the basis.
idaì padațthānam;
5.5

Therein, that which is the good conduct of the body and speech - this is the Morality-aggregate.
tattha yaì kāyikañca vācasikañca sucaritam், ayamं sīlakkhandho.
5.6

In the good conduct of mind is non-covetousness and non-ill-will - this is the Concentration-aggregate.
Manosucarite yā anabhijjhā abyāpādo ca, ayamं samādhikkhandho.
5.7

That which is Right View - this is the Wisdom-aggregate.
Yā sammāditṭhi, ayamं paññākkhandho.
5.8

This is the basis.

Therein, the Morality-aggregate and Concentration-aggregate are Samatha.
The Wisdom-aggregate is Vipassana $\overline{\text {. }}$
Idaí padaṭthānai், tattha sīlakkhandho ca samādhikkhandho ca samatho, paññākkhandho vipassanā.
5.9

This is the basis.
Therein, the result of Samatha is the mind-release due to fading away of passion.
The result of Vipassan $\bar{a}$ is the wisdom-release due to fading away of ignorance.
Idain padatṭhānai், tattha samathassa phalai் rāgavirāgā cetovimutti, vipassanāya phalaì avijjāvirāgā paññāvimutti.
5.10

This is the basis.
Idaì padaṭthānam.
6.1

Desired (vanam) is the basis for desiredness (vanatha).
Vanaì vanathassa padaṭthānam்.
6.2

What is the desired?
Kiñca vanam?
6.3

And what is desiredness?
Ko ca vanatho?
6.4

The desired is the five strands of sensuality; craving is the desiredness -
Vanaì nāma pañca kāmaguṇā, taṇhā vanatho.
6.5
this is the basis.
Idaì padaṭthānam.
6.6

Desired is the fastening on to the signs - as "woman" or as "man."
Vanaì nāma nimittaggāho "itthī"tiva' "puriso"ti v $\bar{a}$.
6.7

Desiredness is taking up the smaller details of the various parts as - "wow! the eye!" ' O ! the ear' 'the nose!' ' O ! the tongue!' ' O ! the body!' -
Vanatho nāma tesamं tesamं añgapaccañgānai் anubyañjanaggāho "aho cakkhu, aho sotaí, aho ghānaì, aho jivhā, aho kāyo" iti.
6.8
this is the basis.
Idaì padațthānam.
6.9

The desired is the uncomprehended internal and external bases.
Vanaì nāma cha ajjhattikabāhirāni āyatanāni apariññātāni.
6.10

The fetter that arises based on that is the desiredness.
Yain tadubhayaì paticca uppajjati samyojanam், ayamं vanatho.
6.11

This is the basis.
Idaim padatṭhānam.
6.12

The desired is the latent-tendency.
Vanaì nāma anusayo.
6.13

The desiredness is the manifestation.
Vanatho nāma pariyuṭthānam.
6.14

This is the basis.
Idaì padaṭthānaì.
6.15

Therefore said the Blessed One, "Having cut the forest (desired) and the afforestation (desiredness)..." Tenāha bhagavā "chetvā vanañca vanathañcā"ti.
6.16

This is combining with basis.
Ayamं padaṭthānena samāropanā.
7.1

Therein, what is combining with synonyms?
Tattha katamā vevacanena samāropanā?
7.2

The mind-release due to fading away of passion is the result for trainees.
Rāgavirāgā cetovimutti sekkhaphalaì;
7.3

The wisdom-release due to fading away of ignorance is the result for the trained (adept).
avijjāvirāgā paññāvimutti asekkhaphalain.
7.4

This is a synonym.
Idamं vevacanam.
7.5

The mind-release due to fading away of passion is the result for Non-returner.
Rāgavirāgā cetovimutti anāgāmiphalaí;
7.6

The wisdom-release due to fading away of ignorance is the exalted result for the trained (adept).
avijjāvirāgā paññ̄āvimutti aggaphalaì arahattaì.
7.7

This is a synonym.
Idamं vevacanam.

## 7.8

The mind-release due to fading away of passion is the transcending the element of sensuality.
Rāgavirāgā cetovimutti kāmadhātusamatikkamanaï;
7.9

The wisdom-release due to fading away of ignorance is the transcending of the three elements.
avijjāvirāgā pañn̄āvimutti tedhātusamatikkamanaì.
7.10

This is a synonym.
Idaì vevacanaim.
7.11

The faculty of wisdom, the strength of wisdom, the training of higher wisdom, the aggregate of wisdom, the investigation of phenomena which is a factor of enlightenment, the equanimity which is a factor of enlightenment, knowledge, right view, determining, investigating, shame to do evil, insight, knowledge in the Dhamma, all this is synonym.
Paññindriyaim, paññābalaì, adhipaññāsikkhā, pañ̃̄ākkhandho, dhammavicayasambojjhañgo, upekkhāsambojjhañgo, ñānaín, sammāditthi, tīranā, santīraṇā, hirī, vipassanā, dhamme ñānain, sabbaí, idaí vevacanaì.
7.12

This is combining with synonyms.
Ayamं vevacanena samāropanā.
8.1

Therein, what is combining with development?
Tattha katamā bhāvanāya samāropanā?
8.2

As the Blessed One said, "Therefore, you dwell here, contemplating the body in body, ardent, alert, mindful, putting aside greed and distress regarding the world.
Yathāha bhagavā "tasmātiha tvaỉ bhikkhu kāye kāyānupassī viharāhi, ātāp̄̀ sampajāno satimā vineyya loke abhijjhādomanassam்."
8.3
$\bar{A} t \bar{a} p i$ (removing heat [defilements] ardent) is the faculty of effort.
Ātāpīti vīriyindriyam.
8.4

Sampajāno (fully understanding defilements alert) is the faculty of wisdom.
Sampajānoti paññindriyam.
8.5

Satima (removing [defilements] with mindfulness mindfulness) is the faculty of mindfulness.
Satimāti satindriyam.
8.6

Vineyya loke abhijjhādomanassam (putting aside greed and distress regarding the world) is faculty of concentration.
Vineyya loke abhijjhādomanassanti samādhindriyaì.
8.7

Thus, while dwelling contemplating the body in the body, the development of the four foundations of mindfulness get fulfilled.
Evaï kāye kāyānupassino viharato cattāro satipaṭthānā bhāvanāpāripūrim gacchanti.
[8.1 to 8.7: Kāyānaupassā tackles all FOUR types of āhāra, and thus removes ALL vipallāsa. See: SN 47.42: Samudayasutta. One needs to understand what is involved in Dhammānupassanā first. Thus, the progression is backward: dhammānupassanā, cittānupassanā, vedanānupassanā, kāyānupassanā. ]

## 8.8

Due to what reason?
Kena kārañena?
8.9
(Due to) the analogous characteristics of the four faculties.
Ekalakkhanattā catunnaì indriyānaì.
8.10

When the four foundations of mindfulness are developed, the development of the four right exertions get fulfilled.
Catūsu satipațthānesu bhāviyamānesu cattāro sammappadhānā bhāvanāpāripūrimi gacchanti.

### 8.11

When the four right exertions are developed, the development of four basis of power get fulfilled.
Catūsu sammappadhānesu bhāviyamānesu cattāro iddhipādā bhāvanāpāripūrim gacchanti.
8.12

When the four basis of power are developed, the development of the five faculties get fulfilled.
Catūsu iddhipādesu bhāviyamānesu pañcindriyāni bhāvanāpāripūrim gacchanti.
8.13

Thus everything.
Evain sabbe.
8.14

Due to what reason?
Kena kāraṇena?
8.15

All are phenomena which are a part of enlightenment, are factors of enlightenment.
They are of analogous characteristic in terms of the characteristic of leading-to.
The development of those qualities which are analogous get fulfilled.
Sabbe hi bodhañgam $\bar{a}$ dhamm $\bar{a}$ bodhipakkhiy $\bar{a}$ niyyānikalakkhanena ekalakkhaṇā, te ekalakkhanattā bhāvanāpāripūrìं gacchanti.
8.16

This is combining with development.
Ayaì bhāvanāya samāropanā.
9.1

Therein, what is combining with abandoning?
Tattha katamā pahānena samāropanā?
9.2

While dwelling contemplating the body in the body - vipallāsa (distortion/mistakenness) of taking something that is 'asubha' (unfruitful umberutifu) as 'subha' (fruitfiul beautifil) is abandoned;
the physical food (kabalikāro) gets comprehended by him;
one becomes un-attached to the sensual-grasping;
one becomes disassociated with the yoke of sensuality;
one gets separated from the body of covetousness bond;
one is un-intoxicated with the intoxication of sensuality;
one crosses over the flood of sensuality;
one is un-pierced by the dart of passion;
there is comprehension of the sustaining of consciousness by associated form;
the passion for the form-element is abandoned;
one does not go the wrong way due to desiring.
Kāye kāyānupassī viharanto "asubhe subhan"ti vipallāsain pajahati, kabaḹ̄kāro cassa āhāro pariññaì gacchati, kāmupādānena ca anupādāno bhavati, kāmayogena ca visamiyutto bhavati, abhijjhākāyaganthena ca vippayujjati, kāmāsavena ca anāsavo bhavati, kāmoghañca uttinṇo bhavati, rāgasallena ca visallo bhavati, rūpūpikā cassa viññānaṭthiti pariññà் gacchati, rūpadhātuyain cassa rāgo pahīno bhavati, na ca chandāgatiin gacchati.

## 10.1

While dwelling contemplating the sensation in the sensation -
vipallāsa (distortion/mistakenness) of taking something that is 'dukkha' (suffering) as 'sukha' (happiness) is abandoned;
the physical food of contact (phassa āhāra) gets comprehended by him;
one becomes unattached to the becoming-grasping;
one becomes disassociated with the yoke of becoming;
one gets separated from the body of ill-will bond;
one is not intoxicated with the intoxication of becoming;
one crosses over the flood of becoming;
one is not pierced by the dart of ill-will;
there is comprehension of the sustaining of consciousness by associated sensation;
the passion for the sensation-element is abandoned;
one does not go the wrong way due to disliking.
Vedanāsu vedanānupassī viharanto "dukkhe sukhan"ti vipallāsain pajahati, phasso cassa āhāro pariññain gacchati, bhavūpādānena ca anupādāno bhavati, bhavayogena ca visamyyutto bhavati, byāpādakāyaganthena ca vippayujjati, bhavāsavena ca anāsavo bhavati, bhavoghañca uttinṇo bhavati, dosasallena ca visallo bhavati, vedanūpikā cassa viññānaṭthiti pariññaim gacchati, vedanādhātuyain cassa rāgo pahīno bhavati, na ca dosāgatim gacchati.

## 11.1

While dwelling contemplating the mind in the mind -
vipallāsa (distortion/mistakenness) of taking something that is 'anicca' (not getting according to desire impermant) as ' $n i c c a$ ' (getting according to desire permanent) is abandoned;
the food of consciousness (viññāna āhāra) gets comprehended by him;
one becomes unattached to the view-grasping;
one becomes dis-associated with the yoke of view;
one gets separated from the body of adherence to rites and rituals bond;
one is not intoxicated with the intoxication of view;
one crosses over the flood of view;
one is not pierced by the dart of conceit;
there is comprehension of the sustaining of consciousness by associated perception;
the passion for the perception-element is abandoned;
one does not go the wrong way due to fear.
Citte cittānupassī viharanto "anicce niccan"ti vipallāsain pajahati, viññānain cassa āhāro pariññain gacchati, diṭthupādānena ca anupādāno bhavati, diṭthiyogena ca visainyutto bhavati, silabbataparāmāsakāyaganthena ca vippayujjati, diṭthāsavena ca anāsavo bhavati, diṭthoghañca uttinṇo
bhavati, mānasallena ca visallo bhavati, sañ̃̄̄̄pika cassa viñ̃̄̄naṭṭhiti pariññaim gacchati, saññādhātuyamं cassa rāgo pahīno bhavati, na ca bhayāgatim gacchati.

## 12.1

While dwelling contemplating the phenomena in the phenomena -
vipallāsa (distortion/mistakenness) of taking something that is 'anattä' (not having control not-self) as 'att $\vec{a}$ ' (having control self) is abandoned;
the food of intention (manosañcetana āhāra) gets comprehended by him;
one becomes unattached to the 'doctrine of self'-grasping;
one becomes dis-associated with the yoke of ignorance;
one gets separated from the body of adherence to 'this is only true' bond;
one is not intoxicated with the intoxication of ignorance;
one crosses over the flood of ignorance;
one is not pierced by the dart of delusion;
there is comprehension of the sustaining of consciousness by associated formations;
the passion for the formation-element is abandoned;
one does not go the wrong way due to folly.
Dhammesu dhammānupassī viharanto "anattani attā" ti vipallāsam pajahati, manosañcetanā cassa āhāro pariññaì gacchati, attavādupādānena ca anupādāno bhavati, avijjāyogena ca visamiyutto bhavati, idamisaccābhinivesakāyaganthena ca vippayujjati, avijjāsavena ca anāsavo bhavati, avijjoghañca uttinnno bhavati, mohasallena ca visallo bhavati, sañkhārūpika cassa viññānatṭhiti pariññamं gacchati, sañkhāradhātuyamं cassa rāgo pahīno bhavati, na ca mohāgatim gacchati.

| Understanding Four Noble Truths leads to abandonment of | $\tanh \bar{a}$ |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Dwelling contemplating on ... | kāya | vedan $\bar{a}$ | citta | dhammā |
| vipallāsa abadonment of Characteristics | kabalīkāro | phasso | viññānam | manosañcetanā |
| Characteristics | asubha | dukkha | anicca | anattā |
| Abandonment of | subha | sukha | nicca | attā |
| Sañ̃na Vipallāsa | Anāgāmi | Anāgāmi | Sotāpatti | Sotāpatti |
| Citta Vipallāsa | Arahatta | Arahatta | Sotāpatti | Sotāpatti |
| Diṭthi Vipallāsa | Sotāpatti | Sotāpatti | Sotāpatti | Sotāpatti |

## 12.2

This is combining with abandoning.
Ayain pahānena samāropanā.
13.1

Therefore said Venerable Mahākaccāyana -
Tenāha āyasmā mahākaccāyano-
14.1
"Those phenomena which are of a (the same) root,
"Ye dhammā yaimmūlā,

## 14.2

and those phenomena which are shown by the Sage to be of same meaning -
Ye cekatthā pakāsitā muninā;
14.3
those (phenomenas) are to be combined -

Te samāropayitabbā,

## 14.4

this is the Samāropana hāra."
Esa samāropano hāro"ti.
14.5

The Samāropana hāra has been elucidated.
Niyutto samāropano hāro.
14.6

And the classification of $h \bar{a} r a s$ has ended.
Nitṭhito ca hāravibhañgo.

### 3.8.1.2 What Is Vedanā (Feelings)?

February 18, 2017

## Vedanā and Samphassa Jā Vedanā - More Than Just Feelings replaces (11Nov2018) Vedanā - What It

 Really MeansDoes Bodily Pain Arise Only Due to Kamma Vipāka?

### 3.8.1.2 Vedanā and Samphassa Jā Vedanā - More Than Just Feelings

February 18, 2017; November 10, 2018 Rewritten and replaces Vedanā - What It Really Means

1. Vedan $\bar{a}$ is conventionally translated as "feelings", but it is much more than just feelings. The Buddha said that vedanā can be analyzed in many ways, with simple or deeper meanings. Here we will analyze vedan $\bar{a}$ in a way that will be most helpful at this stage (for those who have been following the "Living Dhamma" section from the beginning.

- In this analysis, we will discuss 9 types of vedana $\bar{a}$.
- By understanding these 9 types of vedana $\bar{a}$, we can understand how to correctly do vedanānupassana $\bar{a}$ in the Satipatṭhāna bhāvanā.
 "one becomes aware (of a sense input)" and experience the corresponding good, bad, or neutral kamma vipāka.
- That is the vedana experienced by an Arahant. He/she simply is aware of a sense input, and does not ADD anymore vedanā in his/her mind to that sensory input.
- A vedanā can be a dukha vedanā (due to a past bad kamma), a sukha vedanā (due to a past good kamma), or a neutral sensation - like feeling the wind on the body - called an upekkha vedanā.
- Even an Arahant will experience those dukha or sukha vedanā, as long as he/she has the physical body. It is only those "samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedan $\bar{a}$ " that will not arise in an Arahant; see below. No more vedan $\bar{a}$ of any type arising in an Arahant after the death, because he/she will not be reborn in the 31 realms of "this world."
- However, normal humans go far beyond that and generate three additional types of their own mindmade "samphassa ja vedana $\bar{a}$," as we will discuss below.

3. It is important to realize that sukha and dukha vedana due to kamma vipāka are felt by the physical body. They result due to past good or bad kamma vipāka. This can be verified by referring to Abhidhamma:

- Akusala kamma vipāka coming though the body are listed as, "dukkha sahagataì kāya viññānaì," and kusala kamma vipāka coming though the body are listed as, "sukha sahagataì kāya viñnänaì."
- Neutral (upekkhā) vedanā can arise via all five physical senses; see \#7 below.

4. A normal human being will mentally generate three more type of vedana due to those sukha, dukha, and neutral vedanā that initially arise due to kamma vipāka via all five physical senses.

- If it is dukha vedanā (due to a headache, getting injured, etc.), one is likely to start worrying about it and add more suffering. Those are domanassa vedanā or āmisa dukha vedanā.
- If it is sukha vedana (getting a massage, lying in a luxurious bed, etc.), one is likely to start generating thoughts about how good it is and how one can enjoy similar sukha vedana in the future. Those are somanassa vedanā or $\overline{\text { anmisa sukha vedana }}$; one could also be generating them by remembering past such sukha vedan $\bar{a}$. These are also added in by the mind.
- Somanassa means "mind-made joyful." Domanassa means "mind-made misery", which is basically a depressed mindset.
- If a vedana due to a kamma vipāka is not that strong one may just generate neutral feelings about it; that is $\bar{a} m i s a ~ u p e k k h a ~ v e d a n a \bar{a}$.

5. Let us take some examples to illustrate how those additional types of vedanā can arise due to initial dukha vedan $\bar{a}$ and sukha vedana $\bar{a}$.

- Suppose someone comes down with an illness. Any pain (dukha vedanā) due to that illness CANNOT be avoided by anyone once the illness takes hold: It is the RESULT (vipāka) of a previous CAUSE (kamma).
- Of course, it is possible that one could have avoided the kamma vipāka to materialize by trying to minimize CONDITIONS (paccayā); see, "What Does "Paccayā"" Mean in Paticca Samuppāda?." That is why kamma vipāka can be avoided by being mindful and taking precautions.
- Once an illness starts, all one can do is to take medicines and also take any possible actions to reduce the pain.
- However, people tend to make the situation worse by starting to generate negative feelings about the situation. This gives rise to domanassa vedana .

6. In the same way, one can start generating somanassa vedanā based on a sukha vedanā that was brought by a good kamma vipāka.

- For example, when one is eating a delicious meal, one could be generating joyful thoughts about how delicious it is and how one can eat it again in the future. Such joyful thoughts (somanassa vedana $\bar{a}$ ) may be generated even long after the meal.
- Both domanassa and somanassa vedanā are "mind-made." They are called "samphassa-jā-vedanā"; see \#8 below.

7. Kamma vipāka also leads to sense inputs at the other four physical senses. They are all neutral. Thus neutral vedanā can arise via all five physical senses.

- Kusala and akusala vipāka coming through those four sensory doors are listed as, "upekkhā sahagataín cakkhu viññānami," "upekkhā sahagataim sota viññānaín," "upekkhā sahagataì ghāṇa viñ̃āṇamं," and "upekkhā sahagatamं jivhā viññānam.".
- For example, when we see an "eye-pleasing picture", the initial vedana felt by the mind is neutral.
- However, that "neutral feeling" may not even register in one's mind because "samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedan $\vec{a}$ " that we discuss next arise automatically and instantaneously based on one's gati.

8. But if one has cravings or repulsion to such pictures, one will start generating "samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedana $\bar{a}$," or feelings that arise due to "samphassa" ("san" + "phassa" or contacts with "san" that is in one's mind); see, "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansara (or Samsara)."

- It is easy to understand this when one contemplates on some examples. Upon seeing person X , an enemy of X will generate what are called "domanassa vedan $\bar{a}$ " or bad feelings, whereas a friend of X will generate "somanassa vedan $\vec{a} "$ or good feelings.
- The same is true for sounds, tastes, and smells. Even though there appear to be "universally good" tastes, that is not true for an Arahant. We just cannot comprehend it at this stage. But we know that some foods enjoyed by some could be repulsive to others, for example.
- In akusala-mula paticca samuppāda, the "phassa paccayā vedanā" step, the vedanā that arises is really "samphassa-jā-vedanā"; see, "Akusala-Mūla Paticca Samuppāda."

9. Three more types of mentally generated vedanā can arise in those who are on the Noble Eightfold Path. These arise by suppressing or eliminating those $\bar{a} m i s a ~ v e d a n \bar{a}$ or "samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedan $\bar{a}$ " discussed above.

- In the beginning of this section we discussed how heat or tāpa in the mind arise due to "san" which are greed (lobha), hate (dosa), and ignorance (moha); see, "Suffering in This Life - Role of Mental Impurities" and "Satipatthāna Sutta - Relevance to Suffering in This Life."

10. When one constantly is attached or repulsed by all those sensory inputs that one experiences in a given day, one's mind can get really stressed out. A normal human being may even not be aware of this heat (tāpa) in the mind; see those two posts mentioned above, and other posts in the beginning of the "Living Dhamma" section.

- Even if one is generating somanassa vedana , those inevitably lead to the stress in the mind. However, the effect is easily seen with domanassa vedanā.
- This is very important to grasp. You may want to go back and read those posts.

11. When one stays away from generating too many "samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedan $\bar{a}$ " of both kinds, one will start feeling three more types of vedana $\bar{a}$. These are called nirāmisa vedana $\bar{a}$, because they arise due to staying away from cravings (and repulsion) to worldly objects.

- When one prevents the mind from heating up by comprehending the adverse effects of "san" and staying away from them, one's mind starts "cooling down." This is the nirāmisa sukha vedanā that we have discussed in many posts.
- This is what is emphasized by "ātāpi sampajāno" in the Mahā Satipatṭhāna Sutta; it means "remove the fire or heat from one's mind by being aware of the 'san' or "immoral tendencies"; see, "Satipatthāna Sutta - Structure."
- The pleasant feelings one feels during $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$ are also nirāmisa sukha vedanā. They are devoid of tāpa or heat.
- Such feelings can also be experienced when one is doing a meritorious deed, such as giving or helping out someone in need. Those are also devoid of tāpa or heat and are nirāmisa sukha vedanā.
- Nirāmisa sukha can, of course, be experienced while engaging in meditation, especially Metta $B h \bar{a} v a n \bar{a}$. This is optimized when one does those bhāvanā with comprehension of anicca, dukkha, anatta, i.e., when one does it with full comprehension of "ātāpi sampajāno."

12. There are two more types of vedana that one experiences when proceeding on the Noble Eightfold Path.

- Sometimes, one gets a bit discouraged by not advancing "fast enough" on the Path. One thinks about "why am I not getting to the Sotāpanna stage?" or "Is there anything that I am missing in order to make progress?", etc.
- Those are not domanassa vedanā (because they are devoid of patigha anusaya); they are nirāmisa dukha vedan $\bar{a}$. It is common for one to experience such vedan $\bar{a}$.
- If a vedanā is not that strong one may just generate neutral feelings about it; that is nirāmisa upekkha vedanā.

13. The key to vedanānupassana in the Satipatthāna bhāvanā is to be able to recognize which type of vedanā one feels.

- If it is a dukha (vipāka) vedanā, one understands that one needs to bear it (after reducing it as much as possible with medicines, etc). One needs to understand why such a vipāka vedanā arise, and remedy it as much as possible. After all, our goal is to stop any type of suffering.
- A good example is a pain one feels when sitting cross-legged at meditation retreats. Just by saying "I feel this vedana $\vec{a}$ will not of any use. That vedan $\bar{a}$ can be removed by shifting one's posture. I have seen some instructors, advice people, to just bear the pain saying that it will go away. It may go away because the nerves may become numb. That is not good in the long term.
- Also, one needs to understand why one should stop generating domanassa and somanassa vedana $\bar{a}$, per above discussion.
- And one should, of course, cultivate nirāmisa sukha vedanā that arise when one starts on the Path (especially upon comprehending Tilakkhaṇa to some extent) and reduces the tendency to generate domanassa and somanassa vedanā.

14. Vedanānupassan $\bar{a}$ is all about first identifying the types of vedan $\bar{a}$ one is experiencing, and then deciding what to do about them. Getting rid of all vedan $\bar{a}$ - as some people believe - is the wrong thing to try to do.

Vipāka vedanā do not have lobha, dosa, moha, but vipāka vedanā can lead to samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedan $\bar{a}$ which will have lobha, dosa, moha.

- vipāka vedanā needs to be experienced with upekkhā.
- samphassa-jā-vedanā are the ones to be stopped.
- Nirāmisa vedanā are the ones to be cultivated.

15. In summary, try to avoid vipāka dukha vedanā by trying not to make conditions for them to appear; see, "Anantara and Samanantara Paccayā." Do not indulge in vipāka sukha vedanā when those arise. Suppress and gradually eliminate samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedan $\bar{a}$ and cultivate nirāmisa vedana $\bar{a}$, which is what the "Living Dhamma" section is all about.

- That is — in brief - what vedanānupassanā is all about.

More details on vedanā can be found at: Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways" and "Feelings: Sukha, Dukha, Somanassa, and Domanassa."

### 3.8.1.2 Vedanā - What It Really Means

.1.1
February 18, 2017; this is being replaced by Vedanā and Samphassa Jā Vedanā - More Than Just Feelings

1. Vedan $\bar{a}$ is conventionally translated as "feelings", but it is much more than just feelings. The Buddha said that vedan $\bar{a}$ can be analyzed in many ways, with simple or deeper meanings. Here we will analyze vedan $\bar{a}$ in a way that will be most helpful at this stage (for those who have been following the "Living Dhamma" section from the beginning.

- In this analysis we will discuss 9 types of vedanā (highlighted in bold italic red).
- By understanding these 9 types of vedanā, we can understand how to correctly do vedananupassana in the Satipatṭhāna bhāvanā.

2. At the very fundamental level vedana means "veema danaveema" in Sinhala, which means "one becomes aware (of a sense input)" and experience the corresponding good, bad, or neutral kamma vipāka.

- That is the vedana experienced by an Arahant. He/she simply is aware of a sense input, and does not ADD anymore vedanā in his/her mind to that sense input.
- A vedanā can be a dukha vedanā (due to a past bad kamma), a sukha vedanā (due to a past good kamma), or a neutral sensation - like feeling the wind on the body - called an upekkha vedanā.
- An Arahant will bear them all with a neutral mind even though the dukha or sukha sensation cannot be avoided.
- However, normal humans go far beyond that and generate three additional types of their own mindmade "samphassa ja vedanā," as we will discuss below.

3. It is important to realize that sukha and dukha vedanā due to kamma vipāka are felt by the physical body. They result due to past good or bad kamma vipāka. This can be verified by referring to Abhidhamma:

- Akusala kamma vipāka coming though the body are listed as, "dukkha sahagatham kaya vinnanam," and kusala kamma vipāka coming though the body are listed as, "sukha sahagatham kaya vinnanam."


## - Neutral (upekkha) vedanā can arise via all five physical senses; see \#7 below.

4. A normal human being will mentally generate three more type of vedana due to those sukha, dukha, and neutral vedanā that initially arise due to kamma vipāka via all five physical senses.

- If it is dukha vedanā (due to a headache, getting injured, etc.), one is likely to start worrying about it and add more suffering. Those are domanassa vedanā or amisa dukha vedanā.
- If it is sukha vedana (getting a massage, lying in a luxurious bed, etc.), one is likely to start generating thoughts about how good it is and how one can enjoy similar sukha vedana in the future. Those are somanassa vedan $\bar{a}$ or amisa sukha vedan $\bar{a}$; one could also be generating them by remembering past such sukha vedan $\bar{a}$. These are also added in by the mind.
- Somanassa means "mind-made joyful." Domanassa means "mind-made misery", which is basically a depressed mindset.
- If a vedan $\bar{a}$ due to a kamma vipāka is not that strong one may just generate neutral feelings about it; that is amisa upekkha vedanā.

5. Let us take some examples to illustrate how those additional types of vedan $\bar{a}$ can arise due to initial dukha vedanā and sukha vedanā.

- Suppose someone comes down with an illness. Any pain (dukha vedanā) due to that illness CANNOT be avoided by anyone once the illness takes hold: It is the RESULT (vipāka) of a previous CAUSE (kamma).
- Of course, it is possible that one could have avoided the kamma vipāka to materialize by trying to minimize CONDITIONS (paccaya); see, "What Does "Paccaya" Mean in Paticca Samuppāda?." That is why kamma vipāka can be avoided by being mindful and taking precautions.
- Once an illness starts, all one can do is to take medicines and also take any possible actions to reduce the pain.
- However, people tend to make the situation worse by starting to generate negative feelings about the situation. This gives rise to domanassa vedana .

6. In the same way, one can start generating somanassa vedana based on a sukha vedan $\bar{a}$ that was brought by a good kamma vipāka.

- For example, when one is eating a delicious meal, one could be generating joyful thoughts about how delicious it is and how one can eat it again in the future. Such joyful thoughts (somanassa vedana $\bar{a}$ ) may be generated even long after the meal.


## 7. Kamma vipāka also lead to sense inputs at the other four physical senses. They are all neutral.

 Thus neutral vedanā can arise via all five physical senses.- Kusala and akusala vipāka coming through those four sense doors are listed as, "upekkha sahagatham cakkhu vinnanam," "upekkha sahagatham sota vinnanam," "upekkha sahagatham ghana vinnanam," and "upekkha sahagatham jivha vinnanam."
- For example, when we see an "eye-pleasing picture", the initial vedana felt by the mind is neutral.

8. But if one has cravings or repulsion to such pictures, one will start generating "samphassa ja vedanā," or feelings that arise due to "samphassa" ("san" + "phassa" or contacts with "san" that is in one's mind); see, "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Samisāra)."

- It is easy to understand this when one contemplates on some examples. Upon seeing person X , an enemy of X will generate what are called "domanassa vedan $\vec{a}$ " or bad feelings, whereas a friend of X will generate "somanassa vedan $\bar{a}$ " or good feelings.
- The same is true for sounds, tastes, and smells. Even though there appear to be "universally good" tastes, that is not true for an Arahant. We just cannot comprehend it at this stage. But we know that some foods enjoyed by some could be repulsive to others, for example.

9. Three more types of mentally generated vedan $\bar{a}$ can arise in those who are on the Noble Eightfold Path. These arise by suppressing or eliminating those amisa vedana or "samphassa ja vedanä" discussed above.

- In the beginning of this section we discussed how heat or tāpa in the mind arise due to "san" which are greed (lobha), hate (dosa), and ignorance (moha); see, "Suffering in This Life - Role of Mental Impurities" and "Satipatthāna Sutta - Relevance to Suffering in This Life."

10. When one constantly is attached or repulsed by all those sense inputs that one experiences in a given day, one's mind can get really stressed out. A normal human being may even not be aware of this heat (tāpa) in the mind; see those two posts mentioned above, and other posts in the beginning of the "Living Dhamma" section.

- Even if one is generating somanassa vedanā, those inevitably lead to the stress in the mind. However, the effect is easily seen with domanassa vedana $\overline{\text {. }}$
- This is very important to grasp. You may want to go back and read those posts.

11. When one stays away from generating too many "samphassa ja vedana$\vec{a}$ " of both kinds, one will start feeling three more types of vedana . These are called nirāmisa vedana $\bar{a}$, because they arise due to staying away from cravings (and repulsion) to worldly objects.

- When one prevents the mind from heating up by comprehending the adverse effects of "san" and staying away from them, one's mind starts "cooling down." This is the nirāmisa sukha vedanā that we have discussed in many posts.
- This is what is emphasized by "ātāpi sampajāno" in the Mahā Satipatthāna Sutta; it means "remove the fire or heat from one's mind by being aware of the 'san' or "immoral tendencies"; see, "Satipatthāna Sutta - Structure."
- The pleasant feelings one feels during jhānā are also nirāmisa sukha vedanā. They are devoid of tāpa or heat.
- Such feelings can also be experienced when one is doing a meritorious deed, such as giving or helping out someone in need. Those are also devoid of thāpa or heat, and are nirāmisa sukha vedanā.
- Nirāmisa sukha can of course be experienced while engaging in meditation, especially mettā bhāvanā. This is optimized when one does those bhāvanā with comprehension of anicca, dukkha, anatta, i.e., when one does it with full comprehension of "ātāpi sampajāno."

12. There are two more types of vedanā that one experiences when proceeding on the Noble Eightfold Path.

- Sometimes, one gets a bit discouraged by not advancing "fast enough" on the Path. One thinks about "why am I not getting to the Sotāpanna stage?" or "Is there anything that I am missing in order to make progress?", etc.
- Those are not domanassa vedanā (because they are devoid of patigha anusaya); they are nirāmisa dukha vedan $\bar{a}$. It is common for one to experience such vedan $\bar{a}$.
- If a vedanā is not that strong one may just generate neutral feelings about it; that is nirāmisa upekkha vedanā.

13. The key to vedananupassana in the Satipatṭhāna bhāvanā is to be able to recognize which type of vedanā one feels.

- If it is a dukha (vipāka) vedanā, one understands that one needs to bear it (after reducing it as much as possible with medicines, etc). One needs to understand why such a vipāka vedanā arise, and remedy it as much as possible. After all, our goal is to stop any type of suffering.
- A good example is the pain one feels when sitting cross-legged at meditation retreats. Just by saying "I feel this vedanä" will not of any use. That vedanā can be removed by shifting one's posture. I have seen some instructors advice people to just bear the pain saying that it will go away. It may go away because the nerves may become numb. That is not good in the long term.
- Also, one needs to understand why one should stop generating domanassa and somanassa vedanā, per above discussion.
- And one should of course cultivate nirāmisa sukha vedanā that arise when one starts on the Path (especially upon comprehending Tilakkhaṇa to some extent) and reduces the tendency to generate domanassa and somanassa vedanā.

14. Vedananupassana is all about first identifying the types of vedana one is experiencing, and then deciding what to do about them. Getting rid of all vedan $\bar{a}$ - as some believe - is the wrong thing to try to do.

Vipāka vedanā do not have lobha, dosa, moha, but vipāka vedanā can lead to samphassa ja vedana $\bar{a}$ which will have lobha, dosa, moha.

- Vipāka vedanā needs to be experienced with upekkha.
- Samphassa ja vedanā are the ones to be stopped. [ja, $\left(-^{\circ}\right)$ [adj. -suffix from jan, see janati; cp. ${ }^{\circ} \mathrm{ga}$; gacchati] born, produced, sprung or arisen from]
- Nirāmisa vedana are the ones to be cultivated.

15. In summary, try to avoid vipāka dukha vedanā by trying not to make conditions for them to appear; see, "Anantara and Samanantara Paccaya." Do not indulge in vipāka sukha vedanā when those arise. Suppress and gradually eliminate samphassa ja vedan $\bar{a}$ and cultivate nirāmisa vedan $\bar{a}$, which is what the "Living Dhamma" section is all about.

- That is - in brief - what vedananupassana is all about.

More details on vedanā can be found at: "Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways" and "Feelings: Sukha, Dukha, Somanassa, and Domanassa."

### 3.8.1.2 <br> Does Bodily Pain Arise Only Due to Kamma Vipāka?

## January 12, 2018

1. Vedanā can be categorized into five types (WebLink: suttacentral: Pathama Vibhañga Sutta; SN 48.4):

- Two are generated by the mind (called cetasikam sukham and cetasikam dukkham in the above Sutta) due to one's gathi: somanassa (joy) and domanassa (depression).
- Two felt by the body (called kāyikaí sukham and kāyikaí dukkham in the above Sutta) and are "real", not mind-made: sukha (bodily pleasure) and dukkha (bodily pain).
- Neutral: adukkhama sukha (without pain or pleasure) or upekkha (without somanassa or domanassa). In the Sutta stated as : "Katamañca, bhikkhave, upekkhindriyaì? Yaì kho, bhikkhave, kāyikaì vā cetasikaì vā nevasātaì nāsātaì vedayitaím-idaín vuccati, bhikkhave, upekkhindriyaì."
- Kāyika sukha and dukkha are also experienced by the mind, but they come through the body as direct results of previous $k a m m \bar{a}$, as we discuss below.

2. As clearly stated in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Nakulapitu Sutta (SN 22.1)":

- The two types of vedanā generated by the mind do not arise in Arahants. They are called "samphassa $j \bar{a}$ vedan $\bar{a} "$ "; see, "Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways," and at a deeper level "Vedanā - What It Really Means."
- Those two felt by the body due to kammā vipāka are experienced also by the Arahants.
- This is also explained in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Salla Sutta (SN 36.6)," saying that while a normal human experiences both types of vedan $\bar{a}$ when pierced by a spear (including "samphassa j $\bar{a}$ vedanā"), an Arahant experiences only the "direct vedana"" caused by the wound.

3. This is why In Abhidhamma, all sense inputs via the other five sense inputs (other than physical body) are initially felt as upekkha (neutral) vedanā. Only the bodily sense inputs could lead to dukkha vedanā (getting injured, headaches, cancer, etc) or sukha vedan $\bar{a}$ (good massage, lying on a comfortable bed, etc).

- When we generate joy upon seeing something that we like, for example, it comes in as a neutral vedana $\bar{a}$. We generate joy via "samphassa j $\bar{a}$ vedan $\bar{a}$ " based on our gathi.
- A good example is seeing a well-known politician. Some people generate good feelings and others may generate bad feelings; but it is the same person they were all looking at. The joy or disgust was not in the politician, it was within the observer. One may need to contemplate this and let the idea sink in. It is an important point. It holds true for any sensory input other than the bodily sense inputs (except $k \bar{a} m a$ guna, discussed in \#6 below).

4. Regarding Abhidhamma, most people use the book "A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma", by Bhikkhu Bodhi (First Edition 2000). This is the English translation of the "Abhidhammattha Sangaha", a commentary to the Abhidhamma Piṭaka in the Tipiṭaka, by Acariya Anuruddha, who lived around the same time as Acariya Buddhaghosa, who wrote the commentary Visuddhimagga.

- Both these recent commentaries have material inconsistent with the Tipiṭaka; see, "Incorrect Theravāda Interpretations - Historical Timeline."
- I have started a discussion focused on the book "A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma", by Bhikkhu Bodhi (2000) at the discussion forum: "Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma (Bhikkhu Bodhi) - Grave Error on p. 164."

5. Going back to our original discussion, the key point from Abhidhamma is that only bodily sense inputs (experienced via the physical body) can bring in sukha (pleasant) or dukha (unpleasant or painful) bodily sensations.

- In other words, when we experience joy (upon seeing a loved one) and dislike (upon seeing an enemy) are both mind-made; same is true for taste, sounds, smell. The same is also true for dhamma $\bar{a}$ that comes to the mind (recalling past events or future plans).
- However, kāyika sukha or kāyika dukkha arises due to injuries and sicknesses (headaches, cancer, etc), and are thus "real."
- We have discussed these in various posts, but I wanted to find a couple of Suttā, where this is clearly stated concisely. Those are given in \#1 and \#2 above.

6. It must also be stated that the Buddha has described vedanā as two types to 108 types depending on the analysis; see, for example, "WebLink: suttacentral: Bahuvedanīva Sutta (MN 59)." For this discussion, the fives types are appropriate.

- Another complexity involved is due to sensory experiences that arise as part of a being's bhava (yet at the root still determined by kammā), which are called "kāma guna"; see, "Kāma Guna, Kāma, Kāma Rāga, Kāmacchanda." This is also mentioned in the above Sutta.
- For example, dogs and pigs eat feces because they taste such things as tasty. Humans, in general, taste sugar as sweet and salty as salty, etc. Those are kāma guna associated with each bhava; An Arahant would taste them the same way.

7. Everything in this world arises with the mind as the root cause. That is what is meant by the Dhammapada gāthā :"mano pubbangamā dhammā, mano setta manomayā..."

- At the very fundamental level, those 'kammā bī̄a" or "kammic energy" has its root in javana citta with one or more of the six root causes: lobha, dosa, moha, and alobha, adosa, amoha.
- It is also important to realize is that the three types of kammā are done by mano, vacī, and kāya sañkhāra: "Sañkhāra - What It Really Means."

8. This vicious cycle of "vipāka" leading to new "kammā" (via acting with avijjā), which in turn lead to more "vipāka", is the process that binds us to the samंsāra of endless rebirths, or perpetuate our "world" of suffering; see, "How Are Paticca Samuppāda Cycles Initiated?."

- The Buddha described this as, "kammā vipākā vaddanti, vipāko kammā sambhavo, tasmā punabbhavo hoti, evan loko pavattati."
- That means, "kammā lead to vipāka, vipāka, in turn, lead to kammā and thus to rebirth (punabbhavo), and that is how the world (existence) is maintained." Here "sambhava" is "san" + "bhava," or "adding more existences." Also, "loka" is world and "pavatta" means "maintain."

9. However, the working of kammā/kammā vipāka is NOT deterministic, i.e., just because one has done a bad (good) deed in the past, that DOES NOT mean one would get the corresponding result (bad or good); see, "What is Kamma? - Is Everything Determined by Kamma?."

- This is because "conditions" are a key aspect of Paticca Samuppāda (cause and effect) in Buddha Dhamma. Just because there are causes (kammā bīja), corresponding vipāka do not take place unless suitable conditions come into play; see, "How Are Paticca Samuppāda Cycles Initiated?" and "Patthāna Dhammā."

10. On the other hand, things DO NOT just happen. One or more causes MUST act as the root cause for a good (or bad) effect. Therefore, a past kammā, is ALWAYS needed to act as the cause.

- The above is an important point, so let me give an example. When someone gets a headache or cancer that is a bodily vedana arising solely due to a kamm $\bar{a}$ vipa $\bar{k} a$ and one's action at that time does not come into play. Of course, one can take subsequent actions to either alleviate that problem or even to get rid of it.
- On the other hand, one may encounter sufferings that seem to be not directly due to kammā vipāka. For example, one may have breathing problems because one's body has excess phlegm (semha). So, it
appears that the cause of breathing problems is excess phlegm. But there is a root cause for phlegm to be present at high levels in one's body, and that is a past kamm $\bar{a}$. The same is true for bile (pita), gas (vāta), body fluids (sannipāta), change in climate (utu), careless behavior (visama), others' harmful actions (opakkama).

11. There are three Sutt $\bar{a}(\mathrm{SN} 36.21$, AN 5.104 , and AN 10.60) that the reader Siebe mentioned in the discussion forum ("Could Bodily Pain be due Causes Other Than Kamma Vipāka?," that list 8 such possible "secondary causes" for bodily pain:

- One should read that discussion topic to get a good understanding of how this discussion evolved, but let me briefly describe the background.

12. Those other seven "causes" (except kammā) are not root causes. They all have past kamm $\bar{a}$ as the root cause. Nothing in this world happens without a connection somewhere to the six root causes: lobha, dosa, moha, and alobha, adosa, amoha.

- One may get an idea to stand on one's leg. But if one is mindful, one can see the bodily pain associated with that action and decide not to go through with it. Note that the kammā vipāka, in this case, came initially as a mental input (through mana indriya). But one has the CHOICE not to go along with that. Therefore, a second kammā of actually standing on one leg (one's willingness to go along with it) is needed for the $k \bar{a} y a v e d a n a ̄$ to arise.
- The first case above in \#10 (cancer etc) illustrates the vipāka solely attributed to past kammā. Pain due to standing on a leg is also an immediate kammā vipāka. Other cases involve those vipāka arising due to the seven other types of causes that are discussed in the Sutt $\bar{a}$ mentioned in \#11.


## 13. Therefore, sometimes it may not be easy to figure out what is the cause and what is the effect, because the result of a past action itself can act as a (new) cause.

- The above example of standing on one's leg is a good example. The kāya vedan $\bar{a}$ WOULD NOT arise unless one lets the initial kammā vipāka (came through the mana indriya) to proceed. One has the ability to stop that kāya vedanā from arising.
- On the other hand, one cannot stop the cancer by will. One could take actions (called upakkama or prayoga) to alleviate a bodily vedana due to a kammā vipāka. By the way, upakkama is one of the eight mentioned loosely as causes in those Suttā that mention possible eight causes for kammā vipāka.

14. Those upakkama or prayoga can work in the following way too. A upakkama by person A may cause harm to person B. For example, when person B detonate a suicide bomb, person A may die as a result of that action.

- But here again, person A MUST have a pending kammā vipāka for that action by person B to cause harm for him. As I have mentioned many times, we have collected innumerable kamm $\bar{a}$ vipāka and they are waiting for such conditions to appear to give vipāka.
- (Twenty four such conditions are listed and discussed in "Patthāna Dhammā." So far, I have discussed only a few).
- Some people escape such attacks "miraculously." There is no miracle, just the fact the there may not have been a suitable kamm $\bar{a}$ vipāka waiting to be ripened, OR, a past good kamm $\bar{a}$ could overcome even some pending bad vipāka.
- This is why the Buddha said that it is impossible for a human to figure out the causes of kammā vipāka.
- Another such special case is the demise of all living beings in the realms BELOW the abhassara brahma realm at the destruction of the "material world" (loka vināsaya); over a long time, all beings in the lower realms are reborn in higher realms above the abhassara Brahma realm until a new world (new Earth in our case) is formed over billions of years. We will not get to discuss this for a while, since more background material is needed.

15. One would think that the Buddha's good kammā done in his last life would be more than enough to override any kammā vipāka from the past. However, remnants of vipāka of an $\bar{a} n a n t a r i y a ~ k a m m \bar{a}$ were there, and also there could have been other strong kamma . That is the only exception, and that is the kamm $\bar{a}$ vipāka listed among the eight other possible causes. The other seven are really not the root causes, but actually effects that appear as causes.

- The Buddha is said to have to face 12 kammā vipāka ("WebLink: suttacentral: Pubbakammapilotikabuddhaapadāna ; Therāpadāna." An English translation is at: "WebLink: ancient-buddhist-texts.net: The Connection with Previous Deeds - Pubbakammapilotika-Buddhāpadānamí"'). Much merits to the two readers who sent me the reference!).
- Five of those 12 were due to remnants of annantariya papa kammā involving verbally or physically hurting Buddhas in past lives. Two were for killings, two for abusing sages, one for breaking the back of a wrestler, one for giving wrong medication intentionally, and another for watching others engaged in fishing and enjoying it.
- By the way, Moggallana Thero was beaten to death due to remnants of a kamm $\bar{a}$ of killing his parents in a past life. He paid for most of his kammā in a niraya (worst realms in apāy $\bar{a}$ ).

16. Finally, I would caution that material in the Milindapanha are based on conversations that took place between Ven. Nagasena and King Milinda more than 100 years after the Buddha's Parinibbana. Even though most of the material in Milindapanha seems to be compatible with the Sutt $\bar{a}$, it is possible that Ven. Nagasena referred to those extra seven causes as "root causes" just because those three Suttā in \#11 above (SN 36.21, AN 5.104, and AN 10.60) did not elaborate on the deeper explanation that we discussed above.

- Furthermore, as reader Akvan pointed out in the discussion forum, Ven. Nagasena's statement about Buddha not having to face kammā vipāka is not correct (I have not personally read that account in Milindapanaha, if it is there).

17. One's understanding in how kammā/kammā vipāka operates will grow only with an understanding of basic concepts. Until then, one's ingrained belief systems will be operating based on the 10 types of micch $\bar{a}$ ditthi. There are actually two levels of micchā ditṭhi. First one needs to remove the ten types of micchā diṭthi.

- Then one can start on the Noble Eightfold Path AFTER learning about the deeper level of micchā ditṭhi. That is to realize that it is a wrong view to believe that things in this world can bring long-term happiness. This second level of wrong views are dispelled when one comprehends Tilakkhana, the Three Characteristics of this world: anicca, dukkha, anatta.
- The strongest immoral deeds are done by the 10 types of micchā ditthi. They inevitably lead to suffering and can lead to rebirth in the apa $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$.

18. One can attain Nibbāna only by getting rid of the second level of micch $\bar{a}$ dițthi, i.e, only by comprehending Tilakkhaṇa. Thus ultimate and permanent happiness can be attained only by getting rid of the second level of micchā ditṭhi.

- Both types of micchā ditṭhi are discussed in the post: "Micchā Ditthi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage."


### 3.8.1.3 Sañkhāra - What It Really Means

February 25, 2017, revised January 3, 2018; November 1, 2018; July 25, 2019; May 17, 2020; rewritten January 23, 2021; revised January 26, 2021

July 7, 2021: It is critically important to understand what is meant by "sañkhāra." I just started a new section "Basic Framework of Buddha Dhamma" to discuss the relationship among the Noble Truths, Tilakkhaṇa, and Paṭicca Samuppāda. I am including this post in that section.

## "Mental Formations"? - What Does That Mean?

1. "Mental formations" and "formations" are the conventional translations for sañkhāra. Certainly, the former is a better translation. But it is much better to grasp the idea of sañkhāra and just use that word. I recommend the same for most key Pāli words like sañ̃n̄a and viññāna.

- It comes from "san" + "khāra" or actions that involve "san"; see, "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Samsīāra)."
- All sañkhāra arises in the mind. When they lead to conscious thinking or speech, they are called vacī sañkhāra. Those conscious thoughts that lead to bodily actions are kāya sañkhāra. On the other hand, mano sañkhāra arise automatically in the mind.
- Therefore, "san" is associated with anything that one is thinking about doing.
- Sañkhāra are responsible for just getting things done to live the current life (everyday activities). They can also lead to moral/immoral actions that can bring results (vipāka) in future lives.


## Categorizations of Sainkhāra

2. First categorization: Sañkhāra can be three types of mano, vacī, and $k \bar{a} y a$. Mano sañkhārāarise automatically due to one's gati. For example, when one hears a type of music, one may generate "thoughts of liking." But another person may not like that music. That is why it depends on one's gati.

- Based on such mano sañkhārā, one may start consciously thinking (talking to oneself) about it, and one may start talking about that music in the above example. Both those are vacī sañkhāra. See, "Correct Meaning of Vacī Sañkhāra. "
- Kāya sañkhāra are "conscious thoughts" that make our bodies move.


## Kammically Neutral or Not

3. Second Categorization: Some sañkhāra are kammically neutral. Others have kammic consequences.

- Thinking about going to the store to buy food is a vacī sañkhāra. One walks to the store using kāya sañkhāra. Both are kammically neutral.
- If thoughts involve greed, anger, ignorance, they will have kammic consequences. They can bring vipāka in the future. Strong sañkhāra that could lead to rebirth are abhisañkhāra.
- Thinking angry thoughts about an enemy is a vacī sañkhāra with kammic consequences. If then one hits that person, that is done with kāya sañkhāra. Both those have kammic consequences.
- Sañkhāra with kammic consequences can be categorized according to the type of kamma. Let us discuss that now.


## Sañkhāra With Kammic Consequences

4. Third Categorization: Those with kammic consequences fall into three categories.

- Apuñ̃na sañkhāra are "defiled thoughts" (with greed, hate, ignorance.) Apuñña means "immoral."
- On the other hand, puñña sañkhāra are "moral thoughts" (without greed, hate, ignorance.) They are thoughts responsible for proper speech and actions) have good kammic consequences.
- There is a third type with kammic consequences: āneñjābhisañkhāra. These come in ONLY $a b h i s a n ̃ k h a ̄ r a$ category leading to rebirth (see below.)
- Good or bad kammā are done via those types of sañkhāra. They can immediately bring results (kamma vipāka) in this life or future lives. However, not all kammā lead to kamma vipāka; see, "What is Kamma? - Is Everything Determined by Kamma?."

5. Strong sañkhāra with kammic consequences are abhisañkhāra, where "abhi" means "strong." They usually indicate those leading to rebirths.

- Apuñña abhisañkhāra (or apuññābhisañkhāra) can lead to birth in the apāyās. Such "strong" sañkhāra are normally vacī sañkhāra and kāya sañkhāra. Mano sañkhārā have kammic consequences but do not lead to rebirth.
- Puñña abhisañkhāra (or puññābhisañkhāra) lead to "good births" specifically in the human realms, 6 Deva realms, and the 16 rūpāvacara Brahma realms. These include engaging in "moral deeds" and the cultivation of the lower 4 rūpāvacara jhāna. Even more importantly, they are essential for making progress on the Path.
- Āneñjābhisañkhāra (or āneñja abhisañkhāra) lead to rebirths in the arūpāvacara Brahma realms. That basically means the cultivation of the higher 4 arupāvacara jhāna. They lead to rebirths in the 4 arūpāvacara Brahma realms. See \#3 in, "Sañkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka."


## Why Do "Good Sañkhāra" Also Arise With Avijjäa

6. "WebLink: suttacentral: Paticcasamuppāda Vibhañga (Vb 6)" explains the step "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" as, "Tattha katame avijjā paccayā sañkhārā? Puñ̃ābhisañkhāro, apuññābhisañkhāro, āneñjäbhisañkhāro."

Translated: 'What is meant by 'avijjā paccayā sañkhārā?' It means Puññābhisañkhāra, apuññäbhisañkhāra, āneñjābhisañkhāra."

- So, how can puññābhisañkhāra and āneñjābhisañkhāra arise due to avijjā, if they are "good sañkhāra?"
- This is a CRITICAL point that differentiates "living a moral life" from "working towards Nibbāna."


## Avijjā Is Ignorance About the Four Noble Truths!

7. One can be engaged in "moral deeds" and cultivate any type of jhāna without comprehending the Four Noble Truths/Paṭicca samuppāda/Tilakkhaṇa.

- That is why ANY living-being living today has been born in most of the higher realms an uncountable number of times, as well as in bad realms. Most live in the "bad realms" (apāyās) today.
- Some of us are living in a good realm today, but we will not be released from future rebirths in the apāyās until we comprehend the Four Noble Truths/Paṭicca Samuppāda/Tilakkhaṇa.
- That is the CRITICAL point to understand.


## The Essence of Buddha Dhamma - Four Noble Truths, Paticca Samuppāda, Tilakkhaṇa

8. The Four Noble Truths are: (1) Rebirth process is filled with suffering, (2) The root-cause of that suffering is not understanding (avijjā) that our cravings for sensory pleasures (summarized as icchā/tanhhā), (3) That suffering-filled rebirth process will end when avijjā/taṇhā removed, and, (4) The way to achieve that is to follow the Noble Eightfold Path.

- Pațicca Samuppāda explains HOW good OR bad rebirths ( $j \bar{a} t i)$ arise due to the generation of (abhi) sañkhāra via avijjā. That is why the Patticca Samuppāda process starts with "avijjā paccayā sañkhārā."
- Tilakkhaṇa explains why it is NOT ENOUGH to engage in moral deeds. However, engaging in moral deeds is necessary to comprehend Tilakkhana. That is why the cultivation of the mundane eightfold path comes first. See, "Mahā Cattārīsaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty)."
- When one starts understanding Tilakkhana, one becomes a Sotāpanna Anugāmi. At that point, one automatically switches over to the Noble Eightfold Path. Following that Path leads to various magga phala and eventually the Arahant stage.
- Now that we have the above summary, we can look into the word sañkhāra a bit more.


## Relationship Between Vedanā and Mano Sainkhāra

9. To generate sañkhāra, one MUST feel (vedanā) and recognize (sañ̃̄̄̄) something first. That "something" is a new ārammaṇa coming through one of the six sense faculties.

- Mano sañkhāra (same as citta sañkhāra) are DEFINED as "sañña ca vedanā ca citta sañkhāro" in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Cūlavedalla Sutta (MN 44)."
- Thus, when a new ārammaṇa comes to the mind, mano/citta sañkhāra (vedanā, sañ̃̄̄a) arise automatically.
- Therefore, mano sañkhārā arise automatically WITH a new ārammaṇa (which is due to a kamma vipāka.) As we discuss below, such mano sañkhārā arise according to one's gati/anusaya.


## Based on Mano Sañkhāra We May Generate New Kamma

10. Based on that kamma vipāka, we may generate new kamma. If one gets "attached" to that
 could lead to immoral speech/actions, i.e., vacī and kāya sañkhāra that are apuññābhisañkhāra.

- Of course, some ārammaṇa (seeing someone doing a good deed, for example,) may initiate "good, moral thoughts (vacī sañkhāra). Those can develop to talking about it (more vacī sañkhāra) and even taking actions with kāya sañkhāra (like helping that person to continue those efforts.) Thye are all puññābhisañkhāra.
- Therefore, initial mano sañkhārā can be good or bad and can lead to puññābhisañkhāra or apuññābhisañkhāra.


## Mano Saṅkhāra and Gati/Anusaya

11. Those initial mano sañkhāra are automatically in mind due to one's gati/anusaya. Then subsequent vacī and kāya sañkhāra are generated, and we do have control over those; see, for example, "Correct Meaning of Vacī Sañkhāra."

- So, the seeds for thinking, speaking, and acting start at the instant of the first sense input, say, seeing something or hearing something that gets one's attention.
- If the sense input is strong (and one gets interested in it via like or dislike), one will start many such citta $v \bar{t} t h i$ in a short time. This leads to corresponding vacī and kāya sañkhāra to "talk to oneself," speak out or to do bodily actions.
- It is a good idea to follow the new section "Understanding the Terms in Paticca Samuppāda" to clarify that in detail. But let us discuss a few more details.


## The Way to Purify the Mind

12. As we can see from the above discussion, the mind is not pure UNTIL undefiled mano sankhāra arise automatically. By that time, anusaya and "defiled gati" would have been removed from the mind.

- That is achieved by being mindful at all times and following the three critical steps in meditation: (1) stopping bad vacī and kāya sañkhāra, (2) cultivating good vacī and kāya sañkhāra, and - most importantly - comprehending the Four Noble Truths/Pațicca Samuppāda/Tilakkhaṇa.
- Comprehending Four Noble Truths/Paṭicca Samuppāda/Tilakkhaṇa makes one understand the dangers in the rebirth process. With the understanding, one's goal will change from "enjoying life" to "seeking Nibbāna."
- For that to happen, one would have to "see" the hidden dangers in sense pleasures. Then the "tendency to attach" (see \#10 above) will decrease. When that happens "puñ̃̄ābhisañkhāra" will "switch-over" to "kusala kammä" leading to Nibbāna. See, "Kilesa - Relationship To Akusala, Kusala, And Puñ̃na Kamma." I highly recommend reading this post.
- That is how one starts on the Noble Path. That is why Sammā Dittthi is the first step there.

13. The following "wise words" succinctly summarize the process of "cleansing the mind":

- Watch your conscious thoughts (vacī sañkhāra) - they become words (stronger vacī sañkhāra.)
- Watch your words - they become actions (kāya sañkhāra.)
- Watch your actions - they become habits (gati.)
- Watch your habits - they become your character (stronger gati.)
- Watch your character - it becomes your destiny (future births.)

Steps in Paṭicca Samuppāda describe that sequence. The following are further clarifications.

## Vacī and Kāya Sañkhāra Involve Javana Citta Generating Kammic Energy

14. Conscious thinking that could lead to speaking and physical actions occur in the seven javana citta in a citta vìthi. We will discuss that in "Understanding the Terms in Paticca Samuppāda."

- Vacī or kāya sañkhāra arise due to many citta vīthi running one after another. As we discussed previously, billions of citta vithi can run in a second; see, "Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)."
- Another critical point is that the javana citta in subsequent citta vithi gets stronger and stronger. This is why when we start thinking about a person that we like or dislike, we can keep generating increasingly stronger feelings about the situation.
- Sometimes, we can see people getting angry by the minute. They are generating a lot of vacī sañkhāra even without getting a word out. But one can see the person getting highly agitated: the face gets red and facial expression can show how angry he/she has become.


## Samphassa jā Vedanā Lead to Vacī Saṅkhāra and Kāya Sañkhāra

15. In the post, "Vedanā and Samphassa-Jā-Vedanā - More Than Just Feelings," we discussed how "samphassa j $\bar{a}$ vedan $\vec{a} "$ could arise in our minds after the initial vipāka vedan $\bar{a}$. They are "mind-made" due to our gati/defilements and lead to new kamma.

- Those "samphassa jā vedanā" arise when we generate vacīsañkhāra and kāya sañkhāra as a result of the initial vipāka vedanā. Details at, "Vipāka Vedanā and "Samphassa jā Vedanā" in a Sensory Event."
- Those "samphassa j $\bar{a}$ vedan $\vec{a}$ " are all made by us consciously. However, for someone who has not cultivated Satipattthāna or Ānāpāna (the correct versions), this may not be obvious.
- If one is mindful, one could see for oneself when one starts consciously having good or bad thoughts about sensory input. With practice, one can "catch oneself" before generating too many "samphassa j $\bar{a}$ vedan $\vec{a} "$ or - to say the same thing differently - before making a lot of vacī or kāya sañkhāra.
- Of course, if the $\bar{a} r a m m a n ̣ a ~ i s ~ a ~ g o o d, ~ m o r a l ~ o n e, ~ t h a t ~ w o u l d ~ l e a d ~ t o ~ g o o d, ~ m o r a l ~ v a c \bar{\imath} ~ a n d ~ k \bar{a} y a$ sañkhāra.
- Such good, moral vacī and kāya sañkhāra can lead to Nibbāna IF one has comprehended the Four Noble Truths/Paṭicca Samuppāda/Tilakkhaṇa.


### 3.8.2 Rūpa Aggregate

## Bhūta and Yathābhūta - What Do They Really Mean

What are rūpa? - Dhamma are rūpa too!

### 3.8.2.1 Bhūta and Yathābhūta - What Do They Really Mean

December 28, 2017; revised January 21, 2022; re-written August 31, 2022 (\#10 revised later in the day) (\#10 revised on October 17, 2022)

## Yathābhūta - True Nature of Bhūta

1. Yathābhūta is usually translated as "true nature" (close to the true meaning). It implies that bhūta means "nature"; sometimes, bhūta is translated as "becoming." Both are wrong.

- These words are also associated with yathābhūta ñāna. Here ñaṇa means wisdom. That is wisdom about the true nature of this world made of four types of bhūta: pathavi, āpo, tejo, and vāyo.
- Everything in this world (alive and inert) is made of bhūta.

2. Bhūta is a Sinhala word as well as a Pāli word. It means a "ghost." That deeper meaning is associated with the four "mahā bhūta": pathavi, $\overline{a p o, ~ t e j o, ~ a n d ~ v a ̄ y o . ~ T h a t ~ i s ~ a l s o ~ w h y ~ a ~ g a n d h a b b a ~ i s ~ c a l l e d ~ a ~}$ "ghost" too: "Ghost 1990 Movie - Good Depiction of Gandhabba Concept." Also, see \#5 below.

- One cannot ever see mahā bhūta individually. The smallest unit of matter is a suddhāțthaka, which consists of the four mahā bhūta AND varna, gandha, rasa, and $\bar{o} j a$. Thus, a suddhāṭthaka ("suddha" + "attha" where "suddha" is pure or fundamental and "attha" is eight) means "pure octad" or "pure unit of eight components." The formation of a suddhäṭthaka is discussed in "The Origin of Matter - Suddhātthaka."
- Note that the four mahā bhūta are the primary rūpa. All others, including varna, gandha, rasa, and $\bar{o} j a$, are derived from them and are called upādaya rūpa. Those arise due to taṇhā for the primary rupa.


## The origin of Suddhatṭhaka (and thus the World) is the Mind

3. As mentioned in that post, bhūta originates in "gati" (one's character/habits). When one cultivates a certain gati, that can lead to the creation of bhūta (suddhāṭthaka) produced in javana citta according to abhisañkhāra.

- To understand these keywords, one needs to know about gati (I have sometimes spelled it as gathi, the way it is pronounced.) For example, see "Gati, Bhava, and Jāti. "
- Modern science is struggling to distinguish between pure energy and tangible matter; see the Reference below. That demarcation happens at the suddhäṭhaka stage.


## Mind Energy to Matter

4. A suddhātthaka is much smaller than even a photon (a particle of light,) and the Buddha said that mah $\bar{a}$ bhūta are actual "smallest units of matter." That is why he called them bhūta.

- One can NEVER see them or detect them individually. As we mentioned above, the smallest unit of $r \bar{u} p a$ or a suddhāṭthaka consists of eight subunits, including the four mahā bhūta.
- Furthermore, these bhūta arise from gati of living beings; see "The Origin of Matter - Suddhtthaka." A person with rough character qualities is likely to create suddhātt thaka with a higher proportion of pathavi, etc.

5. Billions of billions of suddhatthaka are combined to lead to the mahā bhūta stage of rūpa. Brahmās have bodies made of mahā bhūta. Only Brahmā can see such fine rūpa.

- Large aggregates of mahā bhūta combine to form the denser "dhātu stage" of rūpa. The bodies of Devas are at a lighter dhātu stage, and human bodies are denser.
- Forum participant Dosakkhayo has compiled a figure showing the formation of suddhatthaka and how their condensation leads to denser objects. You can download it here: "Evolution of Rupa." Much merits to him!



## Difference Between "Live Matter" and "Inert Matter"

6. Both types originate via the kammic energy created by the mind. That process is Paticca Samuppāda (PS.) I have only explained the arising of living beings (i.e., new bhavaljāti) via PS: "Paticca Samuppāda."

- All mater that we see are made of such dense dhātu. Rocks have dhātu that have mostly pathavi. Water mostly has āpo. Fire mainly contains tejo, and wind mostly vāyo. Thus, earth, water, fire, and wind are called pathavi, āpo, tejo, and vāyo.


## Some suddhatṭhaka "Acquire Life"

7. A suddhāṭthaka is inert. It acquires "life" when energized by the mind in creating "kammaja rūpa." That energy is in rotation (paribramana) and spin (bramana). When that embedded energy runs out, rotation and spin stop, becoming inert again.

- For example, a hadaya vatthu for a new existence comes into being as a kammaja rūpa at the cutipatisandhi moment. During its lifetime, the hadaya vatthu maintains its spin and rotation. Details at " 31 Realms Associated with the Earth."
- When the kammic energy is exhausted, its motion stops, and the bhava ends. At that time, a new hadaya vatthu for a new bhava is formed by kammic energy. Thus, NOTHING is transferred from "here to there." Kammic energy creates a new existence in the appropriate realm.

8. The hadaya vatthu is also called "vatthu dasaka" where dasaka means "ten." That is because the hadaya vatthu or vatthu dasaka has two energy modes (spin and rotation) in addition to the eight parts in the inert suddhätthaka. Thus the name dasaka (made of ten units). A navaka (discussed below) has only spin and is made of nine units.

- This added spin and rotation is what gives life to an inert suddhattthaka. That power or energy is created by javana citta (mind). If a kamma bija has more energy, it will sustain a bhava (hadaya vatthu) for longer.
- The same is true for the five pasāda rūpa (cakkhu, sōta, ghana, jivha, and kāya) formed at the moment of cuti-patisandhi. There are two bhava rūpa (which are also dasaka,) and jivitindriya rūpa (which is a navaka; just spin or bramana). The post discusses how different modes of rotation and spin give rise to these nine "life forming" basic units: "Gandhabba Sensing the World - With and Without a Physica.'Body".
- By the way, the word kammaja comes from "kamma" + " $j a$ " where " $j a$ " means birth. Therefore, kammic energy creates those nine kammaja rūpa.


## Physical Body Is Inert Without Gandhabba

9. Now, we can see that our heavy physical body, by itself, is inert. The real life is in the gandhabba with the hadaya vatthu and the five pasāda.

- At the death of the physical body, this life-sustaining gandhabba leaves the body, and the body becomes lifeless and decays.
- In the case of an out-of-body experience (OBE), even though the gandhabba leaves the physical body, it is still connected to the physical body (by a "silver cord" in the terminology of astral projection), and that is why the body does not start to decay: "Out-of-Body Experience (OBE) and Manomaya Kāya."

10. Therefore, in all life forms in the 31 realms, life energy is in the ultra-fine manomaya kaya ("mind-made body').

- In kāma loka, the manomaya kāya would have a hadaya vatthu (vatthu dasaka,) bhāva dasaka, and five pasāda rūpa (each of which is a dasaka.) A dasaka is a suddhāṭthaka (the smallest unit of matter with eight units) and two modes of vibration and rotation; "dasaka" means a "collection of ten." Thus, a manomaya kāya in kāma loka would have seven suddhāṭthaka-size units.
- In rūpāvacara Brahma realms, only cakkhu and sota pasāda rūpa are present in addition to hadaya vatthu, kāya dasaka, and bhāva dasaka, i.e., five suddhāṭthaka-size units. In the asañña realm, hadaya vatthu is there, but it is shielded by the "physical body," which has no mana indriya. Thus, it cannot interact with dhammā (or viññāna dhātu,) and cittās cannot arise.
- In arūpāvacara Brahma realms, there is only the hadaya vatthu.
- This is another critical factor in the yathābhūta ñāna: All life forms are like bhūta (ghosts); in essence, life is maintained by an ultra-fine (invisible) body that is impossible to see and has a temporary existence. Any life in any realm is short-lived on the samisāric scale. On the samisāric scale, trillion years is like a drop of water in the ocean.


## Yathābhūta Nāana - Ultimate Truth About the World

11. When someone comprehends what we discussed above about the true nature of matter that exists in this world, one is said to have the yathābhūta ñanna. That is the "knowledge about the true nature of things that comprise our world."

- However, just reading about them is just the start. That ñāna grows as one comprehends the finer details.
- Yathā means true nature. Yathābhūta means the true nature of matter (or the true nature of bhūta, which arises via the MIND. Of course, finer details need a good understanding of Abhidhamma.
- However, it is sufficient for most purposes to have a rough idea.

12. This is also why the Buddha said, "manō pubbangama dhamma $\bar{a}$, manō sett $\bar{a}$ manōmay $\bar{a}$ " in the famous Dhammapada verse.

- "Everything in this world has its origins in mind. The mind prepares all".
- See "Manōpubbangamā Dhammā..."

13. This yathābhūta ñāna about the real nature of our body also helps to get rid of the "ghana sañña" about our bodies. Humans value their dense bodies because they believe an unchanging "self' exists in the physical body.

- Those with uccheda ditthi (like most current scientists and philosophers) believe that our physical body (and its brain) is all there.
- Those with sāssata dittthi believe that there is a mental body that lives forever.


## Yathābhūta Ñāṇa Helps Dispel Sakkāya Diṭ̣̆hi

14. Buddha discovered that both are wrong views. There is a mental body, but it drastically changes from bhava to bhava. One could be a deva or a human for the time being, but the next bhava could be in an apāyā.

- Nothing in our physical body is worth being taken as "mine."
- When one comprehends this fact, sakkāya diṭthi (which is one of four conditions to attain the Sotāpanna stage) is removed.
- This aspect is discussed in "WebLink: suttacentral: Mūlapariyāya Sutta (MN 1)," "WebLink: suttacentral: Kaccānagotta Sutta (SN 12.15)," AND "WebLink: suttacentral: Mahā Hatthipadopama Sutta (MN 28)," among others.
- However, it is just one way to remove sakkāya ditṭhi. Don't worry if you don't comprehend sakkāya diṭthi this way.


## Ananubhūtaín - Inability to See the Real Nature of Things in the World

15. Now we see that the precursors for all matter in this world, four mahā bhūta, are mind-made and have a transient existence. They are "bhūta" or "ghosts." And since everything else is made of them, what we consider "solid, tangible things" in this world are really "ghost-like."

- The knowledge of this real "ghost-like" nature is called "yathābhūta ñāna." When one has that knowledge, one looks at the world according to that correct view, called "anu bhūtam.."
- When one is unaware of this true nature, it is called "na anu bhūtaí"," which rhymes "ananubhūtamं," just like "na āgāmi" becomes "Anāgāmi." It is to note that many key Pāli words are composed that way: anatta is "na" + "atta"; see, "Anatta - the Opposite of Which Atta?".
- Ānantariya is "na" + "an" + "antara". Words like this cannot be analyzed grammatically. This is why current Pāli experts incorrectly interpret such words (and cannot interpret many keywords).
- The word "ananubhūtam" comes in several key suttā, including the ones mentioned above in \#12.

16. One good example is the famous "WebLink: suttacentral: Brahmanimantanika Sutta (MN 49)": "Viññāṇaṃ anidassanaṃ anantaṃ sabbato pabham, taṃ pathaviyā pathavattena ananubhūtam,
āpassa āpattena ananubhūtaṃ, tejassa tejattena ananubhūtam, vāyassavāyattena ananubhūtam, bhūtānaṃ bhūtattena ananubhūtam, devānaṃ devattena ananubhūtam, pajāpatissa pajāpatittena ananubhūtam, brahmānaṃ brahmattena ananubhūtam, ābhassarānaṃ ābhassarattena ananubhūtaṃ, subhakiṇhānaṃ subhakiṇhānaṃ subhakiṇhattena ananubhūtaṃ, vehapphalānaṃ vehapphalattena ananubhūtaṃ, abhibhussa abhibhuttena ananubhūtam, sabbassa sabbattena ananubhūtam.."

Translated: "Viñ̃̃̄̄na is unseen, infinite, and leads to the rebirth process for all. With viñ̃̄̄̄na, one cannot comprehend the real nature of pathavi, àpo, tejo, vāyo, bhūta, deva, pajapti brahma, abhassara brahma, subhakinha brahma, vehapphala brahma, etc. and everything in this world (sabba)".

- One has a defiled consciousness or viññāna until one attains the Arahantship. Until then, one cannot fully comprehend the real "ghost-like" nature of everything in this world, i.e., one's yathābhūta ñāna is not complete.
- We will discuss the first part of the verse "Viññānam anidassanaṃ anantaṃ sabbatō pabhaṃ.." in the next post. This short phrase is commonly mistranslated. See "Anidassana Viñ̃̃āna - What It Really Means."

17. Another major sutta where it appears is "WebLink: suttacentral: Salāyatana Vibhañga Sutta (MN 137)": "Rūpānaì tveva aniccataì viditvā viparināmavirāganirodhaí, 'pubbe ceva rūpā etarahi ca sabbe te rūpā aniccā dukkhā vipariṇāmadhammā’ti evametaì yathābhūtaí sammappaññāya passato uppajjäti somanassaì."

- Loosely Translated: "Any rūpa that has existed or is in existence now has a "ghost-like transient nature." That is why they change unexpectedly (viparin̄ama) and have an anicca nature. Comprehending this true nature brings joy in one's mind (somanassa)."


## Reference (Scientific Theories of Matter)

1. Scientists have now verified the illusive nature of matter on a small scale. They thought the atom to be the smallest possible division of matter until 1897 when J.J. Thomson discovered the electron. An atom consists of protons, neutrons, and electrons. Subsequently, protons and neutrons turned out to have structure too. But their sub-units (quarks, etc.) cannot be detected individually).

- With the advent of quantum mechanics, the distinction between matter and energy has blurred. The mass of a particle depends on its speed. Photons or "particles of light" have zero mass at rest, i.e., zero rest mass. It is typical to state the mass of an elementary particle in terms of energy units.
- All the above is consistent with rūpa's elusive nature (bhūta) in Buddha Dhamma.

2. Furthermore, it is impossible to determine an elementary particle's exact position (Heisenberg uncertainty principle.) For example, it is only possible to say that an electron can be within a certain region of space. Thus, an electron is like a ghost. Scientists cannot precisely measure its location at any time.

- The situation is even worse for a photon, a particle of light. When a photon is released, one can only find it later by stopping it at a detector. It is IMPOSSIBLE to state the exact path of the photon from the source to the sensor. It could have been anywhere in between. The same applies to an electron, even though it has a non-zero rest mass.
- Some refer to the above observations as "quantum weirdness." Microscopic particles are as elusive as ghosts.


### 3.8.2.2 What are Rūpa? - Dhammā are Rūpa Too!

May 13, 2017; revised November 4, 2017; March 20, 2021; January 15, 2022

All our conscious thoughts start with one of the six senses getting input from the external world. With those six sense faculties, we detect six types of rūpa "out there" in the world.

## Dhammā Are Subtle Rūpa Below Suddhaṭthaka

1. Many people think rūpa means just "material things" that we can see out in the world, but EVERYTHING that we sense through our six senses is rūpa. I will systematically explain this.

- Those things that we detect with our five physical senses are what we can call "dense rūpa" made of suddhatthaka, i.e., they are made of mahā bhūta (pathavi, āpo, tejo, vāyo) and are located in $\bar{a} k \bar{a} s a \operatorname{dha} t u$; see, "The Origin of Matter - Suddhatthaka."
- Such rūpa that we detect with the mana indriya are called "dhammā." These are just energies and have not condensed to the suddhatṭhaka level, i.e., they are below the suddhatthaka stage.
- It is good to remember that dhamma refers to a doctrine (like in Buddha Dhamma), and dhamm $\bar{a}$ (with a long "a") refers to such fine (or subtle) rūp $\bar{a}$.
- Let us discuss those two types of $r \bar{u} p a$ in detail first.


## The Six Sense Faculties Detect Six Types of Rūpa

2. All things that we experience through our SIX senses are rūpa. But only the first FIVE types of sensory inputs come through the five physical senses (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body). Science is not aware of the SIXTH one, called mana indriya (located in the brain). But all six are clearly stated in the Cha Chakka Sutta, as discussed below.

- All six types of rūpa are EXPERIENCED by the mind, i.e., with citta (thoughts) with cetasika (mental factors) in them.
- For details of how the mind experiences the sensory inputs that come through the six "sense doors," see "Brain - Interface between Mind and Body."


## Dense Rūpa Made With Suddhatṭhaka

3. Those that we experience through our FIVE physical senses (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and the body) are "dense rūpa." They have suddhatt!haka made of the four great elements or "cattāri mahā bhūtā."

- Those five kinds of $r \bar{u} p a$ are all in our "material world," the world that we experience with the five physical senses.
- We touch with our body or see with our eyes the rūpa that are familiar to everyone. They are "rūpa rūpa" or "vannáa rūpa" (varna rūpa in Sinhala or Sanskrit) to distinguish from other four types.
- However, we need light to "see" those "rūpa rūpa." Light consists of tiny particles called photons. Those photons have tiny masses due to their energies.

4. Now, let us look at the other four types of $r \bar{u} p a$ that we detect with our ears, noses, tongues.

- It is easy to see that what we taste is also "rūpa," ie., solid food or liquids.
- What we detect with the nose are scents, which are very small particulates. So, they are also "rūpa."
- When we hear sounds, our ears detect disturbances in the air due to that sound. Sound, therefore, involves energy, just like light. Sometimes sound energy is attributed to energy packets called "phonons."


## Dense Rūpa Are in Kāma and Rūpa Loka

5. Therefore, detection of $r \bar{u} p a$ in $k \bar{a} m a ~ l o k a$ and rūpa loka involve matter or energy, and all those are above the suddhatthaka stage.

- Yes. The light particles or photons are also made of suddhatt thaka.
- They are above the suddhatthaka stage, so one can see how minute a suddhatthaka is; it is much, much smaller than an atom in modern science.
- For example, a photon in the visible range (which is a suddhattthaka) is a billion times less massive than a hydrogen atom, the smallest atom. That is like the mass difference between a grain of sand an average airplane.
- A suddhatthaka could be a billion times smaller than that photon.


## Science Verified Light as a Type of Rūpa Recently

6. That is another example of how Buddha was ahead of modern science 2500 years ago. He had categorized all five "objects" sensed by the five physical senses as "rūpa" made up of suddhatthaka. It was only about 100 years ago that science identified photons as particles with the advent of quantum mechanics.

- Even many physicists did not accept the particle nature of light until the single-photon detection experiments of Grainger, Roger, and Aspect in 1986: Grainger et al-Experimental Evidence for a Photon Anticorrelation Effect-1986.
- Now it is accepted that light is made up of particles called photons.


## Experiencing Dhammā Requires Only the Mind

7. Now, let us think about what else we experience, other than those detected with the five physical senses. Imagine someone trapped in a cell with soundproof walls with no light inside and nothing in that room except its walls.

- That person can only touch the walls. He cannot see, hear, smell, or taste anything.
- But touch is not the only sensory experience he has. He can think about anything he wants to. He can think about past events and think about what can take place in the future.
- Those thoughts do not come at random but due to kamma vipāka. Of course, one can willingly recall them too. They are one's memories and future hopes, among others. That is the part that most people don't even consider.

8. As we discussed above, those are the finer $r \bar{u} p a$ detected by the mind lie below the suddhatthaka stage. They are detected by the mana indriya in the brain (another fact unknown to science) and subsequently sensed by the mind.

- Kamma bīja - that are generated by our minds (via our thoughts) - are also part of dhamm $\bar{a}$. They bring kamma vipāka back from time to time. We think of these as "random thoughts" that come to us about things and people.
- Those dhammā are not coarse enough to be "seeing" even with abhiñ̃n̄ $\bar{a}$ powers and do not make contact with other five coarse senses. Thus they are called, "anidassanamं appaṭighaì dhammāyatana pariyāpanna rūpam."
- Here, "anidassana" means "cannot be seen," and "appatigha" means "cannot be touched or sensed with even the finest instrument." And, "dhammāyatana pariyāpanna rūpam" means "rupa that belong to dhammāyatana"; see, "What are Dhamma? - A Deeper Analysis."


## Five Physical Senses and the Mana Indriya

9. We see a person when light reflected off of that person comes to our eyes. A sound is heard when the air disturbances due to that sound reach our ears. We smell a scent when tiny particulates of scent reach our noses. When food particles make contact with our tongues, we taste the food.

- So, we have five physical "sensors" on our bodies to detect those five five sense inputs. They are eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and our bodies. They are called cakkhu, sota, ghāna, jivhā, and $k \bar{a} y a$ indriya.
- The sixth sense that we have is called the mana indriya. It is located in the brain. But I have not yet been able to identify it with the known components of the brain. Of course, scientists do not think about it that way. That is how the Buddha described it.

10. We detect "dhamm $\vec{a}$ " with the mana indriya, just like we detect pictures with cakkhu indriya or sounds with sota indriya (ears). But all these sensory inputs are "felt" by the mind (hadaya vatthu) located close to the physical heart; see, "Brain - Interface between Mind and Body."

- These dhammā are also rūpa in Buddha Dhamma, but they are even finer (subtle) than those light particles or photons.
- "Dhamma" are just energies that lie BELOW the suddhatt!thaka stage. We cannot detect them with even the most advanced scientific instruments.
- That person locked up in an isolated room can generate thoughts about his past or future. That involves dhammā and the mana indriya.


## Dhammā Are Kamma Bīja

11. Just like the dense rūpa that we detect with our five physical senses are in Kāma loka and rūpa loka. Dhammā (which are the same as kamma bīja) are in the viññāṇa plane; see, "Our Two Worlds: Material and Mental."

- This mano loka is also called "bhava" because that is where one's kamma bïja are (see \#8.) We all have numerous kamma bïja that can give rise to a variety of bhava at the cuti-patisandhi moment when a new bhava is grasped (the strongest kamma bïja corresponding to an appropriate bhava is selected).
- Of course, kamma vipāka during a given life can also arise due to "smaller kamma bïja," as mentioned above.
- When kamma bïja lose their energies over long times, they become just "records." of what happened. Now they cannot bring any more vipāka, but become only "memories."

12. So, these dhamma (or kamma bīja) are rūpa that are below the suddhatthaka stage, and are in our "mano loka" or "mental world," as opposed to dense rūpa that are in our "material world" or "rūpa loka."

- The "mental world" is all around us, just like the "material world," but of course, we cannot "see it," just like we cannot "see" all those signals from radios, televisions, and cell phones that are all around us.
- But we do know that those radio, television, and cell phone signals are there because we can receive them with our radios, TVs, and cell phones. Just the same way, we receive those "dhammä" with our mana indriya.
- One may be engaged in some task, say washing dishes in the kitchen, but all of a sudden, a thought may come to mind about a friend far away or some incident at work. That is due to "dhamma" impinging on mana indriya due to kamma vipāka.
- Also, we can recall such memories at our will too.


## Six Types of Sensory Experiences - Chachakka Sutta (MN 148)

13. Chachakka Sutta (MN 148) (Ref. 1) describes the sensory interactions with all six senses; see, "Chachakka Sutta - Six Types of Vipāka Viññ̄̄na." For example, a "seeing event" is a sensory input through the eyes: "cakkhuñca paticca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññānam்," i.e., "eye-consciousness arises when a rupa rūpa (with the aid of light) impinges on the eyes."

- Similarly, hearing is due to: "sotañca pațicca sadde ca uppajjati sotaviñ̃āṇaim," etc. for other physical senses of ghāna (smell), jivhā (taste), and kāya (body).
- Finally, detection of dhammā with the mana indriya stated as "manañca paṭicca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviññānam."."


## Abhidhamma Description

15. For those familiar with Abhidhamma, we can state the above with the Abhidhamma language. According to Buddha Dhamma, EVERYTHING in existence can be put into four ultimate realities (paramattha dhamma):

- Thoughts (citta)
- Thought qualities or mental factors (cetasika)
- Matter (rūpa) (includes energy and dhammā.)
- Nibbāna

16. These dhammā eventually lead to the formation of dense $r \bar{u} p a$ that we enjoy with our five physical senses.

Such dense $r \bar{u} p a$ have finite lifetimes (they are impermanent). Besides, they change unpredictably during their existence, and that is called viparināma lakkhana.

- But no matter how hard one tries, one will not be able to maintain such dense $r \bar{u} p a$ to one's satisfaction. Thus, such dense rūpa leads to more suffering than any pleasure.
- Five types of dense rūpa are in our "rūpa loka," the less dense dhammā are in our "mano loka"; see, "Our Two Worlds: Material and Mental."
- A living being exists to experience such dense $r \bar{u} p a$ and hopes to enjoy them with the mind (with citta and cetasika). That is the basis of existence in a sentence.


## Sabbe Dhammā Anattā

17. The Buddha said, "sabbe dhammā anatt $\bar{a}$," i.e., "all dhamm $\bar{a}$ are without essence at the end" and must be given up to attain Nibbāna. But that cannot be done by sheer willpower: One has to comprehend the true nature - Tilakkhaṇa - to see the real nature of all rūpa, including dhamm $\bar{a}$.

- We make our world by creating dhammā on our own. That is a critical point that I will try to explain in future posts in this "Living Dhamma" section.
- The basis for making dhammā are our thoughts with javana citta. A javana citta generates "kamma $b \bar{y} a$," and they give rise to future kamma vipāka. So, kamma bīja are dhamm $\bar{a}$. They are very tiny packets of energy below the suddhatthaka stage.
- But some javana (especially in jhāna samāpatti) can create energies above the suddhaṭthaka stage, i.e., they can produce tangible rūpa. That is how one with abhiñña powers can "create" physical objects.

18. Any $r \bar{u} p a$ (including kamma $b \bar{i} j a$ ) that one makes for oneself cannot be maintained to one's satisfaction.

- Any rūpa with energy will eventually be destroyed, or that energy will wear out. Furthermore, such rūpa can and will change unexpectedly while in existence, too; that is the viparinama characteristic and is a root cause of suffering.
- The only dhammās that are "permanent" are nāma gotta, records of our sañkhāra, which do not have energy in them; "Nāmagotta, Bhava, Kamma Bija, and Mano Loka (Mind Plane)."

19. When one sees the perils of this rebirth process (after one grasps the Tilakkhana), one stops making those causes via abhisañkhāra, and also gives up the craving (tanh $\bar{a})$ for them, which leads to Nibbāna.

- Nibbāna results when all those causes are removed, no rūpa can arise. Hence Nibbāna is permanent. No more suffering!


## Reference

1. The six sense inputs (āyatana) and the six types of rūpa that we experience with them are discussed in several suttā. For example, in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Cha Chakka Sutta (MN 148)":
"Cha ajjhattikāni āyatanāni veditabbānī'ti-iti kho panetaì vuttaì. Kiñcetam pațicca vuttam̀? Cakkhāyatanaì, sotāyatanam̀, ghānāyatanaì, jivhāyatanaì, kāyāyatanaì, manāyatanaì. 'Cha ajjhattikāni āyatanāni veditabbānū̄ti-iti yaim taì vuttaì, idametaì paṭicca vuttaì. Idaì pathamaí chakkam. (1)"
"Cha bāhirāni āyatanāni veditabbān̄̄’ti-iti kho panetaì vuttam. Kiñcetaím paticca vuttamं? Rūpāyatanaìm, saddāyatanaì, gandhāyatanaì, rasāyatanaì, phoṭṭhabbāyatanaì, dhammāyatanaì. 'Cha bāhirāni āyatanāni veditabbān̄̄’ti-iti yaì taín vuttaìm, idametaìm paṭicca vuttaim. Idä் dutiyamं chakkam. (2)"

- Thus, there are six (Cha) internal āyatana (ajjhattikāni āyatanāni) and six external (bāhirāni āyatanāni).
- The sixth internal āyatana is manāyatana, and it detects dhamma (called manāyatana, just like sadda or sound is called saddāyatana).

A more in-depth analysis of dhammā is at, "What are Dhamma? - A Deeper Analysis."

### 3.8.3 Viññāṇa Aggregate

November 30, 2017
Viññāna - What It Really Means
Kamma Viññāna - Link Between Mind and Matter
Anidassana Viññāna - What It Really Means

### 3.8.3. Viññāṇa - What It Really Means

May 26, 2017; revised May 16, 2020

## Two Types of Viññāna

It is a good idea to read the post, "Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)" frrst. More at "Essential Abhidhamma - The Basics."

1. So far, in this subsection on the mental aggregates, we have discussed sañ̃ $\bar{a}, v e d a n \bar{a}$, and sañkhāra in simple terms, mainly focusing on their relevance to stay on the Path. See, "Nāma \& Rūpa to Nāmarūpa." My main goal is to provide the key and essential aspects of these terms so that one can see "how to cool down the mind" and progress towards Nibbāna.

- Viññāna can be said to encompass (include) all those three mental categories: saññā, vedana $\bar{a}$, and sañkhāra. So, we can say that viññāna is the overall effect our awareness encompassing our perceptions (sañ̃̄̄̄), feelings (vedanā), and our likes and dislikes (sañkhāra).
- But viññāna represents a bit more - mainly "our hopes and desires that we want to from this world." That is the more critical aspect - which makes the connection with $r \bar{u} p a$ - that we need to understand, but first, we need to know that there are two types of viñ $\tilde{n} a ̈ n a$.


## Vipāka Viññạ̣̄a

2. When we see something, a cakkhu viññāṇa arises. A split second later we may hear something, and sota viññāna arises. When we watch a movie, it seems like we are seeing and listening at the same time, but it only appears that way because our mind is so fast.

- Basically, six types of viññāna can arise via our six senses: eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and the mind, called cakkhu, sota, ghāna,jivhā, kāya, and mano viññ̄āna. They are all vipāka viññāṇa.
- Therefore, vipāka viññāna can be six types, and they will bring vipāka even for an Arahant until the death of the physical body.
- We don't have control over them once they arise. But we can, of course, avoid some. For example, if we don't want to watch a movie, we can decide not to view it.


## Kamma Viññ̄ạna

3. Then, based on that vipāka viññāna, kamma viññāna CAN arise, IF we get attached to that vipāka viññāna via greed, hate, or ignorance.

- For example, person X may see a person Y that X dislikes. That seeing event is a vipāka, and thus the viññāna generated is a vipāka viññāna.
- But as soon as X sees Y, hateful thoughts may come to X's mind, with which X can generate NEW KAMMA. Those thoughts have kamma viññāna.
- Kamma viññāna ALWAYS arise in the MIND door (not at the other five doors) i.e., kamma viññāna are ALWAYS mano viñ̃̃ān̄a. That is in contrast to vipāka viññāna which can arise at any of the six sense doors.


## Six Types of Vipāka Viññ̄āna

4. So, a vipāka viññāna can arise due to any of the six senses. Seeing a rūpa with eyes ("cakkhuñca paticca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññānain"), hearing a sound with ears ("sotañca paṭicca sadde ca uppajjati sotaviñ̃āṇam"),...dhamma with mana indriya ("manañca paticca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviñ̃̄ānà̀"').

- Note that vipāka viñ̃n̄ạna DO NOT arise via "sañkhāra paccayā viññāna." They ALWAYS appear via eyes seeing a ruppa, ears hearing a sound, etc.
- We are all familiar with how "visual awareness" or cakkhu viññanna arise due to seeing a rūpa. Similarly, auditory awareness arises due to hearing a sound, etc. But most of our vipāka viññanna occur due to "mental awareness" or mano viñ̃n̄ạna resulting via dhamma impinging on the mana indriya; see, "What are rūpa? - Dhamma are rūpa too!."
- Note that rūpa that we see with our eyes are rūpa rūpa (or vaṇna rūpa); they usually are just called rupa, but this can lead to confusion if someone is not aware of this detail.

5. In general, all we experience in this world are rūpa: rūpa rūpa, sadda rūpa, gandha rūpa, rasa rūpa, phott $h a b b a$ rūpa, and ALSO dhamma.

- Dhamma are not called rūpa, simply because they are below the suddhatṭhaka stage. They have not yet "condensed" to the suddhatthaka stage; see, "The Origin of Matter - Suddhatthaka."
- They are very subtle $r \bar{u} p a$ that cannot be seen or touched: "anidassanan appatighan"; see, "What are rūpa? - Dhamma are rūpa too!."


## Based on Vipāka Viññạ̄̂a We Initiate Kamma Viññāna

6. To summarize: vipāka viññāna can arise at any of the six senses, and thus can be cakkhu, sota, jivhā, ghāna, kāya, or mano viññāṇa.

- If the vipāka viññāna is strong (i.e., if the experience liked or disliked), then because of avijjā, we start generating sañkhāra about it, which lead to a viññanna that we create on our own, a kamma viñ̃̃āna.
- Therefore, in contrast to vipāka viññāna, kamma viññāna arise via "sañkhāra paccayā viññāna."
- They start automatically as mano viññāna, via mano sañkhāra. But then we consciously start generating more via vacī and kāya sañkhāra, and that will strengthen kamma viññāṇa.
- We have discussed how mano sañkhāra arise automatically due to our gati, and then we consciously generate vacī and kāya sañkhāra: "How Are Gati and Kilesa Incorporated into Thoughts?."


## Examples of Vipāka Viññāṇa

7. Let us first consider a couple of examples of vipāka viññāna.

- We may get to eat a tasty food item. The experience of that food on the tongue generates taste (jivh $\bar{a}$ viññāna), which is a vipāka viñ̃ñạa. We got to taste that as a result of a previous good kamma $v i p a \bar{k} a$. That experience includes identifying what food it is (sañña $\bar{a}$, and the taste it gives (vedan $\bar{a}$ ).
- If we get a headache, that is bad kāya viññāna that arose due to a past bad kamma, i.e., a kamma vipāka. We know it is a headache (sañña $\bar{a}$, and we feel the pain (vedanā).
- When the sense input first comes, we just become aware of it. There are no kamma done with vipāka viññāna.


## Examples of Kamma Viññạna

8. Based on those six types of vipāka viññāna that arise, we generate new mental states on our own. These are called kamma viñ̃̃̄̄̄na.

- In the above first example, if we like the taste, we immediately start getting attached to it and begin generating sañkhāra about that food. We begin to create vacī sañkhāra (talking to ourselves) about how good the food is. That is a different mental state that we make on our own. Of course, we are likely to generate kāya sañkhāra also when eating that food again. We have discussed the three types of sañkhāra in "Sañkhāra - What It Really Means."
- A kamma viññạna arises within a fraction of a second after the vipāka viññāna, so that we usually cannot differentiate between the two mental states. (For those who are familiar with Abhidhamma, this is discussed at the end of this post).
- Of course, vipāka viñ̃āạa lasts while we eat the food. A large number of jivhādvāra citta vīthi run while we eat. Kamma viññāna also arise later in the same citta vithi, but they also occur well after the meal. We can recall eating that food later at night (with a mano viñ̃ān̄a) and generate more kamma viññ̄ạa (mainly via vacī sañkhāra) by consciously thinking how good it was.
- In the second example above, a split second after we start experiencing the headache (vipāka viññ̄ạna and the associated feeling of pain), we start getting depressed and generating vacī sañkhāra about how this is going to ruin the day and mess up all our plans.


## Kamma Viññạ̣̄a Create Kamma Bija

9. In both those examples, our first mental state (vipāka viññāna) was so strong that we - on our own generated a kamma viññāna which also gives rise to a kamma bīja.

- That kamma būja can come back to our mind later as a vipāka viñnāṇa (this is a mano viñ̃̃āna). That is how we recalled our experience with tasty food later at night.
- If that headache was terrible, we might be able to recall it days or weeks later.

10. Thus the important point is that a kamma bija is the same as a "dhamm $\overrightarrow{\boldsymbol{a}}$ " that makes contact with the mind to give rise to a "mind sense event"; see, "What are rūpa? - Dhamma are rūpa too!."

- Just as a seeing event arises when the cakkhu indriya makes contact with a rūpa ("cakkhuñca paticca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññānam"'), a "mind event" occurs when a dhammā makes contact with the mana indriya ("manañca paṭicca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviññānam").
- One may attach to the taste of that delicious food. While thinking about how to taste it again in the future, many strong javana citta can lead to a kamma bïja.
- Don't be put off by those Pāli words. Once you get to know the meanings behind these words, it will become easy to see what happens.


## More Kamma Viññāna Lead to Strengthening of Kamma Bija

11. The strength of a given kamma bïja determines how likely would it to come back and make contact with the mind later on. For example, if it were a regular sandwich, one would not make craving for that and thus would not create strong kamma bīja or a "dhammā." Then it is likely that one would have forgotten that meal in a few hours.

- However, if the meal were delicious, one would be thinking about it many days after leaving the restaurant, and each time one generates javana citta, one will be making that kamma bïja stronger. The more one thinks about it (i.e., generates vacī sañkhāra) about it, the more robust it gets.
- See, "Correct Meaning of Vacī Sañkhāra" to see how thinking itself can lead to kamma generation.


## Three Types of Sañkhāra

12. This is how one becomes an alcoholic gradually. One starts remembering past "drinking events" and generate a lot of mano and vacī sañkhāra even when not drinking.

- By the way, drinking is a kāya sañkhāra, since it involves moving body parts.
- Mano sañkhāra arise automatically when one first think about a past drinking event (due to "manañca paṭicca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviñ̃nānami." Then when one starts consciously thinking about that past event, one starts generating vacī sañkhāra; see, "How Are Gati and Kilesa Incorporated into Thoughts?."
- All three types of sañkhāra contribute to "feed the viñ̃ān̄a for alcohol" via "sañkhāra paccayā viññāna" Paṭicca Samuppāda step. While we do not have control over mano sañkhāra that arise AUTOMATICALLY, we do have control over vacī and kāya sañkhāra that one generates CONSCIOUSLY, as discussed in the above post. That is the key to A$n \bar{a} p a \overline{n a}$ and Satipaṭthāna bhāvanā.


## Transition from Vipāka Viññạna to Kamma Viññāṇa

13. Let us look at the time-line of how these two types of viññanna arise. viññanna is not an "entity" that is always there. As with sañ̃̄̄ $\bar{a}$, vedanā, and sañkhāra, a given viññāna arises with a thought.

- When thoughts are not there, the mind is in the bhavañga state. Sometimes we see people - usually when they are not alert - staring out into space. Unless they are in deep thought (which is also possible), their minds are likely to be in the inactive bhavañga state.
- Our minds are moved away from the dormant bhavañga state to conscious thoughts first via a vipāka viññāna. Then if get attached ( $\operatorname{tanhha} \bar{a})$ to that, we start generating kamma viññanna, which will bring future kamma vipāka.
- It is essential to recognize this time-line. We start with a vipāka viññaña and then begin generating kamma viñ̃ãana. Of course, kamma leads to more vipāka later, and the whole process continues without end. That is how we go through the rebirth process.
- To stop this, we need to be mindful and stop generating kamma viññāṇa. Especially those lead to bad kamma vipāka. That is the key to $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p a \overline{n a}$ and Satipaṭ! hāna Bhāvanā.
- That is a lot of information to grasp. One may need to re-read and also read relevant posts to fully understand.


## The transition from Vipāka Viññāṇa to Kamma Viññāna is Fast

14. Finally, the time delay between vipāka viññāna and kamma viññāna is unimaginably small.

- In pañcadvāra citta vīthi with 17 thought moments, the vipāka viññāna arise at the beginning of the citta vīthi with the pañcadvārāvajjana citta. Kamma viññāṇa generate in javana citta that occur towards the end of the citta vīthi. Of course, many more pañcadvāra and manodvāra citta vīthi run if one gets attached to that object (ārammana).
- When dhamma impinges on the mana indriya to start a manodvāra vipāka event, a manodvāra citta $v i \bar{t} h i$ with around ten citta runs, with the initial vipāka viññ̄ạna arising at the mind-door adverting thought-moment. Again, kamma viññāna generate at javana citta at the end of the citta vīthi.
- Those who are into Abhidhamma can consult, "Citta vithi - Processing of Sense Inputs" for details.


## Viññāna is the Link Between Mind and Matter

15. Viñ $\tilde{a} \bar{n} a$ is the link between mind and matter, even though it is in the "nāma or mind category" sometimes.

- In the WebLink: suttacentral: Paticcasamuppāda Vibhangga, nāma is defined as only the first three khandha: "Tattha katamaín nāmaì? Vedanākkhandho, saññākkhandho, sañkhārakkhandhoidaí vuccati "nāmam." That is a clear indication that viññāna khandha does not belong in the "nāma or mind category."
- Information in these posts on viñ̃ãana could be new to many readers but are critically important. If one can grasp them, one will have the "nāmarūpa pariccheda ñāna." See, "Kamma Viññāna and Nāmarūpa Pariccheda Ñāna."
- One must read a couple of more posts before making that critical connection. See "Viññāna Aggregate."


## Next, "Kamma Viññāna - Link Between Mind and Matter", ...

### 3.8.3.2 <br> Kamma Viññāṇa - Link Between Mind and Matter

November 30, 2017; revised February 6, 2020; April 11, 2021

## Vipāka Viññāṇa Versus Kamma Viññāṇa

1. In the previous post in this series, we discussed that there are two types of viñ $\bar{n} n ̄ a$ : vipāka viññāna and kamma viññāna; see, "Viññāña - What It Really Means."

- We don't have control over vipāka viññāna, but we do have control over kamma viññāna (via controlling our sañkhāra,) and that is why it is possible to attain Nibbāna.
- We cannot do anything about the vipāka viññāna. Even in an Arahant, they arise as kamma vipāka; he/she will also see, hear, etc., like anyone else.
- Vipāka viññāna can arise via any of the six sense doors, i.e., as cakkhu, sota, ghāna, jivhā, kāya, or mano viññāna. Based on those, WE initiate new kamma viñ̃̃āna, as we discussed in the abovementioned post. This process is analyzed in detail in "How Are Paticca Samuppāda Cycles Initiated?."
- What we can - and need to do — is to stop "sañkhāra paccayā viññāna" - specifically strong vacī and kāya abhisañkhāra - leading to new strong kamma viññāna. Kamma viññāna ALWAYS arise first as mano viññāna.


## Controlling Kamma Viññāṇa

2. Ānāpāna and Satipaṭthāna Bhāvanā involve controlling kamma viññāna by being mindful of the mano sañkhāra that AUTOMATICALLY arise and controlling them with vacī and kāya sañkhāra that we consciously generate. The basis of this critical fact is discussed at "Root of All Suffering - Ten Immoral Actions."

- This means that during formal meditation, we only controls our vacī sañkhāra (conscious thoughts) since we do not move our bodies or speak.
- However, during all waking hours we need to control both vacī and $k \bar{a} y a ~ s a n ̃ k h a ̄ r a ~(i . e ., ~ o u r ~ c o n s c i o u s ~$ thoughts, speech, and bodily actions); see, "Root of All Suffering - Ten Immoral Actions."
- By the way, please do not ignore the initial posts in the "Living Dhamma" section, such as the above mentioned post. It is not possible to grasp complex posts like this one without that basic knowledge.


## Paticca Samuppāda Has Kamma Viññ̄ạna

3. In Paṭicca Samuppāda it is the kamma viññāña that comes into play in, "sañkhāra paccayā viññāna," NOT the vipāka viññāna.

- All sañkhāra are generated in our minds. While mano sañkhāra arise automatically, we CONSCIOUSLY generate vacī and kāya sañkhāra, leading to kamma viñãāna; see, "Root of All Suffering - Ten Immoral Actions."
- This is why sañkhāra are food for the viññāṇa, specifically for the kamma viñ̃ñana.

4. Furthermore, the next step in Paṭicca Samuppāda is "viññāna paccayā nāmarūpa." As you can see, this is where the connection to r $\bar{u} p a$ is made. We will discuss that in detail below.

The KEY POINT is that kamma viñnāna is not totally mental: The mind - when attached to something - will create energy (i.e., a kamma būja or a dhammā) that will be recorded in the kamma bhava.

- Then in the future, that dhammā can come back to the mana indriya and trigger a mind-sense event via "manañca paticca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviññānam.." that we discussed in "What are rūpa? Dhamma are rūpa too!."
- Then, in the latter part of that citta vīthi, more kamma viññāna are created; see, "How Are Paticca Samuppāda Cycles Initiated?."
- Thus it is a feedback process that gets strengthened with time.


## Kamma Viññạna Make Kamma Bīja

5. That kamma viññāna can be building up a kamma bīja (or a dhamm $\bar{a}$ ) in the kamma bhava overtime via the Pațicca Samuppāda process: "viññāna paccayā nāmarūpa", "nāmarūpa paccayā saḷāyatana", "salāyatana paccayā phassa", "phassa paccayā vedanā", "vedanā paccayā taṇhā", "taṇhā paccayā upādāna", and "upādāna paccayā bhava."

- Then under suitable conditions (see, "Anantara and Samanantara Paccaya"), that kamma bïja (or a dhammā) can come back - as a vipāka - and start that process all over again; see, "How Are Paticca Samuppāda Cycles Initiated?."
- A dhammā with energy or a kamma bīja created previously can come back to the mind as a vipāka viñ̃̄āṇa via "manañca paṭicca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviññānaim."
- Every time one generates vacī or kāya sañkhāra relevant to that viññāna, that makes viññaṇa stronger.


## Nāmarūpa Are Precursors to Rūpa Created by the Mind

6. As viññāna gets stronger, "viññāṇa paccayā nāmarūpa" makes nāmarūpa stronger. This nāmarūpa is the first stage of a $\boldsymbol{r} \bar{u} p a$ that is created by the mind, with the viññaña acting as the intermediary.

- It is also important to remember that dhammā includes kamma bīja, and nāmagotta (any record of anything that a given person has done. So, we can also recall events that have nothing to do with kammic energy, for example, remembering talking to someone or seeing something or solving a math problem; see, "Difference Between Dhammā and Sañkhāra."

7. For example, an alcoholic has a "viññ̄āna for drinking." He (she) constantly thinks about drinking and will build up a "drunk existence (bhava)" which comes back to his mind as a dhammā to trigger more thoughts about drinking.

- Until he breaks that loop by willfully controlling his thoughts and actions involving drinking, that viñãāna will grow with time.
- The only way to break that habit of drinking is to be mindful of the bad consequences of drinking and to forcefully suppress any thoughts about drinking (vacī sañkhāra) and abstain from drinking (kāya sañkhāra).


## Kamma Viññāna Is the Link Between Mind and Matter

8. What we discussed above is quite important. Kamma viñ$\tilde{n} a \underline{n} a$ is the link between mind and matter. It is energy made by the mind. A kamma viñnäāna creates tiny amounts of matter (rūpa) below the suddhatt!haka stage. It is important to fully understand this point for one to grasp the meaning of "mano pubbañgama dhamma $\ldots . .$. ." This is in fact how the mind (mano) is creating dhamma $\bar{a}$ via viññāna.

- This is confirmed in the WebLink: suttacentral: Majihe Sutta (AN 6.61), where it is stated that nāma is at one end, rūpa is at the other end, with viññana in the middle: "nāmaì kho, $\bar{a} v u s o$, eko anto, rūpaì dutiyo anto, viññānaim majjhe." ["Name (nāma), friends, is one end; form (rūpa) is the second end; consciousness (viññāna) is in the middle; and craving is the seamstress." For craving sews one to the production of this or that state of existence. It is in this way that a bhikkhu directly knows what should be directly known; fully understands what should be fully understood; and by doing so, in this very life he makes an end of suffering.]
- It would be helpful if one followed the preceding posts in the "Living Dhamma" section.

9. The goal of a given mind is to extract sense pleasures from the outside world, which is made of $r \bar{u} p a$ both above and below the suddhat! thaka stage; see, "Our Two Worlds: Material and Mental."

- We all are familiar with sense enjoyment via the five physical senses. But the most enjoyment we experience is through the sixth sense, the mind.
- The five physical senses only bring in imprints of the five types of "solidified $r \bar{u} p a$ ": $r \bar{u} p a r \bar{u} p a$, sadda rūpa, gandha rūpa, rasa rūpa, and photṭhabba rūpa (in other words, sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and body touches).
- The mind enjoys all those sense imprints that come in. The mind can also enjoy thinking about such past sense experiences and any planned future events. The "fine $r \bar{u} p a$ " involved here are "dhamm $\bar{a}$ "; see, "What are rūpa? - Dhammā are rūpa too!."


## Connection to Dhammā

10. How does the mind enjoy past sense experiences or future expected experiences? The answer to this question leads us to the concept of $\boldsymbol{\operatorname { d h a m m }} \overline{\boldsymbol{a}}$, those rupa that are below the suddhatthaka, and thus are really energies.

- Just like we "bring in" external rūpa (or rūpa rūpa or vanṇa rūpa) with our eyes, external sounds with our ears, etc, we bring in external dhammā through the mana indriya, as explained in "What are rūpa? - Dhamma are rūpa too!." [vaṇ̂a : [m.] colour; appearance; colour of the skin; sort; caste; a letter; quality.]
- Some of those dhammā are made by the mind via kamma viññāna! That kamma viññāna had created a dhamm $\bar{a}$ that got deposited in the kamma bhava as kamma bīja or dhammā with energy. This is the connecting piece of the puzzle. We discuss this in different ways, in order to grasp this key idea.
- All dhammās, including nāma gotta and kamma viññāna (also called kamma bīja) are in the nāma loka; see, "Our Two Worlds: Material and Mental."


## Rūpa Generation Process

11. The point is that "sañkhāra paccayā viñ̃n̄ạa" starts the "rūpa generation process" the "viññāna paccayā nāmarūpa" completes it.

- In Paticca Samuppāda cycles leading to rebirth, this nāmarūpa is the blueprint for the new existence via "nāmarūpa paccayā salāyatana," a new set of indriya are formed. In the case of human birth, this is the single cell (zygote); see, "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception."
- In Pațicca Samuppāda cycles operating during a lifetime, this nāmarūpa just gives rise to new sense events via "nāmarūpa paccayā salāyatana," where existing indriya become āyatana for a new sense event.
- Note that our indriya (cakkhu, sota, ghāṇa, etc) do not always act as àyatana. Only when we act with lobha, dosa, and moha act as āyatana to lead to new kamma.


## Connection to Gati (Habits/Character)

12. In many posts at the site, we have discussed how our gati lead to the creation of viññana for certain things we crave (and dislike); see, for example, " 2 . Viññāna (Consciousness) can be of Many Different Types and Forms" and "3. Viñ̃̃āna, Thoughts, and the Subconscious."

- We have also discussed how such viñ̃n̄ana arise due to our gati, see, for example, "Gati to Bhava to Jāti- Ours to Control," "The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Asavas)."
- So, gati and kamma viññāna are related to each other, feed on each other, and enhance each other.


## We Don't Have Control Over Vipāka Viññāna

13. Vipāka viñ̃āṇa are results of the previous kamma and cannot be stopped. What we need to stop is kamma viññāna that AUTOMATICALLY arise due to our gati; see, "Avyākata Paticca Samuppāda for Vipāka Viññāna."

- Now we are essentially putting together the pieces of a puzzle to develop with the Buddha's world view to illustrate how the mind creates the world. Key pieces to the puzzle are in various sections of the website. In the "Living Dhamma" section, all those components start from the basic components.
- The picture will become more clear with the next post in the series, "Kamma Viññāna and Nāmarūpa Paricceda Ñāna."


### 3.8.3.3 Anidassana Viññāṇa - What It Really Means

January 6, 2018; revised October 10, 2019; April 12, 2021; January 12, 2022

## Introduction

1. I have seen several discussion forums discuss the verse, "viñ̃̄ānāàm anidassanaim anantaim sabbato pabhamं..". Many say, "there is controversy about the precise meaning of this enigmatic phrase." See, for example, "WebLink: suttacentral: Viñ̃̃āna anidassana: the state of boundless consciousness."

- Most common translations say something like, "Consciousness non-manifest (sometimes as consciousness without surface), infinite, radiant all around."
- Such incorrect translations have then led to another drastic error by saying that "anidassana viññaṇa" is the same as the "pabhassara citta" and even as bhavañga. All these are astonishingly wrong!


## What Is Viññāna?

2. Viñ $\tilde{n} \bar{a} n a$ is a central and critical concept to understand. I have started an in-depth discussion of viññaṇa in an advanced subsection of the "Living Dhamma" section: "Viñ̃̃̄̄na Aggregate."

- In this post, I describe a meaningful translation to the verse, "viññānāàm anidassanam anantam sabbato pabhaí.." that is consistent with all the suttā in the Tipiṭaka. I would welcome any evidence to the contrary.
- Now we are getting into deep concepts. I would urge reading other related posts mentioned above first. Depending on one's background, it may take time to grasp these concepts.
- One needs to read the posts in the subsection "Nāma \& Rūpa to Nāmarūpa" of which "Viññāna Aggregate" is a part. If one does not understand those concepts, one could keep going back to earlier sections in the "Living Dhamma" section. It is designed to go from simple to profound.


## What Does Anidassana Mean?

3. First, let us find the meaning of "anidassana" from the Tipitaka. The meaning of the word nidassana means an 'illustration' visible. Anidassana implies something that is not visible.

- For example, dhammā impinge on the mana indriya and give rise to mano viññāna via "manañca paticca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviññānam̈." Those dhammā also cannot be seen; dhammā are just energies lying below the suddhatt!haka stage.
- These dhammā are, "anidassanaí appațighaín dhammāyatana pariyāpanna rūpaï" or "cannot be seen, cannot be touched, and can make contact only with the dhammāyatana"; see, "What are rūpa? - Dhammā are rūpa too!."

4. In the WebLink: suttacentral: Kakacūpama Sutta (MN 21): "..Seyyathāpi, bhikkhave, puriso
 imasmimं ākāse rūpaì likhissāmi, rūpapātubhāvai் karissāmītti. Tä̀ kim mañnatha, bhikkhave, api nu so puriso imasmimं ākāse rūpaì likheyya, rūpapātubhāvai் kareyyā"ti? "No hetaim, Bhante." "Taì kissa hetu"? "Ayañhi, Bhante, ākāso arūp̄̄ anidassano. ."

Translated: "..Bhikkhus, a man may come along bringing off white or yellow or dark green or crimson colors, and may say: ‘I will draw shapes in the sky, I will make material shapes appear. What do you think about this, monks? Could that man draw pictures in the sky with those colors?" "No, Bhante. It is not possible to draw shapes in the empty sky that are visible, that can manifest as figures."
5. In the "WebLink: wikipedia.org: Nibbāna-The Mind Stilled" series, Venerable Katuukurunde Ñāṇananda has provided more evidence that "anidassana" means "something that is not visible" or "something that does not manifest"; see, Sermons 7 and 8 in Volume II, which can be found under the references at, "Katukurunde Ñānananda Thera." [WebLink: PDF File: seeingthroughthenet.net: Books by Venerable Katukurunde Nān̄ananda]

- However, his explanation of viññāna is critically wrong, as I explain below. That is a common mistake that I see in many current interpretations.


## Viññāṇa Is More Than Consciousness

6. Even in Theravāda textbooks, Viññāna is translated as "consciousness" or "awareness." But it is much more than that. Viñnāna represents much more: "our hopes and desires that we want from this world." That is a critical point - that makes the connection between mind and matter ( $r \bar{u} p a$ ).

- We believe that things in this world will provide us with long-lasting happiness. Thus we do vacī and kaya sañkhāra to achieve them. Then, "sañkhāra paccayā viññāna" leads to the cultivation of a corresponding viññāna.
- Viññāna means without ñāna. When one follows the Noble Path, one will comprehend the Three Characteristics of nature (anicca, dukkha, anatta). Then one will realize the unfruitfulness of having such false hopes, i.e., cultivate pañña .

7. That is quite clear from Paticca Samuppada: "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra; sañkhāra paccayā viññāna; viññāna paccayā nāmarūpa, nāmarūpa paccayā salāyatana, salāyatana paccayā phasso, phassa paccayā vedanā, vedanā paccayā taṇhā, tanhhā paccayā upādāna, upādāna paccayā bhavo, bhava paccayā jāti, jāti paccayā jarā, marana, soka-parideva-dukkha-domanassupāyasā sambhavan'ti."

- All future suffering arises because we act with avijjā (i.e., generate abhisañkhāra) to achieve pleasurable worldly things and thereby create viññā̃a.


## Two Types of Viññāna

8. Each citta of a human - which exists only for a billionth of a second - is contaminated in 9 stages. Then it is added to the viññānakkhandha! See; "Pabhassara Citta, Radiant Mind, and Bhavañga."

- A kamma viñnāna is a contaminated citta. Those arise via "sañkhāra paccayā viñ̃ñạna." However, vipāka viñ̃āạa are just consciousness or "awareness"; see, "Viññāna - What It Really Means."
- The contamination of a citta manifests in sañ̃̄ $\bar{a}$ and vedana $\bar{a} . "$
- See details in "Nāma \& Rūpa to Nāmarūpa."

9. It is stated in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Sañgīti Sutta (Digha Nikāya 33)": "Tividhena rūpasañgahosanidassanasappatighaì rūpam, anidassanasappaṭighaì rūpaì, anidassanaappaṭighaì rūpaì."

Translated: "Threefold classification of rūpa (matter) - visible and graspable, invisible and graspable, invisible and ungraspable."

- Three types of rūpa are sensed with the six sense faculties -five physical senses and the mana indriya.
- Those rūpā detected with the mana indriya are dhamma: "manañca paṭicca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviññānaì""; see, "What are rūpa? - Dhammā are rūpa too!."
- These are the $r \bar{u} p a$ of the third kind: invisible and ungraspable (anidassan aappatighaì): "anidassanaì appatighaì dhammāyatana pariyāpanna rūpaì"; see, "What are rūpa? - Dhammā are rūpa too!."
- Those $r \bar{u} p \bar{a}$ of the third kind are same as nāmarūpa that arise due to viññaña: "Kamma Viññāna and Nāmarūpa Paricceda Ñāna."
- That is explained systematically in the subsection: "Nāma \& Rūpa to Nāmarūpa."


## Viññāṇa Is The Link Between Mind and Matter

10. Viñ̃āna is also the link between mind and matter, even though it is in the "nāma" or mind category" most of the time.

- In the WebLink: suttacentral: Paticcasamuppāda Vibhanga, nāma is defined as only the first three khandha: "Tattha katamaì nāmaì? Vedanākkhandho, saññākkhandho, sañkhārakkhandhoidaí vuccati "nāmaim." This is a clear indication that viññāna khandha does not really belong in the "nāma or mind category."
- Even though vipāka viññāna is conclusively in the " $n \bar{a} m a$ " category, kamma viññāna have energies, and thus fall into the $r \bar{u} p a$ category. Sometimes viññanna is not included in the "nāma" category for this reason.
- That was pointed out in the post, "Viññāna - What It Really Means." You may want to read that first. As pointed out in that post, kamma viññāna are different from vipāka viññāna in that kamma viññāna have energies embedded in them.
- Solid confirmation is in the WebLink: suttacentral: Majje Sutta (AN 6.61), where the Buddha stated that nāma is at one end, rūpa is at the other end, with viñ $\tilde{n} \bar{a} \boldsymbol{a} \boldsymbol{a}$ in the middle: "nāmaim kho, āvuso, eko anto, rūpaì dutiyo anto, viññānami majjhe."


## Viññāna Is The Cause For Rebirth and Suffering

11. The real nature of viññana as the cause for suffering is clearly stated in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Dvavatānupassanāsutta (Sutta Nipata 3.12)":
"Yam் kiñci dukkhamं sambhoti,
Sabbaí viññānapaccayā;
Viññānassa nirodhena,
Natthi dukkhassa sambhavo."
Translated: "Whatever suffering that arises, all that arises due to viññāna; With the not arising of viñ̃̃āna, there is no existence with suffering."

- That should lay to rest any arguments about viñ̃āṇa being the same as Nibbāna, pabhassara citta, or bhavañga.
- A critical point that I have been trying to make is that when one sees such dramatic contradiction somewhere, one should be skeptical about that source's trustworthiness. That is the only way to make progress.


## Brahmanimantanika Sutta (MN 49)

 suttacentral: Brahmanimantanika Sutta (Majihima Nikāya 49). I will first provide the essential parts of the Sutta relevant to the meaning of this verse.

Here is the essence of the Sutta in plain English:
At one time, the Buddha saw that the following wrong view came to the mind of the Baka Brahma (who is the leader of the Mahā Brahma realm; see, " 31 Realms of Existence"): "My existence is permanent, it is stable, it is eternal, and is not liable to passing away."

To correct the wrong view of the Baka Brahmā, vanishing from near the great sāl-tree in the Subhaga Grove at Ukkatṭhā, the Buddha appeared in that Brahma-world.

Baka Brahmā saw the Buddha coming, welcomed him, and told him: "Idañhi, mārisa, niccamं, idamं dhuvȧ், idam் sassatam், idam் kevalam், idam் acavanadhammam், idañhi na jāyati na jīyati na mīyati na cavati na upapajjati. Ito ca panaññamं uttari nissaranamim natthī'ti."

Translated: "This existence, good sir, can be maintained to my liking; it is stable, it is eternal. It encompasses all, not liable to passing away. It is not born, nor does it age or die or pass away or uprise. There is no further further release from this existence."

The Buddha replied: "You are ignorant. You say your existence can be to your liking, but that is not so. It is not permanent as you say..." (yatra hi nāma aniccam̀yeva samānaím niccanti vakkhati, addhuvam்yeva samānaì dhuvanti vakkhati).

- By the way, here it is important to note that the Pāli word for "permanent" is "dhuva" and not "nicca."

The Buddha added, "..although you say there is no further release, there is indeed a permanent release" ("santañca panaññà் uttari nissaraṇaì "natthaññaì uttari nissaranan"ti vakkhatī'ti."

- Then there is an account of how Māra the Deva, having entered a particular company of Brahmā, spoke to encourage the Brahma. I will skip that account to get to the crux of the matter.

Baka Brahmā then replied to the Buddha: "But, good sir, I say "nicca" because it is so, I say "stable" because it is stable, I say "eternal" because it is eternal. There is no more suffering,...I have escaped from the cravings for pathavi, āpo, tejo, vāyo dhātu." (Meaning he has overcome taṇhā for sensual pleasures available in the kāma loka comprised from the four (cattāro) mahā dhātu).

The Buddha told the Baka Brahma that he knew that the Baka Brahma had transcended the kāma loka and was fully aware of his powers. The Buddha added that there were things in this world that the Brahma was not aware of. (1) There are higher Brahma realms, (2) Baka Brahma himself was in the Abhassara Brahma realm, died there and was now reborn in this lower Brahma realm. The Buddha told the Baka Brahma: "you neither know nor see those higher realms, but I know and see them."

Here is the relevant part of the Sutta where the Buddha tells Baka Brahma: "Pathavimi kho ahaï, brahme, pathavito abhiññāya yāvatā pathaviyā pathavattena ananubhūtain tadabhiññāya pathavim nāpahosim, pathaviyā nāpahosim, pathavito nāpahosim, pathavim meti nāpahosim, pathavim nābhivadim ..."

Translated: Brahma, knowing pathavi to be just pathavi (devoid of life), knowing the true nature of pathavi, I do not take pathavi to be me. (No attachment to things in the kāma loka made out of the cattāro (four) mahā bhūta)."

- Then he repeated the same verse for the other three mahā bhūta of which the bodies of beings in $k \bar{a} m a$ loka are made of āpo, tejo, vāyo.

Finally, he summarized it all in the following verse, which we discussed in the post: "Viñanānam anidassanamं anantaì sabbato pabhaì, tai் pathaviy $\bar{a}$ pathavattenaananubhūtaím, $\bar{a} p a s s a$ āpattena ananubhūtaì, tejassa tejattena ananubhūtaì, vāyassavāyattena ananubhūtaì, bhūtānaì bhūtattena ananubhūtai், devānaì devattenaananubhūtaì, pajāpatissa pajāpatittena ananubhūtaì, brahmānaì brahmattenaananubhūtaì, ābhassarānaì ābhassarattena ananubhūtaì,
subhakiṇhānaì subhakinhhānaì subhakinhhattena ananubhūtaí, vehapphalānai் vehapphalattena ananubhūtaì, abhibhussa abhibhuttena ananubhūtaì, sabbassa sabbattena ananubhūtaï.."

Translated: "Viññanna is unseen, infinite, and leads to the rebirth process for all. With viññanna (defiled consciousness), one cannot comprehend the real nature of pathavi, āpo, tejo, vāyo, bhūta, deva, pajapti brahma, abhassara brahma, subhakinha brahma, vehapphala brahma, etc., i.e., everything in this world (sabba)."

- See, "Bhūta and Yathābhūta - What Do They Really Mean." Also, note that viññāṇa referred to in the above verse and in \#11 is "kamma viññāna" and NOT "vipāka viññāṇa"; see, "Abhisañkhāra Lead to Kamma Viññ̄n̄a."

Then, the Buddha concluded: "Thus, Brahmā, I am not merely on an exact equality with you as regards super-knowledge; I am indeed higher in knowledge."

Then the Brahma challenged the Buddha, saying that he will disappear, and If the Buddha is of higher knowledge, try to find him. But he was unable to hide from the Buddha.

Then the Buddha said, "Now I am vanishing from you, Brahmā. Find me if you can." Of course, the Brahma was unable to find the Buddha and thus had to concede defeat.

That is the essence of that long sutta, that is relevant for this discussion.

## There Is No Refuge In Any of The Thirty One Realms

13. We have to realize that indeed the Mahā Brahmā has a very long lifetime of a quarter of our universe's age (several billion years).

- Furthermore, since Brahmās do not have solid bodies like ours, they are not subject to diseases or bodily pains. So, they live a peaceful life until the end of their bhava. So it is no surprise that the Baka Brahma thought that he had overcome all suffering by getting rid of the human body. See the post on "Body Types in 31 Realms - Importance of Manomaya Kāya" for details on bodies of beings in other realms.
- Of course, Brahmā can still have future births in the apāyā. Unless they had attained at least the Sotāpanna stage of Nibbāna, they have only suppressed kāma rāga, and have not removed any of the ten samiyojana.
- That should give us a lot to think about our suffering-causing body that lasts only about 100 years! There is absolutely nothing to be proud of one's physical body or to feel that it is worthwhile to take this foul body to be "mine." That is one way to get rid of sakkāya ditt thi.
- The question is not whether there is a "self" or not. Is it wise to think that it is worthwhile to have the perception of a "self"? The wrong perception of a "self" only leads to immoral actions and suffering in future lives.

14. I hope this post - together with the other posts in this subsection - make it clear what viññāna is, and what is meant by the famous verse, "viññānā̄̀ं anidassanaiं anantaiं sabbato pabhaì."

- Please make any comments/suggestions/criticisms in the discussion forum so that everyone can benefit from the discussion.


### 3.8.4 Nāmarūpa Formation

Dec 12, 2017
Kamma Viññāna and Nāmarūpa Paricceda Ñāna

### 3.8.4.1 Kamma Viññāṇa and Nāmarūpa Pariccheda Ñāṇa

## December 12, 2017; revised January 27, 2022; October 9, 2022 (\#1, \#3)

1. Nāmarūpa can have a few different (but related) meanings depending on the context, i.e., where it is used. But the most important meaning is associated with the "nāmarūpa pariccheda ñanna."

- When one has the nāmarūpa pariccheda ñāna, one understands how the mind is related to the matter, i.e., how viñ̃̄̄̄na acts as the critical link between mind and matter.
- Here "pari" means "complete" or "comprehensive"; "uccheda" means to "cut off" or "eradicate." Thus nāmarūpa pariccheda ñāṇa, means the knowledge or understanding how nāmarūpa are generated via kamma viññāna at the "viññāṇa paccayā nāmarūpa" step in Paṭicca Samuppāda (PS).
- The two previous posts in this series provided more related information. This post wraps up that discussion; see "Viññāna - What It Really Means" and "Kamma Viññāna - Link Between Mind and Matter."

2. It is also important to note that nāmarūpa can be of several varieties:

- When written as two words - nāma rūpa -, nāma refers to mental attributes, and rūpa relates to matter. There, nāma rūpa refers to mind AND matter.
- With viñnāna, nāma COMBINES with rūpa and creates nāmarūpa - imprints for future rebirths - which eventually lead to fully-formed living beings. This happens at the "viññāna paccayā nāmarūpa" step in PS.
- These are very fine rūpa which are below the suddhatthaka stage created by viññāna and are part of dhammā. Thus nāmarūpa are distinct from the more dense rūpa that we experience with the five physical senses; see, "What are rūpa? - Dhammā are rūpa too!."
- We also talk about nāmarūpa referring to visuals in our minds; these are also related to the fine rūpa. For example, an alcoholic will visualize scenes of a drinking party they plan to attend. That comes in Idappaccayatā PS; see, "Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda."

3. Here, it is significant to note that in PS, it is the "viññāna paccayā nāmarūpa" step that separates the previous steps involving the mind from those involving rūpa. Now we have "nāmarūpa paccayā salāyatana," leading to internal rūpa.

- Then those saḷāyatana making contact (phassa) with external rūpa: "salāyatana paccayā phassa."
- Note that phassa means contact of internal rūpa (salāyatana) with external rūpa, and giving rise to vedanā: "phassa paccayā vedanā." Now we are back to just nāma, i.e., vedanā.
- If that vedanā lead to samphassa-j̄ $\bar{a}$-vedanā, then the Akusala-mūla PS process proceeds with "taṇhā paccayā upādāna," and we start generating vacī sañkhāra with avijjā. Then Akusala-mūla PS process re-starts at the "avijjā paccayā (abhi)sañkhāra." See "Tanhhā Paccayā Upādāna - Critical Step in Paticca Samuppāda" and "Difference Between Tanhā and Upādāna" for details.
- So, we can see that kamma viññāna plays a crucial role in bridging nāma with rūpa. It is imperative to read and understand the above two posts.

4. Kamma viññāna with kammic energy are created in javana citta. That kammic energy may start small but can grow with repeated generations of abhisañkhāra and grow to become a kamma bïja that can give rise to a new bhava. That kamma bīja then gives rise to a very subtle mental body (gandhabba), providing the "seed" for the dense physical body.

- That happens at the "upādāna paccayā bhava" step giving rise to a gandhabba, which is a very tiny $r \bar{u} p a$ that is a "packet of energy."
- Then at the "bhava paccayā $\bar{a} t i$ " step, gandhabba enters a womb and starts a new physical body.
- Just like a tiny seed can grow into a massive tree by taking in water and nutrients from the soil, an unimaginably small gandhabba gives rise to the heavy human body by taking in food. The only difference is that while a gandhabba or a human has a mind, a seed or a tree does not.

5. Our solid physical body starts with a gandhabba - smaller than the first cell made by the reunion of mother and father (zygote) - descending to a womb and taking hold of that zygote in the womb. We recall that the Buddha also called this event "a viñ̃̃āna descending to the womb"; see below and also "Gandhabba State - Evidence from Tipitaka,". The posts in this series show us why the "gandhabba descending" can also be called "viññāna descending."

- The complex process of this single zygote growing into an adult human is discussed in, "What does Buddha Dhamma (Buddhism) say about Birth Control?."
- Therefore, the "seed" to bring up this physical body of several hundred pounds (tens of kg) was the kammic energy created in the paṭisandhi viñnāna which gave rise to a gandhabba consisting of just a few suddhat!̣haka.

6. This primary mechanism of how a suddhatthaka - the smallest unit of matter (billion times smaller than an atom in modern science) - is created with the mind was discussed in the post, "The Origin of Matter Suddhatthaka" in the Abhidhamma section. But in this subsection on nāmarūpa, we are talking about it with a more simple, fundamental analysis that everyone can understand (if they have grasped the fundamentals.).

- Furthermore, those with abhiññ̄ $\bar{a}$ powers can intensify the kammic energy in javana citta in jhāna (specifically in jhāna samāpatti), and create matter directly too. We can compare that to the difference between a regular lamp that puts out a bit of light and a laser that puts out intense light that can cut through metal; see "Javana of a Citta - The Root of Mental Power."
- When we dive deeper into Buddha Dhamma, we can see that some phenomena that seem "supernatural" (like creating a flower using mind energy) are indeed possible. But that ability to create matter requires purifying the mind to very high levels.

7. The Buddha described how the paṭisandhi viññāna (which is the same as the gandhabba) "descends" to the womb of the mother and starts the process in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Mahā Nidana Sutta (Digha Nikāya 15)" where he has the following exchange with Ven. Ānanda:
'Viññānapaccayā nāmarūpan’ti iti kho panetaì vuttamं, tadānanda, imināpetaỉ pariyāyena veditabbaí, yathā viññānapaccayā nāmarūpaim. Viññānañca hi, ānanda, mātukucchismim na okkamissatha, api nu kho nāmarūpaì mātukucchismimं samuccissathā"ti? "No hetaì, bhante." "Viññānañca hi, ānanda, mātukucchismimं okkamitvā vokkamissatha, api nu kho nāmarūpaìn itthattāya abhinibbattissathā"ti? "No hetam̀, bhante." "Viññānañca hi, ānanda, daharasseva sato vocchijjissatha kumārakassa vā kumārikāya vā, api nu kho nāmarūpaì vuddhim virūḷhim vepullaì $\bar{a} p a j j i s s a t h a ̄ " t i$ ? "No hetamं, bhante." "Tasmātihānanda, eseva hetu etaim nidānamं esa samudayo esa paccayo nāmarūpassa-yadidaì viññānam.

## Here is the English translation:

'It was said: 'With consciousness as condition there is nāmarūpa (normally translated as mentalitymateriality; which in this case is the gandhabba).'

How that is so, Ānanda, should be understood in this way: If consciousness (viññanañca) were not to descend ( $n$ a okkamissatha) into the mother's womb, would that nāmarūpa take shape in the womb?"
"Certainly not, venerable sir."
'If, after descending (okkamitv $\bar{a}$ ) into the womb, consciousness were to depart (vokkamissatha), would that nämarūpa be generated into this present state of being?"
(Note: this happens in the case of a natural termination of pregnancy, where the gandhabba comes out of the womb on its own, because it is not a suitable match).
"Certainly not, venerable sir."
'If the consciousness of a young boy or girl (kumārakassa v $\bar{a} k u m \bar{a} r i k \bar{a} y a v \bar{a}$ ) were to come out, would that nāmarūpa grow up, develop, and reach maturity?"
"Certainly not, venerable sir."
"Therefore, Ānanda, this is the cause, source, origin, and condition (eseva hetu etaim nidānain esa samudayo) for nāmarūpa, namely, defiled consciousness (yadidaí viñ̃ñanaì).
8. Therefore, it is pretty clear that the kammic energy of the patisandhi viñ̃ãna "descends" to the womb and gives rise to the physical body. gandhabba is another term for patisandhi viññaña descending to the womb; it is also called "manomaya kāya."

- Sometimes the gandhabba in a human body can come out in a stressful situation; see "Manomaya Kāya and Out-of-Body Experience (OBE)." The Buddha compared a gandhabba coming out of a physical body to a sword being pulled out of the sheath.

9. The erroneous concept of a pattisandhi taking place in a womb is nowhere in the Tipitaka. Note that in the above verse in \#7, the term okkanti is used to describe the descent of the paṭisandhi viñ̃āña to the womb, and the word "patisandhi" is not there. Patisandhi took place in the previous life, at the end of that bhava, see, "Cuti-Patisandhi - An Abhidhamma Description."

- Furthermore, if patisandhi took place in the womb, a human bhava would last only until death. Then, since human bhava is so rare, rebirth accounts cannot be accounted for (children recall their previous human lives only several years before). See "How the Buddha Described the Chance of Rebirth in the Human Realm."
- Some criticize the concept of a gandhabba, saying it is a Mahāyāna concept about an "antarā bhava." Of course, there is no antarā bhava, i.e., no gap exists between two adjacent "bhava." Cuti (end of one bhava) is followed by grasping the next bhava in the next thought moment; see "Cuti-Patisandhi An Abhidhamma Description."

10. A human gandhabba may be born with a human body many times before the kammic energy for the human bhava runs out, and they are born in another existence (as a deva, animal, etc.); see, "Bhava and Jāti - States of Existence and Births Therein."

- During that whole time, the human gandhabba lives moving from one body to another and spending the time "in between successive human bodies" in para loka; see, "Hidden World of the Gandhabba: Netherworld (Para loka)."
- I keep repeating things, because these are essential points. The "Search" box on the top right is an excellent resource for finding relevant posts if there are still questions. The Pure Dhamma - Sitemap is another good resource.
- You can also use the "Comments" box to send a comment or ask a question. I will be opening the discussion forum soon too.

11. This connection between mind and matter (nāma and rūpa) - combined via viññāna to create nāmarūpa - is what the Buddha meant when he said that, "mano pubbangamā dhammā," i.e., "the mind is the precursor to all dhamma."

- When one understands that point one is said to have the "nāmarūpa pariccheda ñāna."
- We have all the significant components essentially in place now, and there may be some who can see the "whole picture" at least vaguely. But more minor pieces still need to be added to make the picture much clearer.
- However, the picture will not be clear if a critical piece cannot be understood. Please do not hesitate to comment if you have questions. Even if it is clear to me, I may not be conveying it optimally, and I can make it better with your input.

12. I must emphasize that one could be a Sotāpanna and may not even know about these details; I do not want to discourage those who are not really into Abhidhamma.

- What is needed for the Sotāpanna stage is a grasp of Tilakkhaña, the anicca nature of this world.
- The details discussed in this subsection dispel doubts about Buddha Dhamma's consistency and illustrate that it can explain mental phenomena to profoundly deep levels. Furthermore, it can give confidence to those who doubt the validity of critical concepts in Buddha Dhamma (laws of kamma, rebirth, gandhabba, etc).


## IV Living Dhamma

## August 26, 2016

An experience-based process of practicing Buddha Dhamma (Buddhism) is discussed with English discourses. Belief in rebirth process is not needed at beginning.

- Subsection: Essential Buddhism
- Four Noble Truths - Suffering and Its Elimination
- Introduction to Citta, Vedanā, Saññā, Sañkhāra, and Viññāna
- Viññāna - Consciousness Together With Future Expectations
- Connection Between Sañkhāra and Viññāna
- Viññāna and Sañkhāra - Connection to Paticca Samuppāda
- Breath Meditation Is Addictive and Harmful in the Long Run
- Ānāpānasati Eliminates Mental Stress Permanently
- Ānāpāna and Satipatthāna - Fundamentals
- Sati in Ānāpānasati/Satipatthāna - Two Meanings of Sati
- Subsection: Living Dhamma - Overview
- Living Dhamma - Introduction
- Peace of Mind to Nibbāna - The Key Step
- Starting on the Path Even without Belief in Rebirth (with first Desanā "The Hidden Suffering that We All Can Understand"; desanā title different from post title)
- Subsection: Dhamma with Less Pāli
- Buddha Dhamma for an Inquiring Mind - Part I
- Root of All Suffering - Ten Immoral Actions (with the Desanā "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)."
- Is Suffering the Same as the First Noble Truth on Suffering?
- Dhamma, Sañkhāra, Sankata, Rūpa, Viññāna, Gati, Āsava, Anusaya
- Complexity of the Mind - Viññāna and Sañkhāra
- Citta, Mano, Viññāna - Stages of a Thought
- Subsection: Living Dhamma - Fundamentals
- What Are Kilesa (Mental Impurities)? - Connection to Cetasika
- Suffering in This Life - Role of Mental Impurities (with Desanā 2)
- Satipatthāna Sutta - Relevance to Suffering in This Life (with Desanā 3)
- How Are Gati and Kilesa Incorporated into Thoughts? (with Desanā 4; in two parts)
- Noble Eightfold Path - Role of Sobhana Cetasika
- Getting to Samādhi (with Desanā 5)
- Sexual Orientation - Effects of Kamma and Gati (Sañkhāra)
- Subsection: Mundane Sammā Samādhi
- Micchā Ditthi - Connection to Hetu Phala (Cause and Effect) (with Desanā 6)
- Suffering in This Life and Paticca Samuppāda (with Desanā 7)
- Suffering in This Life and Paticca Samuppāda II (with Desanā 8)
- Subsection: Transition to Noble Eightfold Path
- Is It Necessary for a Buddhist to Eliminate Sensual Desires?
- Sīla, Samādhi, Paññā to Paññā, Sila, Samādhi
- Ye Dhammā Hetuppabhavā.. and Yam Kiñci Samudaya Dhammam.
- Subsection: Samādhi, Jhāna (Dhyāna), Magga Phala
- Samādhi, Jhāna, Magga Phala - Introduction
- Vitakka, Vicāra, Savitakka, Savicāra, and Avitakka, Avicāra
- Jhānic Experience in Detail - Sāmaññaphala Sutta (DN 2)
- Ascendance to Nibbāna via Jhāna (Dhyāna)
- Paññāvimutti- Arahanthood without Jhāna
- Mundane versus Supramundane Jhāna
- Nirodha Samāpatti, Phala Samāpatti, Jhāna, and Jhāna Samāpatti
- Subsection: Mental Body - Gandhabba
- Our Mental Body - Gandhabba
- Gandhabba State - Evidence from Tipitaka
- Antarabhava and Gandhabba
- Ānantariya Kamma - Connection to Gandhabba
- Mental Body (Gandhabba) - Personal Accounts
- Abnormal Births Due to Gandhabba Transformations
- Cattāro Āhāra for Mental Body or Gandhabba
- Micchā Ditthi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage
- Working of Kammā - Critical Role of Conditions


### 4.1 Essential Buddhism

## December 25, 2018

Comments/questions at the puredhamma discussion forum: "Forums." The registration process and guidelines are at: "Pure Dhamma Discussion Forum Guidelines." I can also be reached via email: lal@puredhamma.net.

## Four Noble Truths - Suffering and Its Elimination

Introduction to Citta, Vedanā, Saññā, Sañkhāra, and Viññāna
Viññāna - Consciousness Together With Future Expectations
Connection Between Sañkhāra and Viññāna
Viññ̄n̄a and Sañkhāra - Connection to Paticca Samuppāda
Breath Meditation Is Addictive and Harmful in the Long Run
Ānāpānasati Eliminates Mental Stress Permanently

## Ānāpāna and Satipatthāna - Fundamentals

Sati in Ānāpānasati/Satipatthāna - Two Meanings of Sati

### 4.1.1 Four Noble Truths - Suffering and Its Elimination

January 6, 2019; revised May 26, 2021; May 27, 2021

## Introduction

1. The First Noble Truth is about the suffering that we can stop from arising.

- The second describes how suffering arises from our own cravings (which we manifest via our own sañkhāra that we generate willingly, as we have discussed; see, "Sañkhāra - What It Really Means"). I will write a simpler version in the next post.
- The Third Noble Truth says that we can stop future suffering by eliminating those cravings. That REQUIRES an understanding of the wider world view of the Buddha with the rebirth process within the 31 realms.
- The Fourth Noble Truth is the path to acquire that understanding by "learning and living" that Dhamm $\bar{a}$ (by following the Noble Eightfold Path).

2. The Buddha said, "my Dhammā has not been previously known in this world."

- What is new about knowing that there is suffering around us? Everybody knows that there is suffering from old age, diseases, poverty, etc. One does not have to be a Buddhist to see that.
- So, we need to figure out "what is new" about suffering explained in the First Noble Truth.


## The First Noble Truth - What is Suffering

3. I have discussed the First Noble Truth in the post, "Essence of Buddhism - In the First Sutta." Summary:
"Birth is suffering, getting old is suffering, getting sick is suffering, dying is suffering. Having to associate with things that one does not like is suffering, and so is separation from those things one likes. If one does not get what one likes (icch $\bar{a}$ ), that is suffering - in brief, the origin of suffering is the craving for the five aggregates of rūpa, vedanā, saññ̄, sañkhāra, and viññāna (pañcupādānakkhandha). [sañkhittena means being overthrown by defilements]

- (Here, I have translated upādāna as craving. However, the word upādāna CANNOT BE translated by just one word. It is a good idea to grasp the meaning. See, "Concepts of Upādāna and Upādānakkhandha.'")
- There is a deeper meaning in the part, "If one does not get what one likes (iccha), that is suffering." That is connected to the anicca nature.
- That deeper meaning is expressed in terms of upādāna with tanhh $\bar{a}$ (attachment) is expressed in the final part, "Doing worldly activities (samkhittena) to get all those things one craves for (pañcupādānakkhandha) is suffering."

4. Just as in science, something comes about due to causes. Our present life as humans has come about due to causes (kamma) done in the past. Some of those were "good kamma," and that is why we can enjoy some pleasures. Bad kammā has led to instances of suffering.

- But there are lower realms, including the animal realm, where suffering is much higher. Bad kamm $\bar{a}$ lead to such births.
- Suffering in the four lowest realms is real suffering. That is what we first need to focus on.
- And all that suffering arises because we crave things in this world because of our avijja (not comprehending the Four Noble Truths).

5. Seeing this hidden suffering is indeed difficult. When the Buddha attained the Buddhahood, he was worried about whether he could convey these deep ideas to most people.

- It is natural to seek pleasure and happiness. Some people act immorally, seeking such pleasures. The consequences of such immoral acts are not apparent. We can see a stone thrown up coming down, but we cannot see any bad consequences to the drug dealer who seems to be enjoying life.


## The Second Noble Truth - Causes for Future Suffering

6. The cause of future suffering is indicated indirectly in the First Noble Truth: Craving sensory pleasures. Suppose we do immoral things to get such sensory pleasures. The worst outcomes (rebirths in the apāyā) will result.

- For example, person X may kill another person to get his money or to marry his wife. Even though X may accomplish that goal and "enjoy life" for even 100 years, that is nothing compared millions of years of future suffering X will go through due to his immoral action.

7. When a fish bites the bait, it does not see the suffering hidden in that action. Looking from the ground, we can see the whole picture, and we know what will happen to the fish if it bites the bait. But the fish is unable to see that whole picture and thus does not see the hidden suffering. It only sees a delicious bit of food.

- In the same way, if we do not know about the wider world of 31 realms (with the suffering-filled four lowest realms), we only focus on what is easily accessible to our six senses.
- To really comprehend suffering through repeated rebirths, one needs to comprehend that most suffering is encountered in the 4 lowest realms (apāyā); see, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma" at puredhamma.net.
- Thus, stopping suffering requires one to be mindful of one's actions and stop doing bad vacī and $k \bar{a} y a$ sañkhāra (i.e., immoral thinking, speech, and deeds).

8. Therefore, the "previously unheard truth about suffering" that the Buddha revealed is the suffering hidden in sense pleasures. The level of suffering depends on what we do (vaci and $k \bar{a} y a$ sañkhāra) to get those pleasures. If they are immoral then worst suffering in the apāya will result.

- We believe that those sense pleasures are to be valued and to be enjoyed. That is because we do not see right away the consequences of any bad actions that we do to get those sense pleasures.
- For example, if one rapes a woman to get enjoyment for a short time, one could be spending millions of years as an animal in the future because of that immoral action.
- However, it may not be easy to grasp this point. One needs to advance step-by-step; see, "Is It Necessary for a Buddhist to Eliminate Sensual Desires?."
- The first step is to reduce suffering in the future is to avoid doing bad deeds (kamma) via thoughts, speech, and bodily actions (again, these are associated with mano, vacī, and kāya sañkhāra).
- Therefore, we create our own future happiness via puñ̃̃a abhisañkhāra (good sañkhāra) or future suffering via apuñña abhisañkhāra (bad sañkhāra).


## The Third Noble Truth - How to Stop F uture Suffering

9. As discussed above, such suffering can arise in this life due to our own (apuññābhi) sañkhāra (which we generate to satisfy our cravings).

- In the same way, one can stop ALL FUTURE SUFFERING by controlling our own sañkhāra.
- We attach to things with greed and hate via sañkhāra, because of our ignorance of the Four Noble Truths (avijjā). As we have discussed, this is the first step in Paticca Samuppāda leading to "the whole mass of suffering": "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra."

10. The Third Noble Truth is about what can be achieved by systematically removing those causes.

- Nirāmisa sukha increases from the point of embarking on the Path and has four levels of PERMANENT increases starting at the Sotāpanna stage and culminating at the Arahant stage. See, for example, "Three Kinds of Happiness - What is Nirāmisa Sukha?."

11. To stop the arising of "bad sañkhāra" we need to do two things: (1) remove avijiā by learning true Dhamma, and (2) making use of our free will to get control of our sañkhāra (this is the basis of Ānāpānasati/Satipaṭ! hāna).

- A systematic way to achieve this is stated in the Fourth Noble Truth.


## The Fourth Noble Truth - The Way to Stop Future Suffering

12. The second Noble Truth describes those CAUSES that we need to work on. The root causes are greed, hate, and ignorance, but they need to be removed mainly via understanding the Three Characteristics (Tilakkhaṇa) and also via removing our bad sansāric habits; see a series of posts starting with, "Habits, Goals, Character (Gati)" to "The Way to Nibbāna - Removal of Āsavas."

- The way to achieve this is to follow the Noble Eightfold Path: Sammā Ditthi (understanding what is embedded in the Four Noble Truths), and then thinking (sañkappa), speaking (vācā), acting (kammanta), living one's whole life that way ( $\bar{a} j \bar{\imath} v a$ ), striving harder ( $v \bar{a} y \bar{a} m a$ ), getting to the right mindset (sati), and finally to samādhi.

13. When we follow the Noble Eightfold Path, nirāmisa sukha arises first and then various stages of Nibbāna.

- Nirāmisa sukha starts when one lives a moral life (see "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)" and follow-up posts).
- The root causes of immoral behavior are greed, hate, and ignorance. We can reduce ignorance to the level of the Sotāpanna stage just via comprehending the Three Characteristics of "this world of 31 realms," i.e., anicca, dukkha, anatta; see, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta - Wrong Interpretations," and the follow-up posts. It is that powerful.


## Why Is It Hard to See the "Hidden Suffering"? - Time Lag

14. The main problem in clearly seeing the "cause and effect of mind actions" is that the results of those actions have a time delay and that the time delay itself is not predictable.

- In contrast, it is easy to predict what will happen with material things (moving an object, a vehicle, a rocket, etc.). The success of physical sciences is due to this reason. Once the underlying laws are found (laws of gravity, laws of motion, electromagnetism, nuclear forces, quantum mechanics, etc.), one has complete control.

15. But the mind is very different. To begin with, no two minds work the same way. Under a given set of conditions, each mind will choose to act differently. With physical objects, that is not so; under a given set of conditions, what will happen can be predicted accurately.

- Effects of some actions (kamma) may not materialize in this life, and sometimes it may come to fruition only in many lives down the road (but with accumulated interest).
- Even in this life, mental phenomena are complex: This is why economics is not a "real science." It involves how people sometimes act "irrationally" for perceived gains. No economic theory can precisely predict how a given stock market will perform.

16. This "cause and effect" that involves the mind is the principle of kamma and kamma vipāka in Buddha Dhamma.

- But unlike in Hinduism, Kamma is not deterministic, i.e., not all kamma vipāka have to come to fruition; see, "What is Kamma? Is Everything Determined by Kamma?."
- Suitable CONDITIONS must be there to bring good or bad kamma vipāka to fruition. That is why kamma is not deterministic, and we can stop ALL future suffering.
- We just need to get rid of avijjā and taṇhā, two key steps in Paticca Samuppāda. That is how Angulimāla overcame all that bad kamma of killing almost 1000 people.


## We Can Eliminate Only a Part of Suffering Encountered in This Life

Finally, let us look into what kind of suffering can be stopped from arising and gain confidence in Buddha Dhamma. One does not need to believe Buddha's teachings blindly.
17. There are two types of vedanā (feelings); see, "Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways."

- First is due to kamma vipāka.
- The second is mental suffering due to sañkhāra (via attachment to sensual pleasures and friction (patigha) due to things we don't like). This could lead to depression.

18. This life is the RESULT of past kamma. Once life starts, it cannot be stopped until "its kammic energy" is exhausted. This life WILL end up in old age, decay, and eventual death.

- Therefore, if someone has aches and pains due to old age, it is impossible to get rid of them other than to use medications or therapy to lessen the pain and manage it.
- Even the Buddha had back pain due to old age and had a severe stomach ache at the end.
- One may get injured, come down with a disease, etc.
- All these are due to kamma vipāka.

19. On the other hand, it is possible to stop the second type ("mental suffering") that arises due to our own way of thinking (again, our own vacī sañkhāra).

- Therefore, we can EXPERIENCE the relief from suffering (called nirāmisa sukha) in this life itself.
- The suffering (or vedanā) that a living Arahant has eliminated is called "samphassa ja vedanā." This is what leads to depression in some people.
- Here, "samphassa" is "san" + "phassa," or "contact with one's own defilements (san)"; see, "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Samsāra)."


## Humans Have Free Will to Eliminate Future Suffering

20. The life we have as humans is a RESULT of a past good deed - a dog's or an ant's life results from a past deed by that sentient being.

- And what happens to us in this life is a COMBINATION of what we have done in the past (kamma vipāka) AND what we do in this life.
- What happens to an animal is MOSTLY due to kamma vipāka from the past.
- The difference between a human and an animal is that the animal does not have much control over what will happen to it. But human birth is a special one: We have a higher level mind that CAN change the future to some extent, and with possible enormous consequences.
- We have free will, and animals (or those beings in other lower realms) do not. We can control our sañkhāra, and they cannot. It is hard to get a human birth. We should not waste this opportunity.


## Introduction to Citta, Vedanā, Saññ̄ā, Sañkhāra, and Viññ̄āa

December 25, 2018; revised August 23, 2019; April 9, 2020; July 3, 2022; July 8, 2022

## Introduction

1. The Pāli words citta, vedanā, saññā, sañkhāra, and viñ $\tilde{n} a ̣ n a ~$ are mistranslated in most current literature as thought, feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness, respectively.

- The last four (vedanā, saññā, sañkhāra, and viññāṇa) are critical concepts in Buddha Dhamma. They represent the four mental aggregates.

2. The word sañkhāra is generally translated as "mental formations." It does not convey the meaning at all. Viññāna translated as just "consciousness," and that is simply wrong.

- Sañkhāra is associated with "emotions," so we need to make the connection to emotions. In particular, we get attached to some things and are repulsed by others. In both cases, we generate a wide variety of emotions that lead to three types of sañkhāra in our minds.
- They are puññābhisañkhāra (puñña abhisañkhāra,) apuññābhisañkhāra (apuñña abhisañkhāra,) and $\bar{a} n e n ̃ j a ̄ b h i s a \dot{n} k h a ̄ r a ~(a ̄ n e n ̃ j a ~ a b h i s a n ̃ k h a ̄ r a) ~ I n ~ s i m p l e ~ t e r m s,. ~ t h a t ~ m e a n s ~ m o r a l ~ t h o u g h t s / d e e d s, ~$ immoral thoughts/deeds, and the cultivation of arūpāvacara jhāna. For details, see, "Kamma, Sañkhāra, and Abhisañkhāra - What Is "Intention"?"


## Pāli to English Translations - Conventional Meanings

3. The following are the descriptions or definitions that I found online, which seem to be closest to the Pāli words.

Thought (for citta): "an idea or opinion produced by thinking or occurring suddenly in mind."
Feelings (for vedanā): Normally used together with emotion. For example, a "feeling of joy."
Perception (for saññ $\bar{a}):$ recognition. For example, a flower is a "rose" and its color is "red."
Emotions (for sañkhāra): Some define emotions as: "joy-sadness, anger-compassion, greed-benevolence, etc. etc.."

Consciousness (for viñ̃̄āna): "the state of being awake and aware of one's surroundings." However, this will be true only for " vipāka viññāna" as discussed in \#14 below.
4. That is all modern psychology says, and there are many overlaps there too. There are no universally accepted definitions for those words yet.

- On the other hand, the Buddha has provided detailed analyses of the Pāli words citta, sañ̃̄̄̄, vedan $\bar{a}$, sañkhāra, and viññāna.
- Sañkhāra arises due to emotions. These emotions are called cetasika typically translated as "mental factors."
- Therefore, citta, sañ̃̄̄̄, vedanā, sañkhāra, and viññāṇa SEEM TO correspond to the English words thought, perception, feeling, actions based on emotions, and consciousness. But that can lead to many misinterpretations, as we will discuss below.


## We Need to Use Pāli Words Like Citta, Sañn̄̄̄, Vedanā, Sañkhāra, Viññāna

5. That is why it is almost impossible to translate those Pāli words into a single English word. The Sinhala language uses the same words; there are no separate Sinhala words for most of the terms in the Paṭicca Samuppāda including vedanā, saññā, sañkhāra, and viññāna.

- It is much better to learn the meaning of each Pāli word and use that word itself.
- I will briefly discuss some key features to get a basic idea. Other aspects discussed in: "Pāli Dictionaries - Are They Reliable?."


## Citta and Thought - Not Even Close

6. Cittā arise as a series; a single citta never arises by itself.

- In a sensing event that involves the five physical senses (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body), a citta vīthi (or a series of citta) arise with 17 citt $\bar{a}$. Note that citta is pronounced, "chiththa" and cittā is the plural of citta. See, "Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars - Part 1."
- In the case of cittā arising directly in the mind, the basic citta vīthi has 12-14 citta. But in some exceptional cases, there is no limit to the number of citta that can occur (like in jhāna samāpatti).
- There can be billions of citta vīthi running within "the blink of eye" according to Abhidhamma. The Buddha said that there is nothing in this universe faster than a citta.
- After reading this post, you may want to read the previous post, "Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)." That could make things clearer.


## Citta and Cetasika

7. So you can see that what we call a "thought" is NOT a single citta. What we experience as a "thought" is the overall effect of a large number of citta vīthi.

- Each citta arises with at least seven cetasika (mental factors). Vedanā and saññ̄a are two of those psychological factors. Once a "good citta" occurs, many of those arise without changing to "bad citta" in the middle. That is why a "given senorye experience" is just called a citta, even though it may have billions of individual citta.
- There are 52 mental factors (cetasika) that could arise in a citta ("thought"). Thus, a "thought" can be quite complex.
- If it is a "moral citta," then it would have some combination of "good mental factors" such as compassion or "fear of wrongdoing" (hiri). There are 25 of them, and only several of them arise at a given time.
- If it is an "immoral citta," it would have "bad mental factors" such as greed and hate. There are 14 of them.
- Those good and bad mental factors (cetasika) never arise together. See, "Cetasika (Mental Factors)."


## Vedanā and Saññ̄ā - In Every Citta

8. Vedan $\bar{a}$ and saññ $\bar{a}$ are two specialized types of cetasika. That is why they are treated separately from other cetasika.

- Both of those arise with every citta.
- Vedanā basically "feels" that a sense event is happening. There is a sukha vedanā, dukkha vedanā, or a neutral vedana (more accurately adhukkhamasukha vedana $\overline{\boldsymbol{a}}$ ) associated with EACH sensory event. Therefore, joy is not a vedan $\bar{a}$; see \#2 above. There are only three types of vedana
- Sañ $\tilde{n} \bar{a}$ is responsible for recognizing what the sense object is, based on one's prior experience with that object. So, one perceives a rose and that it has the color red, for example.
- Those are, of course, fundamental descriptions.

9. There are 52 cetasika, including vedanā and sañ $\tilde{n} \bar{a}$. Out of the other 50 cetasika, some are included in "sañkhāra"; which particular cetasika will be involved will depend on the specific situation. They define whether a citta is good or bad.

- As we mentioned before, vedanā and saññ̄̄ arise with all citta, good and bad.
- When one does an immoral deed, some of those "bad cetasika" (called asobhana cetasika) arise with citta.
- When one does a moral deed, some "good cetasika" (called sobhana cetasika) arise.


## Sañkhāra Are Our Actions Done With Emotions

10. Cetasika represents the English word "emotions."

- When we experience those emotions, they are called "mano sañkhāra." They arise automatically, according to our gati.
- When we start thinking consciously about them, they become vacī sañkhāra; we also speak with vacī sañkhāra. Here, vacī pronounced "vachee."
- If we do bodily actions with such emotions, then those are done with kāya sañkhāra.
- So, we can see that "sañkhāra" are more than emotions. Saíkhāra is what we think and do with such sentiments.
- It is essential to realize that we have control over vacī sañkhāra and kāya sañkhāra, but mano sañkhāra arise automatically based on our gati.

11. To summarize what we have discussed so far:

- What we experience (and call a thought), is the overall effect of millions of citta vīthi.
- Current scientific research says a human can only register sense events lasting at least a hundredth of a second (about ten milliseconds). During that time, millions of citta vithi would have arisen.
- The sense object is recognized with the sañ̃̃ā cetasika, and accordingly, a sukha, dukkha, or neutral vedanā arises.
- Based on that recognition (but simultaneously) a set of good or bad cetasika arise.
- Based on those good or bad sets of cetasika, the mind generates good, and bad sañkhāra with which we think, speak, and do things.


## Emotions Arise Based on One's Gati and the Sensory Input

12. Thus mano sañkhāra arises automatically based on our gati (or gathi) and the particular sensory input. If one likes a specific sensory input (based on one's gati), then one will start thinking about it.

- So, we consciously think and speak with vacī sañkhāra based on those emotions (mano sañkhāra) that initially arise. If our emotions get high enough, we may take bodily actions based on kāya sañkhāra.
- All three types of sañkhāra arise in mind.

13. I need to emphasize the fact that occurring of a set of good or bad cetasika DOES NOT happen arbitrarily. Nothing happens without a cause.

- Two key factors determine what kind of cetasika arises for a given sense event: (1) One's gati (pronounced "gathi"), roughly meaning character/habits, and, (2) the particular sense object.
- Pali words are written differently than normal English words. See, "Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars - Part 1" and ""Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars - Part 2."
- Gati explained in many posts: "The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Āsavā)," "How Habits are Formed and Broken - A Scientific View," "Gati to Bhava to Jāti - Ours to Control," are just a few.


## Viññāna Is the Overall Experience - Plus Future Expectations

14. Finally, viññ̄ạna represents one's overall sensory experience (including vedanā, sañña, sañkhāra). That is only one type of viññāna: "vipāka viññāna."

- Viññāna has something in addition to those. One may form a future expectation based on that sensory input. That type is "kamma viññāna."
- If one gets attracted to a given sensory experience, one may keep thinking about it and initiate an expectation to enjoy it further. "Kamma viñ̃̃̄ạa" is that expectation. That creates a kamma $b \bar{u} j a$ that can bring vipa$k a$ in the future.
- More information at: "Viññāna - Consciousness Together With Future Expectations" and "Viññāna What It Really Means."
- Thus, it is wrong to translate viññāna as just consciousness (or awareness). Specifically, "kamma viñãāna" is much more than just consciousness.


## Expectations Are Only in Mano Viñ̃āāna

15. Viññāṇa can be categorized in another way into six types.

- We become aware of something in our physical world via cakkhu viññanna (seeing), sota viñ̃āṇa (hearing), ghāṇa viññāṇa (smelling), jivhā viññāna (tasting), and kāya viññāna (touching).
- Then mano viññāna takes over, and will decide to act on it - and if needed - to make "future expectations" or "plans." (Three manodvāra citta vīthi follow each pañcadvāra citta vīthi per Abhidhamma.)
- Therefore, it is the mano viññāna that builds expectations for the future, i.e., "kamma viññạ̄a" are ALWAYS mano viññāṇa.
- To emphasize: Kamma bīja that can bring future vipāka are generated only in mano viññāna. The other five types of viñ̃āṇa only bring in the external sensory input, i.e., they are "vipāka viñ $\tilde{n} a n a "$ ".


## Viññạ̣̄a and Sañkhāra Feed on Each Other

16. For example, cakkhu viññāna is like a camera taking a picture (but is still contaminated by gati.) It is mano viññāna (in the kamma viññāna mode) that takes actions (generates sañkhāra) based on that sensory input.

- If the sensory input is attractive, it will try to get "more of such sensory inputs," i.e., it will initiate a kamma viññāna to "achieve that expectation" via "sañkhāra paccayā viñ̃̄āṇa." For example, let us assume that person X sees a new car and "falls in love with it" and makes a viññaña (an expectation, which is mental energy) for it.
- That kamma viññanna to "buy that car Y " will be in the subconscious of X . It will be in his subconscious until either he buys the car or it turns out that there is absolutely no way for him to afford it.

17. Days later, he is driving to work and sees a similar car on the road (that is, of course, a cakkhu viññāna).

- Now that kamma viññāna to "buy that car Y " will come back to his mind (triggered by that cakkhu viññāna. Then, of course, his mano viññāṇa will take over, and his interest in the car will come to his mind.
- Then we will start generating vacī sañkhāra (conscious thoughts) about buying that car and how nice it would drive to work in it, etc.). That is the backward step of "viññāna paccayā sañkhāra." The Pațicca Samuppāda step "sañkhāra paccayā viññāna" runs backward too; see, "Āsevana and Aññamañ̃̃a Paccayā."
- That, in turn, will provide "more food" for that viñ̃ñaṇa via "sañkhāra paccayā viññạ̄̂a."
- Therefore, sañkhāra and kamma viññāṇa "feed on each other."

One should contemplate these ideas and apply them to other "real life situations." That is real "insight meditation" or "vipassanā bhāvanā." It may take time to get used to the real meanings of these keywords.

## Resources

18. A reasonably good idea of the structure of Abhidhamma can be gained by reading Bhikkhu Bodhi's book, "WebLink: PDF download: A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma."

- "WebLink: PDF download: Buddha Abhidhamma - Ultimate Science," by Dr. Mehm Tin Mon is also a good FREE publication.
- But both of those authors also translate viñ̃ñana as consciousness. Furthermore, they have translated citta also as consciousness. There are other translation problems too.
- However, by reviewing those two resources one can see how in-depth and detailed the mind processes are analyzed in Abhidhamma.
- The "Abhidhamma" section, together with the "Tables and Summaries" section also provides more information on Abhidhamma. Other resource posts are "Pāli Glossary - (A-K)" and "Pāli Glossary -(L-Z)."


### 4.1.3 Viññāṇa - Consciousness Together With Future Expectations

January 1, 2019; revised May 11, 2019; major revision July 1, 2022; July 10, 2022

## Nibbāna = Stopping of Kamma Viñ̃āāna

1. Viññāṇa means "without ñāṇa" or without wisdom, i.e., with ignorance. Viññaṇ̄a could also mean "defiled viñ̃̄̄̄ṇa", i.e., not knowing the consequences of doing dasa akusala. As we will see, there are two main types of viñ̃āṇa (vipāka viññāna and kamma viññāna) and both are defiled.

- However, it is the kamma viñ̃ñana that is responsible for creating kammic energies that can bring future rebirths. This is the viññāṇa ("sañkhāra paccayā viññāna") in Paṭicca Samuppāda. But vipāka
viññāṇa (cakkhu, sota, ghāna, jivhā, kāya, and mano viññạ̣̄a) also provide an "incorrect representation of the world." The Buddha called (any type of) viñ̃āạna a "magician." See "WebLink: suttacentral: Phenapindūpama Sutta (SN 22.95)."
- When one attains Arahanthood when one's paññā (wisdom) will be optimized and one will have "undefiled or clear viññāna."
- There are many suttās that clearly state "viññāna nirodha", or stopping the arising of kamma viñ̃̄āṇa (defiled viññāna) leads to Nibbāna.

2. A succinct statement can be found in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Dvavatānupassanāsutta (Snp 3.12)":
"Yaṃ kiñci dukkhaṃ sambhoti,
Sabbaṃ viññānapaccayā;

## Viñãānassa nirodhena,

Natthi dukkhassa sambhavo."

- Translated: "Whatever suffering that arises, all that arises due to "(kamma)viññāna"; With not arising of (kamma) viñ̃̃āna, there is no existence with suffering."
- I will introduce the concept of viññāṇa in a simple way. In the simplest form, "kamma viñ̃̃āṇa" is any type of expectation even without moral/immoral implications. See, " $\underline{\text {. Viññāna (Consciousness) can be }}$ of Many Different Types and Forms."
- A deeper explanation in, "Anidassana Viññāna - What It Really Means."


## Vipāka Viññāṇa and Kamma Viññāṇa

3. Viñ̃̄āna includes or encompasses the following: our feelings (vedanā), perceptions (saññā), and a set of individual mental factors (cetasika). They all arise together, and the set of cetasika that arises is dependent on each person's gati (habits/character). If you are not familiar with Abhidhamma, don't worry about it. I will take a simple example to illustrate viññāna below.

- Five of the six types of viññāna are strictly vipāka viññāna. These are the five types of viññ̄ạna associated with the five physical senses.
- We become aware of something in our physical world via cakkhu viñ̃āṇa (seeing), sota viñ̃̃āṇa (hearing), ghāna viñ̃n̄ạna(smelling), jivhā viññāṇa (tasting), and kāya viññāna (touching); these are due to past kamma vipāka. When memories come to mind, they are also vipāka viññanna. Therefore, "vipāka viññāna" can come in through all six senses.
- If we get interested in them, we may start generating mano viñ̃̃āna and doing kamma. Those are "kamma viññāna." Thus, "kamma viññāna" can only be mano viññāṇa. Cakkhu, sota, ghāna, jivhā, and kāya viññāṇa are ALWAYS "vipāka viññāna."
- Let us take a simple example to clarify those basic ideas.


## Examples of Two Types of Viññ̄āna

4. When a man X sees a young woman $(\mathrm{Y})$, that is called a "seeing event" or cakkhu viññaña. It is a vipāka viññāna. Suppose the woman has just come to X 's workplace as a new employee.

- With that cakkhu viññanna, X recognizes Y as an attractive female and that is called saññā; X may generate "happy feelings" when seeing Y and that is vedana ; X may also generate lust in his mind and that is a mental factor (cetasika).
- If X gets interested in Y , then X may also generate lust in his mind with subsequent mano viññāna, and start generating mano, vacī, and kāya sañkhāra; see the previous post. These are "kamma viññāna" that arise via "sañkhāra paccayā viññāṇa" in Paṭicca Samuppāda.

5. With the establishment of this new kamma viñ̃̄āna, there is now an expectation in X's mind of getting a date to go out with Y , and may be getting to marry Y someday.

- That is a mano viññāna that stays hidden in X's mind. It has the expectation of getting an opportunity to have a close relationship with Y.
- That idea will remain hidden in X's mind and can re-surface at appropriate times, especially when seeing Y again, or when someone mentions Y's name for example. This is "viññāna paccayā sañkhāra" in Paṭicca Samuppāda.
- The more X will be engaged in generating such sañkhāra, the kamma viñãāna will also strengthen; that is the "sañkhāra paccayā viññāna" in Paṭicca Samuppāda.


## It Is Kamma Viñ̃̃āṇa That Can "Grow"

6. Thus both "sañkhāra paccayā viññāna" and "viñ̃ñạna paccayā sañkhāra" will be operating back and forth, and will keep strengthening that viññāna.

- This is what is meant in many suttā by saying that "viñnäạa will grow" as one keeps doing sañkhāra. That refers to kamma viññāna.

For example, in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Cetanā Sutta (SN 12.38)": "Yañca, bhikkhave, ceteti yañca pakappeti yañca anuseti, ārammaṇametaṃ hoti viññāṇassa ṭhitiyā. Ārammaṇe sati patiṭth $\bar{a}$ viññānassa hoti. Tasmiṃ patiṭthite viñnāne virūlhe āyatim punabbhavābhinibbatti hoti.Āyatiṃ punabbhavābhinibbattiyā sati āyatim jāti jarāmaraṇam sokaparidevadukkhadomanassupāyāsā sambhavanti. Evametassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa samudayo hoti."

Translated: "Bhikkhus, what one intends, and what one plans, and whatever one has a tendency towards this focus (ārammana) a basis for the maintenance of viññana. When there is an ārammaña there is support for the establishing of kamma viññāna. When that viññāna is established and has come to growth, there is the arising of future renewed existence (punabbhavā). When there is the future renewed existence, future birth, aging-and-death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure, and despair come to be. Such is the origin of this whole mass of suffering."
7. So, let us assume that X has been seeing Y for a few days and may be even got to talk to her a few times ( vacī and kāya sañkhāra are associated with those activities). Each time X interacts with Y , that "kamma viññāna for having a close relationship with Y " will grow in X 's mind.

- Furthermore, X will be thinking about Y often (which is generating vacī sañkhāra), which will also help make that "kamma viññāna for having a close relationship with Y " to grow.
- That happens via "sañkhāra paccayā viñ̃n̄ạa" step in Paṭicca Samuppāda.

8. Several days later, X finds out that Y is married when her husband comes to meet her at work.

- He could clearly see that she is happily married and there is no point in even thinking about having a relationship with her.
- In an instant, X's "kamma viññāṇa for having a close relationship with $Y$ " will be eliminated (for most people).
- When the reality of the situation is comprehended by the mind, the corresponding "kamma viñnäna" will be stopped. This is what is meant by "viñ̃nāna nirodha."


## Kamma Viññ̄āna Can be Stopped from Arising

9. Therefore, it is important to see that a kamma viñ $\tilde{a} n ̄ a$ (or an expectation) will be eliminated as soon as one realizes the futility (or the dangers) of that expectation.

- At a deeper level, all of one's highly immoral types of kamma viññāna will be permanently removed when one will be able to see the futility/dangers of engaging in immoral deeds. That is when one attains the Sotāpanna stage via comprehending Tilakkhana.
- Next, one's expectation for seeking pleasures in this world will be totally removed when one realizes the futility - and dangers - of seeking such sense pleasures. That is when one attains the Anāgāmi stage of Nibbāna.
- Once one becomes an $A n \bar{a} g \bar{a} m i$, one is at a stage where one can start seeing the futility of $j h a \overline{n i c}$ pleasures and start getting rid of rūpa rāga and arūpa rāga (or the futility of being born in the rūpāvacara and arupāvacara realms. That is when one becomes an Arahant.
- Therefore, the way to Nibbāna is a step-by-step process; see, "Is It Necessary for a Buddhist to Eliminate Sensual Desires?."

10. There are many types of kamma viñ̃āṇa that we can have. The minor ones are just expectations of getting something done or buying something or getting a new job, etc.

- Sañkhāra or "thinking of that expectation and making plans to get it done also by speaking and doing things (that includes vacī sañkhāra and kāya sañkhāra)" will make that viññāna grow. This comes via the "sañkhāra paccayā viññāna" step.
- In another example, suppose X is thinking about buying a certain type of car. That idea or expectation will be "at the back of his mind" all the time. If he sees a car like that on the road, then that viñ $\tilde{n} a \underline{n} a$ will be awakened, and he will start thinking about it again. Now, one day X buys that car. Then that viññaña will also disappear since he will no longer be interested in buying a car. That expectation has been fulfilled.
- Therefore, a kamma viññāṇa will "take hold in the and grow" only as long as one has a desire AND one believes that it can be fulfilled.

11. I gave those two examples to illustrate the basic concept. But more complex types of viññāna can grow based on certain types of activities that X engages in, and those can become paṭisandhi viññāna that can lead to rebirths.

- For example, if X constantly engages in helping others, donating time and money to charities, etc, he would be cultivating the mindset of a deva (even without knowing). Then that "moral viññāna" would grow with time and may lead to a rebirth in a deva realm.
- If one is constantly thinking and planning to make money by exploiting/deceiving others, he/she is doing vacī/kāya sañkhāra that will be feeding a "bad kamma viññāna" that can lead to a birth in the apāyās.
- Therefore, viññāṇa can be various types.


## Kamma Viñ̃āāna Can Only be Mano Viññāṇa

12. As we discussed in \#2, there are five basic types of "vipāka viññāna" just bring external sense objects (pictures, sounds, tastes, smells, and touches) to our mind. Vipāka viññāña can also bring memories directly to mind (the sixth sense.)

- Then mano viññāṇa takes over, and will decide to act on it - and if needed - makes "future expectations" or "fiture plans". Therefore, it is the mano viñnäna that has expectations for the future.
- We ignore most of the things we see, hear, etc. But if we get attracted to something, then we will be going back to see, hear, etc, and may be making other related plans too. That is all done with mano viññāna, a "kamma viññāna."

13. Obviously, patisandhi viññāna is a very important kamma viñ̃āṇ̄a. It can determine future births.

- This is a complex subject, but when one engages in highly immoral deeds, the pațisandhi viñ̃nāṇa that grows may not be what one desires.
- For example, suppose X is a serial rapist. He gets a temporary sense of satisfaction by raping women. What he does not know is that he is cultivating a kamma viññāna that is appropriate for an animal. So, he could get an animal birth because of that immoral kamma viñ̃̃anna he is cultivating.
- So, hopefully, you can see the connection between viñ̃n̄ạa and gati (pronounced "gathi') too. Gati (character qualities/habits) is an important concept that has been hidden in recent years.


## Connection to Magga Phala

14. When one attains the Sotāpanna stage of Nibbāna, one would see the futility of such immoral and briefly-lived sense pleasures. Then such types of "immoral kamma viñ̃āạa" would not be cultivated in his mind.

- In other words, one's "hidden immoral gati" will be permanently removed at the Sotāpanna stage.
- That is comparable to X losing the "viñ̃āạa for having a close relationship with Y " in \#4 to \#7 above. In that case, X clearly saw the uselessness of having that viññanna, and it died.
- It would be a good idea to read and understand posts on gati: "How Habits are Formed and Broken A Scientific View"; "Bhava and Jāti - States of Existence and Births Therein"; "Gati to Bhava to Jāti Ours to Control."

15. I made this discussion simple in order to get two main ideas across, which are:

- Viññanna is a complex concept. This is why it is not appropriate to translate viñãāna as just "consciousness". See, "WebLink: puredhamma.net: Search Results for: viññāna two meanings."
- Mano viññāna arise due to sañkhāra ("san" + "khāra"). We cultivate those via "sañkhāra paccayā viññāna" in the Pațicca Samuppāda cycles.
- This is why "san" is a key root word in Pāli; see, "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Samsāra)."


## Incorrect Translations Do Not Distinguish the Two Types of Viñnāāna

16. I hope that those who translate deep sutt $\bar{a}$ word-by-word will at least read these series of posts and make amendments to their ways of translating key sutt $\bar{a}$ that discuss deep meanings. They are no different from the Sāti bhikkhu who could not understand what is meant by viñ̃āạa in the WebLink: suttacentral: Mahā Tanhāsañkhaya Sutta (MN 38).

- One should not be translating such deep sutt $\bar{a}$ (also there is no point in reading them either) until one understands what is meant by viññāna.

17. The WebLink: suttacentral: Kevatta Sutta (DN 11) is another such sutta (among many others).

- The key verse there is at the end of the sutta: "Viññānam anidassanam, anantaṃ sabbatopabham Ettha āpo ca pathavī, tejo vāyo na gādhati. Ettha dīghañca rassañca, aṇuṃ thūlaṃ subhāsubhaṃ; Ettha nāmañca rūpañca, asesaṃ uparujjhati; Viñnāṇassa nirodhena, etthetạ̣ uparujijhatī"'ti.
- This is explained in detail in, "Pabhassara Citta, Radiant Mind, and Bhavañga."

18. As I have said many times, Buddha Dhamma is deep. It takes an effort to learn. Just translating deep suttā word-by-word or just reading those translations will not be of many benefits in the long run.

- Of course, some suttā can be translated word-by-word, like the WebLink: suttacentral: Kesamutti Sutta or Kälāma Sutta (AN 3.65). Those are basic suttā that provide guidelines to live a moral life. But deep suttā that discuss anicca, anatta, or Nibbāna require a deeper knowledge of the basics like what is meant by saññā, viññaṇa, sañkhāra, etc.
- It is best to learn the meanings of these keywords and just use them, instead of translating them as a single English word. I hope you can see why, with the above discussion on viñnäạa.


#### Abstract

Also see, "Connection Between Sañkhāra and Viññāna" and "Viññāna and Sañkhāra - Connection to Paticca Samuppāda." These three posts are essential to be understood if one really wants to understand Buddha Dhamma.


### 4.1.4 Connection Between Sañkhāra and Viññāṇa

## January 11, 2018

1. In a recent post, "Viññāna - Consciousness Together With Future Expectations," I discussed how viññāna or "future expectations" are established when one gets attached to something and starts doing sañkhāra (conscious thinking, speech, and actions) about it.

- In this post, I will elaborate more on the importance of sañkhāra and the connection to viññanna. In a few posts, I will try to explain how we create our own future suffering by engaging in abhisañkhāra or "strong sañkhāra."
- These abhisañkhāra are nothing but how we think about, speak about, and take actions on moral/immoral issues. If we do any of the dasa akusala, then we are generating "bad abhisañkhāra" or "apuñña abhisañkhāra" (abbreviated as "apuññābhisañkhāra").
- Those apuññābhisañkhāra lead to suffering. Therefore, key to stop future suffering is to gradually reduce apuññäbhisañkhāra and eventually to stop them.

2. In addition to what we discussed in that previous post, another key point is to realize that all our speech and bodily actions are started by the mind.

- Can you do anything, if you (or your mind) does not want to do?
- You may be in the middle of doing something (say walking to the kitchen), but you can decide you don't really want to go the kitchen and instead walk to the living room. If you start saying something, you can stop in mid-sentence if you want to.
- Some people have strange ideas about humans not having free will. They should try what I just suggested above. It is not that hard to verify.

3. All the progress that science has made is based on the "mind power" of the humans (scientists coming up with breakthrough innovations in their minds). Mind comes first and this is what is expressed in the very first Dhammapada gāthā: "manopubbangama dhammā.." or "mind is at the forefront."

- A child's future depends on how well he learns. If the mind of the child goes in the wrong direction, he/she could become a drug addict or even a murderer.
- In the same way, we determine our own LONG TERM future in the rebirth process by the ways in which we think, speak, and act. That is what is really explained in Patticca Samuppāda (normally translated as "Dependent Origination"; again, it is much better to use the Päli term and understand what is really meant by it).

4. From the moment we wake up in the morning, we do nothing but generate sañkhāra.

- When we just experience a sense input (seeing, hearing, etc) , "mano sañkhāra" are automatically generated.
- The Buddha said, "vedanā, saññā are mano sañkhāra": we just experience the sense input by recognizing it and generating a "sukha, dukkha, or neutral feeling about it."

5. When we start thinking consciously about a particular sense input (what we saw, heard, tasted, etc), we start generating vaci sañkhāra; we may also speak with vacī sañkhāra. Here, vacī is pronounced "vachee."

- For example, if we see a nice car and start thinking about how nice it would be to own such a car, how we can impress our friends with it, etc, we are fully aware of such thoughts.
- Such conscious generation of thoughts about "what to do about a given sense input and how to go about it", for example, are vacī sañkhāra. Actual speech is also vacī sañkhāra.
- The Buddha said, "vitakka, vicāra are vacī sañkhāra": stay on the given sense input and generating thoughts about it or related things.
- Furthermore, we can keep going with such "day dreaming" or we can stop them. If it is something we like, it may be hard to stop thinking about it, i.e., it may take will power.
- That is what is involved in Ānāpānasati/Satipaṭthāna: stopping bad vacī sañkhāra.

6. If we just proceed with those $v a c \bar{c}$ sañkhāra, our emotions may get strong and we may start speaking out (stronger vacī sañkhāra). If we get "really worked up" we may do bodily actions with such emotions, then those are done with kāya sañkhāra.

- For example, let us say two people get into an argument and start shouting at each other. Each person is speaking harsh words (generated via vacī sañkhāra).
- Then one of them (person X) gets "really worked up", loses all restraint, and hits the other person. That "hitting action" was done with kāya sañkhāra (generating thoughts to raise the hand and hit that person).

7. It is important to realize that both speech and bodily actions are initiated by the mind.

- In the above example, both people were engaged in generating "bad vacī sañkhāra," which are nothing but "bad speech", the opposite of "Sammā Vāca" or "correct speech."
- Then person X took did an even worse thing by hitting the other person. That was a "bad action", opposite of "Sammā Kammanta."
- Therefore, they were both acting with "avijja" or ignorance of the consequences of their actions. That is "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra," the first step in Pațicca Samuppāda.

8. Now, we can see what is meant by "sañkhāra" (and "abhisañkhāra").

- In the above example, both vacī sañkhāra and kāya sañkhāra generated by person X were "abhisañkhāra" or "strong sañkhāra."
- If those two people were just taking about something kammically neutral, say about the weather, then that would involve just "sañkhāra."
- If they were talking about weather, while walking, then that would involve both vacī and kāya sañkhāra that are NOT of "abhisañkhāra" type. That speech and action did not involve generation of "kammic energy."

9. Therefore, it is important to understand the difference between just sañkhāra and abhisañkhāra. In the suttā, or in Paticca Samuppāda, the word "sañkhāra" is used often without specifically saying whether it is just "sañkhāra" or "abhisañkhāra."

- Depending on the context, we should be able to determine whether it is just "sañkhāra" or "abhisañkhāra."
- Not only that, but abhisañkhāra are also two types: puññābhisañkhāra (puñña abhisañkhāra or "good deeds") and apuñ̃n̄̄̄hisañkhāra (apuñña abhisañkhāra or "bad deeds").
- Here by "deeds" we include all three types of sañkhāra: mano, vacī, and $k \bar{a} y a$. We should AVOID all three types of apuñ̃̄̄̄bhisañkhāra or immoral thoughts, speech, and actions.

10. It is again important to emphasize that mano sañkhāra arise AUTOMATICALLY based on two things:
(1) the sense input, and (2) one's own gati or gathi (character/habits), as we discussed in the post: "Introduction to Citta, Vedanā, Saññā, Sañkhāra, and Viññāna."

- For example, if someone has a bad temper (that is a bad gati), then that person can be made angry by the slightest provocation.
- On the other hand, there are people who are calm and measured and are not easy to become angry. It will take much stronger provocation to make them angry.
- In the same way, some people are greedy and are easily attached to tasty foods. Some people are kind and quick to come to help for others in need, etc.

11. The key to making progress in the Path of the Buddha is to cultivate "good gati" and gradually reduce "bad gati."

- If one is "quick to anger", that is a bad gati. One important way to reduce that bad gati is to stop generating vacī and kāya sañkhāra by will power when they start arising.
- For example, some people get angry even when they hear the name of a person they do not like. Then they start thinking about all the bad things that person has done in the past. That is generating "bad vaci sañkhāra."
- Even though one may not be saying a single bad word, just consciously think about bad thoughts about another person will feed that bad habit. So, it is important to realize that generating such "silent bad thoughts" is as bad as saying harsh words.
- Of course actually speaking out (also vacī sañkhāra) and doing bad things to person (hitting for example), are also bad abhisañkhāra.

12. This "feeding bad habits" via (apuññābhi)sañkhāra generation is explained via the step, "sañkhāra paccayā viññana"a" in Paṭicca Samuppāda.

- When person $X$ has a "grudge against person $Y$ ", person $X$ has a "viññāna" or an expectation in his mind to "get back to $Y$ or hurt $Y$ " whenever an opportunity arises.
- That viñ̃̄āna "gets food to grow" each time X starts generating bad thoughts about Y , speak against Y , or do something to hurt Y . Those all belong to vacī and kāya sañkhāra.
- On the other hand, mano sañkhāra about Y arise automatically in X's mind when X sees Y or even when Y's name is mentioned by someone else. Then X is likely to start generating vacī sañkhāra or "conscious thoughts about Y."
- The key to progress is to STOP such vacī sañkhāra AS SOON AS one becomes aware of them.

13. Just like a person, an animal, or even a tree would grow when given food on a regular basis, one's viññāṇa would grow when "it is fed on a regular basis" by generating vacī and kāya sañkhāra.

- It works backwards too. If food is reduced, a tree will not grow well. If food and water are totally stopped, the tree will die.
- In the same way, if one stops feeding a given "viññāna" (or a "future expectation") by stopping vacī and kāya sañkhāra, that viñãāna will die with time.
- In the same way, we want to "feed a good viññanna," say to act kindly towards other people and animals. So, we should INCREASE vacī and sañkhāra generation: generate more compassionate thoughts and engage in compassionate activities like giving.

14. So, hopefully, we now have a good idea about what sañkhāra (and abhisañkhāra) are and how they lead to good or bad viññāna.

- We will discuss more on viññāna in the next post. In the mean time, please do not hesitate to ask questions. It is important to understand these basic concepts.


### 4.1.5 <br> Viññāṇa and Sañkhāra - Connection to Paṭicca Samuppāda

## February 25, 2019; revised August 28, 2002

1. To review what we have covered in the last few posts in "Essential Buddhism":

- A defiled consciousness or viññāna has an "expectation" for the future. The "kammic energy" in "kamma viññāna" is responsible for "sustaining the rebirth process."
- We do that willingly by generating (abhi)sañkhāra, i.e., how we think, speak, and act.
- One who has not understood the First Noble Truth is willingly generating (abhi) sañkhāra via, "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" which leads then to the cultivation of different types of viññāna via "sañkhāra paccayā viññāna" step. That is how Pațicca Samuppāda cycles start. They end up in "jāti paccayā jarā, maraṇa, soka, parideva, dukkha,..", the whole mass of suffering!
- Therefore, "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" and "sañkhāra paccayā viññạna" lead to all future suffering. We will proceed step-by-step.

2. The five types of viññanna can be called "just consciousness," i.e., without "future expectations." These are cakkhu viññ̄ṇa (a "seeing event"), sota viññāṇa (a "hearing event"), etc for the five physical sense inputs. One more special case with mano viñãāna is discussed in \#4 below.

- A "defiled viññāna" or "an expectation for the future" is associated only with the mano viñ̃̃anna, which is what is normally referred to in a Pațicca Samuppāda cycle if a specific type is not mentioned.
- Therefore, in Paticca Samuppāda or any sutta, if a reference is made to viññāña, that is referring to "mano viññāna" or "mind consciousness."
- The mind generates the "kammic power" to create "kammic energy" or "kamma bīja" ("bīja" is pronounced "beeja"); see, "Sañkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka." [bīja :[nt.] seed; germ; generating element.]

3. Other five types of viñ̃̄āṇa (e.g., cakkhu viññāna, etc.) are only registered in the mind when we see, hear, taste, etc.

- This is stated as "cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññānaì" in suttā or Abhidhamma. This normally translates as "eye-consciousness arises when a picture is seen or received by the eyes." That gives the basic idea but has a deeper meaning. See "Contact Between Āyatana Leads to Vipāka Viñ̃̃āna."
- Similarly, hearing happens with "sotañca paṭicca sadde ca uppajjati sotaviññānàm" ("hearing consciousness arises when a sound is heard or received by the ears"), etc.

4. In addition to the sensory inputs via the five physical senses, we also get sense inputs DIRECTLY to the mind. These are "memories and future hopes" that just come to the mind and are mano viñ̃ñana. Even though they seem to come to the mind for no reason, it also happens due to the mind DIRECTLY receiving a memory (called dhamm $\bar{a}$; this dhamm $\bar{a}$ is different from dhamma in Buddha Dhamma).

- This process is stated as "manañca paṭicca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviñãānamì", or "mind consciousness arises when the mana indriya or the mine receives a dhamma (of a memory)."
- This event is also "just consciousness," remembering a past event or a future expectation; for a deeper discussion, see, "What are Dhammā? - A Deeper Analysis."

5. Therefore, the mind can "receive" six types of "sensory inputs", i.e., the mind becomes "aware of" or "becomes conscious about" those six types of sense events.

- Based on those, the mind may "take actions" (to think further, to speak, or to act using the body). Those are called vacī and kāya sañkhāra.
- Such sañkhāra then leads to a defiled mindset or a "defiled viññāṇa" via the Pațicca Samuppāda (PS) process. Therefore, such "defiled viññāna" can arise only via PS processes.
- And that happens ONLY IF the mind gets attached to that sense input (an attractive figure, a pleasing sound, tasty food, nice smell, soothing touch, or an important past event (or planned future event).

6. Please read the above points in $\# 5$ carefully until the concept is understood. This is the key to understanding the key Pāli words sañkhāra and viññāna and also the concept of Paṭicca Samuppāda.

- Whenever we willingly grasp something (or get attached to something), whatever results from that action has the corresponding nature. Because one got attached willingly, a similar bhava (existence) will result: i.e., pati+icca leading to sama + uppāda or Paṭicca Samuppāda (PS).
- Here, "pati+icca" means "getting attached willingly," and "sama+uppāda" means "giving rise to a corresponding (similar) existence." [uppāda :[m.] rising; coming into existence; birth.]

7. The "existence" one gets according to one's sañkhāra generated according to one's mindset. As we have discussed before, the first mano sañkhāra arises automatically based on one's gati (or gathi), when one gets attached to a sensory event.

- Then if one does not act with mindfulness (i.e., does not see the bad consequences of generating such thoughts), one will start generating vacī sañkhāra. If one's emotions get strong enough, one could start speaking (more vacī sañkhāra) and even taking bodily actions (kāya sañkhāra). A deeper discussion at "Correct Meaning of Vacī Sañkhāra."
- We will first consider a PS process that happens often during a lifetime. This PS process is not discussed in the Visuddhimagga or any current English texts on Buddha Dhamma.

8. In pavutti PS, bhava or existence refers to a "temporary existence" during a given lifetime. Pavutti means "current." [pavatti : [aor. of pavattati] moved on; proceeded; existed. (f.) happening; incident; news.]

- In the most fundamental sense, a "greedy state of mind" will result when we get attached via greed, i.e., one develops a habit or gati or bhava corresponding to that state of mind; a 'hateful state" (habit/gati/bhava) results via hateful attachment; acts of greed and/or hate are always done with ignorance.
- The pavutti PS, which describes how we develop certain habits or bhava or gati during a given lifetime. It is often easier to use an example to illustrate these PS cycles.
- Pavutti PS is important because the habits (gati) cultivated during this lifetime can feed the uppatti PS process leading to future rebirths. [upapatti : [f.] birth; rebirth; approach.][uppatti:[f.] rebirth; coming forth; origin.]

9. Let us examine how a teenager becomes an alcoholic, using the pavutti PS. The teenager becomes friendly with a group of other teenagers who are into drinking. Initially, he may be reluctant to join in, but due to ignorance (avijj $\bar{a}$ ), he joins them and starts drinking.

- Suppose a good friend or a family member knew about the situation. In that case, they could have prevented the teenager from associating with such bad company, i.e., ignorance could have been dispelled by explaining to him the adverse effects of drinking and associating with such a group.
- Now we will examine in detail how this happens.

10. The PS cycle thus starts with "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra"; due to ignorance of the adverse results, the teenager starts drinking with that group (sañkhāra $=$ "san $+k h a \overline{r a}$ " or actions of accumulating, in this case bad kamma).

- The more he is involved with such drinking activities, the more he thinks about it and develops a "defiled mindset" or a "defiled viññāṇa" for that activity. This is "sañkhāra paccayā viñ̃nāṇa."
- This is explained in detail in the previous post: "Connection Between Sañkhāra and Viññ̄ān."

11. When he begins to like drinking, he starts thinking about it while doing other things. This is "viñ $\tilde{n} \bar{a} n a$ paccayā nāmarūpa" step.

- In this case, nāmarūpa are the mental images associated with that viñnāña, i.e., the names and shapes of particular alcohol bottles, the places where he normally drinks, the friends who drink with him, etc.
- He also thinks about the next "event" and visualizes the scene, all these are associated with nāmarūpa. Thus, here nāmarūpa are the mental images of "things" and "concepts" that one would like to enjoy.
- "Nāma" means "name" assigned to a person/object, and "rūpa" means "spatial profile" associated with that nāma.
- "Nāmarūpa" are the "mental images" together with the associated feelings (vedanā), perceptions (sañ̃n̄a), sañkhāra, and viññāna, the COMBINED effect of "nāma" and "rūpa."

12. Now his six senses become "involved" to provide a reality to those nāmarupa; to provide the desired sensory pleasures. In Pāli terms, the six indriya (senses) become "āyatana." For lack of a single English word, I will call an "ayatana" an "import/export facility" and get involved in the actions associated with drinking events.

- Eyes are used as indriya when they are used just to identify things out there. When eyes are used to repeatedly look at an object TO ENJOY IT, then the eyes are used as "āyatana."
- His mind is often thinking about the next "event" (where, when, with whom, etc), and he makes necessary preparations for the "event" using all six senses (now āyatanas) compatible with those nāmarūpa (that he is cultivating.)
- Therefore, this is the "nāmarūpa paccayā salāyatana" step, where salāyatana means the six $\bar{a} y a t a n a$. Eyes are now not merely for seeing, they have become an assistant looking for a "good drink" or a "good friend to chat with," etc.


## 13. Then we have "salāayatana paccay $\bar{a}$ phassa," i.e., all six $\bar{a} y a t a n a$ become actively engaged making contact with relevant sense objects.

- His eyes are on the lookout for a favorite drink or a favorite person to chat with, etc. Here instead of phassa, it is (more appropriately) called "samphassa" (= "san" + "phassa"), where "san" implies it not just contact, but a "san" contact or "samphassa." See "Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways."
- This may be a good time to review the term "san" if you have not already done so: "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Samisāra)."

14. Such "samphassa" lead to vedanā (feelings), i.e., "(san)phassa paccayā vedanā." He experiences "good (but immoral) feelings" with all those sense contacts.

- Because of such "good feelings," he gets further attached: "vedanā paccayā taṇhā"; see, "Tanhā - How We Attach via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance."

15. Now comes, "taṇhā paccayā upādāna." Upādāna means "grabbing or getting hold of something automatically," like an octopus grabbing its prey with all eight legs.

- In the present case, the teenager wants to re-live this experience and gets immersed in it. When he is experiencing the event, his mind is totally absorbed in it; he does not have the mindset to think about any adverse consequences. This is the critical "habit-forming" or "bhava forming" step.

16. So, the next inevitable step is "upādāna paccayā bhavo"; this particular state of getting drunk becomes increasingly ingrained in his mind. It becomes "a bhava" or "existence" or habit that is important to him. He very much wants to re-live that experience.

- And that is exactly what he gets: "bhava paccayā jāti." This "bhava" or the kamma seed is now well established, and he can be born in that state quite easily. All he needs is an invitation from a friend, or even a sight of a bar while travelling, for example.
- Getting into that state or being "born" there will happen more frequently. So, he gets drunk at every opportunity. See "Bhava and Jāti - States of Existence and (Repeated) Births Therein" for more details.

17. However, like everything else, any birth is subjected to decay and suffering: "jāti paccayā jarā, maraña., eva me tassa dukkhandha samudhayo hoti," i.e., "the whole mass of suffering."

- But in the case of a single drinking event, that state of intoxication comes to an end, possibly with a big headache and a huge hangover. That episode ends with nothing to show for it but a hangover.
- Even worse, now he is "hooked'; he has formed a bad habit, which only strengthens even more if he does it repeatedly. Because each time, the PS runs, the viñ̃̄̄ạna for that habit gets more fuel, and the bhava gets stronger.

18. The more the teenager gets trapped in that bhava, the more $j \bar{a} t i$ that occurs, i.e., more frequently he will be drunk.

- And it is not even necessary to participate in a "drinking event" to run another PS cycle. He may be sitting at a desk trying to study, and may start going through the PS cycle MENTALLY.
- He can start right at "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" and be generating vacī sañkhāra (vitakka/vicāra or planning), thus generating (and strengthening) the viññāna for drinking, generating nāmarūpa (visuals of places, friends, alcohol bottles, etc), and thus going through the rest of the cycle: salāyatana, samphassa, vedanā, tanh $\bar{a}$, upādāna, bhava, jāti ('living it"), repeatedly.
- Thus numerous such PS cycles can run at any time, probably increasing their frequency as the bhava or the habit builds up. The stronger the bhava or habit is, it will be harder to break.
- This is why meditation together with another good habit to work on should be undertaken to replace a bad habit. While in meditation, one can contemplate the adverse consequences of the bad habit.

19. It is important to realize that the above PS cycle does not run to its conclusion when the drinking "event" is over. Rather the cycle can repeatedly run unless it is stopped willfully, deliberately.

- And the way to do that is to act with "mindfulness" and stop those bad first conscious thoughts (vacī sañkhāra) that start arising. This is the key to "real Ānāpāna and Satipatṭhāna meditations" in Buddha Dhamma.
- Then one would stop the "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" step. That will stop "bad viññ̄āna" from arising or being cultivated by the elimination of "sañkhāra paccayā viñãāna" step. That will, of course, stop the end result of suffering.

20. If those abhisañkhāra cultivated get strong enough, they can also lead to future births. The rebirth process proceeds via the uppatti PS process, which is very similar; see "Paticca Samuppāda."

- Only by cultivating Ānāpāna and Satipatṭhāna can we break that cycle of rebirth: "Paticca Samuppāda, Tilakkhana, Four Noble Truths."


### 4.1.6 Breath Meditation Is Addictive and Harmful in the Long Run

January 15, 2019; revised January 21, 2020
I receive many questions from people who insist that breath meditation "works." Breath meditation can indeed provide a relief that can be exhilarating for those who have not experienced a "permanent cooling down." The latter is harder to get and require a determined effort, but will be a permanent solution to the "problem of existential suffering."

## Introduction

1. Doing breath meditation to achieve a "temporary relief" from the "suffering in this world" is like taking an aspirin or a tylenol or a sleeping pill to get relief from a headache. If that headache has a root cause in the onset of cancer in the body, then taking aspirins will only allow the tumor to grow. In the same way, breath meditation does absolutely nothing to remove the root causes (greed, anger, ignorance.)

- One needs to get long-term medical treatment to get rid of cancer. Then the headaches will also go away.
- In the same way, to stop future suffering from arising, one needs to remove defilements (greed, hate, and ignorance) from one's mind. Then all the mental stresses will also go away permanently.
- It makes sense to get a temporary relief using a pill, but one MUST start working on a long-term solution for the root cause of cancer.
- In the same way, it is OK to do a bit of breath meditation to deviate the mind from a stressful situation, but it is unwise to use it as a long-term solution.

2. The problem here is that many people get "addicted" to breath meditation, just as a drug addict starts an addiction by getting used to "taking a pill" to get to an "ecstatic state of mind" for a few hours.

- The problem is that the drug addict will have to keep increasing the dose with time to get the "same kick."
- Even though breath meditation is not directly harmful like drug addiction, it is dangereous in the sense that it will shift the focus from the primary goal of a permanent solution to the "problem of suffering."
- Furthermore, breath meditation can lead to anāriya jhāna, and that is a trap. Once people start enjoying $j h a \overline{n a}$, they even equate that to Nibbāna. I will discuss this later on.
- The Buddha always analyzed a given problem in detail so that one could get a clear picture of the whole situation. So, let us analyze possible causes for the agitation of the mind.


## Heating of the Mind Due to Too Many Sense Inputs

3. The mind can focus on only one thing at a time. However, it SEEMS that we can see, hear, smell, taste, touch, and also think about concepts all at the same time.

- For example, when watching a movie, we see and hear the film, and also be thinking about the movie plot. If we are eating popcorn, we can touch, smell, and taste popcorn too. So it SEEMS that we are using all six sense faculties "at the same time."
- But we have that perception of a mind engaged in all at once only because the mind is VERY FAST. It can go back and forth among the six sense inputs at an incredibly fast rate.
- The Buddha said that the mind is the fastest entity in the world.

4. But in the above example, the mind (or more accurately the brain) gets overworked. All those sensory inputs need to be processed by the brain, which is like a computer. You may have seen that a computer can get "overheated" when it is running too many applications at the same time.

- That is why we cannot watch movies all day long. If we watch even two movies without a break, we are likely to get a massive headache. The brain gets overloaded.
- So, this is one kind of stress that we feel. It is simply due to the mind (and the brain) trying to process too many sensory inputs.
- There is another, more important, way that a mind can get stressed. That may not be obvious to many. Let us discuss that now.


## Heating of the Mind Due to Greed, Hate, and Ignorance

5. Do you remember the last time when you got outraged? How did that feel? You get hot. The whole body becomes hot and agitated; blood pressure goes up; face becomes dark because the blood becomes dark (By the way, this is clear evidence that the mind can affect the body).

- This "burning up" is called "tāpa" in Pāli (pronounced "thāpa"; ъ3 in Sinhala), and is due to greed, hate, and ignorance. "A$t \bar{a} p i "$ means the opposite, "cooling down via getting rid of those defilements."
- That is the "fire" discussed in detail in the WebLink: suttacentral: Adittapariyaya Sutta (SN 35.28).
- Therefore, "ātāp̄ sampajāno" means "remove the fire or heat" from one's mind by being aware of the 'san' or "immoral tendencies."
- When someone can get to the "ātāpi sampajāno" state, one feels calm and "cooled down"; see, "Kāyānupassanā - The Section on Habits (Sampajānapabba)" and other sections in "Mahā Satipatthāna Sutta."

6. When one acts with greed, "heating up" still happens, may be to a lesser extent than when one is angry. As a kid, when I was stealing something, I felt heated and uncomfortable.

- The same is true when one acts with ignorance too. One is not confident whether that is the right thing to do; the mind goes back and forth: is this right or wrong? Should I do it or not? That is called "vicikicch $\vec{a}$ " in Pāli. Because one does know, one is not confident, one becomes anxious, and the body gets heated up.
- On the other hand, do you remember how you felt when you made someone happy, either via a good deed or word? You cooled down; it felt good. Didn't you feel the opposite of when you got mad?

7. Thus, when one gives up acting with hate, greed, or ignorance, one becomes less agitated, at ease, with a sense of peacefulness. One can enhance this calmness by also engaging in moral deeds - this is sila or ethical conduct.

- Giving up an immoral lifestyle and engaging in moral activities is the basis for getting to Nibbāna, the ultimate "cooling down."
- As one can see the benefits of cooling down, one will avoid actions done with hate, greed, and ignorance. And one will be looking forward to doing act of goodwill, generosity, and with mindfulness.
- Avoiding greed, hate, and ignorance is the same as preventing dasa akusala.


## Mind Can Handle Only One Sense Input at a Time

8. In \#3, \#4 above, I mentioned that the mind could focus on only one sensory input at a time. Let us take an analogy to see why that is so.

- We all have seen a "ring of fire" at some circuses. The performer rotates a long stick with burning torch, and it looks like a "ring." Yet, we know that it is not really a "ring," but it is just the fast rotation that "fools our eyes" to be seen as a continuous ring.
- The light is coming from only one point on the circle at a given time. But we see it as a continuous ring; see \#13 of "Do I Have "A Mind" That Is Fixed and "Mine"?."

9. In the same way, at a given instant, only one sensory input is processed by the mind: seeing ,hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, or contemplating. They come in packets of about a few milliseconds (a millisecond is a thousandth of a second).

- Yes. Scientists have done systematic studies in recent years to confirm this picture that the Buddha explained in Abhidhamma 2500 years ago!

10. For example, we may see a snapshot of the movie at a given instant. A few milliseconds later, we hear a word, followed by the brief smelling of popcorn. and so on. They go through the mind very fast, and we FEEL LIKE we are experiencing all those at the same time.

- The mind can to sort all those different sensory inputs and present a cohesive continuous picture. That is the magic of the mind.
- Even just the movie itself is a series of static pictures projected on the screen at a fast rate, above 20 frames per second. If we slow down the projector, we will be able to see individual frames very similar to a picture taken by a camera.
- A movie camera takes 24 frames a second. When projected on the screen, it appears to be continuous.

11. That is why the Buddha said that the mind is like a magician. The fast mind can give us the impression of experiencing many things at the same time. But it is a series of discrete events happening VERY FAST.

- All those sensory inputs need to be processed by the brain for the mind to experience them.
- If there are too many, that leads to stress in the mind and in the brain. That is why one could get a headache by watching too many movies or television programs.
- Even if it is just one sense input (say, looking at an attractive person and generating lustful thoughts), that itself can lead to stress (even though most people do not feel it that way). Here the real stress is masked by one's anticipation of sense pleasures.


## Why Breath Meditation "Works" on Temporary Basis

12. Now we have discussed three things that come in to play.

- A mind (with the help of the brain) can process only one sensory input at a time. But it handles a large number of such inputs in a second so that we have the illusion that we are experiencing many things at the same time.
- If the mind is experiencing many sense inputs (called ārammaṇa in Pāli) - like watching a movie and eating popcorn - both the brain and mind get stressed out or get "overheated."
- Another type of "heating" happens with greedy, hateful, and ignorant thoughts. Even if one focuses on one thing (say anger on someone), the mind gets heated internally, and that is called "tāpa" in Buddha Dhamma.

13. When we focus the mind on the breath, we are forcing the mind to "stay focused on just feeling the breath." The mind is staying on one "thought object" and not running back and forth among many. Also, the brain virtually has no "load" to process.

- That also avoids the more subtle yet essential "heating up" is due to greedy, hateful, or ignorant thoughts from coming to the mind.

14. Now we can see why "breath meditation works" temporarily.

- It disengages the mind from too many sensory inputs and forces them to stay on one task. That is really the easiest to see.
- Furthermore, it also removes the possibility of sensual, hateful, or even ignorant thoughts arising in the mind. The mind is OCCUPIED with one harmless sense input: monitoring the breath or something like that.
- You can prove this for yourself by focusing the mind on the up and down movement of your belly. In mundane kasiña meditation, yogis focus the mind on a kasina object. Since most of you are used to breath-meditation, it may appear to be better. But if you spend time doing any other type, like kasina meditation, you will get used to it.


## Breath Meditation: Addictive and No Long-Term Benefits

15. As you can see, "breath meditation" can be useful in solving the first problem: It can keep the mind on a single focus.

- While it can find a temporary solution to the problem of "internal heat generation" ( $t \bar{a} p a$ ) by SUPPRESSING the root causes (greed, hate, and ignorance), it is not able to permanently remove them.
- Then they can be "triggered" (or made to come to the surface) when a strong sense input (like seeing an attractive figure). The the "agitation" will be back.
- There is a second problem: When we have those lurking in our minds, we tend to do dasa akusala too, which will also lead to more suffering in the future.
- Therefore, REMOVING (instead of just suppressing) greed, hate, and ignorance will benefit in the short term as well as in the long run.
- That permanent solution is in the real Ānāpānasati bhāvanā in Buddha Dhamma.

16. As we discussed earlier, someone in pain feels the need to keep taking pain relievers to avoid the pain. A drug addict feels the need to keep taking drugs to maintain the "high."

- In the same a way, a person engaged in breath meditation feels the need to do it on a regularly to "maintain the calmness."
- If one does this all day long for several days (while at a retreat), one really starts feeling a "sense of great relief."
- But when one leaves the retreat and gets back to the "rat race," all those agitations come back.
- I know several people who go to retreats to get "refueled" regularly. Getting addicted to breath meditation can be harmful in that way. One is wasting precious time in doing something that will only provide a short-term solution AND is preventing one from undertaking a long-term PERMANENT solution.


## The Better Solution - Real Ānāpānasati/Satipaṭṭhāna

17. The better way is to systematically get rid of the tendencies for such greedy, hateful, and ignorant thoughts to come to mind and stay there.

- One cannot accomplish that in a few days. It needs an effort in two ways: First, one needs to understand why greed, hate, and ignorance (dasa akusala) give rise to "heating of the mind" or tāpa.
- At the same time, one needs to live a moral life with minimum burdens. We will live only for about 100 years at most. Is there a point in amassing a huge sums of money or luxurious things, only to leave all that behind at death?
- The more things one "owns," the more stressful it will be one's mind. One's mind will be burdened all the time.
- Of course, that does not mean one should endure poverty and suffering. We should ALWAYS minimize suffering. That is the "middle way" prescribed by the Buddha.

18. That seems to be simple enough, and it is. But there are many more details on how one can increase this "relief" or "cooling down" or "ātāpa." But it is a step-by-step process.

- The relief from this "heat" or "burning" does happen, especially after one gets on the Noble Path, by comprehending the root causes for this stress.

19. Many people tell me that they cannot focus their minds and do a meditation session without concentrating on the breath. If they try to meditate on a Dhamma concept, the mind tries to fly off in different directions.

- The solution is simple. It is not essential to do "formal meditation sessions" in the beginning.
- If you read the WebLink: suttacentral: Sabbāsava Sutta (MN 2) carefully, you will see that bhāvanā is essential only after the Sotāpanna stage ("āsavā dassanā pahātabbā"), to get to the Sakadāgāmi stage and beyond (" $\bar{a} s a v a \bar{a} b h a ̄ v a n a ̄ ~ p a h a ̄ t a b b \bar{a} ") . ~$
- What is really needed is "contemplation" and "examination," which is vimainsā (also related to dhammavicaya sabbojjhañga), though that could be also called "bhāvanā."

20. In any case, it is good to understand and practice the real $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p a \bar{n} a s a t i / S a t i p a t t h \bar{a} n a ~ b h \bar{a} v a n \bar{a}$. That means what to take into the mind and what to be rejected from the mind). That can be done even before getting to the Sotāpanna stage.

- The most important first thing is to learn true Buddha Dhamma and live a moral life (sila) while engaging in meritorious deeds like giving and helping out others in need.
- This will help maintain one's focus on learning Dhamma concepts first. Then one would be able to do formal meditation sessions without the help of breath meditation.


### 4.1.7 Ānāpānasati Eliminates Mental Stress Permanently

## January 21, 2019; revised July 1, 2022

## Introduction

1. In the last post, we discussed how focusing the mind on breath CAN calm a mind. But we also saw that any relief one gets is temporary. Here we discuss the $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p a \overline{n a s a t i ~ i n ~ t h e ~ W e b L i n k: ~ s u t t a c e n t r a l: ~ A ̄ n a ̄ p a ̄ n a s a t i ~}$ Sutta (MN 118).

- We also briefly discussed in the previous post the idea that in order to permanently REDUCE and eventually REMOVE the "mental stress" we need to purify our minds. ."
- Here we will discuss some details, and show the connection to dasa akusala and Paṭicca Samuppāda, key concepts in Buddha Dhamma.
- You may want to read the earlier post: "Breath Meditation Is Addictive and Harmful in the Long Run."

2. From the sutta (MN 118): "Ānāpānassati, bhikkhave, bhāvitā bahulīkatā mahapphalā hoti mahānisamisā. Ānāpānassati, bhikkhave, bhāvitā bahulīkatā cattāro satipatṭhāne paripūreti. Cattāro satipațthānā bhāvitā bahulīkatā satta bojjhañge paripūrenti. Satta bojjhañgā bhāvitā bahulīkatā vijjāvimuttim paripūrenti."

## Translated:

"Bhikkhus, when $\overline{A n} \bar{a} p \bar{a} n a s s a t i$ is developed and cultivated, it is of great benefit leading to the ultimate release. When Ānāpānassati is developed and cultivated, it fulfills cattāro satipatțthāna (the four foundations of mindfulness). When the four foundations of mindfulness are developed and cultivated, they fulfill the seven enlightenment factors (satta bojjhanga). When the seven enlightenment factors are developed and cultivated, they fulfill ultimate knowledge and release (vijjāvimuttim paripūrenti)."

- So, Ānāpānassati and Satipatṭhāna are the same and both lead to Nibbāna (Arahanthood). Satipatthāna describes the steps in more detail, but the key is to first understand what is meant by Ānāpāna.
- Here we discuss the basic ideas of Ānāpānassati bhāvanā. Details at: "Bhāvanā (Meditation)."


## An Example of Getting Angry

3. We start with a simple case of getting angry. Being angry makes one turns into a totally different person as we briefly mentioned in the last post.

- Not only one will have an agitated (and uncomfortable) state of mind, but one's body complexion will change too. One's face becomes "very unpleasant" even to look at.
- With that agitated mindset, one may do something really bad (even hit or kill someone if things get out of control).
- Now, let us see WHY we get angry.

4. The root cause of anger is greed. We get mad when someone or something gets in our way to prevent us from getting something that we really crave. Therefore, vyāpāda (anger) arises out of abhijjh $\bar{a}$ (greed).

- Note that $a b h i j j h \bar{a}$ and vyāpāda are the first two of pañcanīvaraṇa (five "hindrances"): they are a "hindrance" to a calm state of mind! See "Key to Calming the Mind - The Five Hindrances."
- Furthermore, vyāpāda can bring rebirths in the niraya (hell), while greed can bring rebirths as hungry ghosts (in preta or peta realms). Thus $\boldsymbol{v} \boldsymbol{y} \bar{a} p \bar{a} d a$ is worse than $a b h i j j h \bar{a}$.


## Why Some People Get Angry Than Others?

5. As the Buddha always pointed out, in order to eliminate a problem, we must first find the causes that gave rise to that problem. Then when we eliminate those causes, the problem will NOT ARISE anymore. That is the meaning of the word, "nirodha" ("nir" + "udā"). Dukkha nirodha is "stop future suffering from arising." It may NOT stop any dukkha vedanā currently experienced; those are results of the previous kamma! That is a common misunderstanding.

- When one understands dukkha samudaya ("san" + udaya" or how "san" give rise to suffering), then one can understand dukkha nirodha or how to stop suffering from arising; see, "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Samsāra)."
- The tendency to get angry is a gati (pronounced "gathi"), which can be loosely translated as a "character quality", which gets established firmly if one has made it to be a habit.
- The more angry one gets (this is what is really meant by "āna" in Ānāpanasati), the more will the "tendency to get angry" becomes. This is important to understand.

6. This has been established in neuroscience in recent years. Our brains (or more accurately neural circuits in the brain) get "wired" for certain habitual activities. The more we do something, the easier it becomes to do it again.

- That holds not only for "defiled activities" like getting angry, to "getting addicted to doing something on a regular basis like smoking and drinking, to eating too much, or even harmless (and useful) habits like driving.
- For example, after one learns to drive, it becomes a habit. When we drive, we are mostly on "auto pilot", especially if it is a regular drive, like driving to work every day. Here is an article that is an easy read: "WebLink: healthtransformer.co: The Neuroscience of Behavior Change."

7. Therefore, the trick to stop getting angry is to "try to stop that anger when one becomes aware that one is angry" (this is what is really meant by "āpāna" or put out or get rid of, in Ānapāna, which comes from "āna" + "āpāna"). Many Pāli words are shortened to rhyme.

- The long-term solution is to think about the CONSEQUENCES of such an angry mindset, and focus one's attention deliberately on a neutral or a "pleasing thought object", say visualizing a calm Buddha image in one's mind.
- If such an angry mindset comes to one's mind while in a formal meditation session, then one COULD do "breath meditation" for a few minutes to get the mind off of that mindset.
- The easiest is just to count to 10 in order to quickly stop the incoming thought and then think about the bad consequences of such an angry mindset.
- The key point is that "stopping these angry thoughts from arising" MUST BE DONE any time and all the time, whether one is in formal me ditation or just engaged in regular activities.

8. Thus a critical aspect of being able to stop such bad thoughts is to really understand the bad CONSEQUENCES of having such thoughts (which would feed that bad kamma viññāna and could even lead to bad bodily actions).

- Therefore, an understanding of the bad consequences of immoral deeds and thoughts (kamma vipāka resulting from bad kamma) will be valuable.
- Viññāna can be of two types: (i) We do kamma with a certain (good or bad) mindset, i.e., kamma viññāna. (ii) the results of such actions will bring vipāka in the form of vipāka viññanna. See, "ِ. Viññāna (Consciousness) can be of Many Different Types and Forms."
- Also see, for example: "Kanha (Dark) and Sukka (Bright) Kamma and Kammakkhaya" and "How the Buddha Described the Chance of Rebirth in the Human Realm."


## How That Bad Vipāka Viñ̃ñaṇa Was Created in the First Place

9. Now we need to see how this "kamma viñãāna regarding enemy Y " is created and where it exists. This is what is explained in Paṭicca Samuppāda. Don't worry. It is easy to see this process.

- Let us take an example. Persons X and Y were competing for something that they crave: a girl friend, a job, an elected position, we can think about many possible scenarios. But suppose X starts hating Y because Y is competing to win the heart of a girl.
- Now, every day X is thinking about how to block Y from "getting the girl." He may try to get Y kicked out of his job or physically hurt or even kill Y.
- These conscious angry thoughts about Y are vacī sañkhāra generated by X .

10. That is how a Pațicca Samuppāda process starts with "sañkhāra paccayā viññāṇa." That viñ̃n̄ạa is a "kamma viññāna."

- The more one does any type of sañkhāra (mano, vacī, and kāya), the more strong that "kamma viñ̃̄āna of enemy Y " will become in X 's mind.
- In simple terms, that means thinking about harming Y , speaking against Y , or doing something to hurt Y . All those activities will help that "kamma viññanna of enemy Y " to grow.

11. When X is consciously generating such "bad thoughts" about Y , then X will be imagining (creating) scenarios in one's mind of hurting Y in some way. This could be telling a lie about Y's character to the girl in question or his boss, for example. Or it could even be creating in his mind how he will ambush Y and carry out a physical attack.

- This is called creating "nāmarūpa" (creating various scenarios) in one's mind: "(kamma) viñ̃āạna paccayā nāmarūpa."

12. That will initiate the next step: "nāmarūpa paccayā salāyatana."

- The more bad thoughts (vacī sañkhāra) that X generates, his all six sense faculties (salāyatana or six $\bar{a} y a t a n a)$ will start getting involved. He will be looking to see (using cakkhāyatana) whether Y is talking to that girl, and he may write a nasty email about Y to his boss (using kāyāyatana), etc.
- Of course, some of these steps occur simultaneously and go back and forth too. For example, "nāmarūpa paccayā viññāna" happens as well as "viññ̄ạna paccayā nāmarūpa." In other words, the more "nāmarūpa" X makes in his mind, his bad viññ̄ạna will grow too.

13. Each of such activities will lead to contact with "san" (his greed towards the girl and hate towards Y ), via "salāyatana paccayā (san)phassa" or "salāyatana paccayā samphassa."

- That invariably leads to the next step: "samphassa paccay $\bar{a}$ vedan $\bar{a}$," which is also known as "samphassa jā vedanā," i.e., X is now generating a lot of "angry feelings that arise due to hate," which leads to "vedanā paccayā tanhhā."
- That "samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedan $\vec{a}$ " is a mind-made vedan $\bar{a}$.

14. It is important to note that "tanh $\bar{a} "$ " is not just greed. Taṇhā really means "getting bonded to a situation via greed or hate."

- Now X cannot let go of it, and now he pulls it even closer: "tanhhā paccayā upādāna": upādāna ("upa" + "ādāna") means 'pulling closer' (in the mind).
- This leads to the next critical step of "upādāna paccayā bhava." This is where that "kammic energy" that was initially created via the "viññanna of enemy Y " gets really established in the kamma bhava. It is easier to just think of "kamma bhava" as a form of energy that stays out there in the universe (just like visible $r \bar{u} p a$ are out there).
- This energy also called dhamm $\bar{a}$ (with a long $\bar{a}$ ) can come back to one's mind at times. That is how the "subconscious" works, and we will discuss that at a later time.

Paṭicca Samuppāda processes are described in detail at, "Paticca Samuppāda."

## Viññāṇa, Kamma Bhava, Kamma Bīja - Related to Each Other

15. We can see that both kamma viññāna and bhava are associated with kammic energy. The easiest way to remember is that kamma bhava is where kammic energy is, and those various types of kammic energies (good and bad) are kamma būja (seeds, pronounced "beeja") in the kamma bhava. They are waiting to bring kamma vipāka or the results of such kamma.

- When we do good kamma (say donating food to the needy), we also create good kamma bïja in the kamma bhava that can bring future "good vipāka" or "good results."
- Therefore, there are good and bad kamma bïja (seeds) waiting in the kamma bhava, to bring in kamma vipāka, so to speak.
- Just like a seed can give rise to a plant, a kamma bīja can give rise to a kamma vipāka. A good seed will give rise to a good plant (something useful, say apples or grains), and a bad seed will give rise to a bad plant (weeds).

16. When a kamma bīja brings a kamma vipāka to the mind, it leads to a mindset that is compatible with the kamma vipāka; that is a "kamma viñ $\tilde{n} \bar{a} n ̃ a . "$

- A "Kamma viñ̃̃āna" can be good too (in a mundane sense), for example, when engaging in a meritorious deed. We first need to get rid of "bad kamma viññāna." All viññāna are reduced to "pure consciousness" at the Arahant stage. It may take some time to grasp this point.
- Earlier we saw (\#8-\#13) that kamma viññanna is the "initiator" of a kamma bïja that is "deposited" in the kamma bhava. Then that kamma bïja will be waiting for the right "conditions" to bring that mindset back to the mind.
- Then that mindset (kamma viññāna) can lead to doing more sañkhāra (i.e., more kamma) that will, in turn, make that kamma viññāna grow; that will, in turn, lead to strengthening the corresponding kamma $b \vec{j} a$ in the kamma bhava.
- Then a corresponding gati (pronounced "gathi") is established. It is important to understand what is meant by gati. Then it will be easier to see how different gati (including the "angry gati" of $\mathbf{X}$ that we discussed above) are established.

See, "The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Asavas)," "How Habits are Formed and Broken - A Scientific View," "Gati to Bhava to Jãti - Ours to Control."

## Putting It All Together - These Fundamentals Are Essential

17. So, now we are starting to see the connections among these different terms: sañkhāra, kamma viñ̃̄āṇa, bhava, kamma bīja, gati, Ānāpānasati, etc.

- Whenever you have time, you may want to go back and read relevant previous posts. With repeated readings, things will become much more clear.
- In the sutt $\bar{a}$, the Buddha used this pattern of repeating stuff over and over. That makes it easier for these concepts to sink in.
- Please don't hesitate to ask questions if something is not clear.


## 18. Understanding Buddha Dhamma is all about understanding the steps in Paticca Samuppāda:

"Yo paticcasamuppādam passati,
so Dhammam passati.
Yo Dhammam passati,
so paticcasamuppādam passati",
"One who sees paticcasamuppāda
sees the Dhamma.
One who sees the Dhamma
sees paticcasamuppāda."
(WebLink: suttacentral: Mahāhatthipadopama Sutta (MN 28); at the end)

- If one to understands Paṭicca Samuppāda, one needs to understand all these key terms like sañkhāra, kamma viññāṇa, bhava, kamma bīja, gati, Ānāpānasati, etc.
- Other relevant posts are listed below. The more one reads and contemplates, the more one will be able to understand:
"Viññ̄̄na - Consciousness Together With Future Expectations," "Pāli to English - Serious Problems With Current Translations," "Four Noble Truths - Suffering and Its Elimination," "Connection Between Sañkhāra and Viññāna."


### 4.1.8 Ānāpāna and Satipatṭhāna - Fundamentals

## January 30, 2019

1. Mahā Satipațthāna Sutta (DN 22) just describes in more detail the Ānāpānasati bhāvanā that is in the Ānāpānasati Sutta (MN 118).

- This post discusses the fundamentals related to both suttā. More details at: "Mahā Satipatthāna Sutta."

2. One synonym for Nibbāna is "cooled state", which means the mind is "permanently cooled down." There can be no anger, greed, or ignorance can arise such a mind.

- However, we start at a more basic state. When we start doing real Ānāpāna/Satipatṭhāna, we will start feeling a PERMANENT relief from our stressed minds.
- On the other hand, "breath meditation" provides only a temporary relief.

3. We discussed how our thoughts can affect our minds in the previous post, "Breath Meditation Is Addictive and Harmful in the Long Run."

- When angry thoughts arise, one's whole body becomes hot and agitated; blood pressure goes up; face becomes dark, because the blood becomes dark.
- On the other hand, when one has compassionate thoughts in one's mind, one's mind feels joyful and it shows up in the face too.

4. Some people are more prone to generating angry thoughts; others are more like to generate compassionate thoughts. In other words, some people have "angry gati" while other have "compassionate gati." Previously we discussed that there are a wide variation of gati ranging from very bad to very good.

- Of course, these gati do not show up all the time. Even a person with "angry gati" must be provoked for such angry thoughts to arise.
- In Buddha Dhamma's language, a person with "angry gati" has "anger hiding in the mind" waiting for a trigger to come to the surface. These are called "anusaya" or "kilesa" (hidden defilements).
- The key word gati (pronounced "gathi") is related to one's habits and character; see "The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Asavas)."

5. We can take an analogy to clarify this. Anusaya can be compared to dirt at the bottom of a glass of water. If the glass is not disturbed, the dirt will settle at the bottom, and the water may look clean at the top.

- If there is a lot of dirt at the bottom of the glass, only a slight disturbance can make the dirt come up and make the water dirty. But if it is only a little bit, most minor disturbances may not make the water dirty.
- Just like that, the more anusaya (or corresponding defilements) one has, it will be easier for them to come to the surface. If one has "very angry gati," that person would be easy to be angered.

6. On the other hand, if there is no dirt at the bottom of the glass, no matter what kind of disturbance it is, the water will remain pure.

- The mind of an Arahant is like that. He/she can live totally unaffected surrounded by the world's most tempting sense objects.
- We have a long way to get to the Arahant stage. But we can start getting rid of these "bad gati" or "anusaya" or "defilements" by cultivating the correct Ānāpāna/Satipatṭhāna.
- When one's mind becomes purified, it will be hard to make that person agitated or depressed. One will have a relatively calm mindset even under normally stressful conditions.

7. Even though a glass of water has dirt in it, if the water is left undisturbed for a while, the dirt gets settled at the bottom and the water becomes relatively clear.

- That is what happens with "breath meditation." One focuses one's mind on a neutral thought object for a while and all "agitations" subside. But they do not go away.
- Breath meditation appears to provide relief. In particular, if one goes to a retreat and spends several days with one's mind removed from "enticing" AND "angry" thoughts, one feels a high sense calmness.
- However, when one comes back and gets into the usual "rat race", with all kinds of enticing and aggravating inputs from the environment, all those anusaya" come back to the surface!

8. In real Ānāpāna/Satipaṭthāna, those anusaya or "hidden defilements" will be REMOVED gradually. The procedure involves the following:

- Get rid of bad thoughts (such as anger) that may arise due to whatever reasons.
- Let any "good thoughts" that may arise (such as compassion or just thoughts about dhamma concepts) to continue.
- Deliberately contemplate on Dhamma concepts like dasa akusala, gati, anusaya, kilesa, kamma, kamma vipāka, Noble Truths, Noble Eightfold Path, Paṭicca Samuppāda, etc.
- We will see in upcoming posts, how those "three components" are taken into account in the four types of Satipaṭthāna: kāyānupassanā, vedanānupassanā, cittānupassanā, and dhammānupassanā.

9. If a bad thought comes to the mind, one must think about the bad consequences of keeping such thoughts in one's mind and forcefully remove them. For example, if someone says something to make one angry, one could count to ten in one's mind (or just walk away) and not retaliate.

- This is hard to do first. But with practice, one can see the benefits and one will be motivated to continue.
- The nice thing is that the more one trains, the easier it becomes to control one's impulsive reactions.

10. In order to get rid of any bad habit (which are related to gati), it will be VERY HELPFUL to see the bad consequences of such bad habits.

- A smoker needs to convince himself that smoking can lead to various health problems, including cancer. That will be an incentive to get rid of smoking.
- Taking drugs is even worse, one could die with many health problems if one becomes addicted to drugs.
- Even eating too much is a bad habit. One should look at the statistics that clearly show the bad health consequences of over-eating.

11. Learning Dhamma is like learning the bad consequences of bad habits. When one is engaged in immoral activities, one will have bad consequences of those actions, speech, and thoughts in two ways:

- Even if one is making a lot money doing immoral things, one WILL have a stressed mind even in this life.
- The more important consequences may realize in future lives. Highly immoral activities lead to births in the four bad realms (animal realm is one).
- Therefore, it is essential to learn true Buddha Dhamma, where one can begin to understand kamma and kamma vipāka.

12. Another way to say this is that one needs to see the difference between "dhamma" and "adhamma."

Dhamma are the "good, moral deeds" and adhamma are the "bad immoral deeds."

- Note that dhamma here is different from the Buddha Dhamma, even though they are related. Adhamma are opposite of dhamma.
- As we have discussed before, adhamma lead to a stressed mind and dhamma lead to a calm mind at the very basic level.
- At the next level, strong adhamma or "highly immoral deeds" have very bad consequences in the future, especially in future lives (rebirths in the lowest 4 realms). On the other hand, strong dhamma or "highly moral deeds" lead to good rebirths in the higher realms.
- I have discussed them previously. It would be beneficial to review them.
"Rebirth - Connection to Suffering in the First Noble Truth."
"Does the Hell (Niraya) Exist?."
"Dasa Akusala/Dasa Kusala - Basis of Buddha Dhamma."
"Gati to Bhava to Jāti- Ours to Control"
4.1.9 Sati in Ānāpānasati/Satipaṭṭāna - Two Meanings of Sati


## February 4, 2019; revised August 2, 2019; August 13, 2021

This post is critical. Before one can do Ānāpānasatisati or Satipatțthāna meditations, one needs to understand what is meant by "sati."

## Double Meanings of Words - Unique In Pāli with Deeper "Dhamma Meanings"

1. Many Pāli words have "double meanings." As we will see below, that happens in other languages too.

- However, the situation is unique in Pāli in the context of Buddha Dhamma because some Pāli words have deeper meanings that are only to do with Buddha Dhamma.
- An example that we have already discussed is viñ̃̄̄̄na. The ordinary meanings is "consciousness", but the more profound meaning is "defiled consciousness" for mano viññanna that arise via "sañkhāra paccayā viñ̃̄āna." In order to see the context in a given situation, one must know both meanings; see, "Connection Between Sañkhāra and Viññāna."
- Therefore, unlike in other languages, one must have a more in-depth knowledge of Buddha Dhamma to see the deeper meanings of words like viññāna and sati.

2. One fundamental problem with English translations today arises because most translators try to use dictionary translations. Many times, a dictionary may not list all possible meanings, especially the deeper meanings.

- For example, in most Pāli dictionaries, "sati" is given the following two meanings: mindfulness and attention.
- However, another more profound meaning is only approximated by "mindfulness" as we discuss below. The key is to figure out "mindful of what?".
- But let us first see why this is not a big problem in English (or any other language).


## Double Meanings in English versus Pāli

3. In English novels or any other "mundane text," two different meanings are commonly used even in the same paragraph.

- For example, the word right conveys two different meanings in the following sentence: These are the right directions; make a right turn at the first traffic light.
- Following are more examples:

Rose: My favorite flower is a rose. He quickly rose from his seat.
Type: He can type over 100 words per minute. That dress is not her type.
(Read more at "WebLink: grammar.yourdictionary.com: Words with Multiple Meanings").
4. The unique situation in Pāli is that words like "sati" have unique meanings that one can understand ONLY in terms of fundamental concepts and the context.

- To comprehend the deeper meaning of some keywords, one must learn and understand that meaning.
- It has nothing to do with one's academics qualifications. If one has not heard that meaning from a Buddha or a true disciple of a Buddha, one can NEVER figure that out by oneself.
- Since "sati" is a critical Pāli word that appears in the context of Ānāpānasati/Satipatṭhāna, we should spend some time on it.


## Mundane Meaning of Sati - Attention Can Lead to Bhava and Jāti

5. Perhaps "attention" is the best from the "mundane meanings" in \#2 above. When we are engaged in a specific task, we need to keep our attention on that task.

- For example, one needs to keep attention to traffic while driving or paying attention to a teacher who is teaching a new concept.
- Another example is keeping one's attention on a particular "thought object," whether one is looking at something, studying, etc.

6. When one focuses attention to get possession of a worldly thing, that is the "seed" for future bhava. That is a crucial point for those who would like to look into it.

- It is discussed in the post, "Imasmim Sati Idam Hoti - What Does It Really Mean?."
- One may not be able to grasp it until one understands Paṭicca Samuppāda to some extent.


## Why the Mundane Meaning Is Not Enough for $\overline{\text { An }} \boldsymbol{n} \bar{p} \bar{a} n a s a t i / S a t i p a t t ̣ h a ̄ n a ~$

7. Now let us take some examples to see why "attention" and even "mindful" will not give the deeper meaning in the context of Ānāpānasati/Satipatṭhāna.

- Suppose a suicide bomber is assembling a bomb that he intends to use to kill many people. He must be paying careful attention to what he is doing, and that is the ordinary meaning of sati there.
- The term "mindful" also describes the mindset of a suicide bomber while assembling the bomb. He must be mindful of his task. If he makes even a slight mistake, he may trigger the bomb right there.
- Therefore, that bomb maker must have attention and be mindful of his task. Obviously, he is not engaged in Satipatṭhāna.

8. We can see this in many other "mundane" examples too.

- A surgeon doing a complicated operation must pay total attention to the task; he must be mindful of the task.
- The same applies to anyone doing any critical mundane task. Driving, studying, a nuclear scientist designing an atomic bomb that can kill millions of people, an engineer designing a crucial component for a spaceship, etc.
- That is not the "sati" that one must have to cultivate $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p \bar{a} n a s a t i / S a t i p a t t h \bar{a} n a$, even though one must ALSO pay attention and be mindful.

9. However, breath meditation only requires ordinary meanings: one must be paying total attention to the breath and one must be mindful of that task.

- I have explained in the post, "Breath Meditation Is Addictive and Harmful in the Long Run," how "breath meditation" can provide a temporary relief, AND why that can be addictive and bad in the long run.
- For one to engage in true Ānāpānasati/Satipaṭthāna, one must have a particular "mindset" IN ADDITION to paying attention. That is being aware of the moral/immoral implications of one's thoughts, speech, and actions.
 actions. The Iriyāpatapabba section in Satipatṭhāna is ALL ABOUT physical actions. One cannot do that by sitting down and focusing on the breath. We will discuss that later in detail.
- To understand "sati," we need to look at the ultimate goal of a Buddhist.


## One Needs to be Mindful of the Goal in Buddha Dhamma

10. The ultimate goal is Arahanthood, or Nibbāna, which is, "rāgakkhayo Nibbānam, dosakkhayo Nibbānam, mohakkhayo Nibbānam," or "completely removing greed, anger, and ignorance from one's mind."

- We don't need to start there. But one embarks on the Path by gradually removing those three defilements from one's mind.
- One definition of Nibbāna is "cooling down (of the mind)." That "cooling down" can be experienced even at the beginning to some extent.

11. WHEN one is attracted to a sense input (IF IT is enticing OR repulsive), that WILL lead to a burdened mind. Thoughts associated with greed or anger are unavoidable.

- Therefore, one needs to be aware of such DEFILED thoughts, speech, and actions and stop them as they arise. That is the key to true $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p a \overline{n a s a t i / S a t i p a t t!h a ̄ n a . ~}$
- An even deeper meaning of "sati" is to be mindful of the unfruitful and dangerous nature of this world (Tilakkhana.) See, "Basic Framework of Buddha Dhamma." At least read the first post there: "Buddha Dhamma - Noble Truths, Paticca Samuppāda, Tilakkhana."
- That particular mindset is "sati."


## Deeper Meaning of Sati Involves a Unique Mindset

12. Therefore, the meaning of "sati" in the context of Ānāpānasati/Satipatthāna has a more specialized meaning. A suicide bomber making a bomb, or even a student intensely concentrating on learning a subject, will not have that sati.

- This "deeper sati" is a "good mental factor" (a sobhana cetasika). The sati cetasika is cultivated by learning Dhamma and eventually comprehending Tilakkhaṇa.
- This "sati" is VERY DIFFERENT from the ordinary meanings. The elementary version means "having a mindset to stay away from dasa akusala," which is what one does when one follows the Eightfold Path.
- In short, one needs to focus attention on getting rid of "immoral thoughts, speech, and actions" AND on cultivating "moral thoughts, speech, and actions."

13. However, we can see that the ordinary meanings of "maintaining attention" or "being mindful" must ALSO be there during $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p a \overline{n a s a t i / S a t i p a t!t h a ̄ n a . ~}$

- One must keep the attention (sati) on "good things" and remove attention away (asati) from "bad things" too while keeping the "sati mindset."
- By the way, there is no "asati" cetasika or a "bad mental factor"; it has only the ordinary meaning. Asati means keeping the mind away from any ārammana or any "thought object."
- Asati means "not being focused on a given thought object." There is ONLY one meaning for asati.

14. I hope one can see why just paying attention or being mindful is not enough to cultivate Ānāpānasati/Satipațthāna.

- One must understand that "cooling down of the mind" has its origins in staying away from dasa akusala and actively engaging in moral deeds, speech, and thoughts.
- In particular, it is essential to understand the importance of cultivating moral vacī sañkhāra (conscious thoughts and speech); see, "Connection Between Sañkhāra and Viññāna."

15. When that is done consistently (keeping the mind on good things and off of bad things), over time it leads to Sammā Sati over time. That, in turn, leads to Sammā Samādhi completing the Noble Eightfold Path.

- But one needs to know what is good and what is bad. What is bad is dasa akusala and what is good is dasa kusala, i.e., staying away from dasa akusala.
- When one makes progress on the Path and starts comprehending Tilakkhaṇa (anicca, dukkha, anatta), one's sati will grow. That will be lead to better samādhi.


## The Goal Is Not To Remove All Thoughts From the Mind

16. I also need to mention a common mistake some people make. They think they need to get rid of ALL thoughts that come to mind.

- When one is engaged in $\bar{A} n a \bar{p} a \overline{n a s a t i / S a t i p a t t!h a ̄ n a, ~ o n e ' s ~ g o a l s ~ a r e ~ t w o ~ f o l d: ~ g e t ~ r i d ~ o f ~ e v i l ~ t h o u g h t s ~}$ that come to the mind AND cultivate good thoughts.
 "passāsa" (discarding bad things).

17. Another way to say this is that one needs to see the difference between "dhamma" and "adhamma." Dhamma are the "good, moral deeds," and adhamma are the "bad, immoral deeds."

- As we have discussed before, adhamma leads to a stressed mind, and dhamma leads to a calm mind at a fundamental level.
- At the next level, strong adhamma or "highly immoral deeds" have terrible consequences in the future, especially in future lives (rebirths in the lowest four realms). On the other hand, strong dhamma or "highly moral deeds" lead to good rebirths in the higher realms.
- We discussed dhamma/adhamma in the previous post. I want to mention another aspect of it now.


## What are Dhamma and Adhamma?

18. In many suttā, the Buddha has clearly stated that dasa akusala are adhamma, and that staying away from those is dhamma. For example, in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Dhamma Sutta (AN 10.182)": "katamo ca, bhikkhave, adhammo? Pān̄ātipāto ... pe ... micchāditthi," ie., basically dasa akusala.

- There are many suttā where the Buddha describes adhamma as dasa akusala or opposites of the eight factors in the Noble Eightfold Path.
- On the other hand, dhammas are dasa kusala and the eight factors in the Noble Eightfold Path.

19. This act of keeping the mind (sati) on "good things" and keeping it away (asati) from "bad things" is the key to Buddhist meditation: Satipatṭhāna, Anāpānasati.

- Both require keeping the mind focused on "good things" and stopping it from focusing on "bad things."
- When that is done consistently, over time, it leads to Samm $\bar{a}$ Sati (or always keeping the mind on good things), and then to Samm $\bar{a}$ Samādhi, completing the Noble Eightfold Path.
- But one needs to know what is right and what is bad. What is bad is dasa akusala and what is right is dasa kusala, i.e., staying away from dasa akusala.


## Dhamma Are the Things to "Bear" and Adhamma Are the Things One Should Not "Bear"

20. What is meant by "dhamma" here is "what one bears in mind" or "the mindset." One thinks, speaks, and acts according to that mindset.

- But as we have seen, what one thinks, speaks, and acts are called sañkhāra. And "sañkhāra paccayā viññāna" means one's viñ̃̃āṇa are based on one's sañkhāra; see, "Connection Between Sañkhāra and Viññ̄n̄a."
- Then Pațicca Samuppāda leads to "bhava paccayā jāti." Therefore, when one generates "bad sañkhāra," one ends up creating "bad $j \bar{a} t i$ " for oneself (both during this life and in future lives).

21. Now, "bad sañkhāra" are generated when one bears "bad dhamma." "Good sañkhāra" are created when one takes "good dhamma."

- That is the basis of Paticca Samuppāda, and its connection to "sati."
- When one gradually gets rid of "bad dhamma" by staying away from dasa akusala, and cultivates "good dhamma" by engaging in moral deeds, one cultivates "sati" via Satipaț! hānalĀnāpānasati.


## Sati Included in Five of the 37 Factors of Enlightenment

22. There are " 37 Factors of Enlightenment" that the Buddha said are critical to attaining Nibbāna and thus must be cultivated.

- The importance of the word "sati" is apparent since it appears in 5 of the 37 factors in different forms.
- Sati is in the Five Faculties (Pañca Indriya), Five Powers (Pañca Bala), Four Factors of Mindfulness (Cattāro Satipatṭhāna), Seven Factors of Enlightenment (Satta Bojjhañga), and the Eightfold Noble Path (Ariya Atthangika Magga); see, "37 Factors of Enlightenment."

23. When Ānāpānasati/Satipatt Nibbāna.

- For example, according to the WebLink: suttacentral: Ānāpānassati Sutta (MN 118): "..Ānāpānassati, bhikkhave, bhāvitā bahulīkatā cattāro satipaṭthāne paripūreti. Cattāro satipaṭthānā bhāvitā bahulīkatā satta bojjhañge paripūrenti. Satta bojjhañgā bhāvitā bahulīkatā vijjāvimuttiim paripūrenti."
- Translated: "..Ānāpānassati, when used (bhāvitā) and used frequently (bahulīkatā), completes (paripūreti) four types of Satipațthāna. Cattāro Satipaṭthāna, when used and used frequently, completes Satta Bojjhañga. Satta Bojjhañga, when used and used frequently, completes the full release (Nibbāna or Arahanthood)."


### 4.2 Living Dhamma - Overview

October 27, 2016

\author{

- Living Dhamma - Introduction <br> - Peace of Mind to Nibbāna - The Key Step <br> - Starting on the Path Even without Belief in Rebirth (with first Desana "The Hidden Suffering that We All Can Understand"; desanā title different from post title)
}


### 4.2.1 Living Dhamma - Introduction

August 5, 2016; Revised August 26, 2016 (This replaces the deleted post, "Introduction to a New Approach to Meditation").

1. This series started as a subsection in the "Bhāvana (Meditation)" section. But I think it can be the "step-by-step" by process of "learning and living" Dhamma starting from a very fundamental level. One does not need to be bothered about too many Pāli words or deeper concepts at the beginning.

- From many comments that I get, it is clear that many people have "road blocks" at concepts like "kamma vipāka" and "rebirth." When we start at a fundamental level, one does not need to worry about them. One's own change in experience - as we proceed - will hopefully help clarify those concepts as we proceed.
- All other sections at the website can be used to investigate and learn different aspects from different angles. Buddha Dhamma is a self-consistent theory of nature. There are no contradictions.

2. About a month ago, I started thinking about this approach based on emails from a few people about their experiences. Many people feel the positive effect of meditation, but seem to be "stuck" without being able to go past a certain point.

- I must hasten to add that this "new approach" is fully consistent with Buddha Dhamma and not an invention of mine. It is just another way and - hopefully a refreshing way - to look at how to practice Buddha Dhamma (Buddhism) with a clear understanding.

3. What got me started thinking was the following email from a person (X) who has been doing mostly anāriya meditation, including conventional metta bhāvana ( I am withholding the name for obvious reasons); highlights are mine. Anariya meditation basically means doing meditation without comprehending anicca nature, so most people start that way:
"..The other issue I wanted to ask you about was that I sometimes start wondering if meditation is just dulling my mind, making me less sensitive to what others are doing around me, like a sedative almost. Am I getting addicted to meditation that I need a constant dose, and when I stop I feel I am missing something. for example when I was meditating regularly I no longer felt like reading books or listening to music which I loved earlier so I felt like it was changing my core personality.

To experiment I stopped my formal meditation for a few weeks and I found that I began to get agitated and anxious as before. I was also able to enjoy songs as before. I know that is consistent with what you say about anāriya meditations - that the effects are temporary.

So I am curious to ask you, have you experimented with stopping your meditation practice for a few weeks? I am asking because I understand that you are doing the Ariya meditation and that those effects should be more permanent. Or are you so used to your meditation practice that it would be a torture to ask you to stop even for a few days let alone a few weeks. But the trouble is - if you never stop how will you know if the effects are permanent or not..."
4. I am grateful to X for sharing this beautifully written description. I believe many people have experienced such thoughts at various times. Our tendency to always go back to sense pleasures is very strong, because that is what we have been doing through uncountable rebirths in the kāma loka in the past.

- Whether it is Ariya or anāriya meditation (including even breath meditation), the tranquility of mind (peace of mind) that comes during a meditation session is due to the suppression of the five hindrances (pancanivarana); see, "Key to Calming the Mind - The Five Hindrances."
- In simple terms, the five hindrances are: sense cravings, tendency to be angry, sleepy or dull mind, scattered mind, and the inability to decide the right action. They are always in the background, "covering the mind" and constantly making the mind "agitated and anxious" as X described above.
- What happens during a meditation session (or even if one a fully focused on some task that does not involve sense pleasures), is that the mind is taken off of all such hindrances temporarily. This is actually the first stage where one could experience the "cooling down" or "nivana" or "niveema." It can be called a mundane version of Nibbāna. This is also called "nirāmisa sukha"; see, "Three Kinds of Happiness - What is Nirāmisa Sukha?."
- When one is on a regular meditation program (or in a meditation retreat), that "cooling down" can last during that whole time - days or weeks - outside the meditation sessions.

5. Another person $(\mathrm{Y})$ asked the following related question: "Nirāmisa sukha is felt by which citta?."

- Nirāmisa sukha is not experienced by a specific citta. Rather, nirāmisa sukha APPEARS when cittō BECOME free of defilements, i.e., when the mind becomes (at least temporarily) free of hindrances; see, "Key to Calming the Mind - The Five Hindrances." We will go into details in upcoming posts, but this is a CRITICAL point.
- More examples: Water becomes clear and pleasant when all the dirt is removed. One feels good when a headache goes away; that relief was not gained by adding something, but by removing the headache.
- Similarly, nirāmisa sukha is felt when hindrances and defilements are SUPPRESSED temporarily. When those are removed PERMANENTLY in four stages, one feels more permanent happiness of Nibbāna. At the Sotāpanna stage, a big junk of stresses associated with defilements are PERMANENTLY removed. At the Arahant stage, ALL defilements are PERMANENTLY removed, and the "cooling down" is complete.
- Thus it is going to be a gradual process. It is a mistake to try to go all the way all at once. Don't even think about the Arahant stage (let alone the Anāgāmī stage where one has removed kāma rāga or attachment to sense pleasures), but concentrate on attaining the Sotāpanna stage.
- For many, even before that one needs to experience the nirāmisa sukha. That is what we focus on initially.
- It is when kämacchanda and other nivarana are suppressed that one is able to experience the nirāmisa sukha, grasp the anicca nature, and become a Sotāpanna. This is easier when one abstain from dasa akusala too.
- Thus, in order to grasp the anicca nature (i.e., to suppress the nivarana), the mind needs to be purified to some extent. Person X above is almost there, but you can see how hard for X to be not be tempted by sense pleasures.

6. I will go into details in the upcoming posts in this section, but through countless rebirths we have cultivated a craving for sense pleasures that inevitably lead to the five hindrances, that cover our minds and not letting us see the real nature of this world. Sense pleasures have the following key characteristics:

- They are definitely "pleasurable", i.e., the sense experience is palpable and enjoyable. The Buddha himself said that beings will not be trapped in this suffering-filled rebirth process unless they are seduced by these pleasurable sense contacts.
- The price we pay for that "happy feeling" is that the mind gets excited and restless. Furthermore, that pleasurable feeling cannot be maintained for long times; we get tired of it no matter what it is. Think about anything (food, sex, watching movies, etc), and you will realize that soon we would have had enough of it and we just move onto some other pleasurable activity or "just take a rest."
- But that experience is addictive. The urge to do it again comes back very strong at later times. If we cannot experience it at that time, we at least tend to recall the past experience and try to enjoy that. This is due to the fact that we have a reservoir of mental impurities (kilesa) in our minds, as we discuss in an upcoming post.
- Until one can realize the dangers in at least excessive sense pleasures (anicca, dukkha, anatta nature), one's mind is easily tempted by those sense pleasures; one is afraid that one will "miss out" on the sense pleasures. This is what $X$ was trying to convey above.

7. The meditation experience is the totally opposite of sense pleasures. Nirāmisa sukha can be maintained as long as one stays in the "meditation mindset." But it is not an "enjoyment" in the sense of a sense pleasure. It is really a "peace of mind" (one could actually feel a bodily sukha sensation in a $j h a \bar{a} a$, but we will discuss that later). This is why X is tempted by them, even though they lead to general agitation of the mind (see the first highlighted sentences in \#3 above).

- Nirāmisa sukha BECOMES addictive (i.e., preferable over sense pleasures) only AFTER getting to the Sotäpanna stage (at which time it can be called beginning of the "Nibbāna sukha" or "nivan suva"). At that time, even though one may still be tempted by sense pleasures until the Anāgāmī stage, one will ALWAYS go back to meditation for relief. Until then it is always a battle that is so eloquently expressed by $X$ in \#3 above.
- Furthermore, at that stage one will have voluntarily given up some of more excessive sense pleasures. This is something that just happens. One needs to forcefully give up only those things that are directly harmful to oneself or to others. For example, sexual MISCONDUCT needs to be forcefuilly given up, but not sex (We recall that one of the main upāsikā of the Buddha, lady Visaka, attained the Sotāpanna stage at age 7, but got married and had 22 children). The urge for sexual pleasure will AUTOMATICALLY go away only at the Anāgāmī stage.
- Of course, one could start discarding some "conventionally pleasurable" but not directly harmful things like watching TV or going to concerts etc. (as X stated in \#3 above). I also experienced the same kind of things in early practice. I would rather learn Dhamma than watch TV even in the early days. "pleasure of Dhamma" is different.
- However, I still get pulled into a limited number of sense pleasures occasionally, so I know how hard it is to resist especially those activities that one has gotten used to. Getting rid of all kāma rāga (i.e., reaching the Anāgāmi stage) is the hardest. But once the anicca nature is comprehended to some extent, it becomes easy to discard most things as a waste of time.

8. Therefore, in the beginning it could be a "tug of war" between those addictive sense pleasures that we are used to enjoy and the long-lasting but not so addictive nirāmisa sukha of meditation. Here, meditation also includes listening, reading, and contemplation of Dhamma.

- As one's mind gets more and more cleansed, the "joy of Dhamma" WILL increase. One WILL BE able to grasp deeper and deeper meanings even from the same discourse or a post.
- The time to contemplate on anicca (and Tilakkhana in general) is when one starts "liking Dhamma", with the pancanivarana temporarily lifted. If one starts forcing the mind to accept the anicca nature, that may not be successful, and one may get discouraged. Of course, each person is different and some may be able to do it.

9. Finally, in X's last (highlighted) statement in \#3 above, the question was: If I stopped meditating for two weeks, would I be able to "switch back to enjoying sense pleasures" as X did?

- I am quite sure I could abstain from meditating for two weeks if I really wanted to. But, such an abstinence would not change "my core." It just cannot. Sometimes when I go on a trip with my family, I do not get to meditate for several days. For example, last month there was a break of about 7-8 days during such a trip. But when I get back, I automatically get back to my normal schedule of meditation.
- In addition, most of my "meditation" is not formal. I think about Dhamma concepts whenever there is time, sitting in a car, just before falling asleep, first thing when I wake up, etc.
- Furthermore, I don't feel "missed out" on those cravings that I have lost, even though I can still experience that "sense pleasure." For example, while I was working I used to have an alcoholic beverage daily for over 30 years, even though I did not really get "drunk"; it was just a habit. Nowadays, that habit has automatically disappeared. Still, If I am out with an old friend (who does not know that I have changed) and he has a drink, I may have one just to keep him company. But the "urge" to have a drink at the end of the day is never coming back. A big chunk of "mental impurities" (or kilesa) have permanently been removed from my mind.

10. What we are going to do is to look closely at what these defilements are that needs to be removed in order to purify the mind, so that those pancanivarana will be permanently lifted and the mind can grasp deeper and deeper concepts easily.

- It is easier to solve a problem when one figures out what the problem is, and the root causes that lead to the problem.
- Our problem here is the defiled mind. The root causes are the mental impurities (or kilesa, keles, or klesha in Pāli, Sinhala, and Sanskrit respectively) that have accumulated in our minds over the beginningless rebirth process. These are ultimately responsible for the five hindrances (pancanivarana) that cover our minds.
- We will discuss these kilesa in future posts. They provide a simple way to identify and quantify mental impurities, and how they are to be discarded step-by-step.

Next in the series, "Peace of Mind to Nibbāna - The Key Step."

### 4.2.2 Peace of Mind to Nibbāna - The Key Step

August 12, 2016; Revised December 21, 2016; June 27, 2022 (note that I wrote this in 2016) ; August 27, 2022 (note that I wrote this in 2016)

I have changed the title of this post from "Nirāmisa Sukha to Nibbāna Suva - The Key Step."
One needs to experience a "peace of mind" or "cooling down" (nirāmisa sukha) before starting on the Noble Path to Nibbāna; the transition to the Sotāpanna stage happens when one comprehends the anicca nature while experiencing nirāmisa sukha.

- After that transition, nirāmisa sukha becomes permanent with the removal of the pañcanīvaraṇa. The full explanation will take more posts, but we start here.
- Many people start meditating without understanding what to meditate on. One needs to learn the basics of pure Buddha Dhamma first. One can start with conventional meditation techniques that are out there. Still, to grasp deeper Dhamma, one needs to stay away from the ten defilements (dasa akusala) as much as possible.

1. In the previous post "Living Dhamma - Introduction", we discussed the experience of X. Please read it before reading this post.

- X had experienced nirāmisa sukha by engaging in a regular anāriya Mettā Bhāvanā. Even though it led to a relaxed and calm state of mind, X realized that at the same time the desire to engage in some types of sensual pleasures (reading books or listening to music) went away.
- Then X stopped meditating for two weeks, and the ability to enjoy books or music returned. However, the nirāmisa sukha also disappeared, and X's mind was again burdened and agitated.
- Some people may not have experienced such a temporary "cooling down" or nirāmisa sukha, so I thought of discussing this a bit more before discussing the technical term "kilesa." It is important to figure out one's current status before reaching the next stage. It is a step-by-step process.
- One needs to get to that stage (where X was) to at least experience the difference between the nirāmisa sukha and sensory pleasures to start comprehending anicca nature. At that stage, pañcanīvaraṇa is temporarily lifted and the mind becomes calm enough to comprehend anicca nature. However, that can happen momentarily during listening to a discourse too.

2. When fully immersed in sensory pleasures, the mental burden that inevitably comes with it is not apparent to that person. We have gotten used to the "mental agitation in the background" and don't feel it most of the time. Only when one gets into a "calmed state of mind" can one appreciate the burden of this "constant agitation or incessant distress" in the background.

- Through the meditation program, X has begun to appreciate the relief from this "incessant distress" effect due to pañan̄̄varana, and the relief is called nirāmisa sukha.
- However, the conundrum is that there is a price to pay (if one does not comprehend the anicca nature)! To the dismay of X , the ability to enjoy some favorite sense pleasures disappeared.

3. In very simple terms, this problem arises because X has not comprehended the anicca nature (what we will be doing in this new section is to discuss a step-by-step process that could help comprehend the anicca nature).

- In X's mind, those sensory pleasures are worth hanging on to. And that feeling is VERY POWERFUL.
- Even though a Sotāpanna who has lost the craving for SOME sensory pleasures has still more left. So, even a Sotāpanna knows how hard it is to eliminate that "nagging feeling" of needing to seek sensory pleasures. Of course, a Sotāpanna would not do any apāyagāmi deeds seeking sensory pleasures.

4. This is why comprehending the anicca nature is so important at X's stage. When one comprehends the anicca nature of SOME EXTENT, one loses the "nagging feeling" to seek some sensory pleasure.

- Only when one truly realizes the dangers (or at least the worthlessness) of given sensory pleasure will the mind automatically lose that "nagging feeling." For example, if one likes to go hunting, one will not give it up voluntarily until one starts seeing the bad consequences of that activity. Same for fishing, being an alcoholic or a drug user, etc.
- Comprehension of the anicca nature comes gradually. One first sees the dangers in immoral sense pleasures. Then one sees the worthlessness in extreme sense pleasures that are not harmful to others but oneself. One sees the worthlessness of any sensory pleasure in the kāma loka only at the Anāgām $\bar{\imath}$ stage. This is why it is a step-by-step process.

5. It is like holding onto a gold necklace that was considered valuable. But if it were undoubtedly proven that the necklace was an imitation, one would instantly lose the attachment to it.

- Attaining the Sotāpanna stage via comprehending the anicca nature to some extent is like that, i.e., realizing the dangers (and/or worthlessness) of SOME extreme sense pleasures. Even though one may not realize that one has lost the craving for SOME sense attractions, one will realize that within weeks or months.
- Then, the more one meditates on the anicca nature, the more one starts seeing the perils of other (less harmful) sense pleasures too. That is why one HAS TO proceed step-by-step. Getting rid of ALL kāma rāga (attachment to sense inputs via the body touches, smells, and tastes) happens only at the Anāgām $\bar{\imath}$ stage.

6. However, I must say that X is a bit unusual in losing the desire to read books and listen to music. Those are not really "extreme sense pleasures." Before that one will lose the desire to go fishing, mistreat animals, etc., and get pleasure from lying, gossiping, slandering, stealing, sexual misconduct, etc. I am quite sure X never tended to those anyway.

- I also do not want people to think that one needs to lose sensory pleasures such as reading books or listening to music to become a Sotāpanna or to experience nirāmisa sukha. That is not the case. One could even be a Sotāpanna and still have those two tendencies. I have mentioned a person in the time of the Buddha who became a Sotāpanna but could not get rid of the urge to have a drink (however, he did not live that long after attaining the Sotāpanna stage). No one can say whether another person has attained the Sotāpanna stage.
- A Sotāpanna would not do only those deeds that could make him/her suitable for rebirth in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$. That means he/she has removed high levels of greed, hate, and ignorance to the levels of kāma rāga, paṭigha, and avijjā; see, "Lobha, Dosa, Moha versus Raga, Patigha, Avijiāa."
- I believe X had cultivated anāriya jhānā in previous but recent rebirths and is carrying that "gati" to this life. X has described some bodily sensations that are associated with $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$. This is why it is easy for X to at least temporarily lose attachment to even fairly harmless things like reading books or listening to music.

7. Each person loses a set of characteristics (gati) upon attaining the Sotāpanna stage. One should be able to look back and see what those are, just like X did. And, of course, whether those changes are permanent. (Note that my personal experiences discussed below were as of 2016.)

- As I mentioned, I have lost the urge to have a drink at the end of the day, which I had been doing for over 30 years. I did not force that, even though I contemplated the possible bad consequences of keeping that habit.
- When one follows the Path, one does not forcefully give up sensory pleasures, only immoral actions that can hurt other living beings; even X did not forcefully give up books or music, it just happened. Losing the desire for sense pleasures happens gradually, starting with extremes.
- I have only lost interest in reading fiction books. I used to read all types of books, but now I am not interested in reading fiction because it is a waste of time, just like watching TV. On the other hand, I am now reading more non-fiction books.
- Over the past two years, I have also been more productive in my science interests. I have learned the subtleties of quantum mechanics that were not apparent to me even two years ago. The mind becomes much clear as one gets rid of kilesa.
- So, it is important to realize that one is not supposed to lose all interests. One loses interest in only those activities related to greed, hate, and ignorance. That is a must and should be fairly obvious when one looks back. One loses interest in all worldly affairs only upon attaining the Arahanthood.

8. My point is that it is desirable to first get into this stage of X , where X can see the difference between sensual pleasures (āmisa sukha) and the nirāmisa sukha that arise by at least temporarily suppressing the desire for sensual pleasures via a meditation program.

- Even more critical than a meditation program is living a moral life, staying away from dasa akusala as much as possible.

9. Many people try to attain "Nibbānic pleasure" just because they think sensual pleasures, i.e., that Nibbānic pleasure is like the pleasure of music, good food, etc. This is why the account of X is so good an example in pointing out the difference between the two.

- Actually, this is good place to discuss the differences among āmisa, nirāmisa, and jhāna sukha and the Nibbānic sukha.
- I reserved the name "sukha" for Nibbāna because it differs from the nirāmisa sukha. It is an overall state of "well-being." I have no idea what that is like at higher stages, but it is now an ever-present calming effect on the body and mind.
- Sense pleasures lead to āmisa (or sāmisa) sukha. So, we are all familiar with āmisa sukha.

10. Nirāmisa sukha can arise due to a few different causes. They are all beneficial for the Path and to comprehend the anicca nature.

- Those cittā that bring us àmisa sukha are burdened with kilesa or akusala cetasika (which we will discuss in the next post). These give rise to an agitated mind that is under incessant distress; see, "Anicca - The Incessant Distress ("Pilana")." This is what X described in the previous post, ".. I stopped my formal meditation for a few weeks, and I found that I began to get agitated and anxious as before." When one gets rid of this incessant distress, one feels the nirāmisa sukha.
- One can also feel the nirāmisa sukha for short times when engaged in moral activities, for example, helping others or giving food to hungry people or animals. Again, this feeling comes because those kilesa are not present in citta (thoughts) that arise during such activities.
- Another is engaging in Ariya or anāriya meditations. Here also, one's mind is mostly devoid of kilesa (depending on the strength of the samādhi).

11. There is also a higher nirāmisa sukha that the Buddha recommended. That is the sukha arising due to $j h a \bar{a} \bar{a}$. When in a jhāna, one has citta running through one's mind that belongs to rūpa or arūpa loka.

- By definition, those cittā are also devoid of kilesa or mental impurities.
- Jhānā arise when samādhi is intensified (cultivated) to a certain level.

12. "Nivan sukha" or "Nibbānic sukha" or "Nibbānic bliss" is due to cittā that are even purer. There is no trace of incessant agitation or stress left in those citt $\bar{a}$.

- These cittā are also called pabhassara (bright) citta; see "Nibbāna - Is it Difficult to Understand?" and "Pabhassara Citta, Radiant Mind, and Bhavaniga."
- Also, Sotāpanna will not be able to experience the Nibbāna sukha for that stage unless he/she can get into Sotāpanna phala samāpatti via cultivating jhānā. Still, he/she will not have the nirāmisa sukha going away. Whatever relief gained from the "incessant distress" is permanent.

13. We will discuss the kilesa (akusala cetasika) that give rise not only to incessant agitation and stress but eventually to all sansäric suffering - soon in this series.

- The incessant distress can be considered "immediate kamma vipāka" due to cittā burdened with kilesa or akusala cetasika. The "delayed effects" of such citta will bring more kamma vipāka at later times, and the more potent ones can bring rebirth in the ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$.
- Thus the key step to the Sotāpanna stage is to experience nirāmisa sukha by cleansing the mind via moral behavior (sila) and a good meditation program. Then the mind is open to grasping the anicca nature, i.e., pañcañ̄varaṇa could be suppressed for days.
- However, that transition may happen quickly when one is living a moral life and contemplating pure Dhamma be followed by the Sotāpanna phala moment without one noticing it then. Different people get there in different ways.
- But there is much to discuss before discussing the Sotāpanna stage.

Next in the series, "Starting on the Path Even without Belief in Rebirth", ....

### 4.2.3 Starting on the Path Even without Belief in Rebirth

August 19, 2016; revised August 24, 2022

1. The "Living Dhamma" section lays out a step-by-step Path from fundamentals. You may want to read it after reading this post.

- Many people, including some Buddhists, have difficulty connecting with the idea of rebirth.
- Rather than making the idea of rebirth a prerequisite to starting the practice, one can start practicing by comprehending another type of suffering that the Buddha revealed to the world.

2. The Buddha revealed at least two types of suffering unknown to the world (and taught how to get rid of both PERMANENTLY).

- Even though the future suffering associated with the rebirth process is the one that is mostly highlighted in the literature, there is a suffering that we all experience in this life without even knowing about it.
- That first type of suffering we all experience is the incessant distress that we all feel (but may not even be aware of). One starts feeling the nirāmisa sukha when one temporarily suppresses this incessant distress.
- In a way, it is necessary first to realize the existence of this first type of suffering, at least suppress it, and experience the nirāmisa sukha that results from it (as X did ).
- That will provide the initial faith in Buddha Dhamma and enable the mind to get to samādhi and help comprehend the anicca nature. That will lead to the next step of comprehending the second type of suffering associated with the rebirth process.

3. Rather than writing a few more posts on this, I decided to present this idea in audio format. I have never delivered a "desanä" previously, but hopefully, you will be able to grasp the concept. You need to adjust the volume control on your computer:

## "The Hidden Suffering that We All Can Understand"

## WebLink: Audio Desana: Episode 1 - The Hidden Suffering That We All Can Understand

WebLink: Audio Desana: Episode 1 - The Hidden Suffering That We All Can Understand (Original Larger file size)
4. Here are the links to the posts mentioned in the above desan $\bar{a}$ :

## Posts on the fundamentals of meditation:

1. Introduction to Buddhist Meditation
2. The Basics in Meditation
3. The Second Level

Posts on the "incessant distress":
Anicca - The Incessant Distress ("Pīlana")

## Need to Experience Suffering in Order to Understand it?

## Post on the five hindrances (pañcan̄̄varana):

Key to Calming the Mind - The Five Hindrances

## $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p a ̄ n a s a t i B^{B} \bar{a} v a n \bar{a}:$

6. Ānāpānasati Bhāvanā (Introduction)

## Satipaṭthāna Bhāvanā:

Satipatthāna Sutta - Structure

## Step-by-Step Progression in the Path:

Buddha Dhamma - In a Chart
Mahā Cattārīsaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty)
Next in the series, "What Are Kilesa (Mental Impurities)? - Connection to Cetasika."

### 4.3 Dhamma with Less Pāli

November 14, 2017
This new subsection is now the second subsection in the "Living Dhamma" section.

- Initially, I had "Living Dhamma - Fundamentals" as the second subsection after the "Living Dhamma Overview" subsection.
- Now I realize that it was to much of a jump, even for many who have had exposure to Buddha Dhamma, but are not familiar with cetasika and other key Pāli words. So, in this new subsection, I plan to close that gap.


## Posts:

Buddha Dhamma for an Inquiring Mind - Part I

- "Root of All Suffering - Ten Immoral Actions" (with the desanā "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)."
- Is Suffering the Same as the First Noble Truth on Suffering?
- Dhamma, Sañkhāra, Sankata, Rūpa, Viññāna, Gati, Āsava, Anusaya
- Complexity of the Mind - Viññāna and Sañkhāra
- Citta, Mano, Viññāna - Stages of a Thought


### 4.3.1 Buddha Dhamma for an Inquiring Mind - Part I

April 12, 2018; revised April 27, 2022
Today, Buddha Dhamma remains hidden under a lot of incomprehensible Pāli words. I can see that many people use Pāli words without knowing their true meanings. If one has a good understanding of the "basics" or the "framework," it is easier to understand and remember the meanings of key Pāli words.

- This post will be in summary form, since it is impossible to describe even an outline in several essays. One can find relevant posts by using the "Search" box at the top right. Furthermore, one can ask questions at the discussion forum ("Forum"). I encourage any opposing to views, as long as one provides evidence from the Tipitaka.
- This website is based solely on the Tipitaka and only the three Commentaries there. The reasons discussed in the section "Historical Background."


## Buddhism (Buddha Dhamma) - What Happens After Death?

1. The majority of people in the world today belong to one of the following two camps:

- The next life is going to be forever, in heaven or hell.
- This life is all one has. When one dies, it is over-no rebirth or hell or heaven.

2. The first theory has been handed down from generation to generation, and there are many "holes" in that theory. It seems illogical in many ways (it is one thing to create the Earth, but to make billions of galaxies with billions of planets like Earth? And how did the Creator come about?), but think about this:

- If a baby dies within a few months, will it go to heaven or hell (it has not done anything good or bad)?
- Furthermore, how come some people are born wealthy and thus have a better chance to go to heaven than one who is born poor and therefore may be tempted to do immoral things to survive (and hence go to hell)?

3. The second theory appears more logical to many "scientifically-oriented" people with a "materialistic" view.

- But even if just one of the rebirth stories is believable or proven to the satisfaction of someone, then that person has to throw away that theory.
- More importantly, no explanation is available for how consciousness arises from inert matter. Our bodies are made of the "same stuff" that makes a tree or a house.

4. In contrast, Buddha Dhamma says that there will be future lives as long as there are causes for future lives to arise.

- We can learn a lot about Buddha Dhamma by looking at what those causes are. Those causes arise in one's mind.
- One's Creator is oneself. And, as long as one perceives that one can find ultimate happiness in this world, one will be reborn in this world.


## The Four Noble Truths

1. In simple terms, Buddha Dhamma is based on the following four truths about this world, called the Four Noble Truths:

- The Noble Truth about suffering.
- The causes for such suffering.
- One can eliminate those causes and thereby stop future suffering from arising.
- Fourth is the way to eliminate those causes. That leads to ultimate happiness (Nibbāna).

2. The Buddha said that when one understands the First Truth, one will automatically understand the other three. Therefore, let us discuss the First Noble Truth.

- The key and critical issue here is understanding what is meant by "suffering" in Buddha Dhamma.
- It is essential to realize that "suffering" and "the Truth about suffering" are different.

3. Everyone knows suffering very well as a FEELING. One does not have to be a Noble Person or even a Buddhist to see that suffering. Even animals know what that suffering is, and they don't like that either. We all have seen dogs cry with pain when hit.

- So, what is the Noble Truth about suffering? The Buddha said that this Truth is unknown and is hidden from humans until a Buddha teaches what it is.
- The cause for FUTURE suffering is attachment to sense pleasures. That is the Noble TRUTH about suffering. Thus, "attachment to sense pleasures" is what the Buddha called "dukkha."

4. Understanding the truth about suffering requires an understanding of the broader world of 31 realms and that most of that future suffering would be in the four realms or the ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$ (of which the animal realm is one). But suffering is associated with all realms.

- There are causes for that suffering, i.e., causes for leading to rebirth in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$ or in any realm in general.
- Thus, one can stop the worst types of suffering by abstaining form such immoral actions. Yet, it is difficult to overcome such temptations.
- The Noble Eightfold Path is the way to overcome such temptations. So, now we can begin to see why one will know all four Truths when one understands the First Truth.


## Mind - Where Root Causes for Suffering Arise

1. We know that we are conscious because we can think. We think via thoughts. We can think about many types of things.

- When we are sleepy, we are just aware that we are alive.
- On the other hand, if one is about to be run over by a car, one will generate enough power to jump a long distance away from that car or, if chased by a lion, can probably beat a world record for sprinting.

2. One's mind also controls one's actions and speech via thoughts or citta that arise in mind.

- We cannot even lift a finger without a citta or a thought arising in mind. We may not even think about lifting that finger, but we do. It is easy to figure out this way: We can fold that finger any time we want to.
- You may not realize that speech comes via thinking or citta. Again, it is easy to see that we can stop that speech any time we want to.

3. One's actions, speech, and thoughts have consequences. One's conscious thoughts determine the level of future suffering.

- Future suffering arises due to our conscious thoughts or citta, and they are also called sañkhāra in some contexts.

4. There is a difference between citta and sañkhāra (the English word "thought" does not translate precisely as either).

- The word citta is used in Abhidhamma to denote the smallest mental activity that lasts only a fraction of a billionth of a second.
- Sañkhāra represents the overall effect of billions of citta.
- In that sense, the word thought is closer to sañkhāra.

5. Those thoughts that move the body (e.g., lifting that finger) are kāya sañkhāra, because those sañkhāra control the body or kāya.

- Those that lead to speech are called vacī sañkhāra, which are two types: We can speak out loudly or just "talk to ourselves" (thinking consciously); both are vacī sañkhāra.
- However, the word "vāc $\vec{a}$ " is used only for speaking aloud.
- Other thoughts that arise are called mano sañkhāra, which are those thoughts that arise without us even thinking about it consciously.
- So, I hope it is clear what those three types of sañkhāra are. It is crucial to be able to see the differences. But they all arise in the mind.

6. Mano sañkhāra arise automatically based on our gati (or character or habits). We only become aware of them after they arise.

- Immediately after mano sañkhāra arise, we become aware of them and if we are not paying attention, we may just keep generating vacī sañkhāra along the same lines.
- For example, when an alcoholic sees a bottle of alcohol at a party, their first reaction is to have a drink. But if that person has willpower, they can think about the harmful consequences and forcefully move the mind to some other matter.
- Both Satipatṭhāna and $\bar{A} n a \bar{a} a \overline{n a}$ Bhāvanā is based on understanding how vacī sañkhāra arise based on mano sañkhāra that occur according to one's gati (and that we have control over vacī sañkhāra).

7. Another critical observation from the above discussion is that our physical bodies are "inert shells." It is the mental body (called "gandhabba") where all thoughts (i.e., sañkhāra) arise, thereby controlling the physical body.

- That is why in many confirmed Out of Body Experiences (OBE), the body becomes lifeless when the gandhabba comes out of the body.
- These are all key concepts discussed in detail on the website. One can use the "Search" box to find pieces as needed.


## Importance of Javana Citta

Not all thoughts are the same. To get a better idea about thoughts or sañkhāra, it is good to know some basic facts about citta.

1. Citta can be of 89 types and that analysis is very complex. We don't need to know all those. We need to know that some of those 89 types are called "javana citta." They are very powerful citt $\bar{a}$.

- The word "javana" comes from the root " $j a$," meaning "birth." Thus javana citta is the root for all births. Javana can also mean "running" or "spear" that can penetrate, to indicate the power.
- The opposite of javana citta would be "ati parittârammana citta," that we don't really even feel. Citt $\bar{a}$ (plural) arise when we are asleep and are responsible for breathing.
- Breathing involves the movement of body parts (lungs), and is thus a "kāya sañkhāra." That is an excellent example of an "undefiled" sañkhāra. It is a necessary action to maintain life.

2. On the other side of the spectrum, we have powerful javana citta, which CAN lead to strong sañkhāra called abhisañkhāra.

- Javana cittā generate energies that are the root cause of future vipāka (results) that can give rise to various types of $v i p a \bar{k} a$ during a lifetime. Strong ones can lead to future rebirths. Thus, the key to future suffering is in javana citta.
- However, not all javana citta lead to abhisañkhāra. For example, kusala kamma (wholesome deeds) done by Arahants are not abhisañkhāra. They are called kriya (or "action without lobha, dosa, moha.") They don't have kammic energy to fuel rebirths or bring pavutti vipāka.

3. A very strong kāya sañkhāra would be to kill a human, say by stabbing. That requires a very strong impulse, a high javana power. One can do that only when one's mind is very agitated and is full of hate. These are called apuññābhi sañkhāra (apuñña abhi sañkhāra, meaning "bad strong sañkhāra").

- However, high javana power does not necessarily mean an evil action. When someone does good deeds (kusala kamma), those involve puññābhi sañkhāra (puñña abhi sañkhāra, meaning "good strong sañkhāra").
- High javana power may involve neutral actions too. For example, lifting a heavy object requires high javana power. But such an action while cleaning house, for example, is a neutral action (no kammically good or bad intention), therefore is not called good or bad (puñ̃̃a or apuñña). Such javana cittā are not included in Abhidhamma because they do not have kammic consequences.

4. There are 12 types of javana citta corresponding to the 12 types of akusala citta and 8 types of javana citta corresponding to the eight types of kusala citta.

- These are the javana citta of importance to us.
- The 12 types of akusala citta with akusala javana can bring bad vipāka during a lifetime or rebirth in "bad realms."
- The eight types of kusala citta with kusala javana can bring good vipāka during a lifetime or rebirth in "good realms." We need to do kusala kamma to avoid rebirth in the apāyā to attain Nibbāna.
- However, "good" and "bad" in the above are relative. It is just that "bad realms" have extreme suffering. But no realm out of the possible 31 realms is free of suffering.

5. Now we are beginning to see why dasa akusala kamma or the ten immoral deeds (done with those 12 types of akusala citta), are at the heart of Buddha Dhamma.

- When one is engaged in such immoral deeds, they generate "energies" called "bhava shakti" to fuel future kamma vipāka (bad results), including rebirths in the apāy $\bar{a}$.
- Thus it is unfruitful and dangerous to engage in dasa akusala; this is why such activities are of anicca nature (do not lead to what one expects and only lead to more stress and suffering), one of the three characteristics of this world (Tilakkhana).
- Such activities lead to suffering or dukkha, the second of the Tilakkhana.
- Once one gets a rebirth in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$, it is tough to get out, and thus, one becomes "helpless." Furthermore, clearly such actions are fruitless in the long run, even if born in "good realms." That is the key to understanding "anatta," the third characteristic of this world.

So, that is the first part of a highly-condensed outline of Buddha Dhamma. We will continue this outline in the next post.

Ongoing discussion on this topic at the discussion forum: "Buddha Dhamma for an Inquiring Mind."

### 4.3.2 <br> Root of All Suffering - Ten Immoral Actions

## November 14, 2017

1. This new subsection of "Dhamma with Less Pāli" is now the second subsection in the "Living Dhamma" section.

- In the first desan $\bar{a}$ of the "Living Dhamma - Overview" subsection, we talked about how one's mind get agitated when one is engaged in dasa akusala or the ten immoral actions.

2. After that "Living Dhamma - Overview" subsection, I had "Living Dhamma - Fundamentals" as the next subsection, where I started discussing the connection between those dasa akusala and cetasika or mental factors in our thoughts.

- Now I realize that it was to much of a jump, even for many who have had exposure to Buddha Dhamma but are not familiar with cetasika.
- So, in this new subsection - "Dhamma with Less Pāli" - I plan to close that gap. This subsection will have much less Pāli words, and I will try to introduce only the essential Pāli words as I proceed.

3. Here is the first desanā: "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)." Here we discuss the ten immoral actions (dasa akusala) and how avoiding them helps calm the mind; in fact, this is the key to avoid depression.

WebLink: Download "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)"
WebLink: Download "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)" (Original - Larger file size)

## 4. Posts relevant to the desan $\bar{a}$ :

Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)
How to Evaluate Weights of Different Kamma
Correct Meaning of Vacī Sañkhāra
Truine Brain: How the Mind Rewires the Brain via Meditation/Habits
The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Asavas)
Habits, Goals, and Character (Gati)

How Habits are Formed and Broken - A Scientific View

## Wrong Views (Micchā Ditthi) - A Simpler Analysis

## Micchā Ditthi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage

## Origin of Morality (and Immorality) in Buddhism

- In the first desanā of the "Living Dhamma - Overview" subsection, I talked about how one's mind get agitated when one is engaged in dasa akusala or the ten immoral actions. Here is that desanā:


## "The Hidden Suffering that We All Can Understand"

## WebLink: Download "The Hidden Suffering that We All Can Understand"

I recommend reading the three posts in that "Living Dhamma - Overview" subsection.

### 4.3.3 Is Suffering the Same as the First Noble Truth on Suffering?

## Re-written September 4, 2022

A common misconception is that dukkha means the feeling of suffering. Current suffering is a result of the previous kamma. We need to focus on eliminating future suffering.

## Misconception 1 - Sensory Pleasures Can Overcome Suffering

1. There was this question in the discussion forum apparently by a young person, "With so many pleasurable things around us with the innovations from science and technology, why do people need to think about suffering? Isn't Buddha's message kind of outdated?"

- We all are seeking to avoid suffering. Modern society gives the impression that pursuing sensory pleasures will lead to happiness. But we have ample evidence that it does not work. Many people have enough wealth to acquire any sensory pleasure they desire. But don't they suffer just like everyone else?
- Suffering due to injuries, sicknesses, old age, etc., will be there irrespective of one's wealth or accessibility to sensory pleasures.
- Some wealthy people have committed suicide because they could not cope with depression. If they have enough wealth to access any sensory pleasures they desire, how can they become depressed?
- Buddha taught something that no one has ever taught: "We suffer in the long run BECAUSE of our attachment to sensory pleasures."
- Don't be turned off yet. It will be worthwhile to read this post to the end.

2. The Buddha never said that "there are no sensory pleasures to be had in this world." There are plenty of mind-pleasing things and activities. He said people could not SEE the hidden suffering in sensory pleasures.

- We can get into trouble at different levels depending on how we pursue such sensory pleasures. The bad outcomes are obvious if one does immoral things (stealing, sexual misconduct, etc.) in pursuing sensory pleasures.
- However, even "harmless" sensory pleasures can bring about suffering in the rebirth process. That is the "previously unheard teachings" of a Buddha.
- But that does not mean one should start giving up sensory pleasures from this moment. That will only lead to frustration. There is a step-by-step to be followed. See "Is It Necessary for a Buddhist to Eliminate Sensual Desires?"


## Misconception 2 - First Noble Truth Is About Getting Rid of Physical Suffering

3. Some believe practicing Buddha Dhamma can lead to a pain-free life.

- That was clear from the following comment by another person: "I understand what the Buddha meant by suffering because I came down with this ailment."
- Some others have a wrong idea that the First Noble Truth on Suffering is about physical suffering and that one can get rid of it by practicing Buddhism, i.e., by "doing meditation."
- The goal of a Buddhist is to avoid such suffering in future lives. Any physical suffering we experience now requires medical treatment. Even the Buddha experienced physical suffering (due to an injury and backaches.)
- Of course, practicing Buddhism/meditation can also bring relief in this life. But that is relief from depression or other "mental suffering." See "Three Kinds of Happiness - What is Nirāmisa Sukha?"
- Relief from sicknesses or other ailments cannot be overcome that way. One must seek medical advice in those cases.


## First Noble Truth on Suffering Is About a More Serious Issue

4. The First Noble Truth on Suffering or Dukkha Sacca (pronounced "sachcha") is about suffering in future lives and how to overcome it.

- It is the ultimate truth about suffering. Any suffering that one may be experiencing in this life is negligible compared to that when born in the four lowest realms (apāyās.) The animal realm is included there.
- Buddha Dhamma needs to be understood with wisdom. Wisdom (pañña) is a mental factor (cetasika) that needs to be cultivated mostly by reading (or listening) to the Buddha's worldview first.

5. In his first sermon, Dhamma Cakka Pavattana Sutta, the Buddha stated that his teachings are: "pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu" or "a Dhamma that has never been known to the world."

- However, those teachings can not be understood if we just focus on this life, like the young person who commented in \#1 above.
- In other words, the First Noble Truth is primarily about the suffering in the rebirth process. If one does not believe in rebirth, it would be worthwhile to look into the evidence for rebirth. See "Starting on the Path Even without Belief in Rebirth" and "Evidence for Rebirth."


## The worldview of the Buddha

6. The "wider worldview" of the Buddha can be briefly stated as:

- There is a wider world out there with many more beings living in 29 more realms than the human and animal realms that we experience, AND the real suffering is in the lower four realms.
- This life is only a brief stop in our long journey through the cycle of rebirths called samsāra.
- Even in this life, there is hidden suffering even when one seems to be enjoying life, AND there is real suffering in old age and death that is inevitable for everyone. That last part is apparent to anyone but is not thought about much. As one gets old, when the real suffering starts, the mind could be too weak to learn Dhamma.


## Importance of "Understanding the Big Picture"

7. Analogy 1: When a fish bites a bait, it does not see the suffering hidden in that action. Looking from the ground, we can see the whole picture and know what will happen to the fish if it bites the bait. But the fish cannot see that whole picture and thus does not see the hidden suffering. It only sees a delicious bit of food.

- In the same way, if we do not know about the wider world of 31 realms (with the suffering-laden four lowest realms) and that we have gone through unimaginable suffering in those realms in the past, we only focus on what is easily accessible to our six senses.
- That analogy is in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Balisa Sutta (SN 17.2)." You can read the translation there.

8. Analogy 2: Suppose someone makes you an offer. He says, "I will put you in one of the best resorts with all amenities paid for a month. But there is a catch. The food will taste great but have traces of poison that will become effective in a few months and lead to death within the year".

Will anyone accept the offer, knowing it will lead to suffering and death? Of course not.

- But they would gladly accept the offer if they were not told about the poison in the food. They will have a good time but bear the same consequences as the fish in the above analogy.
- In the same way, we enjoy sensory pleasures without knowing their long-term consequences, especially if we do immoral things to get them.


## Things to Contemplate (This is Meditation!)

9. We all have seen how a parent, a grandparent, or even an unrelated celebrity from past years transforms from a dynamic, self-confident, and sometimes imposing character to a feeble, helpless person in the latter years. Sometimes they die under pathetic conditions that would have been unimaginable for them when they were young. But this change is gradual, and even they do not realize it until it is too late.

- When one becomes too old, it may be too late to start thinking about these facts; one needs to spend a little time contemplating these "facts of life" now.
- Not to get depressed about this inevitability, but to DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT; this will enable one to enjoy the latter days of life with nirāmisa sukha, even if no stage of Nibbāna is attained.

10. However, it DOES NOT MEAN one should rush to get away from all sensory pleasures even if one becomes convinced of the core message of the Buddha.

- Abandoning everything abruptly may have even worse consequences if it is not done with true understanding. It takes time to digest the whole message. It has taken me several years to reach where I am now. I have not given up anything with remorse; I do not "miss" anything that I have given up. The only things one may want to "forcefully give up" are things that directly hurt other beings, like killing, stealing, etc., which most people don't do anyway.
- Giving up sensory pleasures comes gradually with understanding when one sees the benefits of giving up.

11. There is no need to rush into taking drastic actions. The urgent task is to get started. Allocate a little time each day to learn Dhamma, preferably when the mind is a bit calmer so that one can focus and contemplate. As the Buddha said, this Dhamma differs from what we are used to.

- As one begins to understand the message of the Buddha, the learning process will become easier. What I hope to do with this site is to present all the background material I have gone through so that others do not have to repeat it all.
- Of course, you may want to do additional research. Each person evaluates things differently.


## Summary

12. The First Noble Truth on suffering is NOT so much about current suffering, especially physical suffering. It is not about the dukha vedana but needs to be UNDERSTOOD with wisdom (pañña).

- The Pāli word for suffering is dukha, with one "k." The First Noble Truth (Dukkha Sacca) is not merely about dukha but how to get rid of it or dukkha (dukha + khaya); see "Does the First Noble Truth Describe only Suffering?"


## Dhamma, Sañkhāra, San̉khata, Rūpa, Viññāṇa, Gati, Āsava, Anusaya

July 22, 2018; revised October 9, 2022

1. I recently realized that it would be a good idea to explain what some critical Pāli words mean in one place.

- This information could be spread over hundreds of posts on the website, but not many people have read even a fraction of what is on the web site.
- Since it is critical to understand these key terms, I will try to provide another condensed "big picture" in terms of these keywords. In the last post we analyzed the big picture in terms of root causes; see, "Six Root Causes - Loka Samudaya (Arising of Suffering) and Loka Nirodhaya (Nibbāna)."

2. One way to look at this is to start with how the Buddha described "everything in this world." We have two worlds: the physical world (rūpa loka) and the mind world (mano loka).

- Everything that is in the physical world is detected by the five physical senses of the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body: vaṇna rūpa (visible objects), sadda rūpa (sounds), gandha rūpa (smells), rasa rūpa (tastes), and photthabba rūpa (touchable objects).
- Therefore, everything in our physical world is called r $\bar{u} p a$ and includes the five types mentioned above. Those rūpa are all above the suddhatthaka stage.
- For example, we can see vaṇ̣a rūpa with eyes: "cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññānaim." Similarly, for the other four.
- Some objects in the physical world can be detected with more than one sense faculty, and the more information we get, the more knowledgeable we become of the object: we can see and touch an apple; if we can also smell it, the apple is probably ripe; if we taste it, we can confirm that it is ripe.

3. We have a sixth sense faculty: mana indriya, which detects everything else in our world, and they are called dhammā: "manañca paṭicca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviñ̃̃ānaim." These dhammā are in our mano loka (mental world).

- These dhammā include everything that is not detected with the five physical senses. They include, for example, kamma bïja, nāma gotta (memory records or memories), mathematics, philosophy, Buddha Dhamma, etc.
- Those are also called $r \bar{u} p a$, but those $r \bar{u} p \bar{a}$ are different from the $r \bar{u} p a$ in the physical world: Some have energies that lie below the suddhatthaka stage (kamma bīja), and the rest of them are either just memories (nāma gotta) or concepts.
- These fine rūpa are described as, "anidassanaì, appațighaì, dhammāyatana pariyāpanna rūpaì" or "rūpa that cannot be seen, touched, and only detected via dhammāyatana (mana indriya)."

4. When one of our senses detects something in our physical world or the mental world, one of the six types of viñ $\tilde{n} \bar{a} n a$ arise, and we become aware of that "thing", whether it is a vaṇna rūpa, sadda rūpa, or a dhammā.

- Viññanna is a very complex entity: it includes or encompasses the following: our feelings (vedanā), perceptions (saññ̄), and a set of individual mental factors (cetasika). They all arise together, and the set of cetasika arising depends on each person's gati.
- For example, totally different sets of vedanā, saññ̄a, and sañkhāra (i.e., cetasika) arise when a famous politician is seen by one of his supporters and a person from the opposition party.
- But in addition, viññāna also includes one's hopes for the future. That is important.

5. The initial response in one's mind upon subjected to an external sense input (whether it is seeing, hearing or just a memory coming to the mind), is called a mano sañkhāra. Of course, that is part of viññāna.

- We can see why different people generate different types of viññāna when exposed to the same sensory input. Such mano sañkhāra - generated instantaneously - depends on one's gati or set of kilesa (lobha, dosa, moha).
- Each person has a set of kilesa called āsava, and one's gati (and therefore mano sañkhāra) closely follow those anusaya/āsava; we will discuss that below.

6. If that sensory input is an interesting one (a like or a dislike), one immediately starts thinking about it. This is called "generating vaci sañkhāra" or basically "talking to oneself." Now one is fully aware that one is thinking about that sensoru input, whether it is a picture, sound, memory, or anything else.

- Furthermore, if one gets animated about that object, one may speak about (still with vacī sañkhāra), and may even take a bodily action that will involve kāya sañkhāra.
- In contrast to mano sañkhāra that arise AUTOMATICALLY, both vacī and kāya sañkhāra are generated consciously. This is key to Ānāpānasati and Satipatṭhāna meditation since we have the ability to stop or to continue with those vacī and kāya sañkhāra.
- Those three types are collectively called sañkhāra.
- So, I hope you now have a better understanding of what is meant by viññāna and sañkhāra and also how they are related. From \#4 above, we can also see that sañkhāra are part of dhammā.

7. By the way, kāya kamma are those actions done with the body, but we see that kāya sañkhāra are responsible for such kāya kamma.

- In the same way, vacī sañkhāra are responsible for vacī kamma, and mano sañkhāra are responsible for mano kamma.
- All kamma (actions) are done with sañkhāra. They all have origins in the mind.

8. Now, such sañkhāra can be "harmless," "dangerous," or "beneficial." Our actions, speech, and thoughts are all based on such saṅkhāra.

- When one gets hungry, one may generate vacī and kāya sañkhāra to ask for food or walk to the kitchen to get something to eat. Such sañkhāra are kammically neutral because they don't lead to "good or bad kamma vipāka" in the future other than getting what one wants to satisfy the hunger.
- Of course, if one gets attached to that food while eating, one may generate strong sañkhāra or abhisañkhāra that will have significant kammic consequences. That is an apuñña abhisañkhāra since that involves the lobha cetasika.

9. If one is planning to kill another human, then one would be generating very strong "apuñña abhisañkhāra" that involves vacī sañkhāra and may lead to kāya sañkhāra if one goes through the killing. Then one would have generated a strong kamma bīja that can bring a future birth in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$.

- On the other hand, if one is studying Buddha Dhamma, one will be generating all three types of puñña abhisañkhāra (thinking, contemplating and doing things like downloading material from the internet). They will create good kamma bīja that will lead to good vipāka: either leading to magga phala or at least births in good realms so one could continue on the Path.

10. Now, we can see how sañkhāra can lead to the formation (or arising) of sañkhata. A potent kamma bīja generated via a strong apuñña abhisañkhāra can lead to say, animal bhava and to the birth of an animal.

- Therefore, that sañkhata (animal) came to be because of that kamma bīja, and many abhisañkhāra could have contributed to that kamma bïja.
- In the same way, a strong "good kamma bīja" generated via puñña abhisañkhāra (puñña kamma) can lead to a human or a deva birth. That human or deva is a sañkhata too.

11. It is much more complex, but ALL material things arise in this world are due to sañkhāra. I will take a simple example to show the basic idea.

- A house (a sañkhata) comes into being due to many types of sañkhāra. First, one needs to get the idea of building a house. Then he/she may consult an architect and after much discussion (a lot of mano and vacī sañkhāra and also kāya sañkhāra), they will come up with a blueprint (plan) for the house.
- Then many people will work to build the house. Innumerable mano, vacī, kāya sañkhāra are involved in bringing the house to completion (of course, most of those are not puñña or apuñña abhisañkhāra; they are just primarily neutral sañkhāra).
- The explanation of how a tree arises is more complex, but it also has origins in mind. We may get to that in the future, but it is not necessary to attain Nibbāna. As the Buddha said: "mind is the precursor to everything in this world."

12. Any sañkhata has the following universal properties: it comes into being and eventually is destroyed and undergoes unexpected change while in existence. Think about anything in this world. Those three characteristics are associated with any of them.

- This is why ANY sañkhata HAS the anicca nature. It is said that "uppāda vayattena aniccā," emphasizes those main properties: any sañkhata arises and eventually is subjected to decay and death, whether living or inert.

13. However, it is essential to realize that a sañkhata WILL NOT bring suffering to anyone unless one gets attached to it. A sañkhata has the anicca nature (i.e., the potential to bring suffering), but it does not automatically lead to suffering.

- A bottle of poison sitting on a table has the potential to kill someone. But unless someone takes the bottle and drinks from it, he/she will not be affected.
- In the same way, we will be subjected to suffering ONLY IF we get attached to worldly things (sankkhata (sankata in Sinhala), whether it is a person, house, car, etc). Then why do we get attached to such things all the time? That is because we have not comprehended the real anicca nature of sañkhata (sankata in Sinhala). It is not easy to see anicca nature.

14. Therefore, the critical point is that any type of rūpa (or any sañkhata in general) WILL NOT bring us $d u k k h a$ unless we get attached to (or repulsed by it), i.e., it leads to taṇhā in mind.

- This is why the Buddha said, "..pañca upādānakkhandhā dukkhā," and NOT "pañcakkhandha dukkhā."
- There could be all kinds of attractive/hateful things around us, but if we don't generate upādāna for them via craving (lobha) or hate (dosa), we will not be subjected to suffering.
- However, that is hard until one cultivates pañña (wisdom) by learning Buddha Dhamma and eventually grasping the Tilakkhaṇa (anicca, dukkha, anatta).

15. Until then, when we experience a sense input via any of the six senses (see above), we may automatically generate bad mano sañkhāra and then willingly generate vacī and $k \bar{a} y a$ sañkhāra along the same lines, if we are not being mindful.

- As we discussed above, mano sañkhāra arisse AUTOMATICALLY according to our gati. Those gati are closely associated with anusaya (mental fermentations) that cannot be removed until one comprehends Tilakkhaṇa.
- Based on the sense input, those āsava may come to the surface and that is called $\bar{a} s a v a$; see, "Gathi (Gati), Anusaya, and Āsava."
- The only way to change those gati (i.e., to remove āsava from one's mind permanently) is to cultivate $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p \bar{a} n a s a t i$ and Satipatṭhāna, by being mindful of what kind of sañkhāra arise in our minds as we are exposed to such external sense inputs.
- So, it is VERY IMPORTANT to both learn Buddha Dhamma (in particular Tilakkhaṇa) and ALSO to practice real Ānāpānasati/Satipaṭthāna Bhāvanā.

16. It must be clear now that the main cause of suffering is not sañkhata, but sañkhāra, specifically apuñña abhisañkhāra. This is why it is said that "sabbe sañkhāra aniccā" and NOT "sabbe sañkhata anicc $\bar{a} "$ or "sabbe dhamma aniccā"

- Another word for apuñña abhisañkhāra is dasa akusala. Abstaining from dasa akusala is the same as stopping BAD mano, vacī, and kāya sañkhāra.
- Some of that can be done via pure determination. However, that discipline becomes challenging when one gets tempting sensory inputs. For example, one may not take a bribe, but if the offer is a million dollars, one may be tempted to take the bribe.

17. That is the difference a fundamental comprehension of Tilakkhana will accomplish; one's tendency to do immoral things will naturally reduce as one's comprehension of Tilakkhaṇa increases. An Arahant will not be tempted by absolutely anything.

- An Anāgāmī will not be tempted by any "kāma" input, for example, seeing the most attractive person. But he/she will have a liking (craving) for Buddha Dhamma and possibly for jhānic pleasures.
- A Sotāpanna WILL NOT do any apāyagāmi akusala (i.e., will not generate such apuñña abhisañkhāra).
- Those controls take place automatically. The mind will automatically do that by not generating even spontaneous mano sañkhāra belonging to those categories. That is done via permanently changing one's gati for the better via pañña.

18. Finally, another thing to remember is that most of what we experience is dhamm $\bar{a}$, via the mana indriya.

- Those five physical senses are active ONLY in bringing that sensory input, which means that sense experience is very brief.
- Let us take the example of watching a person walking toward you. When the person is 100 meters away, you see a snapshot of him. Then that mental imprint immediately goes to the past. By the time he is close to you, all those visual events of him walking towards you will have gone to the past; they can now be recalled only as dhamma $\overline{\text { a }}$
- The same is true for all five physical senses. We experience them only DURING the sense event, only momentarily. After that we can only RECALL those events with the mana indriya. Those past sense events come back as nāma gotta or memories. A day after meeting that person, you can visualize the whole event with the mana indriya.

19. Therefore, pañcakkhandha (except for those arising at any given moment) is dhammā, experienced by the mind via the mana indriya. This subtle point may not be apparent immediately; also, see "Pañcakkhandha or Five Aggregates - A Misinterpreted Concept."

- We get attached to only a small fraction of pañcakkhandha, and that is called pañca upādānakkhandha; see, "Pancupādānakkhandha - It is All Mental."

20. If you think deeply enough, you will realize the world that one's mind makes up one experiences to some extent. It is easy to see that our vedanā, sañ̃ña, sañkhāra, and viññāna are all highly personal and are based on one's gati.

- The physical world around us exists for sure and is real, but what we perceive is highly personal. What we see and experience is our own "mental picture" of the world: our own vedanā, saññā, sañkhāra, and viññāna.

21. This post became longer than I expected. However, it is impossible even provide a basic outline in a short post. Still, one would need to read other relevant posts to understand this basic layout, thereby understanding those keywords better. But it is essential to do if one is really interested in grasping the actual teachings of the Buddha.

- As the Buddha said, "this Dhamma has never been known to the world, and it is not easy to comprehend." It requires a real effort. On the other hand, getting released from the apāy $\bar{a}$ should not be expected to be done quickly. Otherwise, none of us would still be here.


### 4.3.5 Complexity of the Mind - Viññāṇa and Sañkhāra

April 28, 2019; revised November 8, 2019

## Vipāka Viññāna and Kamma Viññāṇa

1. Even though science has made significant progress in the understanding of the material world, science has advanced very little on the subject of mental phenomena.

- The words viññāna and sañkhāra have no corresponding words in English. It is absurd to translate viññāna as "consciousness." There are two types of viññāna. Vipāka viññanna are only consciousness. However, kamma viññāṇa that arise via "sañkhāra paccayā viññāna" are much more than just consciousness.
- I looked up the definition of consciousness. It is usually defined as "the state of being awake and aware of one's surroundings" or "the awareness or perception of something by a person." That is not what is meant by viññāna.

2. Kamma viñ̃̃āna arises only when one acts with avijjä: "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" and "sañkhāra paccayā viññāna." Thus, kamma viññāṇa can occur only if one acts with avijjā or ignorance.

- The Buddha did not act with viññāna (i.e., did not generate kamma viññāna) after attaining the Buddhahood. But he had perfectly good consciousness.
- Viññāna is a very complicated word. Even though I have simplified viñãāṇa as "defiled consciousness," that is also not adequate; see, "Viññāna - Consciousness Together With Future Expectations."


## Different Categorizations of Sañkhāra

3. In WebLink: suttacentral: Paticcasamuppāda Vibhañga (Vb 6), the term "avijjā paccayā sañkhārā" in akusala-mūla Paticca Samuppāda (that leads to suffering) is explained as follows: "Tattha katame avijjā paccayā sañkhārā? Puññābhisañkhāro, apuñn̄ābhisañkhāro, āneñjābhisañkhāro, kāyasañkhāro, vacīsañkhāro, cittāsañkhāro."

Translated: "What is avijjā paccayā sañkhārā? Puññābhisañkhāra, apuñ̃̄ābhisañkhāra, āneñjābhisañkhāra, kāyasañkhāra, vacīsañkhāra, cittāsañkhāra." (here, cittāsañkhāra is the same as manosañkhāra).

- They are all abhisañkhāra, even though the verse has simplified as "avijjā paccayā sañkhārāey."
- There are two types of abhisañkhāra mentioned there: one kind refers to types of kamma accrued. The second categorization says whether it involves the body, speech, or just mind.
- Therefore, sañkhāra has a much deeper meaning than just "mental formations," even though that is better than the translation for viññāna as consciousness.
- Let us discuss those two types next.


## Mano, vacī, and kāya Saṅkhāra

4. First, let us consider mano sañkhāra, vacī sañkhāra, and kāya sañkhāra.

- They all arise in the mind, but have differences: thoughts that appear automatically in the mind are called mano sañkhāra.
- When we consciously think about something, those are vacī sañkhāra (speaking out is also included).
- When we move the body with our thoughts, those thoughts are kāya sañkhāra.
- Of course, those sañkhāra become abhisañkhāra when immoral or moral intentions play a role. Such abhisañkhāra lead to rebirth and future suffering (see \#5 below).

4. In other words, sañkhāra in "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" in akusala-mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda are abhisañkhāra that can lead to rebirth.

- Even an Arahant will generate sañkhāra (all three types of mano sañkhāra, vacī sañkhāra, and kāya sañkhāra) to live in this world the physical body dies.
- However, an Arahant will NOT generate any abhisañkhāra.


## Apuñ̃̃a, Puñña, and $\bar{A} n e \tilde{n} j a ~ a b h i s a n ̃ k h a ̄ r a ~$

5. Abhisañkhāra falls into three categories of apuñna abhisañkhāra, puñña abhisañkhāra, and āneñja abhisaǹkhāra.

- Apuñña abhisañkhāra are immoral actions leading to births in the apāyā.
- Puñ̃̃a abhisañkhāra are moral actions leading births in the "good" realms of human, deva, and rūpāvacara brahma realms (via cultivation of rūpāvacara jhāna).
- Āneñja abhisañkhāra are involved in the cultivation of arūpāvacara jhāna leading to rebirth in arūpāvacara brahma realms.
- Therefore, just translating sañkhāra as "mental formations" is not very useful in describing what they are; see, "Sañkhāra - What It Really Means."


## Current Scientific Knowledge of Consciousness

6. Modern science is far behind the Buddha in the understanding of mental phenomena. To understand the severity of this problem, let us examine a presentation by the philosopher John Searle, "Our Shared Condition - Consciousness."

## WebLink: youtube: John Searle: Our shared condition -- consciousness

7. In my opinion, John Searle is one of few philosophers who comes even close to understanding mind phenomena. Some philosophers/scientists do not even believe that consciousness is real. They say: "..Science is objective, consciousness is subjective. Therefore there cannot be a science of consciousness." Whether there can be a "science of consciousness" or not, consciousness is real, as Searle points out.

- Some others object, "..Maybe consciousness exists, but it can’t make any difference to the world. How could spirituality move anything?." In response, Searle points out: "..I decide consciously to raise my arm, and the damn thing goes up."


## Consciousness Is Real

8. John Searle is also quite correct that consciousness is not an illusion. As he points out, only a conscious living being can decide to move a body part, say raise a hand.

- But to be perfectly correct, consciousness is not what moves an arm. One needs to make a "conscious effort" to move the arm, i.e., one must decide to raise the hand. Those thoughts are kāya sañkhāra: conscious thoughts that lead to moving body parts.
- However, it is essential to realize that the energy to raise the hand does not come from the mind. The mind initiates the process, and the brain sends the necessary commands to the muscles to raise the hand; energy for such muscle movements comes from the food we eat.
- Just like an on-board computer carries out the commands of the pilot flying a plane, the brain acts like a computer and carries out the commands given by the mind.


## Breathing Involves Basic Kāya Sañkhāra

9. The definition of $k \bar{a} y a$ sañkhāra is "assāsa passāsā kāya sañkhāra" or "breathing in and out is $k \bar{a} y a$ sañkhāra." We all do such kāya sañkhāra through our lives, and that is the most basic kāya sañkhāra.

- Even though we do not realize it, breathing in and out involves "thinking at the lowest level" or with "atiparittārammana citta vīthi." Those citta vīthi do not have javana citta, and thus, we do not "feel them."
- In the fourth jhāna samāpatti, kāya sañkhāra involved in breathing stop, i.e., breathing stops.
- Kāya sañkhāra lead to any bodily movement. Unless those bodily movements lead to kammic effects (good or bad), they do not become abhisañkhāra, which could lead to rebirth.


## Vacī Abhisaṅkhāra and Kāya Abhisañkhāra Can Lead to Rebirth

10. Vacī sañkhāra also can be just sañkhāra (thinking to oneself/speaking about normal activities) or abhisañkhāra with kammic consequences. See, "Correct Meaning of Vacī Sañkhāra."

- Both vacī and kāya abhisañkhāra can lead to rebirth.
- Mano sañkhāra - which arise automatically - do not lead to rebirths.


## Some Pāli Words Should Not be Translated

11. Modern science cannot explain sañkhāra (more correctly how a person moves body parts or speaks on his/her volition). The English language does not have an equivalent word for "sañkhāra." Furthermore, as explained above, "consciousness" should not be used as the English translation for "viññạ̄na."

- We need to learn the Pāli words (sañkhāra and viñnänaa) and then just use those words.
- That is what has been the practice in the Sinhala language. The same words viñnāna and sañkhāra appear in the Sinhala translations of the Tipitaka. Just like in English, there are no Sinhala words assigned for viññāṇa and sañkhāra.


## Citta, Manō, Viññāṇa - Nine Stages of a Thought

January 24, 2018; revised January 6, 2019; July 26, 2020; August 23, 2022

## Citta, mano, viññāṇa - All Different

1. Citta, mano, and viññāna are common words used indiscriminately in many texts on Buddhism (Buddha Dhamma). They are all related yet different.

- A citta becomes "contaminated" in eight steps to viñ̃n̄ana (and in another step to becoming part of the viññānakkhandha.) That transformation happens in an unbelievably short time. The level of "contamination" depends on one's gati (character/habits.)
- I hope this post will clarify some fundamental concepts, will be invaluable in understanding other concepts.
- I cringe when I see some online comments even say viññāna is Nibbāna. It is exactly the opposite. One attains Nibbāna when one gets rid of viñ̃̃āna or more accurately, when one purifies one's mind to the extent that a citta does not contaminate to the viññanna stage.
- Viññāna discussed at "Viññāña Aggregate."


## Fundamentals of a Citta

2. The generic term in English, "thought," cannot even begin to explain the complex process that happens within a fraction of a billionth of a second when a citta arises. A citta goes through three stages (uppāda, tithi, bhañga) before terminated within a billionth of a second.

- When we see, hear, smell, taste, or touch, seventeen citt $\bar{a}$ flow uninterrupted. Such a series of citt $\bar{a}$ is called a pañcadvāra citta vīthi. For example, it happens in "cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññānaṁ."
- Many such citta vīthis flow before we consciously become aware of that "thought."
- If the thought object comes through the māna indriya ("manañca paṭicca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviññānaï"), that citta vīthi is called a manodvāra citta vith hi, and it has 10-12 citta. Again, many such citta vīthi flow before we consciously become aware of that "thought."


## A "Thought" May Have Billions of Citta

3. Another essential point to remember is that the word "citta" is used loosely, even in Buddha Dhamma. It often gives the same impression as the word "thought." We just say, "a citta comes to the mind."

- The word "citta" has that "conventional" meaning, but it is the initial stage of a "thought" that is also called a citta. That citta has only the seven UNIVERSAL cetasika. That means those seven cetasika are in ANY citta, including a that of a Buddha or an Arahant. That means it is a "pure citta" (pabhassara citta in Pāli.)
- See "Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)."


## A Pure Citta Has Only Seven Universal Cetasika

4. A pure citta is analogous to a glass of purified water without any contaminant. It has only seven cetasika (mental factors): Phassa (contact); vedanā (feeling); sañ̃̄̄̄ (perception); cetanā (volition); ekaggatā (One-pointedness) can become Sammā Samādhi; jīvitindriya (life faculty); manasikāra (memory).

- If we add a bit of sugar to that glass of water, the water becomes sweet. That is like adding "good" (sobhana) cetasika, like compassion, to a citta.
- But if we add a bit of dirt to that pure water, it becomes dirty. That is like adding "bad" (asobhana) cetasika, like anger, to a citta.
- Yet, we may still call either glass of water a "glass of water."
- In the same way, we commonly refer to any thought as a citta. However, technically, only the first stage can be called a citta, Thus, "any thought" is a viññanna (a contaminated citta.)


## The Nine Stages of the Evolution of a Citta

5. The initial, pure stage of citta becomes contaminated within an unbelievable short time. It evolves through nine steps in the following sequence: citta, mano, mānasain, hadayaì, paṇ̂araí, mano manāyatanaỉ, māna indriyain, viññāna, viññākkhando. [Yaï cittaì mano mānasaí hadayaì paṇ̣araì mano manāyatanaì manindriyà̀ viññāṇaì viññānakkhandho...]

- By the time it gets to the viññanna stage, it is a contaminated citta. As we will discuss below, how contaminated it gets, depends on the thought object and one's gati.
- What we experience is that last stage.

6. Before we proceed with the discussion, let me provide a reference to the above verse, which is in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Paticcasamuppāda Vibhangga," in Section WebLink: suttacentral: 2.5.1. Akusalacitta
: "Tattha katamaì sañkhāra paccayā viñn̄ānaì? Yaì cittaì mano mānasaì hadayà் paṇ̣̂araìn mano manāyatanai் manindriyai் viññānaì viñāānakkhandho tajjāmanoviññānadhātu-idaì vuccati "sañkhārapaccayā viñn̄ānam̀."

- Note that "sañkhāra paccayā viñ̃̃ānaí" happens in different ways depending on whether it is a "good thought" or "bad thought."


## The "Nine Stages of Evolution" Can Only be Seen by a Buddha

7. That fast process can be seen only by a Buddha. It is perceptible discernible (gocara) only to the highest purified mind.

- The Buddha explained that first to Ven. Sāriputta, when he first explained the key ideas of Abhidhamma to Ven. Sāriputta and it took several hundred years of effort by "the bhikkhus of the Sāriputta lineage" to do a systematic compilation of all mental phenomena.
- That is why the Abhidhamma Piṭaka was finalized only at the third Sangāyanā (Buddhist Council.) See "Abhidhamma - Introduction."

8. It is best to describe the actual process to understand these steps. Let us go back to the evolution of a single citta in nine steps.

- It starts with the citta stage, the purest stage (it has only the seven universal cetasika or mental factors). One is aware that one is alive.
- These deeper aspects are discussed in "Pabhassara Citta, Radiant Mind, and Bhavangga."

9. Now that we have stated that technical point (which is not critical for this discussion), we can proceed to the next stages.

- At the first stage of citta, the mind just knows that the world exists. That there is a sense impression coming through either of the five physical senses (cakkhu, sota, jivhā, ghāna, or kāya indriya) or the māna indriya.


## The Nine Stages of Evolution

10. Let us take a specific event: Suppose it is seeing a woman.

As we said above, at the first citta stage, one is only aware that a thought object came to the mind via the eyes (cakkhu indirya).

- Then in the mano stage, the mind "measures" or "compares" (that is why it is called the "mano" stage) with past experiences to decide whether the object is a tree, a car, a man, a woman, etc. In this case it determines that it is a woman.
- The next "mānasaì" stage is to decide a specific connection to him/herself. In this case, it turns out that it is a woman.

11. Now, those steps occur for any human, including an Arahant or even the Buddha. One cannot live without getting to this stage. The Buddha was able to differentiate between Ven. Ānanda, Ven. Sāriputta, Visaka, or King Kosala, and addressed them accordingly.

- In fact, in the Karaniyamatta Sutta, "mānasambhāva ye aparimānaì.." means to cultivate "mānasaì" to the optimum level. That way, one can quickly figure out how to deal with a given situation.

12. At the next step, an average human will generate the "sañ̃̃̄ about the person seen" and may make a definite identification of that woman and generate some affection. See "Sañ̃ña - What It Really Means." That is called the "hadayam" stage. Remember that all nine steps happen in a short time and do not involve conscious thinking.

- For example, it might reach the "hadayam"" stage if it was a distant relative.

13. Proceeding to the next stage of "pandaramं," that feeling established at the "hadayam" stage strengthens in the case of a close person like one's mother. It is like allocating more "energy" to a closer person.

- It is also important to note that it may go the totally opposite way for an arch-enemy. Here, one will have strong bad feelings about such a person.

14. Now comes the next stage of "mano manāyatanam." Here one's mind becomes an "āyatana" or "be receptive" (or hatefil) to that person depending on the level of attachment (revulsion) formed at the hadayami and paṇdaraín stages.

- That is strengthened (to a level based on the feelings generated in the previous steps) at the "mana indriyam" stage.
- Note that this "mana indriyam" stage is different from the mana indriya involved in "manañca paṭicca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviññānaim."

15. At the viññ̄āna stage, one's mind is removed from "ñāna" or wisdom or "the reality of nature." As long as one has worldly desires (i.e., cravings), one has not stopped the viññāna stage (i.e., until one becomes an Arahant).

- Then at the last stage of viñ̃̃̄̄nakkhandha, the mind strengthens attachments cultivated in the past, evaluates the current situation, and makes new hopes and plans for the future. That is the last stage.
- That last stage is what we experience. We do not experience one such "citta" or "viñ̃nāṇa." Thousands of citta vith $h$ may flow within a fraction of second before we become aware of it.

16. However, in the case of an Arahant, the process stops at the mānasain stage and thus does not evolve further. The mind makes decisions based on recognizing a person, regardless of the connection between oneself and that person.

- Even under the threat of being killed, feelings towards that person will be no different from feelings towards one's mother. That is why I say that we cannot even imagine the mind of an Arahant.


## The Initial Citta Stage is a Pabhassara Citta

17. Anguttara Nikāya 1; Accharāsañghātavagga; Sutta \#51 is a very short sutta. Here is the complete sutta: "Pabhassaramidaì, bhikkhave, cittaì. Tañca kho āgantukehi upakkilesehi upakkilitṭhain. Taì assutavā puthujjano yathābhūtaì nappajānāti. Tasmā 'assutavato puthujjanassa cittabhāvanā natthī'ti vadāmī"ti.
Translated: "Bhikkhus, a (pure) citta has pabhassara nature. That citta is contaminated by defilements (keles or kielesa). A normal human who has not heard my Dhamma (assutavā puthujjano) is unaware of this true nature. I do not recommend citta bhāvanā to them."

- This sutta clearly states the importance of knowing that a pure citta becomes contaminated to the level of viññāna.

18. Once we have those basics, we can now build on that and try to make the picture clearer.

- For example, when seeing an attractive object, the mind may become greedy by incorporating lobha, issa, etc. (asobhana cetasika) that bends the mind immorally.
- Upon seeing a helpless person, one may generate compassionate thoughts by incorporating metta, karuna, etc. (some sobhana cetasika).


## Contamination of a Thought Depends on Gati and ATrammana

19. Therefore, we can now see why two factors play important roles in how the thought process would evolve. One is one's gati, and the other is how strong the thought object (ärammana) is.

- Someone with "lobha gati" can be easily influenced by a slightly attractive object or ārammaña. On the other hand, someone with less 'lobha gati' may not be perturbed by it. Possible situations are endless, depending on the sense -object and one's gati. That is a good vipassana $\bar{a}$ subject to contemplate.


## Sañkhāra Paccayā Viññāna

20. Another important thing is that when one repeatedly thinks about a given sense object, then one's viññāna (expectations) for that objects will be cultivated. That, in turn will cultivate one's gati in that direction, thus becoming a self-feeding cyclic process. A good example is an innocent teenager who gets addicted to alcohol or drugs.

- If we thought a bit more about the above case, we could see the involvement of "sañkhāra paccayā viññāna." When one starts thinking consciously (generating vacī sañkhāra) about drinking and then also do it frequently (kāya sañkhāra), then one's "drinking viññāna" will grow in strength.
- That is why we must be carefil about letting our thoughts "go wild" or "daydreaming." See "Correct Meaning of Vacī Sañkhāra."
- One should think about one's bad habits or "bad viñ̃āạa" that keep popping up in mind regularly. By being mindfiul, we can suppress such thoughts (by thinking about their adverse consequences or ādīnava) and reduce such bad gati. Similarly, one can strengthen one's "good gati" by engaging more in similar activities.
- That is the basis of $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p \bar{a} n a$ and Satipatt $h \bar{a} n a$.


### 4.4 Living Dhamma - Fundamentals

October 27, 2016

- What Are Kilesa (Mental Impurities)? - Connection to Cetasika
- Suffering in This Life - Role of Mental Impurities (with Desanā 2)
- Satipatthāna Sutta - Relevance to Suffering in This Life (with Desanā 3)
- How Are Gati and Kilesa Incorporated into Thoughts? (with Desanā 4; in two parts)
- Noble Eightfold Path - Role of Sobhana Cetasika
- Getting to Samādhi (with Desanā 5)
- Sexual Orientation - Effects of Kamma and Gati (Sañkhāra)


## 4.4 .1 <br> What Are Kilesa (Mental Impurities)? - Connection to Cetasika

August 26, 2016; revised June 7, 2020; February 18, 2021; August 24, 2022; re-written August 26, 2022; re-written August 27, 2022

We discuss kilesa (defilements) in terms of impure mental factors (asobhana cetasika.)

## Kilesā̈ Make a Mind Corrupt

 impure") are related to gati and $\bar{a} s a v a$ (in both Pāli and Sinhala.) They are the main reasons we do things (sañkhāra) to perpetuate the sansäric journey. The closest English translation for kilesa is "impurities accumulated in mind."

- Kilesā gives rise to immoral thoughts or akusala citta via asobhana cetasika, as discussed below. Asobhana cetasika is listed in "Cetasika (Mental Factors)."
- Sobhana or asobhana cetasika (moral or immoral mental factors) are what makes a given citta a moral (kusala) or corrupt (akusala); for details, see "Citta and Cetasika."
- As you can guess, sobhana and asobhana mean "beautiful" and "non-beautiful," respectively.


## Kilesā Are Related to "San"

2. There are several posts on related critical concepts of san, sañkhāra, saimsāra, etc. See, "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Samisāra)."

- Also, repeated bad habits cultivate gati and anusaya (hidden cravings/defilements.) All these are related to kilesa and lead to a set of unique kilesa for each living being. Of course, they keep changing.
- When one removes all these mental impurities or kilesa (or keles), one attains kilesa parinibbāna or saupadisesa Nibbāna. That person is still "in this world of 31 realms." That is the state of a living Arahant; they have removed all mental impurities from the mind.
- When that Arahant dies, there is no rebirth, and Nibbāna is "complete." That is Parinibbāna or anupadisesa Nibbāna.


## Kilesā And Upakkilesā

3. Kilesa are of different types:

- Lobha (excess greed), dosa (ill will), and moha (delusion) are, of course, the primary mental impurities or kilesa.
- The others arise because of the primary three and are called upakkilesa ("upa" means "close to"). There are several Upakkilesa Suttas describing them variously. "WebLink: suttacentral: Upakkilesa Sutta (AN 5.23)" provides an analogy. Just as gold becomes dull and hard to work if other metals are mixed in, pañcan̄̄varaṇain makes a citta dull.
- "WebLink: suttacentral: Upakkilesa Sutta (MN 128)" has a more detailed description. I have linked it to the start of that discussion.


## Cetasika Analysis in Abhidhamma

4. Abhidhamma provides a more detailed description of kilesa and upakkilesa in terms of cetasika.

- Kilesā and upakkilesā are all asobhana cetasika. The three main asobhana cetasika (lobha, dosa, moha) are kilesa. The rest are upakkilesa. That observation will help us better identify kilesa and upakkilesa.
- The other 11 asobhana cetasika belonging to upakkilesa are the following: Ditṭhi (wrong views), vicikicchā (inability to sort out moral from immoral), thīna (dullness of mind), middha (trapping of the mind somewhere and losing focus), issa (jealousy), macchariya (tendency to hide wealth), kukkucca (do lowly acts), ahirika (shamelessness in doing immoral), anatoppa (fearlessness in doing immoral), uddhacca (tendency to become offended), and māna (self-importance).


## Kilesā And Upakilesā Are Asobhana Cetasika

5. Identifying kilesa as asobhana cetasika makes it easier to see how kilesa (mental impurities) are systematically reduced and removed at each stage of Nibbāna.

- The Abhidhamma Piṭaka of the Tipiṭaka was finalized after the Parinibbāna of the Buddha. So, in the Sutta Piṭaka, mostly the term kilesa was used.
- The Buddha briefly described Abhidhamma to Ven. Sāriputta. It took several generations of Bhikkhus of the "Sāriputta lineage" to fully assemble the Abhidhamma structure. It was finalized only at the third Buddhist Council; see "Abhidhamma - Introduction."
- Some say that the citta/cetasika analysis was "invented" by bhikkhus when compiling Abhidhamma after the Parinibbāna of the Buddha. But they are sadly uninformed. Various types of cetasika that can arise in cittas are discussed in suttas. See, for example, "Kāya Sutta (AN 10.23)" and "Mahācunda Sutta (AN 10.24)."


## Removal (Non-appearance) of Asobhana Cetasika with Magga Phala

6. There are four universal asobhana cetasika that are in ALL akusala citta. They are moha (delusion), uddhacca (restlessness), ahirika (shameless of wrongdoings), and anottappa (fearlessness of misdeeds). See "Cetasika (Mental Factors)." It is easy to see that these four asobhana cetasikā or mental impurities are completely removed only at the Arahant stage. However, all akusala cetasik $\bar{a}$ reduce in strength at each stage of magga phala.

- The following asobhana cetasika stop arising after the Sotāpanna stage: ditṭhi, vicikicchā, thīna, middha, issā, macchariya, kukkucca. Furthermore, lobha, dosa, and moha reduce the strength to become rāga, paṭigha, and avijjā.
- The above clarification could help one decide whether one has attained the Sotāpanna stage. (See the meanings of those Pāli terms in \#4 above): for example, one should have lost jealousy, a tendency to hide wealth from others, etc.). This means that one has realized the worthlessness of material things to a significant extent; that comes with comprehending the anicca nature to some extent.
- At the Sakadāgāmi stage, kāma rāga (which is a part of rāga) and patigha reduce in strength (they still keep the same names). At the Anāgāmi stage, both kāma rāga and patigha stop arising.
- The remaining asobhana cetasika (avijja, ahirika, anatoppa, uddhacca, mana) stop arising at the Arahant stage.


## Many Mental Impurities Removed at Sotāpanna Stage

7. Thus, we can see that many "mental impurities" or kilesa or asobhana cetasika stop arising after the Sotāpanna stage. Still, a Sotāpanna abstains entirely from only one akusala kamma, as discussed in "What is the only Akusala Removed by a Sotāpanna?."

- The Buddha said that the kilesa leftover for a Sotāpanna is equivalent to a thumb-full of sand compared to sand on Earth for an average human. Now we can see why. Many asobhana cetasika stop arising, and all others are reduced in strength at the Sotāpanna stage.
- Note that akusala kamma (immoral deeds) are different from akusala citta (immoral thoughts). There are ten akusala kamma and 12 akusala citta. See "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)" and "Akusala Citta and Akusala Vipāka Citta." The mind is a very complex entity, and all these parameters are needed to describe what happens in mind. But they are all inter-consistent. With time, one can grasp various aspects of the mind with these parameters.
- All different types of defilements removed or reduced at each stage of Nibbāna are listed in "Conditions for the Four Stages of Nibbāna." That table provides a complete summary in one place.


## Kilesa in Twelve Types of Akusala Citta

8. Let us discuss some practical things when figuring out how different types of cetasika influence our thoughts (citta.)

- As shown from \#6, moha (or its reduced form avijjā) is in all akusala citta. There are only 12 types of akusala citta, and 8 of them have lobha (or its reduced forms of kāma rāga, rūpa rāga, or arūpa $r a \bar{g} a$ ). When one is attracted to a sensory object, one of these eight akusala citta arises.
- Lobha and dosa do not arise together. There are only two akusala citta with the dosa cetasika. When repulsed by a sensory object, one of these two akusala cittā arise.
- The other two akusala citta do not have either lobha or dosa, but only the moha as a root. These two cittā arise not due to greed or hate but purely due to moha (or avijjā, its reduced form).
- More details can be found in the post, "Akusala Citta and Akusala Vipāka Citta."


## Kilesā, Asobhana Cetasika, and Immoral Gati

9. Each person's kilesā are thus a combination of the 14 asobhana cetasika but keep changing/evolving. The goal is to stop them from arising. In practice, this happens by changing one's gati (habits) and anusaya (hidden cravings); see "9. Key to Ānāpānasati - How to Change Habits and Character (Gati)."

- Until the Sotāpanna stage, any of the asobhana cetasika can arise in a person. They may temporarily be subdued or lessened in strength but never removed.
- Therefore, these kilesā (or asobhana cetasika) do not always appear; they can stay hidden as anusaya. They can come to the surface when triggered by an external stimulus (like seeing an attractive person or an enemy). This "bubbling up to the surface" is called āsava. See, "Āsava, Anusaya, and Gati (Gathi)."
- When in a comprehensive anāriya meditation program (like a meditation retreat), these kilesā (or asobhana cetasika) do not get a chance to come to the surface; they stay hidden as anusaya. The environment at a retreat is such that "temptations" would be minimal. Thus one could be enjoying nirāmisa sukha at such a retreat.
- However, when one returns from the retreat, one is exposed to various sensory inputs. That WILL reawaken the same old akusala citta burdened with asobhana cetasika.


## Once Removed at a Magga Phala, Kilesa Cannot Return

10. However, when one removes a part of kilesa (asobhana cetasika) at each stage of magga phala, they are PERMANENTLY removed or reduced per \#6 above. No external stimulus can trigger asobhana cetasik $\bar{a}$ that have been permanently removed.

- That is the difference between the temporary relief many have experienced at meditation retreats and the permanent relief upon becoming a Sotāpanna, i.e., between the anāriya and Ariya Paths.
- See "Akusala Citta - How a Sotāpanna Avoids Apāyagāmi Citta."


## An Analogy

11. Since all these Pāli words could confuse you at the first read, let us use an analogy to clarify what kiles $\bar{a}$ (asobhana cetasik $\bar{a}$ ) do to our thoughts. Here we compare citta (or thoughts) to a glass of pure water. Most of our thoughts are like clear water. They are not immoral or moral, just neutral. We see, hear, etc., millions of things daily but generate moral or immoral thoughts in relatively few cases.

- In this analogy, immoral thoughts are like dirty water. Just like added dirt makes the water cloudy, asobhana cetasik $\bar{a}$ contaminate a citta. But how do these asobhana cetasik $\bar{a}$ get incorporated into a citta?
- Since a citta arises in a billionth of a second, there is no way to control what kinds of cetasik $\bar{a}$ get into a citta. It happens automatically, according to our gati/anusaya!


## Anusaya Can Be Compared to Mud at the Bottom of the Glass

12. Even though a glass of water has dirt, most of it settles at the bottom. Thus, the water appears relatively clean. Our minds are like that too. Most of the dirt (mental impurities, kilesa, or asobhana cetasika) remain hidden most of the time. They stay as anusaya; see "Āsava, Anusaya, and Gati (Gathi)." Thus anusaya can be thought of as "the dirt accumulated" at the bottom of the water glass.

- However, if stirred with a straw, the dirt will make the water dirty.
- In the mind's case, the stirrer is a desired (attractive) or an undesired (repulsive) sense event. Mainly the asobhana cetasika of greed and hate come to the surface (always accompanied by the four universal cetasika mentioned in \#4, but could be accompanied by a few more of the other 11 asobhana cetasika, depending on the situation.
- The other two related parameters of gati and anusaya contribute to setting up the exact asobhana cetasika that will arise for a given sensory input. For example, an alcoholic only has to see a whiskey bottle to get the urge for a drink. Only a person with ingrained habits (gati) of a thief will steal on impulse, i.e., anusaya will be triggered automatically.


## Connection to Pañcañ̄varaṇa

13. Another related point is that glass with dirt ALWAYS has some of it mixed in with water, even though most of the "heavy stuff" goes to the bottom. We can compare that "ever-present" muddy color to the pañca nīvarana (five hindrances), which makes our minds "covered" almost at all times.

- Just like the dirty water prevents us from seeing what is in the water, a mind covered with pañca n̄̀varaña cannot "see-through."
- These "ever-present" pañca nīvaraṇa are responsible for the "sense of agitation" or "sense of unfulfillment" that is there with us most of the time.
- When engaged in a meditation program, the mind can become relatively pure for a considerable time. That is called vikkhambhana pahāna (or pahāna.) That is in contrast to tadañga pahāna (suppressing only for a short time) and uccheda pahāna (permanent removal). See "Suffering in This Life - Role of Mental Impurities."
- By the way, while listening to a discourse or reading a Dhamma post, one could get into tadañga pahāna. Then the content may become easily understood, and one could momentarily feel the nirāmisa sukha too. That is why one should read these posts when the mind is relatively calm. That makes conditions for tadañga pahāna optimum and even extends to vikkhambhana pahāna, i.e., for a day or longer.


## Nirāmisa Sukha Appears With Removal/Suppression of Kilesa

14. Now we can see how nirāmisa sukha comes during meditation sessions per the question raised in a previous post, i.e., "Nirāmisa sukha is felt by which citta?".

- Nirāmisa sukha appears when the asobhana cetasika (or kilesa) and pañca nīvaraña are SUPPRESSED.
- The post "Noble Eightfold Path - Role of Sobhana Cetasika" addresses how a Sotāpanna's mind automatically blocks certain types of asobhana cetasika.


## Why Is It Necessary to Use Pāli Words?

15. I hope everyone will understand my reasons for emphasizing Pāli words. In many cases, it is difficult or even impossible to find a single English word to convey the meaning of a Pāli word (e.g., anicca); these are powerful words that pack a lot of content. Here, there is no equivalent word in English for kilesa.

- It is best to use Pāli words (and some Sinhala words like "niveema" or "suva"), but with an understanding of what they mean. See "Why is it Necessary to Learn Key Pāli Words?." So, don't be discouraged by these Pāli terms; keep reading to the end, and you will see it start making sense. You can "fill in the gaps" by reading relevant posts afterward.


### 4.4.2 Suffering in This Life - Role of Mental Impurities

## September 2, 2016

1. In the post, "Starting on the Path Even without Belief in Rebirth" in this series ("Living Dhamma"), we introduced two types of hidden suffering revealed to the world by the Buddha, and discussed the first type of suffering that we experience in this life.

- Here we continue that discussion, and figure out ways to relieve that suffering.

2. In the previous post, "What Are Kilesa (Mental Impurities)? - Connection to Cetasika," we discussed how asobhana cetasika represent the mental impurities or kilesas.

- In this and a few more desanās, we will discuss that highly condensed post, in order to simplify and clarify the main ideas relevant to practice.

3. Here is the desana $\bar{a}$ (You may need to adjust volume control on your computer):

WebLink: Audio Desana: Episode 2 - Suffering in This Life - Role of Mental Impurities
WebLink: Audio Desana: Episode 2 - Suffering in This Life - Role of Mental Impurities (Original Larger file size)

## Relevant posts mentioned in the desanā:

## 2. The Basics in Meditation

Cetasika (Mental Factors)
Citta and Cetasika
Next in the series, "Satipatthāna Sutta - Relevance to Suffering in This Life."

### 4.4.3 Satipaṭ̣̣āna Sutta - Relevance to Suffering in This Life

## September 10, 2016

1. This is the sixth post in this series. It is important to follow the series from the beginning. All posts are at: "Living Dhamma."

- Here I want show that what we have been discussing in this section is exactly what is recommended in the beginning of the Mahā Satipatṭhāna Sutta.
- Here we will discuss the key verse, "ātāpī sampajāno, satimā vineyya loke abhijjhā domanassam" that appears in the sutta numerous times. It is also the basis of the Ānāpāanasati bhāvanā.

2. Many people believe that the Sutta is basically a kammattana that one recites or "meditate on." But it is much more than a kammattana. I will provide more evidence in future posts, but here is the audio on the basics of the Mahā Satipatṭhāna Sutta (you may need to control the volume in your computer):

WebLink: Audio Desana: Episode 3 - Satipatthāna Sutta - Relevance to Suffering in This Life
WebLink: Audio Desana: Episode 3 - Satipatthāna Sutta - Relevance to Suffering in This Life (Original Larger file size)

## 3. Links relevant to the desan $\bar{a}$ :

## Satipatthāna Sutta - Structure

What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Samisāra)
More posts on "san": San

1. Introduction to Buddhist Meditation

Kamma, Debt, and Meditation
Prerequisites for the Satipatthāna Bhāvanā

Next post in the series, "How Are Gati and Kilesa Incorporated into Thoughts?."

### 4.4.4 How Are Gati and Kilesa Incorporated into Thoughts?

September 22, 2016
In this post, we will discuss why mano sañkhāra are different from kaya and vacī sañkhāra. Understanding this will help one to realize how our gathi can AUTOMATICALLY give rise to immoral thoughts.

- It will also help one understand how such initial immoral thoughts can be overcome by purposefully generating moral thoughts. This is actually the basis of the Satipatṭhāna and Ānāpānasati bhāvanā.
- Furthermore, we will discuss the issue of where our gathi, kilesa, or cetasika are "stored."

This is the seventh post in this section: "Living Dhamma." To get full benefits, one should start from the first post. I am using a combination of text and audio files to convey a lot of information in this section.

Here are the audio files :
WebLink: Audio Desanā: Episode 4 - How Are Gati and Kilesa Incorporated into Thoughts?
WebLink: Audio Desanā: Episode 4 - How Are Gati and Kilesa Incorporated into Thoughts? (Original Larger file size)

October 22, 2017: I just listened to the above audio after one year. They are good and provide solid basis for understanding gati and how they can be changed by controlling vacī and kāya sañkhāra that we have control over.

- It is important to realize that many citta vīthi flow in a second. But each subsequent citta vīthi is influenced by the previous one. So, they can take one on a downward path very quickly unless we intervene by being mindful.
- It is very important to realize that: mano sañkhāra are generated AUTOMATICALLY based on our gati. Vacī sañkhāra are generated when we "talk to ourselves, without getting the words out." Both such "internal speech" and actual speech are associated with vacī sañkhāra; bodily actions are kāya sañkhāra.
- July 26, 2019: Reader Siebe just pointed out that at 14.30 mins I had defined speech as 'kāya sañkhāra. That is not correct, as explained in more detail in "Correct Meaning of Vacī sañkhāra."
- We become CONSCIOUS about both vacī and kāya sañkhāra quickly and thus have control over them; see, "Correct Meaning of Vacī sañkhāra."


## Posts mentioned in the desana $\bar{a}$

1. Suicide statistics: WebLink: Suicide and Depression

- I know that most readers of this site do not have suicidal tendencies. But the point is that we underestimate the severity of mental suffering compared to our physical suffering.

2. If one has a hard time comprehending the Tilakkhana, starting with anicca, one needs to first follow the mundane Eightfold Path, remove the first type of suffering, and experience the nirämisa sukha as explained in the previous posts in this section.

- This is also pointed out in the "Mahā Cattārīsaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty)" and "Buddha Dhamma - In a Chart."

3. More details on how our minds control our physical bodies are in the sections: "Citta and Cetasika" and "Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya)."

- In particular, the following post illustrates how we perceive our external world: "Citta and Cetasika How Viññ̄āna (Consciousness) Arises."
- Citta Vīthi are discussed in "Citta Vithi - Processing of Sense Inputs."

4. How thoughts can affect other people: "Transfer of Merits (Pattidana) - How Does it Happen?."
5. The brain architecture of humans and animals: "Truine Brain: How the Mind Rewires the Brain via Meditation/Habits."
6. The post mentioned in the discussion on the question "Where are these gati or kilesa or cetasika are maintained or stored?": "Our Two Worlds: Material and Immaterial."
Next in the series, "Noble Eightfold Path - Role of Sobhana Cetasika."

### 4.4.5 Noble Eightfold Path - Role of Sobhana Cetasika

September 30, 2016; revised December 5, 2017 (\#5); July 11, 2021; August 26, 2022

1. In previous posts in this section, we have discussed how nirämisa sukha or "peace of mind" arises due to both removal of asobhana cetasika (non-beautiful mental factors) or kilesa AND the cultivation of sobhana cetasika (beautiful mental factors).

- In this post, I will point out that 7 of the 8 factors in the Noble Eightfold Path are in the set of sobhana cetasika.

2. The most important fact that one needs to comprehend from the posts in this series up to this point, is that our minds are heated/agitated by the presence of asobhana cetasika or kilesa or defilements.

- On the other hand, our minds are soothed and comforted, and made joyful by the presence of sobhana cetasika.
- One may not realize this until one comprehends this fact and practices cultivating sobhana cetasika while suppressing/removing asobhana cetasika.

3. As explained elsewhere at the site, Abhidhamma, with its methodical analysis of citta and cetasika, was not finalized for a few hundred years after the Parinibbāna of the Buddha at the Third Buddhist Council. This enlarged Canon completed at the Third Council was committed to writing in Sri Lanka in the first century BCE ( 29 BCE) at the Aluvihara Monastery at the Fourth Buddhist Council. This was the last Buddhist Council attended by Arahants.

- Soon after that, the decline of the pure Dhamma of the Buddha started its decline with the simultaneous rise of the Mahāyāna; see the section "Historical Background."
- When Buddhaghosa wrote the Visuddhimagga, presumed to be a summary of the Tipitaka, even Theravadins stopped using the Tipitaka for convenience.
- Therefore, no one seemed to have realized some important possible usages of cetasika: First, kilesa are the same as asobhana cetasika. Second, components of the Noble Eightfold Path are in the set of sobhana cetasika. This makes it easier to comprehend how one could systematically follow the Path, which is the post's focus.
- I will discuss the details in the upcoming desanās, but here I would like to provide a summary that we can use for that discussion. Another summary post that will be used in these desanās is a summary given in one of the previous posts: "What Are Kilesa (Mental Impurities)? - Connection to Cetasika."

4. Let us start by continuing from the last desana $\bar{a}$, where we discussed how INITIAL thoughts in response to a sensory event arise without us even being conscious about it. These initial thoughts arise AUTOMATICALLY due to our gati or set of sobhana/asobhana cetasika. Any akusala thoughts arise due to our kilesa, which are the same as asobhana cetasika.

- However, because our speech and bodily actions are much slower than the rising of those initial thoughts, we can keep vigilant and reverse any reactive akusala thoughts that are AUTOMATICALLY generated.
- This is the basis of both Satipațthāna and Ānāpānasati Bhāvanā. Please listen to that previous desanā on "How Are Gati and Kilesa Incorporated into Thoughts?" and fully comprehend this important concept. Here is the link to that desanā in two parts (there is volume control on the right, but for the second desan $\bar{a}$, you may need to turn up the volume on your computer):
WebLink: Audio Desanā: Episode 4 - How Are Gati and Kilesa Incorporated into Thoughts?
WebLink: Audio Desanā: Episode 4 - How Are Gati and Kilesa Incorporated into Thoughts? (Original Larger file size)
- We also discussed the evidence for such gati to be associated with any given person and addressed the question of where they are "stored."

5. We also saw in the above desanās that those initial thoughts that arise in response to a sense event are called mano sañkhāra. Therefore, we do not have conscious control over mano sañkhāra, AND they arise within a fraction of a second DUE TO our gati (set of sobhana/asobhana cetasika).

- December 5, 2017: Such akusala mano sañkhāra CAN then lead to the generation of vacī sañkhāra (silent speech in our heads and speech) and kāya sañkhāra (bodily actions). This differs from the desanā, and I have discussed the reasons for this revision in "Correct Meaning of Vacī Sañkhāra."
- But, if we are mindful (sati), we can catch any such akusala mano sañkhāra and make sure they do not lead to akusala vacī and kāya sañkhāra.
- In the Eightfold Path, such deliberately generated vacī sañkhāra are called sammā sañkappa or sammā sankalpa.
- And those sammā sañkappa were generated because one acted with sammā sati.

6. In the above desanās, we discussed an example of a person X finding a lost ring. If X had strong greedy gati, The initial thoughts (mano sañkhāra) could be to keep the ring for himself. However, if X knows about being mindful, X has time to evaluate the situation with vacī sañkhāra (in his head) and conclude that keeping the ring for himself is immoral.

- If he made that correct decision, even after thinking about it, he could prevent an akusala kamma of stealing. Not only that, he can do a kusala kamma by ensuring that the ring is returned to the rightful owner.
- So, now we can see the critical roles of sammā sati and sammā sañkappa in the Eightfold Path. We have the opportunity (unlike animals) to rationally think about our initial REACTIVE decisions and to reverse them if they are immoral.

7. If X acted with samma sati and realized the problem with the initial reaction and made the right decision with samma sañkappa, then he can take the next steps to samm $\bar{a} v \bar{a} c \bar{a} \bar{a}$ (moral speech) and samm $\bar{a}$ kammanta (moral actions) to implement that decision. He can walk over to the counter, hand over the ring, and tell the office personnel to return the ring to the owner.

- This is just one possible example. We come across many such instances during the day. In another example, one may get annoyed by someone accidentally stepping on one's foot in a crowded place and start yelling at that person without thinking about the consequences. That person did not intentionally do that, especially since it was likely to be a stranger.
- Even if one started getting the words out, one could quickly stop and smile at the person indicating that it is no big deal. That would make that person be relieved because, most likely, he/she felt bad about it.
- This simple act of kindness would lead to a "cooling down" on both sides. The other person will feel relief and will thank for the kindness. Furthermore, it could have escalated into a shouting match and led to "heated minds" on both sides.

8. When one sees the benefits of such mindful behavior, one will start doing more. One will start living a moral life. This is sammā $\bar{a} j \bar{i} v a$ or moral livelihood.

- Not only that, one will make an extra effort to be mindful and catch any reactive thoughts that could lead to such akusala kamma. This is sammā vāyāma or moral effort.
- In a few weeks or months, this will start changing one's ingrained gati. When one stops using asobhana cetasika, their power will diminish with time. At the same time, one is cultivating sobhana cetasik $\bar{a}$ (i.e., sammā sati, sammā sañkappa, sammā vācā, sammā kammanta, sammā ajjīva, sammā vāyāma). Thus bad gati will diminish, and good gati will grow.

9. Now, X was able to think rationally about the bad consequences of his initial decision (mano sañkhāra) to keep the ring because he had samma ditthi or moral vision, to some extent. Deep down, he knew that such an act of stealing was immoral and was able to fight off the tendency to keep it.

- Sammā dittthi is related to the sobhana cetasika of pañña, which is loosely translated as "wisdom." This "wisdom" cannot be cultivated by reading books, even by reading Dhamma. The pañ̃̄ā cetasika is cultivated by learning Dhamma and living it (i.e., by following the Eightfold Path), thereby getting rid of moha.

10. Now, let us examine the connection between the other factors in the Eightfold Path (here, the mundane version) and some of the sobhana cetasika.

- First, three factors in the Eightfold Path have the same names in the list of sobhana cetasika: samm $\bar{a}$ vācā, sammā kammanta, sammā ājīva; see "Cetasika (Mental Factors)."

11. Sammā sañkappa are the vacī sañkhāra that we deliberately generate even if we have akusala mano sañkhāra arising due to sense inputs. Vacī sañkhāra are described in the suttā as vitakka (pronounced "vithakka")and vicāra (pronounced "vichaara"). Vitakka is turning the mind towards a thought object, and vicāra is keeping the mind around that thought object.

- Those who are familiar with jhānā know that vitakka and vicāra are two jhāna factors in anāriya $j h a ̄ n \bar{a}$. In the first anāriya jhāna, one can, for example, turn the mind into a kasiña object (vitakka) and keep it there (vicāra). In Ariya jhānā, they are called savitakka and savicāra because one is focused on Nibbāna.
- So, you can see that maintaining sammā sañkappa is the same as generating "moral" vitakka and vicāra or kusala vacī sañkhāra. Remember that these are generated in the head, not speaking out. They are called "sankalpana" in Sinhala.
- Also, we note that vitakka and vicāra could be used in immoral paths. A master thief planning a robbery will focus on that task and spend many hours thinking about the plan. So, those two cetasika fall under the category called particulars or pakiṇnaka; they can appear in kusala or akusala thoughts as needed.

12. Now, sammā vāyāma arises from another of these particulars, or pakinṇaka cetasika, the viriya cetasika.

- When one is making an effort to live a moral life, that sammā vāyāma. If one is making an effort towards an immoral life, like that master thief, he is making micchā vāyāma.
- Of course the sati cetasika, which is a sobhana cetasika, is sammā sati.

13. Now, we are left with sammā samādhi. This is the only factor that is not related to a cetasika directly. Most people have the idea that samādhi is jhāna or at least is attained only in formal meditation. But it is much deeper. In the next desan $\bar{a}$, I will discuss samādhi and the implications of what is summarized in this post.

- We are trying to comprehend and reinforce the FOUNDATION of Buddha Dhamma: How one can remove the "thaapa" or "heat" from the mind by getting rid of asobhana cetasika (kilesa) and SIMULTANEOUSLY "cool down" the mind and bring joy to it, by cultivating sobhana cetasika.

This was discussed in the first desana $\bar{a}$ in this series:
"The Hidden Suffering that We All Can Understand"

## WebLink: Audio Desanā: Episode 1 - The Hidden Suffering That We All Can Understand

WebLink: Audio Desanā: Episode 1 - The Hidden Suffering That We All Can Understand (Original Larger file size)

- More details were given in the following two desanās:
"Suffering in This Life - Role of Mental Impurities"
WebLink: Audio Desanā: Episode 2 - Suffering in This Life - Role of Mental Impurities

WebLink: Audio Desanā: Episode 2 - Suffering in This Life - Role of Mental Impurities (Original Larger file size)
"Satipattana Sutta - Relevance to Suffering in This Life"
WebLink: Audio Desanā: Episode 3 - Satipatthāna Sutta - Relevance to Suffering in This Life
WebLink: Audio Desanā: Episode 3 - Satipatthāna Sutta - Relevance to Suffering in This Life (Original Larger file size)
14. As discussed in the above desanās, akusala thoughts that arise with asobhana cetasika cloud our minds and keep us in the dark. Moha is darkness; it leads to lobha and dosa. That darkness can be temporarily lifted (tadañga pahāna) during listening or reading Dhamma.

- The next step is to keep that "light on" for days and weeks by being mindful and stopping akusala thoughts that lead to akusala kamma for an extended time. This is vikkhambhana pahāna, which is what we are trying to achieve now. It is done by being mindful, i.e., with samm $\bar{a}$ sati.
- The ultimate goal is to permanently remove such asobhana cetasika and to make that "cooling down" permanent (uccheda pahāna), even for future lives. We will get to that in future posts. But we need to establish a good foundation and experience the nirāmisa sukha for extended periods (vikkhambhana pahāna) first.

15. To get rid of darkness (moha), one has to bring light in. Light is pañña or "wisdom", a sobhana cetasika. The Noble Eightfold Path is designed to optimize the pañ̃̄ā cetasika - via sammā samādhi and to eliminate the moha cetasika.

- Other sobhana cetasika, like karuṇa and mudita (or mudutā) also help with this process.
- Ultimately, one will see how different pieces of the puzzle (including Paṭicca Samuppāda) all fit together to make an easy-to-see picture of the whole process. That will make it easier to grasp the Tilakkhaña and advance to the next stage.
- All of these can be shown to be consistent with the scheme of sīla, samādhi, and pañña. In the WebLink: suttacentral: Cetanā Karanīva Sutta (AN 11.2), the Buddha has detailed how sīla (moral conduct) leads to nirāmisa sukha, and nirāmisa sukha leads to samādhi, and samādhi, in turn, leads to pañn̄̄a. We will discuss all these in the upcoming desanās.
Next in the series, "Getting to Samādhi."


### 4.4.6 Getting to Samadhi

## October 7, 2016

1. In the post "Noble Eightfold Path - Role of Sobhana Cetasika," it was discussed how 7 of the 8 factors in the Noble Eightfold Path are related to some of the sobhana cetasika or moral mental factors.
2. In the following desana $\bar{a}$, we discuss how the cultivation of those 7 factors lead to the 8th factor in the Noble Path, Sammā Samādhi, or at least the mundane version of it first (volume control will appear on right when you start playing):
"Getting to Samādhi"
WebLink: Audio Desana: Episode 5 - Getting to Samādhi
WebLink: Audio Desana: Episode 5-Getting to Samādhi (Original - Larger file size)

## Links mentioned in the desanā:

3. Before one can comprehend the Tilakkhana (anicca, dukkha, anatta), one needs to get to mundane Sammā Samādhi. There are two kinds of Sammā Samādhi and also a micchā samādhi:

- What is Samādhi? - Three Kinds of Mindfulness
- Three Kinds of Ditthi, Eightfold Paths, and Samādhi

4. The role of the brain in changing one's gathi:

- Brain - Interface between Mind and Body

5. Two types of suffering discussed in:

- Starting on the Path Even without Belief in Rebirth

6. Suppressing and eliminating the pancanivarana in stages:

- Suffering in This Life - Role of Mental Impurities

Next in the series, "Micchā Ditthi - Connection to Hethu Phala (Cause and Effect)", ...

### 4.4.7 Sexual Orientation - Effects of Kamma and Gati (Sañkhāra)

## January 14, 2017

This post will be helpful in not only clarifying Buddha's teachings on sexual orientation, but also that there can be many varieties of sañkhāra, viññāna, and corresponding bhava and jathi arising according to paṭicca samuppāda.

1. In this beginning-less rebirth process, it is likely that we all had switched between male or female many times, just as we are likely to have been born in most of the 31 realms in the past.

- It is said that the Bodhisattva - before becoming Buddha Gotama - was a female when the paramita process to become a Buddha was initiated.
- However, once the paramita process progressed, and the Bodhisattva became a male, it never switched back to female.
- Only a male can actually be a Buddha.

2. Whether one is male or female is predominantly determined by one's sañkhāra, and not due to a past kamma.

- But in some cases, kamma could be the direct cause. For example, if one intentionally severed or mutilated another's sexual organs, it is possible that one may be born without a sexual organ. Such a person is called a "napunsaka" in Sinhala (pandaka in Pāli), but I am not aware of a corresponding English word.
- An eunuch is a person who is castrated, so that also could be due to a kamma vipāka of a past kamma.

3. Male/female distinction is there only in the kāma loka. In the brahma realms (higher 20 realms), there is no such distinction. Brahmā do not have dense physical bodies or sexual organs.

- One is born in either the 16 rūpa loka realms or the 4 arūpa loka realms (brahma realms) because one has given up all desires for bodily pleasures, including sex, because one has seen the value of nirāmisa sukha (and jhānic pleasures) that can be achieved by giving up bodily pleasures.

4. One is born in kāma loka because one likes bodily pleasures, especially those associated with taste, smell, and sex. Of course, vision and sound that help satisfy those three bodily pleasures also come into play here.

- One is born in human or deva realms in the kāma loka because one has done meritorious deeds ( puñ̃̃a kamma). There are female devas, who have attained those births because of their puñña kamma just like male devas. One is born a female deva, because one has cultivated "iththi sañkhāra"; see \#5 below.
- One is born in the four apāya realms in the kāma loka because one has done immoral deeds (pāpa kamma). Here the corresponding sañkhāra are apuññabhi sañkhāra.

5. One is born male or female due to whether one cultivates "purisa sañkhāra" or "iththi sañkhāra" by thinking, speaking, and doing things accordingly. One does not do either puñña abhisañkhāra or apuñña abhisañkhāra here.

- Such sañkhāra (kaya, vacī, and mano) are not necessarily meritorious (puññabhi sañkhāra) or immoral (apuññabhi sañkhāra). Those are in line with pure habits based on "purisa gathi" and "iththi gathi."
- This can be compared to cultivating habits for playing a certain musical instrument. They are called "vāsana keles," keles that do not have good or bad kamma vipāka, but more like ingrained habits.

6. Purisa is the Pāli or Sinhala word for a male and the word comes from "piri" or "full." A male is likely to give more (especially to the wife) than to take from the wife. Iththi is the Pāli (and old Sinhala) word for female, and means "ithiri" or "left over space to be filled." For example, if a cup is full that is "piri"; if it is not full, it needs more to become full, it has "ithiri."

- So, a male is likely to willingly buy things for the wife, but does not care much about his appearance. Most wives expect gifts and sustenance.
- However, these "purisa gathi" and "iththi gathi" can have large variations. A male has more "purisa gathi" than "iththi gathi." But we do see "alpha males" with close to $100 \%$ "purisa gathi" as well as females with very high "iththi gathi."
- On the other hand, we also see females who like to act and dress more like males, and also males who like to act and dress more feminine. If they cultivate those gathi more, a sex change is possible in future lives (in rare cases even in this life).

7. In most families, if one examines the wardrobes of the husband and wife, one is likely to find many more items in the wife's wardrobe (in particular, the man may have a couple of pairs of shoes but the wife will have many!). Females wear much more jewellery too.

- Furthermore, a female is more concerned about the appearance of her (and her husband). A guy usually grabs something to wear, but a woman is likely to pay much more attention. I know by experience that I have been "instructed politely" to change into something better many times when going out.
- Thus females constantly think about theirs (and their spouses and children's) appearance. This is not necessarily due to greed, but mainly due to sansāric habits.

8. Therefore, as far as attaining Nibbāna, it does not matter whether one is a male, female, or somewhere in between (with mixed gathi).

- One is born in the deva realms due to good kamma vipāka, and there are male and female devas, just like in the human and animal realms. The type of sex is not determined by kamma vipāka.
- All brahma realms are "unisex." They do not have bhava dasaka, which determine the sex type. Brahmā do not have dense bodies to experience touch, taste of foods, or smells. They have very fine bodies with just the hadaya vatthu, kaya dasaka, cakkhu dasaka, and sota dasaka.
- Therefore, a brahma "body" has only a few suddhatthaka, and is much much smaller than an atom in modern science. So, it is clear why sense pleasures are absent in brahma loka.

9. It is important to realize that there are moral gathi due to puñ̃̄̄̄bhisañkhāra (puñña abhisañkhāra), immoral gathi due to apuñ̃̄̄̄bhisañkhāra (apuñña abhisañkhāra), and "kammically neutral" gathi due to sañkhāra that are not abhisañkhāra.

- While one is born in the human bhava, one would also have a "iththi bhava" (as a female) or "purisa bhava" (as a male).
- Not only that, one could be born in an "angry bhava" for a given period of time that would be triggered by a sense event such as seeing an enemy - if one has cultivated angry gathi by thinking, speaking, and acting with an angry mindset.
- One could be born in a "greedy bhava" the same way. If we start acting mindfully to think, speak, and act with less greed, those greedy gathi will reduce over time.
- The more one thinks, speaks, and acts in a "female way", one will be cultivating "female gathi"; but these are not moral or immoral sañkhāra as we discussed above.

10. In any of these cases, the more sañkhāra one makes, one builds up the corresponding viñ $\bar{n} a ̄ n a$ (sañkhāra paccayā viññāna) and so on until it gets to strengthening upādāna and thus strengthening bhava (upādāna paccayā bhava).

- Therefore, paticca samuppāda explains not only how bhava in the rebirth process, but also in bhava that last only for short periods of time, like getting into an "angry state of mind" or "angry bhava."

11. Another possibility that may come into play in a transgender person (a person whose sex is changed during the lifetime) can be understood of one understands the role of the gandhabba (mental body) that dictates the functioning of the physical body. Gandhabba is not a Mahāyāna concept: "Gandhabba State Evidence from Tipitaka."

- When a gandhabba goes into a womb, it is not firmly attached to the zygote (the cell formed by the union of the father and the mother) during the first several weeks.
- Sometimes, the gandhabba just leaves the womb if it turns out to be not a good match with the parents. This is the reason for a miscarriage.
- If a gandhabba leaves the womb within such a short time period, in some cases another gandhabba can enter the womb and take possession of the partially formed physical body that was abandoned by the previous gandhabba. Now, it may happen that the second gandhabba is of opposite sex.
- For example, suppose the first gandhabba was a male and the second a female. So, this female is thus taking hold of a physical body that was taking shape to be a male and thus continue to form a male body. Once born as a male baby, and while growing the female character may start to convert the physical body to that of a female. This is what happens to a transgender person.

12. One is bound to the kāma loka because one has craving for bodily pleasures, whether it is tasting good food, watching movies, listening to music, smelling nice fragrances, or in engaging in sexual activities. If one does those activities without engaging in immoral activities, then the only harm done is to be eligible to be born in the kāma loka.

- One cannot be freed from even the higher realms in the kāma loka (human and deva realms), if one has desires for such bodily pleasures. However, it becomes relevant only at the Anāgām $\bar{\imath}$ stage. A Sotāpanna or a Sakadāgāmī has not given up desires for sensual pleasures.
- I have not seen anything in the Tipitaka that distinguishes between sexual activities based on who the partners are. So, it seems to me that homosexual or bisexual activities are not that different from heterosexual activities as far as kammic consequences are concerned. They are all done to achieve bodily pleasures.
- However, if one engages in any immoral activities - in particular breaking the five precepts - then one would be eligible to be born in the lowest four realms of the ka$m a ~ l o k a$, the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$.
- I specifically made the comment on the homosexuality in answering a specific question by a reader. The main point is to make sure that any pleasurable activity at the expense of hurting someone will have bad consequences, and depending on the nature, could make one eligible to be born in the apayy $\bar{a}$.

13. One way to understand the anicca nature is to take a good look at the transient nature of our physical body and that it can provide only temporary bodily pleasures, even though they are enjoyable.

- The gandhabba is the more long-lasting entity; a human bhava can last many hundreds to many thousands of years; a physical body is a temporary shell used by the gandhabba for about 100 years.
- The bodily pleasures that one experiences with this "physical shell" can last only part of that maximum 100 years. As one gets old, those pleasures go away, and there is no way to keep them the same.
- On the other hand, the jhānic pleasures - or at least nirāmisa sukha - can be enjoyed even at old age, as long as one keeps steps to maintain the brain in good condition. The gandhabba - since it is trapped inside the physical body - needs the brain to in order to be mindful and to cultivate good vaci and mano sankh $\overline{a r a}$; this is what is emphasized in the earlier posts in this section, and analyzed in detail (for those who need to go deeper) in the Abhidhamma section.

14. Finally, it is important to emphasize the point that it will take a concerted effort to understand these concepts fully. The more one reads, the more one will understand. It is not possible to gain insight by reading a few posts. One has to spend time and read relevant posts in order to "fill in the gaps."

- A simple introduction to the concept of gadhabbaya is given in this section: "Our Mental Body Gandhabba."
- A section is the Abhidhamma is devoted to the concept of gadhabbaya: "Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya)." There are posts in other sections too, in relation to the material in those sections.


## 4.5 <br> Mundane Sammā Samādhi

October 27, 2016

- Micchā Ditthi - Connection to Hethu Phala (Cause and Effect) (with Desana 6)
- Suffering in This Life and Paticca Samuppāda (with Desana 7)
- Suffering in This Life and Paticca Samuppāda II (with Desana 8)


### 4.5.1 Micca Ditṭhi - Connection to Hethu Phala (Cause and Effect)

## October 18, 2016

1. The main reason for many people having various types of micch $\bar{a}$ ditthi (or wrong views) can be traced back to the fact that the workings of cause and effect involving living beings - and in particular the mind of the sentient beings - is complex.

- Science has been able to have much success in the material realm, simply because it is easier to see how cause and effect work in the material realm.

2. In the discourse (desanā) below, we will talk about cause and effect (hethu-pala) in Buddha Dhamma, and how conditions (paccaya) play a critical role in mental phenomena. The complex relationship between causes and effects in relation to the mind is the reason why it is hard for many to comprehend how and why kamma lead to kamma vipāka. As we discuss in the desanā:

- Nothing in this world can come to existence without suitable causes AND conditions,
- Rebirth process must be valid, in order to fully implement the principle of causality (cause and effect).

3. The critical link between hethu-pala and paticca samuppāda is patthāna dhamm $\bar{a}$, which describe the conditions under which causes (hethu) bring about effects or results (phala).

- In the near future, I will start a new section on patṭhāna dhammā. It is a deep subject, but it can be simplified to easily understand the relationship between hethu-pala and paṭicca samuppāda.

4. Here is the desan $\bar{a}$ (volume control on the right):

WebLink: Audio Desanā: Episode 6 - Micchā Ditthi Connection to Hetu Phala Cause and Effect
WebLink: Audio Desanā: Episode 6 - Micchā Ditthi Connection to Hetu Phala Cause and Effect (Original - Larger file size)

## Related Posts

1.     - Getting to Samādhi

- How Are Gati and Kilesa Incorporated into Thoughts?

2. Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)
3. Anantara and Samanantara Paccayā
4.     - Sanikhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka

- Nāmagotta, Bhava, Kamma Bīja, and Mano Loka (Mind Plane)
- Another post I forgot to mention in the desana is on the question of "Where are those kamma seeds stored?." It is discussed in, "How Are Ga0hi and Kilesa Incorporated into Thoughts?."

5. What Does "Paccaya" Mean in Paticca Samuppāda?
6. Bhava and Jāti - States of Existence and Births Therein
7. How Character (Gati) Leads to Bhava and Jāti

Next in the series, "Suffering in This Life and Paticca Samuppāda", ..

### 4.5.2 Suffering in This Life and Paṭicca Samuppāda

## October 28, 2016

In a previous desan $\bar{a}$ in this section, we discussed how suffering in this life is described in the beginning of the Mahā Satipaṭthāna Sutta. In this desanā, we will discuss how it is described by Paṭicca Samuppāda.
"Suffering in This Life - According to Pațicca Samuppada"
WebLink: Audio Desana: Episode 7 - Suffering in This Life According to Paticca Samuppāda
WebLink: Audio Desana: Episode 7 - Suffering in This Life According to Paticca Samuppāda (Original Larger file size

## Links mentioned in the desan $\bar{a}$ :

1. Posts in the "Paticca Samuppāda" can be consulted for details on Pațicca Samuppāda cycles.

## 2. Taṇhā: Tanhā - How We Attach Via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance

3. Mano sañkhāra arise automatically, without conscious thoughts. And conscious thoughts - even without speech - are vacī sañkhāra:

## How Are Gati and Kilesa Incorporated into Thoughts?

- In this desana $\bar{a}$, incorrectly said that speech is vacī sañkhāra because the mouth and the tongue are moved during speech. However, whether one talks to oneself or actually get the words out loud, both are $v a c \bar{i}$ sañkhāra. There is a difference between moving body parts in general (as in walking) and moving the lips and tongues during speech: They are done with two types of rupa: kāya viñnatti and vaci viññatti respectively. I will discuss this in detail later.
- My thanks to the reader who pointed out my mistake in categorizing speech as kaya sañkhāra. I had to dig deeper in Abhidhamma to find the explanation. I can and do make mistakes, and that is why I welcome your input. My goal is to have this website to be fully self-consistent.

4. Suffering in this life due to vacī and kāya sañkhāra done in this life:

Suffering in This Life - Role of Mental Impurities
Satipatthāna Sutta - Relevance to Suffering in This Life
5. Role of asobhana cetasika in immoral thoughts:

## What Are Kilesa (Mental Impurities)? - Connection to Cetasika

6. Phassa and samphassa:

## Difference between Phassa and Samphassa

Kāma Assāda Start with Phassa Paccaya Vedanā or Samphassa Ja Vedanā

### 4.5.3 Suffering in This Life and Paṭicca Samuppāda II

## December 7, 2016

1. In the previous desanā, "Suffering in This Life and Paticca Samuppāda," we discussed one application of Paticca Samuppāda (PS).

- Here, we will continue that discussion to gain more insights and discuss the importance in controlling vaci sañkhāra during Satipaṭthāna and Ānāpānasati bhāvanā.

2. I have posted three new essays in other sections at the website since that time.

- Correct Meaning of Vacī Sañkhāra
- Asevana and Annamanna Paccaya
- Sutta Learning Sequence for the Present Day

They are relevant to the discussions in this section.
3. Here are the PS sequences for reference, as you go though the discussion. You may want to make a printout of this post or have this post open while listening.

- Avijjā paccayā sañkhāra, sañkhāra paccayā viñnāṇa, viññāna paccayā nāmarūpa, nāmarūpa paccayā salāyatana, salāyatana paccayā phassa, phassa paccayā vedanā, vedanā paccayā taṇhā, taṇhā paccayā upādāna, upādāna paccayā bhava, bhava paccayā jāti, jāti paccayā jara, marana, soka, parideva, dukkha, domanassa, upasaya sambhavan ti."

The cycle ends with marana or death and describes the time evolution of how a sankhata (sankata in Sinhala) (whether it is a thought process or a living being or an inert entity) arises and eventually dies.

New desanā: "Suffering in This Life and Pațicca Samuppāda II"
WebLink: Audio Desana: Episode 8 - Suffering in This Life and Paticca Samuppāda II
WebLink: Audio Desana: Episode 8 - Suffering in This Life and Paticca Samuppāda II (Original - Larger file size)

Links mentioned in the desanā:

1. Posts in the "Paticca Samuppāda" section can be consulted for details on Pațicca Samuppāda cycles.
2. Time evolution of a sañkhata (sankata in Sinhala):

- Difference between and Vaya (destruction of sankhata (sankata in Sinhala) that has arisen) and Nirodha (stopping of the arising of a sañkhata (sankata in Sinhala)).


## Nirodha and Vaya - Two Different Concepts

3. How "random thoughts" come to our minds:

Our Two Worlds: Material and Immaterial
What are Dhamma? - A Deeper Analysis
4. Two types of $v e d a n \bar{a}$ :

- Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways

True meaning of tanhā:

[^2]Why suitable conditions are necessary to bring kamma vipāka:

- Anantara and Samanantara Paccaya

Cultivating good gathi and removing bad gathi through Ānāpānasati (and Satipatthāna):

- 9. Key to Ānāpānasati - How to Change Habits and Character (Gati)


## 4.6 <br> Transition to Noble Eightfold Path

September 2, 2017

- Is It Necessary for a Buddhist to Eliminate Sensual Desires?
- Sīla, Samādhi, Pañ̃̃ā to Paññā, Silla, Samādhi
- Ye Dhammā Hetuppabhavā.. and Yam Kiñci Samudaya Dhammam.


### 4.6.1 Is It Necessary for a Buddhist to Eliminate Sensual Desires?

September 28, 2018; revised June 1, 2021; December 13, 2021

## Introduction

1. I saw the above question raised in a discussion forum recently (with a different title). The questioner stated: "Eliminating sensual desire as a lay follower doesn't seem possible, or reasonable, especially if one plans on being in a relationship, or having motivation at work. .."

- I think this is a critical question. Most people have not understood the fact that one MUST follow the Noble Path of the Buddha sequentially.
- Getting rid of sense desires (including sex, craving for food, etc.) is unnecessary in the beginning and even up to the Sotāpanna stage.
- Getting to the final stage of Nibbāna (Arahanthood) is a step-by-step process.


## Following the Path Is a Step-by-Step Process

## 2. The necessary INITIAL steps involved are:

(i). Be a moral person and hold the mundane five precepts (abstain from killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, outright lying, and getting intoxicated) and also gossiping, slandering, and harsh speech; see, " 2 . The Basics in Meditation."
(ii). Understand the correct "wider world view" of the Buddha, and get rid of the ten types of micch $\bar{a}$ ditṭhi; see, "Mahā Cattārisaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty)."
(iii). Learn about the "deeper world view of the Buddha," stated by Tilakkhaṇa (anicca, dukkha, anatta nature); see, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta."
3. When one starts to understand the "anicca nature" (anicca means much more than just impermanence) of this world, one becomes a Sotāpanna Anugāmi. When that "correct vision" about "this wider world of 31 realms" sinks into the mind permanently, one becomes a Sotāpanna.

- One does not need to even think about removing the desire for sex or any other sensory pleasure until one gets to the Sotāpanna stage. That is a critical point that most people do not understand.


## The futility of Starting at the End

4. Therefore, many people waste precious time by either first trying to suppress sense desires, and even in some cases, try to eliminate the innate sense of "me" or "a self."

- But like one cannot learn algebra or advanced calculus without learning how to do addition, those people will not make any significant progress. It is impossible to do so.
- Furthermore, while one may get temporary relief from "stresses of day-to-day activities" by doing breath meditation, that will not provide the long-term release from suffering that the Buddha explained.
- Until one begins to understand Tilakkhaṇa, one will never get to the Sotāpanna stage.


## Even a Sotāpanna Has Not Given Up Sensual Pleasures

5. Even during the time of the Buddha, many lay followers attained the Sotāpanna stage and continued to live "householder lives," too. They were married and had regular jobs. There was no need to avoid sense pleasures, including sex, at all.

- For example, Vishākā (or Visākā), who was the leading female lay disciple at the time, attained the Sotāpanna stage at age seven and went on to get married and have twenty plus children.
- Many others were regular lay people with families who attained the Sotāpanna stage and continued to live that way.
- Of course, those who desired to attain higher stages of Nibbāna made an effort to eliminate the craving for sense pleasures. Most of them became bhikkhus who abstain from sex and other sense pleasures.


## Only at Anāgāmī Stage One Will Lose Craving for Sensory Pleasures

6. One needs to completely abstain from sense pleasures entirely only to become an $A n \bar{a} g \bar{a} m \bar{u} \overline{\text {. Even a }}$ Sakadāgāmī still enjoys sense pleasures, even though he/she would not have the desire to "own" things that provide sense pleasures.

- For example, a Sakadāgāmī would still enjoy some sense pleasures, but there would be no desire to own "things that provide sense pleasure" (houses, cars, etc.).


## Losing Craving for Sensory Pleasures Comes After a Deeper Understanding of Tilakkhana

7. One CANNOT just give up sense pleasures by sheer will power and become an $\boldsymbol{A n} \bar{a} g \bar{a} m \overline{\mathrm{l}}$. One has to comprehend the "anicca nature" at a higher level than a Sotāpanna, and then those desires will NATURALLY go away.

- That maybe hard for most people to understand: how the desire for sense pleasures will naturally go away. That is why one should follow the Path SEQUENTIALLY, one step at a time.
- By the way, the sense of "me" or " a self" will go away only at the Arahant stage!


## It is Necessary to See Harmful Consequences of Sensory Indulgences (Kāmasukhallikānuyoga)

8. However, it is also important to realize that one needs to stay away from both excessive sensory pleasures (kāmasukhallikānuyoga) and extreme ascetic practices of completely staying away from any comfort (Attakilamathānuyoga.) The Buddha recommended the "middle path," where one would live a simple, comfortable life without going to either extreme.

- Therefore, one cannot become a Sotāpanna by enjoying sense pleasures to the full, i.e., maintaining a "playboy type" lifestyle.
- When one starts comprehending the anicca nature, one's life WILL become simple.
- Even before one gets to the Sotāpanna stage, one will start feeling nirämisa sukha due to lessened stress on the mind due to this simple lifestyle.

9. Of course, one can speed up the process of the Sotāpanna stage by giving up sense pleasures. Those who take this path become bhikkhus. They voluntarily give up most sense pleasures, including sex.

- If one is to attain jhāna, one must at least SUPPRESS all sense desires. For example, in "WebLink: suttacentral: Tapussa Sutta (AN 9.41)," "..So kho ahamं, ānanda, vivicceva kāmehi vivicca
akusalehi dhammehisavitakkaì savicāraì vivekajaì pūtisukhaìm paṭhamaì jhānaì upasampajja viharāmi."
- That means one needs to have all thoughts of sense pleasures and akusala kamma removed from one's mind at the time of getting to the jhāna.
- That statement appears in every sutta describing jhāna.


## The Wider World View

10. According to the "wider world view" of the Buddha, there are 31 realms in this world. Suffering in those realms decreases as one goes from the lowest four realms (ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$,) where the suffering is intense, to the human realm (where there is both suffering and happiness). In deva realms and 20 Brahma realms, there is increasingly more happiness.

- The peaceful feeling one experiences in a jhāna are the same sense experience of Brahmā in the corresponding realms. But getting to jhāna has nothing to do with getting to magga phala, even though $j h a \overline{n a}$ can provide a better mindset to do insight meditation.
- None of those realms can provide permanent happiness because a lifetime in any realm is finite. Even though the Brahma realms have very long lifetimes, one would eventually die and be reborn in any realm.
- If one's goal is permanent happiness, one must eventually get to the Arahant stage of Nibbāna. However, if one can get to the Sotāpanna stage, one is guaranteed to get to the Arahant stage within a relatively few subsequent births.


## Difference With Other World Religions

11. That is the main difference between Buddha Dhamma and other religions. Christianity and Islam promise permanent happiness in deva realms, and Hinduism promises lasting happiness in a Brahma realm.

- But the Buddha taught that nothing in this world is permanent. That holds for living beings and inert things in the whole universe.
- Scientists (including Einstein) believed as recently as 100 years ago that the universe is in a "steady state." Now science has accepted that everything in our world is in constant flux.
- Therefore, one born in any realm will die from there and be reborn in another realm.


## There Is Nowhere in This World Where Suffering Ends (Anicca Nature)

12. The above sub-title summarizes the anicca nature of this world. One gets to the Sotāpanna stage by "seeing that." When one first realizes the anicca nature of this world, one can immediately see the dangers in doing the strongest of dasa akusala. That realization will make one's mind resistant to doing "apāyagāmi actions," i.e., those that make one eligible to be born in the four lowest realms (apāy $\bar{a}$.)

- That understanding registers permanently in the mind of a Sotāpanna and is unbreakable. That is why he/she will never do any such immoral deed, no matter how tempting.
- At that time, one will have unbreakable faith in Buddha, Dhamma, and Sañgha. One can see at that time how valuable Dhamma is. Of course, the Buddha discovered that Dhamma. It can be conveyed accurately only by a Noble Person.
- That is the reason for "unbreakable faith," or "aveccappasāda" (avecca pasāda) in Buddha, Dhamma, and Sañgha; see \#4 of "Sotapatti Anga - The Four Qualities of a Sotāpanna."
- One is also said to have "Ariyakānta sīla" or "unbreakable moral conduct" as a Sotāpanna. That does not mean one will not do any of the dasa akusala. But one will never again do a dasa akusala with strong kamma vipāka bringing rebirth in the apāy $\bar{a}$. A Sotāpanna has permanently removed such a mindset.


## Higher Stages of Nibbāna Come With Deeper Comprehension of Anicca Nature

13. A Sotāpanna would then get to the Sakad $\bar{a} g \bar{a} m \bar{\imath}$ and $A n \bar{a} g \bar{a} m \bar{\imath}$ stages by getting rid of the desire for sense pleasures in two phases.

- Avijja, or the ignorance of the Four Noble Truths, is removed only at the Arahant stage. That is the time when one removes the "sense of me" or the "sense of a self."
- It is a systematic, long process.
- As I said initially, one cannot expect to do advanced mathematics unless one first knows how to add/subtract, then how to do algebra, etc.
- Thus, moral conduct and getting rid of the ten types of micchā ditt hi are REQUIREMENTS for any stage of magga phala. Getting rid of the cravings for sense pleasures comes after that.


## There Are Dangers in Craving for Sensory Pleasures

14. Finally, one may think that all one needs to do is get to the Sotāpanna stage. Because then one would be free from the ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$. That is true. However, when one gets to the Sotāpanna stage, one will see the sufferings in the kāma loka, including the deva realms. In a way, it is good to focus on getting to the Sotāpanna stage, and not worry about the higher stages.

Still one needs to at least start seeing the dangers of excessive sensory pleasures, even before the Sotāpanna stage. That is necessary to get to Sammā Ditthi. One would then remove the wrong perceptions (saññ̄a) about the value in sensual pleasures at the Anāgami stage. See, "Vipallāsa (Ditthi, Saññā, Citta) Affect Sañkhāra."

As stated in the WebLink: suttacentral: Dhammika sutta (Snp 2.14):

- Abrahmacariyam parivajjayeyya,

Añgārakāsum் jalitaìva viññ̄u;
Asambhuṇanto pana brahmacariyam,
Parassa dāraì na atikkameyya.

## Translated:

- A wise person would live a celibate life (avoiding sex), as one would avoid falling into a pit of fire. But if one is not yet at the stage of abstaining from sensory pleasures, one should not engage in sexual misconduct.
- Furthermore, sensual pleasures are not restricted to sex. Excessive attachment to ALL sensory pleasures comes under kāmasukhallikānuyoga in \#8 above. Also, see "What is "Kāma"? It is not Just Sex" and "Craving for Pornography - How to Reduce the Tendency."


### 4.6.2 Sīla, Samādhi, Paññā to Paññā, Sīla, Samādhi

September 2, 2017; revised September 14, 2019; May 5, 2022; July 4, 2022; September 10, 2022

1. These days, it is customary to state that the Noble Eightfold Path consists of three steps: sīla (moral conduct), samādhi (Concentration), and pañ̃̄̄̄ (wisdom). However, that sequence holds only for the mundane Eightfold Path. It does not lead to Nibbāna but only sets up the conditions to get into the Noble Eightfold Path.

- In this initial stage, one cultivates sīla by living a moral life by making a determined effort not to violate the five precepts; see " 2 . The Basics in Meditation."
- Samādhi is much more than concentration; see, "What is samādhi? - Three Kinds of Mindfulness." When one lives a moral life, one's mindset will gradually change to a calm state ("sama" + "adhi"), as explained in that post.
- With this calm mindset, one will be able to get rid of the ten types of micchā ditthi ("Micchā Ditthi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage." Then one reaches mundane Sammā Ditṭhi or the first level of wisdom.

2. One must follow the mundane Path before understanding anicca, dukkha, and anatta, and get into the Noble Path; see "Buddha Dhamma - In a Chart" and "What is Unique in Buddha Dhamma?." Thus, there are three necessary steps to Nibbāna:

- Follow the mundane Eightfold Path by living a moral life (sīla) to remove the ten types of micchā diṭthi. Those include not believing in kamma vipāka, rebirth, etc. Then one can get to mundane samādhi and gain the first level of wisdom (paññ̄a): sīla, samādhi, paññā.
- Then start removing a DEEPER layer of micchā ditt hi (that this world can offer lasting happiness) by learning the CORRECT versions of anicca, dukkha, and anatta (Tilakkhana).
- Once one grasps the basics of Tilakkhaṇa, one becomes a Sotāpanna Anugāmi. One then starts living with an unbreakable sīla to attain Sammā samādhi and the four stages of Nibbāna by following pañ̃̃̄̄, silla, samādhi.

3. The first level of wisdom, achieved in the mundane path, is called kammassakata Samma ditṭhi: understanding that one's actions, speech, and thoughts ( $k \bar{a} y a$, vacī, and mano sañkhāra) - one's kamma - WILL have consequences in the future, both in this life and in future lives.

- With kammassakata sammā ditthi, one understands and accepts the fact that what we experience (kamma vipāka, good and bad) is due to our past kamma.
- One understands that to encounter good kamma vipāka in the future (including future lives), one needs to cultivate GOOD kamma (i.e., good mano, vacī, and kāya sañkhāra).
- Even more importantly, one starts avoiding strong BAD kamma. Thus one starts getting rid of the coarse levels of lobha, dosa, and moha, which is the same as preventing dasa akusala.
- When one follows this "sīla step," one will start experiencing the early stages of Nibbāna of "cooling down"; see "Nirāmisa Sukha" and "How to Taste Nibbāna."

4. Some people think that if one kills animals without knowing that will have consequences, that will lead to kamma vipāka. That is not correct. "Intention to kill" must be there to bring kamma vipāka.

- There is no superhuman being that keeps track of what one is doing. But when one intentionally kills an animal, one's mind knows that, and one's viññāna will adjust accordingly. See "Viññāna What It Really Means."
- The more one kills animals that viñnāna capable of killing will only grow. That will lead to a corresponding bhava in the niraya realm (hell), where similar suffering exists.
- Therefore, being ignorant of nature's laws is not an excuse. Not knowing it was unlawful will not be an excuse when one gets caught doing an illegal act.
- There is another type of action where one kills animals unintentionally. For example, we kill many insects every time we take a walk. That does not lead to any kamma vipāka.
- So, only those sañkhāra (or more correctly abhisañkhāra) done with intention lead to viññāṇa (via "sañkhāra paccayā viññāna"), and subsequently lead to births in different realms via "viññāṇa paccayā nāmarūpa," etc. to ..."bhava paccayā jāti."

5. Most people also think that kamma vipāka arises only due to bodily actions (via kāya sañkhāra.) But physical movements, speech, and thoughts all contribute to kamma. It is the cetana (intention) involved in
thoughts, speech, and actions (i.e., mano , vacī, and kāya sañkhāra) that is kamma. That is explained in the subsection, "Living Dhamma - Fundamentals."

- When one starts comprehending the laws of kamma (that causes lead to similar effects IF suitable conditions are present), one will gradually get to mundane sammā samādhi. Then one's ability to grasp more profound Dhamma concepts (paññ̄a) will grow; see "Mundane Sammā Samādhi."
- One can stop future suffering only by eliminating the corresponding abhisañkhāra, i.e., "sañkhāra nirodho bhava (and jāti) nirodho."
- But sañkhāra can only be stopped by the corresponding abhisañkhāra, i.e., "sañkhāra nirodho bhava (and jāti) nirodho."
- But sañkhāra can be only stopped by removing avijjā since sañkhāra are unavoidable as long as avijjā is there. "Avijjā paccayā sañkhārā." That is why Sammā Diṭthi (understanding Tilakkhana) is so important.
- One will have a good idea of how births in different realms are associated with different types of suffering. Furthermore, one would see how one's actions (sañkhāra) lead to such births. I have summarized them in the table below.

| Realm(s) | Level of Suffering | Causes | Generation/Stopping of Sañkhāra |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Niraya (Hell) | Incessant suffering | Dosa: Killing (especially humans), torture, rapes, etc |  |
| Peta (Hungry Ghosts) | Starvation | Lobha or Excess greed (may I get all, not others) |  |
| Vinipatha Asura ['demons', titans, evil ghosts] | Spend time aimlessly; mostly heavy bodies not movable | Moha: Tina middha, vicikicchā (lazy, lacking wisdom). |  |
| Animal (Tirisan: "tiri" + <br> "san" or with all 3 causes) | Combinations of above three types | Combinations of lobha, dosa, moha |  |
| Human (Manussa: <br> "mana" + "ussa" or with advanced mind) | In between lower and higher realms | In between lower and higher realms | Almost all sañkhāra responsible births in all realms occur here. |
| Deva (similar to human bodies, but much less dense) | Mostly no physical suffering and abundant sense pleasures (kāma). But there is mental stress. | Good kamma vipāka (done with alobha, adosa, amoha). Mental stress arises due to kāma rāga. |  |
| R̄̄̄̄̄̄vacara Brahma (only manomaya kāya; cannot be even seen with a microscope) | Mental stress is much reduced. Mainly jhānic pleasures. Vipariñāma $d u k h a$ when close death. | Suppression of kāma rāga and cultivation of rūpāvacara jhāna (while in the human realm) |  |
| Arūpāvacara Brahma (only hadaya vatthu and mind) | Only arūpāvacara jhānic pleasures. <br> Viparināma dukha when close death. | Cultivation of arūpāvacara jhāna (while in the human realm) |  |
| Nibbāna | Permanent release from all suffering. | Elimination of all causes for existence, i.e., | Mostly attained in the human realm, but |


| Realm(s) | Level of Suffering | Causes | Generation/Stopping of <br> Sañkhāra |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
|  |  | rāgakkhaya, <br> dosakkhaya, <br> mohakkhaya. | possible in higher <br> realms, especially after <br> the Sotāpanna stage. |

6. Now, it is clear how future suffering arises via one's actions, speech, and thoughts (sañkhāra). It is also clear that suffering decreases, and "nirāmisa sukha" grows at successively higher realms.

- When one lives a sinful life and engages in dasa akusala like killing, raping, etc., one is likely to be reborn in the lowest four realms ( $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$ ) and face much suffering. Such actions involve $k \bar{a} y a, v a c \bar{c}$, and mano sañkhāra with lobha, dosa, moha.
- One is likely to be born in rūpa or arūpa Brahma loka when one cultivates jhānā by even abandoning $k a \overline{m a}$ rāga (at least temporarily).
- When one has reduced lobha, dosa, moha to rāga, paṭigha, avijjā (see, "Lobha, Dosa, Moha versus Rāga, Patigha, Avijiā̃") by following the mundane eightfold path, one is likely to be reborn in the human or deva realms. In these realms ,suffering is much less, and most remaining suffering is mental, especially in the deva realms.

7. However, there is much suffering that we tend to ignore. Sañkhāra dukha and vipariṇāma dukha belong to that category; see "Introduction - What is Suffering?" and the follow-up post.

- That suffering arises due to kāma rāga, i.e., craving (upādāna) for sense pleasures. Thus even if one is not engaged in dasa akusala, one would not be released from kāma loka as long as one has kāma rāga.
- At the next higher level in the rūpa and arūpa realms, kāma rāga is absent, and thus one enjoys jhānic pleasures.
- Unlike sense pleasures, jhānic pleasures can be sustained for longer times and are much-refined. However, that is still not permanent as the Nibbānic bliss arrived by eliminating all suffering.

8. As humans, we can overcome suffering in the kāma loka during this life itself, by cultivating jhānā. That means being able to "temporarily live" in rūpāvacara or arupāvacara realms.

- One gets to $r \bar{u} p \bar{a} v a c a r a$ and arūpāvacara jhāna via either REMOVAL or SUPPRESSION of $k \bar{a} m a$ rāga and paṭigha. Of course, that is not possible if one engages in dasa akusala.
- There are Buddhist and non-Buddhist meditation techniques to achieve this. See, "Elephant in the Room 2 - Jhāna and Kasina."
- If one develops $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$, one will be born in $r \bar{u} p a$ or arūpa realms in the next birth. However, as we can see from the above table, any future births in those rūpa and arūpa realms are temporary. One could later be reborn in the apayy $\bar{a}$.
- The only permanent solution to end all future suffering is to attain Nibbāna, as shown in the above table.

9. When one gets into mundane sammā samādhi by cultivating sīla, one can see the truth of the overall picture shown in the table above. At this stage - with this broader world picture - one can take the second important step towards Nibbāna by comprehending the Tilakkhana. However, one needs to know the correct versions of Tilakkhaṇa; see "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta."

- That is the pañña (wisdom) associated with the first path factor (Sammā Dittthi) in the Noble Eightfold Path.
- One will then be able to comprehend the First Noble Truth about the suffering in this world, the Dukkha Sacca.

10. The Buddha's key message is that one cannot find permanent happiness anywhere among the 31 realms in this world. Any such temporary happiness would be minuscule compared to suffering in the ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$ and kāma loka. That is very hard to comprehend (no matter how well-educated one may be).

- This fundamental fact of nature is called anicca nature. It means that NOTHING in this world can bring a permanent state of happiness (and WILL only bring suffering). The only permanent state of happiness is Nibbāna.
- When one has the opposite perception of nicca and focuses on seeking long-term happiness in this world, one WILL face suffering ( $d u k h a$ ) in the long run.
- Thus, eventually, one will become helpless in this rebirth process, which is the anatta nature.
- Those are the Three Characteristics of nature. See, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta." Therefore, the crucial second step toward Nibbāna (permanent happiness) is to learn these critical characteristics of Nature from a true disciple of the Buddha.

11. When one starts comprehending the Tilakkhaṇa to some extent, one becomes a Sotāpanna Anugāmi and enters the Noble Path; see, "Sotāpanna Anugāmi and a Sotāpanna."

- In this third and last step towards Nibbāna, one starts with a NEW mindset about this world's real nature. One can see that unimaginable suffering in the future if one does immoral things to get sensual pleasure.
- Thus one starts to understand the First Noble Truth or the Dukkha Sacca: There is unimaginable suffering in this world of 31 realms. At this initial stage, it is hard to see the dangers/suffering in the human and deva realms. But if one has comprehended the fact that apāy $\bar{a}$ (four lower realms) must exist for the laws of kamma to work, then one can see the unimaginable suffering in the ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$.
- The Buddha said one would simultaneously understand the other three Noble Truths when one understands the First Noble Truth. One will see that lobha, dosa, and moha are the origins of that suffering (Samudaya Sacca). That one needs to remove those causes (Nirodha Sacca). And, the way to accomplish that is to follow the Noble Eightfold Path (Magga Sacca).

12. This understanding becomes permanent forever (through future lives) when one attains the Sotāpanna stage. From that point onward, one will NOT be CAPABLE of doing a kamma that could make one eligible for rebirth in the apa $\bar{a} \bar{a}$. Thus, one will be free from the worst suffering in the future.

- The post, "Akusala Citta - How a Sotāpanna Avoids Apāyagāmī Citta," explains how Nature enforces laws of kamma.
- One's mind will automatically reject any apāyagāmī action, even on an sudden impulse.

13. Understanding Paṭicca Samuppāda is critical. It explains how future bhava (existences) arise due to how one thinks, speaks, and acts (with vacī and kāya sañkhāra). See "Sañkhāra - What It Really Means" and "Correct Meaning of Vacī Sañkhāra."

- If one can hurt and kill others, one is making conditions to face similar situations in the niraya.
- If one has excessive greed and is willing to hurt others for pleasure, one could be born a peta (hungry ghost).
- Those who are lazy and depend on others cultivate asura sañkhāra. That leads to asura viñ̃āạna and thus gives rise to an asura existence.
- If one can think, speak, and act like an animal, one is cultivating animal sañkhāra. Thus one could be born into an animal existence.

14. At this stage, one starts living by the ariyakanta silla. This sila is different from the sīla in the first step. [ariyakanta :[adj.] agreeable to the Ariyas. kanta : [adj.] pleasant; lovely; agreeable. (m.), the beloved one; husband. (pp. of kamati), gone; entered into.]

- In the first type of sīla, one forcefully avoided doing pāpa kamma or immoral acts. But there could have been occasions where one "could not help breaking the silla" because the temptations were too strong.
- However, this new ariyakanta sīla is unbreakable, no matter how intense the temptation is. One's mind has grasped that it is NOT WORTH to commit apāyagāmī actions. That is regardless of how much wealth or pleasures they could bring. [ap $\bar{a} y a g \bar{a} m \overline{\boldsymbol{\imath}}$ : [adj.] going or conveying to the state of misery.]
- For example, it is not worthwhile to make a lot of money by killing animals or fish, selling drugs that can harm others, lying, bribing, etc.
- At this stage, one could still have cravings for sensual pleasures. Thus one could live everyday married life, i.e., "moral living."

15. It is unnecessary to attain any jhāna to get to the Sotāpanna stage. These days there is too much emphasis on jhāna.

- One must realize that rūpāvacara and arūpāvacara jhāna are sensory experiences in the rūpa and arūpa realms. Therefore, such experiences belong to "this world" of 31 realms.
- The Buddha stated that any of his lay disciples with the Sotāpanna stage is million times well-off than a $y o g i$ who had attained all $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$ and all abhiññ $\bar{a}$ powers.
- While those $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$ and $a b h i n ̃ n ̃ \bar{a}$ powers last only during this life, a Sotāpanna is freed from the apāyā FOREVER.
- However, understanding $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$ is important since it confirms the Buddha's broader worldview in the above table. There are many in the world today who can experience $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$.
- But some people mistakenly believe that $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$ are necessary to attain magga phala. But as the above table shows, $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$ are still part of "this world" and can be achieved even by following "non-Buddhist meditations." More details in "Elephants in the Room."


### 4.6.3 Ye Dhammā Hetuppabhavā.. and Yam Kiñci Samudaya Dhammam..

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This post will analyze two famous key verses to show the interconnections among the Four Noble Truths, Tilakkhaṇa, Paticca Samuppäda, and the Noble Eightfold Path. These are the main concepts that must be comprehended to benefit from Buddha's Dhamma.

Ye Dhammā Hetuppabhavā..

## Background

"Ye dhammā hetuppabhavā,
Tesaì hetum tathāgato āha;
Tesañca yo nirodho,
Evainvādī mahāsamano"

- From just hearing this verse uttered by Ven. Assaji, Upatissa (later Ven. Sariputta) became a Sotāpanna. That is the fundamental concept of Buddha Dhamma and explained in detail in the Patticca Samuppāda.
- The correct translation is the following. "Whatever dhamm $\bar{a}$ (which are kamma bīja) that give rise to the rebirth process, causes for those to arise have been declared by the Buddha; he has also explained how those causes can be stopped from arising (and thus end the rebirth process)."
- First, let us briefly discuss how we arrive at this translation.


## What Does "Hetuppabhavä" Mean?

1. "Ye dhamm $\bar{a}$ " means "those dhamma $\bar{a}$." The compound word in the verse is hetuppabhava $\bar{a}$ : It is the combination of "hetu," "pa," and "bhava," which respectively mean causes, repeated, and existence. The combination rhymes as hetuppabhav $\bar{a}$, just as dhamma cakka pavattana rhymes as "dhammacakkappavattana."

- Note that " $p a$ " (meaning repeated) and "bhava" combine to rhyme as "pabbhava" with an additional 'b."
- So, hetuppabhavā means "causes leading to repeated birth or causes to sustain the rebirth process."
- Note that both words hetuppabhavā and pabhassara have the words "pa" and "bha" embedded in them; see, "Pabhassara Citta, Radiant Mind, and Bhavangga."
- So, "ye dhammā hetuppabhavā" means "those dhammā that sustain the rebirth process or samisāra."


## Tesain and Tesañca Both Have "Say"

2. Tesam is "te" + "saŋ" or three "say" of lobha, dosa, moha. These are those hetu or causes.

- Even though there are six root causes, they all can be eliminated by eliminating just three (lobha, dosa, moha); see, "Six Root Causes - Loka Samudaya (Arising of Suffering) and Loka Nirodhaya (Nibbāna)."
- Of course "say" are the defilements responsible for the rebirth process for anyone, which are dasa akusala; see, "San."
- Again, "te" and "say" combine to rhyme as "tesay."
- So, "Tesaí hetum tathāgato āha" means "The Buddha has declared what those three causes are."

3. The next part, "Tesañca yo nirodho" or "Te say ca yo nirodho" has the second complex keyword of nirodha, which comes from "nir"+"udaya," where "nir" means stop and "udaya" means "arise." $[t e+$ san $+c a=$ tesañca]

- Thus nirodha means to stop something from arising; see, "Nirodha and Vaya - Two Different Concepts."
- The easiest way to understand nirodha is to see that a plant can be stopped from arising (i.e., coming into being) by destroying the seed. Put in the real context of the word nirodha, a plant's coming into being can be stopped by stopping the creation of that seed.
- In the same way, a future existence (bhava) can be stopped by stopping the formation of the corresponding viññāna (kamma bïja), i.e., bhava nirodha is achieved by viññāna nirodha.


## How Is Viññāṇa Nirodha Realized?

4. By going backward further in PS, viññāna nirodha in turn is done by (abhi)sañkhāra nirodha; see below too. Of course, abhisañkhāra nirodha cannot be done by sheer will power. One must cultivate pañña (wisdom) and get rid of avijj $\bar{a}$. That requires comprehending of Tilakkhana or the futility of clinging to this suffering-filled world of 31 realms that will make one helpless in the end (especially when born in the four lowest realms or $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a})$.

- We can thus see that viññāna nirodha leads to the stopping of initiation of akusala-mūla Paticca Samuppāda (PS) cycles starting at the "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" step.

5. Now it is clear what is meant by "tesañca (te say ca) yo nirodho, evainvād̄̄ mahāsamaṇo." The Buddha (mahāsamaṇo) has explained how those defilements can be stopped from arising."

- Viññāṇa nirodha is achieved via stopping abhisañkhāra or - to put in a practical statement - by abstaining from all dasa akusala. That involves the three akusala done by the body (via kāya sañkhāra), four akusala by the speech and defiled conscious thoughts (via vacī sañkhāra), and three akusala by the mind (via mano sañkhāra).
- It is essential to understand what is meant by keywords like sañkhāra and viññāna; see, "Mental Aggregates."
- It is essential to realize that conscious thoughts are also vacī sañkhāra; see, "Correct Meaning of Vacī Sañkhāra." It is not just immoral speech and deeds that matter, but immoral "daydreaming" counts too.

6. The way to achieve viññāna nirodha is, of course, the Noble Eightfold Path. When one follows the Noble Path, one's avijjā will be removed and thus no more initiations of PS cycles, i.e., no more suffering (there will not be " $j \bar{a} t i p ~ p a c c a y a ̄ ~ j a r a ̄, ~ m a r a n a, ~ s o k a, ..) . ~$

- In the WebLink: suttacentral: Petakopadesa, this verse expresses the four Noble Truths (cattāri ariyasaccāni), and we can now see why.


## Yaì Kiñci Samudaya Dhammaì..

## Introduction

7. The second related verse "yaim kiñci samudaya dhammain sabbaim taim nirodha dhammaim" is in the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta (SN 56.11); see, "WebLink: suttacentral: Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta (SN56.11)." [kiy + ci=kiñci; kim or kiy :[rel. or inter. pron.] what? ci:cid, indecl. an indefinite interrogative particle. koci [whoever], kiñci [whatever], kadāci [whenever], kuhiñci [wherever] . cf. ca, cana, ce.]

- Translated: "If there are dhammā that give rise to suffering (i.e., any samudaya dhamm $\bar{a}$ ), all such $d h a m m \bar{a}$ can be stopped from arising (via the Noble Eightfold Path)." $[s a m u d a y a=s a n+u d a y a=$ rise of san (that leads to suffering)]
- "yaim kiñci samudaya dhammaim" means "any dhammā that eventually lead to suffering. And, "sabbaín taí nirodha dhammaí" means "all such dhammā" are nirodha dhammā, i.e., they can be stopped from arising.


## Here Viññāṇa Is "Defiled Consciousness"

8. But we need to get the idea embedded in this verse, instead of just translating word-by-word.

- From what we have learned so far, we know that samudaya dhamma (or kamma bïja) are created by viññāna, for which the best translation is "defiled consciousness."
- Viññāna, in turn, arise due to our own (abhi) sañkhāra. And the reason that we do abhisañkhāra is that we are ignorant of the anicca nature, i.e., we have avijjā.
- That is what the paṭicca samuppāda states: "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra, sañkhāra paccayā viññāna, viññāna paccayā nāmarūpa," leading to "upādāna paccayā bhava, bhava paccayā $j a \bar{a} t i$," which ends up in the whole mass of suffering: "jāti paccayā jarā, marana,..."

9. So, again we can see that samudaya dhamma arises with defiled viññạna that occur due to abhisañkhāra done with avijjā!

- If we do not cultivate such defiled viññāṇa via abhisañkhāra (i.e., if we stop doing dasa akusala), then we will not end up with births leading to all types of suffering. Those are jarā (old age), maraṇa (death), soka (unhappiness), parideva (long lasting state of unhappiness where soka keeps bubbling up), $d u k k h a$ (physical injuries, diseases, etc), domanassa (long bouts of depression), upāsāya (extreme distress where can faint or generates suicidal thoughts)."
- Those sufferings described above are mainly for the human realm. If one is born in the four lowest realms, it will be much worse, mostly physical suffering or dukkha.


## Kamma Vipāka Are Not Deterministic

> In the above, we have discussed how to stop the formation of kamma bija. But what about that kamma $b \overline{i j} a$ that we have already piled up during this life and from previous lives? Will not they bring vipāka and initiate new bhava and $j a \bar{a} i t$ filled with suffering?
10. The key is to understand that one gets a "second chance." Kamma vipāka are not deterministic, i.e., kamma bīja cannot automatically bring vipāka.

- In a upapatti [rebirth] PS cycle, we saw that kamma bïja form with the first two steps in the PS cycle: "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" and "sañkhāra paccayā viñ̃n̄ạna." This viññāṇa is called a kamma viññāna.
- But when kamma bīja try to bring back corresponding vipāka at a FUTURE time, they are brought back as vipāka viññanna. That means the mind is exposed to a "sign" called a "nimitta" that corresponds to the same kamma done to make that kamma bïja.

11. So, it is essential to realize that in a upapatti PS cycle, the "viññāna paccayā nāmarūpa" step starts much later, may be even in future life.

## An Example

12. We can explain that with an example. Suppose person $X$ kills another human being in this life. That involves a lot of mano, vacī, and kāya abhisañkhāra and all those contribute to a defiled mindset (viñ̃n̄ạa) that led to a kamma bīja which got the most contribution at the moment of killing via a kāya abhisañkhāra.

- Now, that kamma bīja will be there waiting to bring its $v i p a \bar{k} a$ at a later time.
- Suppose X dies a few years later, but he has more kammic energy for this human bhava left. In that case, that kamma bīja cannot bring vipāka. He will leave a dead body as a gandhabba and wait for a suitable womb.
- However, if X had killed one of his parents, for example, that would be a ānantariya kamma, that kamma bīja will bring its vipāka at the end of this life.

13. In either case, the "viññāna paccayā nāmarūpa" step will start the rest of the PS cycle leading to a new bhava (let us say in the niraya) with the following way.

- So, X is now on the deathbed, whether in this life or a future life as a human. Just before the dying moment, that kamma bïja will bring a sign (called nimitta) of that kamma to X's mind. It could be a scene from that killing event or a scene from the niraya that he is about to be born.
- Since he had done this act with intention, that mindset will come back, and he will have that defiled mindset (viññanna) responsible for the killing. Then he will have that nimitta come in, and this is the "nāmarūpa" that comes to his mind at that time: "viññāṇa paccayā nāmarūpa."

14. All his six sense faculties will transform according to that sign or nimitta: "nāmarūpa paccay $\bar{a}$ salāyatana." Of course, the nimitta will come through only one, let us say like a picture from that killing event or a sound.

- His mind will now make contact (saḷāyatana paccayā phassa) just as in any sense event, and that leads to "phassa paccay $\bar{a}$ vedana $\overline{\text { a " }}$ i.e., now he is about to re-enact the crime in his mind, starting at the "vedanā paccayā tanhā" step.


## The Difference for a Sotāpanna

15. But a critical point in these steps occur at the "vedanā paccayā taṇhā," "taṇhā paccayā upādāna" steps. When one gets that nimitta of birth in the niraya appears at the moment of death, one WILL NOT grasp it if one has attained the Sotāpanna stage.

- A Sotāpanna's mind has grasped the truth of the "anicca nature" and has a higher level of paññ̄a (wisdom), so it WILL NOT grasp that nimitta. That is why Angulimāla was able to attain Arahanthood, even after killing almost 1000 people. That past kamma bïja did not get to germinate.

16. Therefore, that nimitta will be ineffective if X had become a Sotāpanna in the intervening time, and a different (good or bad) next in line will appear. The process will continue until a suitable new bhava grasped at the "upādāna paccayà bhava" step.

- That is how a Sotāpanna avoids "apāyagāmi kamma bīja" from bringing their vipāka.
- Of course, if X had not attained the Sotāpanna stage, he would be born in niraya.


## Further Reading

17. Please do not hesitate to ask questions at the forum if this is not clear. Kamma viññaña are discussed in detail at: "Kamma Viññāna - Link Between Mind and Matter."

- The process of how past kamma try to bring vipāka with vipāka viññanna discussed in detail at, "Avyākata Paticca Samuppāda for Vipāka Viññāna."
- Of course, one needs to understand what is meant by all these terms (vedanā, taṇhā, upādāna, etc.) to understand these processes; see, "Mental Aggregates."
- If one can truly comprehend this post, one could get to the Sotāpanna stage, because this is seeing the "way to Nibbāna," i.e., stopping the future suffering permanently. That is about getting to lokuttara Sammā Ditthi. [lokuttara : [adj.] super-mundane; transcendental.]


### 4.7 Samādhi, Jhāna (Dhyāna), Magga Phala

- Samādhi, Jhāna, Magga Phala - Introduction
- Vitakka, Vicāra, Savitakka, Savicāra, and Avitakka, Avicāra
- Jhānic Experience in Detail - Sāmaññaphala Sutta (DN 2)
- Ascendance to Nibbāna via Jhāna (Dhyāna)
- Paññāvimutti- Arahanthood without Jhāna
- Mundane versus Supramundane Jhāna
- Nirodha Samāpatti, Phala Samāpatti, Jhāna, and Jhāna Samāpatti
[Dhyāna is a sanskrit word while Jhāna is a Pāli word.]


### 4.7.1 Samādhi, Jhāna, Magga Phala - Introduction

October 12, 2017; revised April 28, 2018; September 13, 2018; February 11. 2020; June 26, 2022

## Introduction

1. Apparently, there are a considerable number of people who have attained magga phala (with or without $j h a \overline{n a}$ ) recently all over the world. We are indebted to the late Waharaka Thero for this great awakening with his correct interpretations of Buddha's teachings. Now many are working tirelessly to make those interpretations available to others; see, "Parinibbāna of Waharaka Thero."

- Over the years, I have seen some key issues related to jhāna and magga phala discussed at many online forums, without reaching a definitive conclusion. I hope this series of posts will be of use to bring more clarity.
- I will try to put together a consistent picture solely based on material from the Tipiṭaka. One common problem that I see in online forums is that many people put Tipitaka on the same footing as commentaries (such as Visuddhimagga) written much later by people (non-Ariyā) like Buddhaghosa or Nagarjuna. That leads to confusion because those accounts have many contradictions with the Tipitaka.
- These posts are supposed to be read in the given sequence. Please read carefully at a quiet time.


## What Is Samādhi?

2. Samādhi ("sama"+"adhi" where "sama" means "equilibrium" and "adhi" means "dominance") means keeping the mind focused on a single arrammaṇa or a nimitta.

- The opposite of the Pāli word "sama" is "visama." When either the body or the mind gets "away from equilibrium," that is "visama" and we become uncomfortable.
- A good analogy is the following. We become restless if our environment becomes too hot. Then we try to find a way to cool ourselves. We get very uncomfortable if we are in a "too cold" environment also. Then we try to be warm by turning on a heater or wrapping ourselves with blankets.
- However, if the room temperature is moderate and away from both those extremes, then we feel comfortable. We feel contended.
- A similar effect takes place when the mind stops going to the extremes. A greedy or angry mind is in a "visama" state and is away from samādhi.
- However, if the focus is a dhamma concept, then the mind moves toward "equilibrium."
- Samādhi is essential to attain Magga phala. Jhāna is a special category of samādhi and are not essential to attain magga phala.


## Sammā Samādhi Are Two Types

3. Samādhi can be of many types. What is essential to attain magga phala is Sammā Samādhi. As we have discussed before, there is mundane samm $\bar{a}$ samādhi that is reached by getting rid of the 10 types of micch $\bar{a}$ ditṭhi. Then there is lokuttara Sammā Samādhi that is reached by comprehending Tilakkhaṇa to some extent; see, "Buddha Dhamma - In a Chart."

- As discussed in the previous post, "Sila, Samādhi, Paññā to Paññā, Sīla, Samādhi," one gets to mundane Sammā Samādhi via "Silla, Samādhi, Paññā." Then one can comprehend the Tilakkhaṇa and follow the Noble Path via "Paññā, Sīla, Samādhi," with Sammā Diṭthi taking the lead.
- There is nowhere in the Tipiṭaka that says one needs jhāna to attain magga phala or Nibbāna.
- Magga phala means one is starting to break the bonds (dasa samyojana) to this world; see, "Dasa Samyojana - Bonds in Rebirth Process." One attains magga phala by getting into lokuttara Sammā Samādhi (samādhi to remove "san": "san" + "mā"; see, "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Samisāra)."


## Jhāna Are Not Necessary to Attain Magga Phala

4. April 28, 2018: I found a desanā by Waharaka Thero where he presents clear evidence that jhāna are not necessary to attain magga phala (It is of course in the Sinhala language):

## WebLink: Download "Are Jhāna Required for Magga-Phala"

- The main point the Thero makes is that we know that there are jāti Sotāpannas born in the human realm. But if a jhāna was REQUIRED to attain the Sotāpanna stage, then that person WOULD NOT be born in the human realm, but in a brahma realm corresponding that $j h a \overline{n a}$.
- However, the Tipitaka asserts that King Bimbisara (a Sotāpanna) was reborn in a lower Deva realm. Another is that Sakka, the king of the Tāvatimsā Devas, became a Sotāpanna while listening to a discourse by the Buddha and was reborn as Sakka (i.e., he died and was reborn a moment later; he did not even realize that until the Buddha told him.)


## Attaining Jhāna Has Nothing to Do With Nibbāna

5. In simple terms, jhāna are mental states existing in the 16 rūpa realms and the four arūpa realms. Thus by definition, attaining jhāna has nothing to do with Nibbāna. This can be easily seen in "The 89 (121) Types of Citta."

Jhāna falls into two categories (Ariya and anāriya) and - depending on the category - could be an asset or hindrance, as we will discuss in this section.

- As discussed in " 31 Realms Associated with the Earth" those 20 realms lie above the realms of $k \bar{a} m a$ loka. Those $r \bar{u} p i$ and arūpi Brahmā enjoy only jhānic pleasures, which are better than sensual pleasures.
- We all have been born in most of the 31 realms (except for the realms reserved for the Anāgāmis) uncountable times, and thus had attained those jhänic states uncountable times in previous lives.
- As we know, sensual pleasures are present only in kāma loka (human realm, six deva realms, and the animal realm). The jhānic experience is discussed in, "Jhānic Experience in Detail - Sāmaññaphala Sutta (DN 2)."
- Humans can cultivate jhāna by suppressing (anāriya) or removing (Ariya) the craving for sensual pleasures (kāma rāga).
- One could approach Nibbāna via Ariya or anāriya jhāna; see, "Ascendance to Nibbāna via Jhāna (Dhyāna)."


## Difference Between Ariya and Anāriya Jhāna

6. If those Brahmā are born there via cultivating mundane jhāna, then kāma rāga remain with them as anusaya (which means deeply hidden). So, when they die and are reborn in the lower realms, kāma rāga re-surface. The suppression is only during the time they live as Brahma $\bar{a}$ in those higher realms.

- In the same way, those humans who get into jhānā SUPPRESSING kāma rāga can lose the ability to get into $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$ even in this life. The best example from the Tipitaka is Devadatta, who developed not only anāriya (mundane) jhānā but also abhiñ̃̃̄ $\bar{a}$ powers, and then lost all that and ended up in an apāya. Even though Devadatta was obviously exposed to correct Tilakkhaṇa (he was ordained by the Buddha himself), he apparently did not comprehend.
- The ability to get into $j h a \bar{n} a$ is also related to our gati (pronounced "gathi"; our habits from past lives). Those who have cultivated mundane $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$ in relatively recent past lives can easily get into mundane jhāna.
- However, if one gets into even the first Ariya (supramundane) jhāna, one has essentially attained the $A n \bar{a} g \bar{a} m \bar{\imath}$ stage by removing kāma rāga; see, "Mundane versus Supramundane Jhāna."


## Magga Phala Require Sammā Samādhi

7. Magga phala (including the Arahant stage) can be reached via going through any of the jhānic states or without going through any jhānic state; see, "The 89 (121) Types of Citta."

- This is also discussed in "WebLink: suttacentral: Paññāvimutta Sutta (AN 9.44)" and "WebLink: suttacentral: Susimaparibbājaka Sutta (SN 12.70)."
- Furthermore, a Sotāpanna may attain anāriya jhāna and be born in brahma realms lying below the Suddhāvāsa realms reserved for the Anāgāmis. But they also do not come back to kāma loka; see, "Pathama Metta Sutta." Of course, those who attain anāriya jhāna without magga phala, will come back to kāma loka and could be born in the apāy $\bar{a}$ subsequently.

8. More detailed information with references to suttā at, "Ascendance to Nibbāna via Jhāna (dhyāna)," "Mundane versus Supramundane Jhāna," "Nirodha Samāpatti, Phala Samāpatti, Jhāna, and Jhāna Samāpatti."

- There are a series of posts on jhāna (in simpler terms, without too many Pāli words) in an older section: "Power of the Human Mind." A new series with more details at "Elephant in the Room 2 - Jhāna and Kasina."
4.7.2 Vitakka, Vicāra, Savitakka, Savicāra, and Avitakka, Avicāra

March 7, 2019; revised December 3, 2019; July 27, 2022; August 29, 2022 (sutta refs. updated)

## Introduction

1. It is important to understand the meanings of vitakka/vicāra, savitakka/savicāra, and avitakka/avicāra. I see many discussions on discussion forums without reaching a satisfactory conclusion, and most sutta translations are incorrect. In particular, savitakka and savicāra are incorrectly translated as "with vitakka and vicāra."

- As always, one MUST start with the basics. Trying to extract the meanings of such keywords from deep suttā is counter-productive.
- We need to start with the basic definitions. Then the meanings of verses in deeper suttā CAN BE figured out using those basic definitions. I have seen that this method ALWAYS works within the Tipitaka.
- Please comment on the discussion forum if someone can point out a sutta in the Tipitaka that is inconsistent with this post.
- Possible inconsistencies MAY arise if one tries to make them compatible with late commentaries like the Visuddhimagga.


## What Are Vitakka and Vicāra?

 be "think one way," further/counter analysis, investigate in depth. They are the same as vacī sañkhāra.

- All those words describe conscious thinking about a thought object (ārammaña). One either silently 'talks to oneself' or speaks out while analyzing the situation. [takka:[m.] thought; reasoning; logic. (nt.), butter-milk. vitakka :[m.] reflection; thought. vicāra: :m.] investigation; management; planning; discursive thinking.]

A clear explanation is given in Abhidhamma, in the discussion on kāma dhātu, byāpāda dhātu, vihims $\bar{a}$ dhātu, nekkhamma dhātu, abyāpāda dhātu, avihimsā dhātu, in the following section: "WebLink: suttacentral: Dhātuvibhañg.." [avihimsa : (Avihesa) (f.) $[a+$ vihimsā] absence of cruelty, mercy, humanity, friendliness, love.]

- For example, "Tattha katamā kāmadhātu? Kāmapatisaminyutto takko vitakko sà̇kappo appanā byappanā cetaso abhiniropanā micchāsañkappo-ayaì vuccati kāmadhātu."

Translated: "What is the element of kāma (indulgence)? takka, vitakka, sañkappa, appanā, byappan $\bar{a}$ (remaining there, which is related to vicāra), which lead to establishing wrong views. That is the element of desire/indulgence." In other words, when one constantly generates such thoughts, kāma rāga builds up.
3. The opposite, element of nekkhamma is defined as: "Tattha katama nekkhammadhātu? Nekkhammapatisamiyutto takko vitakko, sañkappa, ... pe ... sammā sañkappo-ayaì vuccati "nekkhamma dhātu."

- Translated: "what is the element of renunciation? takka, vitakka, sañkappa, appanā, byappan $\bar{a}$ (remaining there, which is related to vicāra), which lead to establishing correct views (leading to the removal of defilements). This is called the element of renunciation." In other words, when one constantly generates such thoughts, kāma rāga is diminished.
- Similarly for byāpāda dhātu, vihimisā dhātu, and the opposites abyāpāda dhātu, avihimisā dhātu. [vihims $\bar{a}:[\mathrm{f}$.$] (\& adj. { }^{\circ}$ a) [abstr. fr. vi+hims, to injure] hurting, injuring, cruelty, injury. hims $\bar{a}:[\mathrm{f}$. [Vedic himsā] injury, killing.]


## Vacī Sañkhāra Are Sañkappa (Conscious Thoughts)

It is important to see the connection between vacī sañkhāra and sañkappa (as in Sammā Sañkappa.)
4. We can now see that kāma (abhijjhā) sañkappa, byāpāda (or vyāpāda) sañkappa, vihimisā sañkappa are all "bad" vacī sañkhāra. They associate with greed, hate, and ignorance.

- Their opposites are associated with Sammā Sañkappa: nekkhamma, abyāpāda, and avihimsā sañkappa. [nekkhamma: [nt.] giving up the world; renunciation.]
- Note that Sammā Sañkappa comes next to Sammā Diṭthi in the Noble Eightfold Path. Therefore, we can see the importance of vacī sañkhāra.

5. Now we can also see the connection to vacī sañkhāra as defined clearly in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Cūlavedalla Sutta (MN 44)": .." vitakka vicārā vacī sañkhāro" OR "vacī sañkhāra are vitakka vicārā."

- Vacī sañkhāra are "conscious thoughts that we silently generate" and also those thoughts that lead to the speech by moving the lips, tongue, etc. Hate speech is due to apuññābhi vacī sañkhāra. Thinking about a Dhamma concept is a puñ̃n̄abhi vacī sañkhāra; see "Correct Meaning of Vacī Sañkhāra."


## Vacī Sañkhāra (Vitakka Vicārā̆) Are Sañkappa

6. Another important sutta where this is discussed is "WebLink: suttacentral: Mahācattārīsaka Sutta (MN 117)":
"Katamo ca, bhikkhave, sammāsañkappo ariyo anāsavo lokuttaro maggañgo? Yo kho, bhikkhave, ariyacittassa anāsavacittassa ariyamaggasamañgino ariyamaggaì bhāvayato takko vitakko sañkappo appanā byappanā cetaso abhiniropanā vacīsañkhāro-ayaṁ, bhikkhave, sammāsañkappo ariyo anāsavo lokuttaro maggañgo.."

- Translated: "And what, bhikkhus, is Sammā Sañkappa that is Noble, without āsava, supramundane, a factor of the Noble Path? Those are Noble thoughts (ariyacittassa) that are devoid of cravings (anāsavacittassa), belong to the Noble Path (ariyamaggasamañgino ariyamaggaì bhāvayato) with takko vitakko sañkappo appana byappanā cetaso abhiniropanā vacī sañkhāro: that is Sammā Sañkappa that is Noble, a factor of the Noble Path."


## Vitakka is Usually Reserved for "Bad Saṅkappa"

7. "WebLink: suttacentral: Akusala Vitakka Sutta (SN 9.11)" provides one example: "Tena kho pana samayena so bhikkhu divāvihāragato pāpake akusale vitakke vitakketi, seyyathidaí-kāma vitakkaì, byāpāda vitakkaì, vihimsā vitakkaì."

- Meaning: "That bhikkhu engaged in generating highly immoral (pāpa) and akusala vitakka during his resting time - they were sensual, ill-will, and cruel thoughts. (pāpake akusale vitakke vitakkeyyātha, seyyathidain- kāma vitakkain, byāpāda vitakkain, vihimisā vitakkain).
- Another verse in the same sutta: "Ayoniso manasikārā, so vitakkehi khajjasi.." or "with the wrong mindset (ayoniso manasikāra), he is burdened with such defiled thoughts."

8. Succinct explanations can also be found in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Vitakka Sutta (SN 56.7)."

Following is the basic idea of the whole sutta:

- "Bhikkhus, do not engage in evil unwholesome thoughts, which are: sensual thoughts, thoughts of ill will, thoughts of harming others (pāpake akusale vitakke vitakkeyyātha, seyyathidain-kāma vitakkain, byāpāda vitakkain, vihimsā vitakkain).
- For what reason? These thoughts, bhikkhus, are without real substance (Nete, bhikkhave, vitakk $\bar{a}$ atthasaimhit $\bar{a}$ ), irrelevant to the fundamentals of the holy life, and do not lead to escape from the sense world, to dispassion, to cessation, to peace, to direct knowledge, to enlightenment, to Nibbāna. When your mind starts such thoughts, bhikkhus, you should think: 'This will lead to suffering.'
- Instead, you should think: ‘These are the causes of suffering'; you should think: ‘The way to the cessation of suffering by cultivating thoughts of renunciation and compassion." Such thoughts will lead to escape from the sense world, to dispassion, to cessation, to peace, to direct knowledge, to enlightenment, to Nibbāna."


## Vitakka/Vicāra and Savitakka and Savicāra

9. In many instances, the words vitakka and vicāra indicate "bad thoughts" or defiled thoughts.

- However, in some cases, they indicate "all kinds of thoughts, good or bad."
- Therefore, one must identify which meaning to use in the words' context. The above examples illustrate that point.

10. When one generates thoughts that specifically do not involve kāma rāga or other akusala - but the opposites (nekkhamma/kusala) - those are called savitakka and savicāra.

- That is how one gets into jhāna: Eliminating (or suppressing) vitakka/vicāra and cultivating savitakka/savicāra.

11. You can see that in any sutta that describes jhāna. For example, in "WebLink: suttacentral: Tapussa Sutta (AN 9.41)": "..So kho ahaì, ānanda, vivicceva kāmehi vivicca akusalehi dhammehi savitakkain savicāramं vivekajam̀ pūtisukhamं paṭhamaì jhānà் upasampajja viharāmi."

- Translated: "Ānanda, when one stays away from vitakka/vicāra with kāma rāga and akusala and cultivates savitakka/savicāra, one will get into the first jhāna."
- However, occasionally, vitakka/vicāra with kāma rāga and/or akusala may come to mind.
- Also see "Tapussa Sutta (AN 9.41)- Akuppā Cētōvimutti."


## Avitakka and Avicāra

12. The absence of any "bad thoughts" is indicated by avitakka, avicāra. In this case, one would only have savitakka and savicāra (good thoughts).

- This happens in the second jhāna, where only savitakka/savicāra remains.
- Therefore, it is important to realize that avitakka/avicāra DOES NOT mean "without thoughts"; it just means the absence of bad thoughts.

13. This is very clear at the end of the "WebLink: suttacentral: Upakkilesa Sutta (MN 128)": " ..So kho ahaì, anuruddhā, savitakkampi savicāraì samādhim bhāvesim, avitakkampi vicāramattaì samādhimं bhāvesim, avitakkampi avicāraì samādhim bhāvesim, sappītikampi samādhim bhāvesimं, nippītikampi samādhim bhāvesim, sātasahagatampi samādhim bhāvesim, upekkhāsahagatampi samādhim bhāvesim..."

- Translated: "Anuruddha, I systematically cultivated the following samādhi in this order. Savitakka savicāra samādhi, avitakka vicāramattaì samādhi (absence of vitakka with a trace of vicāra left), avitakka avicāra samādhi (absence of vitakka and vicāra), sappītikampi samādhi (with pīti or joy), nippītikampi samādhi (absence of pīti or joy), sātasahagatampi samādhi (with only sukha left), and upekkhāsahagata samādhi (sukha also removed to be in the upekkhā state)."
- What the Buddha described above is getting to the first jhāna with savitakka savicāra, and then to the second jhāna with the absence of vitakka and vicāra (with pīti and sukha), the third jhāna with just sukha (joy removed), and the fourth jhāna with sukha also removed and with just upekkhā).
- For a description of Ariya jhāna with jhānañga removed at each successive stage, see "WebLink: suttacentral: Rahogata Sutta (SN 36.11)," for example. [jhānañga : 'constituents (or factors) of absorption'. anga : [nt.] 1. a constituent part; 2. a limb; 3. quality.]


## Summary

14. Sañkhāra is different types, so it is necessary to get an idea of how to use these basic definitions of vitakka/vicāra, savitakka/savicāra, and avitakka/avicāra in terms of different types of sañkhāra: puññābhisañkhāra, apuññābhisañkhāra, āneñjābhisañkhāra; see, "Correct Meaning of Vacī Sañkhāra" and "Sañkhāra - What It Really Means."

- Further details in the post, "Vacī Sañkhāra - Sañkappa (Conscious Thoughts) and Vācā (Speech)."

15. Finally, the "WebLink: suttacentral: Savitakkasavicara Sutta (SN 43.3)" clearly states that Nibbāna is reached (asañkhatagāmi maggo) via the following sequence. Savitakka savicāra samādhi, avitakka vicāramatta samādhi, avitakka avicāra samādhi.
"Katamo ca, bhikkhave, asañkhatagāmimaggo? Savitakkasavicāro samādhi, avitakkavicāramatto samādhi, avitakkaavicāro samādhi-ayaì vuccati, bhikkhave, asañkhatagāmimaggo."

### 4.7.3 <br> Jhānic Experience in Detail - Sāmaññaphala Sutta (DN 2)

March 2, 2019; revised January 3, 2021; revised \#4 on February 14, 2022

## Introduction

1. The $j h \bar{a} n i c$ experiences in the first four $j h \bar{a} n a$ are clearly described by the Buddha in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Sāmañ̃̃aphala Sutta (DN 2)."

- There are many conceptions about what it feels like to be in different jhānic states. Therefore, it is good to have a description by the Buddha to get a good idea about the experience.
- It is a long sutta, and I will provide the English translation for the sutta's relevant sections. The Pāli version can be found in the link above.

2. Jhānic experiences in Ariya and anāriya jhānā may have some common features since these jhān $\bar{a}$ correspond to mental states of rūpāvacara brahma realms. However, the Buddha clearly stated that anāriya jhāna are "burdened" and not as peaceful as Ariya jhānā; see, "Tapussa Sutta (AN 9.41)Akuppā Cetovimutti."

- To get into jhāna, one must transcend (elevate one's mindset above) the sensual realms (kāma loka).
- This means one's mind needs to be devoid of any sensual thoughts (kāma rāga) and dasa akusala AND focused on thoughts of renunciation and compassion (savitakkalsavicāra). In any sutta describing the jhānic experience, there is this phrase: "So vivicceva kāmehi, vivicca akusalehi
 viharati..."
- Translated: "Withdrawn from sensuality, withdrawn from akusala thoughts, and engaged in thoughts of renunciation and compassion, he enters and remains in the first jhāna..."


## Experience in the First Jhäna

3. 'Withdrawn from sense pleasures, withdrawn from akusala thoughts, he enters and dwells in the first jhāna, which is accompanied by savitakka and savicāra (applied and sustained moral thoughts). His mind is filled with joy ( $p \bar{t} t$ ) and the whole body is suffused and filled with bodily happiness (sukha) born from withdrawal from sense pleasures ( $\boldsymbol{k} \overline{\boldsymbol{a} m a}$ ) and akusala thoughts. This rapture and happiness suffuse his entire body. (It should be noted that vitakka/vicāra or kāma and akusala thoughts are not completely removed in the first $j h \bar{a} n a$ ).

- "Great king, suppose a skilled bath attendant or his apprentice were to pour soap powder into a metal basin, sprinkle it with water, and knead it into a ball so that the ball of soap-powder be pervaded by moisture, encompassed by moisture, suffused with moisture inside and out, yet would not trickle. Similarly, the great king, the bhikkhu, drenches, steeps, saturates, and suffuses his entire body with the rapture and happiness born of seclusion. This, great king, is a visible fruit of a life abstaining from $k a ̄ m a$ and akusala.


## Experience in the Second Jhāna

4. "Further, great king, with the removal of vitakka/vicāra (but savitakka/savicāra remain), the bhikkhu enters and dwells in the second jhāna, which is accompanied by internal confidence and unification of mind, is without sensual ( $k \bar{a} m a$ ) or immoral (akusala) thoughts [vitakka and vicāra], and is filled with the rapture and happiness born of concentration. He drenches, steeps, saturates, and suffuses his body with this rapture and happiness born of concentration so that there is no part of his entire body that is not suffused by this rapture and happiness. See, "Vitakka, Vicāra, Savitakka, Savicāra, and Avitakka, Avicāra."

- "Great king, suppose there was a deep lake whose waters welled up from below. It would have no inlet for water from the east, west, north, or south, nor would it be refilled from time to time with showers of rain; yet a current of cool water, seeping through underground channels, would maintain the water level, so that the entire lake is filled to the brim. Similarly, the great king, the bhikkhu, drenches, steeps, saturates and suffuses his body with the rapture and happiness born of concentration so that his entire body is suffused with this rapture and happiness. This too, great king, is a visible fruit of a life abstaining from kāma and akusala.


## Experience in the Third Jhāna

5. "Further, great king, with the fading away of rapture ( $\boldsymbol{p} \overline{\boldsymbol{t}} \boldsymbol{i} \boldsymbol{i}$ or joy is lost), the bhikkhu dwells in equanimity, mindful and clearly comprehending, and experiences happiness with the body. Thus he enters and dwells in the third jhāna, of which the noble ones declare: 'He dwells happily with equanimity and mindfulness.' He drenches, steeps, saturates, and suffuses his body with this happiness free from rapture so that his entire body is suffused with this happiness.

- "Great king, suppose in a lotus pond there were blue, white, or red lotuses that have been born in the water, grow in the water, and never rise above the water, but flourish immersed in the water. From their tips to their roots, they would be drenched, steeped, saturated, and suffused with cool water, so that there would be no part of those lotuses not suffused with cool water. Similarly, the great king, the bhikkhu, drenches, steeps, saturates and suffuses his body with happiness free from rapture so that this happiness suffuses his entire body. This too, great king, is a visible fruit of a life abstaining from $k a ̄ m a$ and akusala.


## Experience in the Fourth Jhāna

6. "Further, great king, with the abandoning of bodily pleasure (sukha), the bhikkhu enters and dwells in the fourth $j h \bar{a} n a$, which is neither pleasant nor painful and contains mindfulness fully purified by equanimity. He sits suffusing his body with a pure bright mind so that there is no part of his entire body not suffused by a pure bright mind (one's physical body no longer is felt, and only a "white light" is discerned; that white light is the only "rūpa" left to be cognized).

- "Great king, suppose a man were to be sitting covered from the head down by a white cloth so that there would be no part of his entire body not suffused by the white cloth. In the same way, great king, the bhikkhu sits suffusing his body with a pure bright mind, so that there is no part of his entire body not suffused by a pure bright mind. This, too, is a visible fruit of a life abstaining from kāma and akusala.

The sutta now proceeds to describe what could be further accomplished by the bhikkhu.

- "With his mind thus concentrated, purified, and bright, unblemished, free from defects, pliant, malleable, steady, and attained to imperturbability, he directs and inclines it to knowledge and vision. He discerns: 'This body of mine is endowed with form, composed of the four primary elements, born from mother and father, nourished with rice and porridge, subject to inconstancy, rubbing, pressing, dissolution, and dispersion. And this consciousness of mine is supported here and bound up here.'
- In other words, the bhikkhu can now see the ādīnava (drawbacks) and the burden of carrying one's own physical body.


## Essential Background to Attain Jhāna

7. Sāmaññaphala Sutta is an excellent sutta which also discusses in detail how one can setup the necessary background to attain jhāna.

- It is too long a sutta to be discussed in a post. One could read Bhikkhu Bodhi's English translation to get a good idea: "WebLink: PDF Download: The Sāmaññaphala Sutta." It is a pdf file that one can download.

8. Also note that while the abandonment of the 10 types of micch $\bar{a}$ dittthi is needed for even anāriya jhānā.

- Ariya jhānā require a level of comprehension of Tilakkhaṇa also, and thus only Ariyā (Noble Persons) can attain them; see, "Tapussa Sutta (AN 9.41)- Akuppā Cetovimutti."


## Eventual Outcomes of Ariya and Anāriya Jhāna

9. Both types of jhāna lead to rebirth in corresponding Brahma realms. However, those with anāriya $j h \overline{a n a}$ will come back to the human realm at the end of their lifetime, and could be born in the apa $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$ in the future.

- On the other hand, those who have cultivated Ariya jhānā will never come back to kāma loka, let alone apāy $\bar{a}$. They will attain Nibbāna (Arahanthood) in Brahma realms.

10. This is clearly explained in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Pathamanānākarana Sutta (AN 4.123)" and several other sutta.

For example, regarding those who have cultivated the first anāriya jhāna: "Idha, bhikkhave, ekacco puggalo vivicceva kāmehi vivicca akusalehi dhammehi savitakkaì savicāramं vivekajaì pītisukham paṭhamaì jhānamं upasampajja viharati. So tadassādeti, taì nikāmeti, tena ca vittimim āpajjati. Tattha ṭhito tadadhimutto tabbahulavihār̄̄ aparihīno kālaì kurumāno brahmakāyikānaì devānai் sahabyataí upapajjati. Brahmakāyikānai், bhikkhave, devānai் kappo āyuppamānaì.
 khepetvā nirayampi gacchati tiracchānayonimpi gacchati pettivisayampi gacchati."

- Translated: "An individual, withdrawn from kāma rāga, withdrawn akusala, enters and remains in the first $j h a \bar{a} a$ filled with joy ( $\overline{\bar{i} t i) \text { and the whole body is suffused and filled with bodily happiness (sukha). If }}$ he does not lose the jhāna at death, he is born among the Brahmakayika devas, who have a life span of an eon. These normal humans (puthuijano), having used up all the life-span of those devas, may go to hell (niraya), to the animal realm, and the state of the hungry ghosts (peta)."

On the other hand, those who have attained the first Ariya jhāna: "Bhagavato pana sāvako tattha yāvatāyukaì ṭhatvā yāvatakaì tesaì devānaì āyuppamānaì taì sabbaì khepetvā tasmimyeva bhave parinibbāyati."

- Translated: "But a disciple of the Blessed One, having stayed there, attains Nibbāna from there."

11. The same is stated about those who have attained the second, third, and fourth anāriya jhāna. None of them is free from the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$.

- On the other hand, those who have cultivated Ariya jhāna attain Nibbāna from those corresponding Brahma realms.

12. Finally, this discussion about getting rid of (or at least suppressing) any sensual thoughts or kāma rāga may discourage those new to Buddha Dhamma.

- That should not be the case; see, "Is It Necessary for a Buddhist to Eliminate Sensual Desires?" and "Starting on the Path Even without Belief in Rebirth."


### 4.7.4 Ascendance to Nibbāna via Jhāna (Dhyāna)

October 4, 2017; \#14 revised on October 5, 2017; November 15, 2017; November 30, 2018 (including \#8); October 9, 2022

1. There are three categories: One can attain magga phala without jhāna; one can attain jhāna and not have magga phala; one can attain magga phala and then cultivate jhāna. To sort these out, one needs to understand the difference between Ariya (supramundane) and anāriya (mundane) jhāna and whether (and how) they are related to magga phala.

- In a series of posts based on material from the Tipitaka, I will try to put together a consistent picture. Please let me know (lal@puredhamma.net) if I make any mistakes because this is important to everyone.
- Even before the Buddha, ancient yogis cultivated jhāna and attained what they believed to be cetovimutti (liberation via calming the mind). But the Buddha showed that such cetovimutti is temporary; one would not attain akuppā cetovimutti (true and unshakable liberation) until Nibbāna is realized; see, "Tapussa Sutta (AN 9.41)- Akuppā Cetovimutti."
 $j h a ̄ n a$, (ii) first attaining the Sotāpanna stage and then through Ariya (supramundane) jhāna.
- Of course, there is another way to attain Nibbāna, without any jhāna, in pañ $\tilde{\boldsymbol{a}} \boldsymbol{v} \boldsymbol{v i m u t t i}$ (liberation with wisdom); see below.
- If one takes the path via Ariya jhāna, one would attain cetovimutti.This is also called akupp $\bar{a}$ cetovimutti or unshakable/unbreakable cetovimutti. That is what the Buddha attained on the night of the Enlightenment. [ubhato : [ind.] in both ways or sides; twofold.][It is also called 'unshakable deliverance of mind' (akuppa-cetovimutti) ][akuppa : [adj.] steadfast; unshakable.]
- Those yogis who attain cetovimutti via anāriya jhāna have not removed avijjā anusaya; that is why they are not liberated. Then they can be reborn in the kāma loka; see \#4 below.

3. As the table below shows, the level of suffering decreases AND levels of both mundane and nirāmisa sukha increase as one moves successively to higher realms.

- In the post, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma - Introduction," we described a model that consisted of 31 concentric "shells." The actuality is close to that analogy, with some additional features. I have compiled a summary of the 31 realms in the " 31 Realms of Existence" table.
- From those posts, it is clear that as one goes from the apāyā through higher kāma loka to rūpa loka and finally to arūpa loka, attachments to "this world" get weaker AND actual suffering decreases too.
- It seems that the highest arūpa realm is quite close to Nibbāna. In a way it is —but technically it is far away too.

4. Yogis like Āḷāra Kālāma and Uddakarāmaputta, who had attained the highest arūpa jhānā at the time of the Buddha, believed that the highest arūpavacara state was Nibbāna (or final release, vimutti). Indeed, at that highest realm of Ne'va sañ̃ña n $\bar{a} \operatorname{san} \tilde{n} \bar{a}$, connection to "this world" is ALMOST cutoff, and one can experience the "highest bliss" that can be attained without realizing Nibbāna.

- The Buddha (or rather the Bodhisattva), who learned to attain those highest jhānā from those yogis, realized that all living beings had attained those states many times in the rebirth process, and that is not the end of suffering.
- He realized that until one completely removes all ten samisāric bonds (see, "Dasa Samyojana - Bonds in Rebirth Process '", one will never be free of ANY of the 31 realms. As discussed in that post, one SUCCESSIVELY and PERMANENTLY leaves the lowest realms (apāyā), higher kāma loka realms, and then $r \bar{u} p a$ and $a r u \bar{u} p a$ realms by breaking those bonds (samyojana) few at a time (by following the Noble Path).

5. However, one can TEMPORARILY enjoy the highest arūpa realms existence by cultivating even the corresponding MUNDANE $j h a \bar{n} a$, i.e., those attained without removing ANY samiyojana.

- For example, while we live in this human realm we are not subjected to the harsh sufferings in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$, and we can enjoy the sensory pleasures, mixed in with some suffering.
- In the same way, when one is born in the rūpa realms, one will not be subjected to the sufferings in the human realm, and the suffering is even less going from $r \bar{u} p a$ to arūpa realms.
- However, since no samiyojana are broken, one can be reborn in any of the realms in the future (just like an average human can be born in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$ in the future).

6. The easiest way to understand jhānic states is to examine the properties of the ru$p a$ and aru$p a$ realms compared to those of the lower realms. The following table can be useful here.

| Realm(s) | Level of Suffering | Causes | Generation/Stopping of Sañkhāra |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Niraya (Hell) | Incessant suffering | Dosa: Killing (especially humans), torture, rapes, etc |  |
| Peta (Hungry Ghosts) | Starvation | Excess greed (may I get all, not others) |  |
| Vinipāta Asura | Spend time aimlessly; mostly heavy bodies not movable | Moha: Thina middha, vicikicchā (lazy, lacking wisdom). |  |
| Animal (Tirisan: "tiri" + "san" or with all 3 causes) | Combinations of above three types | Combinations of lobha, dosa, moha |  |
| Human (Manussa: "mana" + "ussa" or with advanced mind) | In between lower and higher realms | In between lower and higher realms | Almost all sañkhāra responsible births in all realms occur here. |
| Deva (similar to human bodies, but much less dense) | Mostly no physical suffering and abundant sense pleasures ( $k \bar{a} m a$ ). But there is mental stress. | Good kamma vipāka (done with alobha, adosa, amoha). Mental stress arises due to kāma rāga. |  |
| Rūpāvacara Brahma (only manomaya kāya; cannot be even seen with a microscope) | Mental stress is much reduced. Mainly jhānic pleasures. Viparin̄āma dukha when close death. | Suppression of kāma rāga and cultivation of rūpāvacara jhāna (while in the human realm) |  |
| Arūpāvacara Brahma (only hadaya vatthu and mind) | Only arupavacara jhānic pleasures. Viparin̄āma dukha when close death. | Cultivation of arūpāvacara jhāna (while in the human realm) |  |
| Nibbāna | Permanent release from all suffering. | Elimination of all causes for existence, i.e., rāgakkhaya, dosakkhaya, mohakkhaya. | Mostly attained in the human realm, but possible in higher realms, especially after the Sotāpanna stage. |

7. If you look at any sutta describing Ariya jhāna, it always starts with verse, "..bhikkhu vivicceva kāmehi vivicca akusalehi dhammehi savitakkaiं savicāraì vivekajaì pītisukhaì paṭhamaì jhānamं upasampajja viharati.."

We can see why the above table is helpful in understanding how one gets to jhānā by first abstaining from akusala kamma (vivicca akusalehi dhammehi) and then kāma rāga (vivicceva kāmehi).

- Until one abstains from akusala kamma, one has no hope of escaping the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$. Here abstaining does not mean complete removal.
- Until one overcomes kāma rāga, one has no hope of escaping the kāma loka and ascending to the rūpavacara realms.
- However, one does not need to REMOVE kāma rāga (with anusaya) to attain mundane (anāriya) $j h a \bar{n} a$, even up to the highest in the arūpa loka. This is why Alara Kalama and Uddaka Rama Putta, who are in the arūpa realms right now, could even be reborn in the apāya in future lives.
- All one needs to do is to have the mind focused on a neutral object to make it free of akusala thoughts and kāma rāga while in the jhāna.

8. We can summarize the above conclusions in the following way:

- One frequently engaged in akusala kamma is LIKELY to be born in the four lowest realms (apāyā).
- One who is frequently engaged in kusala kamma, AND avoids akusala kamma, but has $k \bar{a} m a c c h a n d a$, is LIKELY to be born in the human or the deva realms.
- One who abstains from akusala kamma and kāmacchanda, can cultivate rūpavacara or arūpavacara jhāna. Since they are mahaggata kusala kamma (mahaggata means higher), one WILL be reborn in rūpa or arūpa loka at the death of this physical body BEFORE the next cuti-paṭisandhi transition. Getting to even an anāriya jhāna is ānantarika kamma.
- However, if it is an anāriya jhāna, one has not been released from the apāy $\bar{a}$, since one has not removed avijjā by comprehending Tilakkhaṇa.

9. If one can stay away from akusala and suppress kāma rāga, one's mind AUTOMATICALLY moves to higher mental states. In other words, one starts feeling jhānic pleasures ("sañkhāra paccay $\bar{a}$ viññāna").

- When striving to discard kāma rāga, one is said to be cultivating mahaggata kusala kamma. Here one goes beyond mundane moral actions (puñña kamma) of giving, helping, etc, and loses (or suppresses) craving for kāma rāga.
- Therefore, while kusala kamma leads to rebirth in higher kāma loka (human and deva realms), mahaggata kusala kamma leads to rebirth in rūpa and arūpa loka. One, of course, experiences those jhānic states in this life.
- The jhānic experiences experienced by yogis correspond to various rūpa and arūpa realms; see, " 31 Realms of Existence." It is like one is born in the corresponding Brahma realm for the duration of the jhānic experience.

10. Mahaggata kusala kamma can be cultivated using Ariya (supramundane) or anāriya (mundane) meditation techniques, and get to the same mental states (the difference is in how one gets there and how permanent those states are).

- It is easy to see that the key to cultivating the first mundane $j h a \bar{a} a$ is to stay away from akusala and suppress sense cravings. Then one's mind will automatically point to the first rūpavacara mental state, i.e., the first $j h a \overline{n a}$.

11. One can get to the first anāriya jhāna by focusing on a fixed mundane object (breath or a kasiṇa object).

- When one does this for long periods and also abstains from sensual pleasures (like ancient yogis did), one can get into the first $j h \bar{a} n a$, followed by successively higher $j h \bar{a} n a$, when one practices for longer times.
- Conventional breath meditation is a kasiña meditation, since it focuses on the breath.

12. This is how all living beings in the lower realms get into the Abhassara Brahma realm when our world system (Cakkavata) is destroyed in a "loka vināsaya." When the Sun starts heating up, fine sense objects start being destroyed, and less sensual objects will be there to trigger kāma rāga. All humans and animals will move to higher realms (over an antakkappa which lasts billions of years).

- When the human and animal realms are destroyed, all those beings would be reborn in the first rūpa realms. When that is gradually destroyed, they will be reborn in the next higher realm and so on, until they are all in the Abhassara realm.
- Even though all dense material realms are destroyed at the destruction of the Sun and the Earth [loka vinasaya], all rūpa and arūpa realms at or above the Abhassara realm remain intact. When the Solar system is "re-formed" after billions of years, they all gradually come down to lower realms. See "Buddhism and Evolution - Aggañña Sutta (DN 27)."
- Just like none of those living beings had removed their anusaya (or broken the samyojana), one engaged in mundane $\boldsymbol{j} h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$ has not removed them either.

13. On the other hand, one gets to the first Ariya jhāna by focusing on the "cooling down" (Nibbāna) that one has seen. This is normally done by reciting/contemplating the verse "etaim santaim etaì pañ̄tai் ...", and also recalling one's own experience of Nibbāna (cooling down).

The best example from the Tipitaka is Ven. Moggallana. We all know that Ven. Moggallana (Kolita before becoming a bhikkhu), attained the Sotāpanna stage upon hearing a single verse by Ven. Assaji and then conveyed to him by Upatissa.

- Then Kolita (and Upatissa) went to see the Buddha and were ordained. It took them a week to two weeks to attain Arahanthood. The WebLink: suttacentral: Moggallana Samyutta in the Samyutta Nikāya has nine suttā that describe step-by-step how Ven. Moggallana attained Ariya jhānā one by one starting with the first Ariya jh $\bar{a} n a$. Thus it is quite clear that the Sotāpanna stage comes before any Ariya (supramundane) jhāna.
- In particular, the very first sutta there describes how the Buddha came to him by iddhi bala and encouraged him to cultivate the first Ariya jhāna (WebLink: suttacentral: Pathamajhāna Pañhā Sutta; SN 40.1): "..Atha kho maim, āvuso, bhagavā iddhiyā upasañkamitvā etadavoca: 'moggallāna, moggallāna. Mā, brāhmaṇa, paṭhamaì jhānam pamādo, paṭhame jhāne cittaí sanṭhapehi, paṭhame jhāne cittaì ekodim karohi, paṭhame jhāne cittaim samādahā'ti.." OR "..the Buddha came to me by iddhi bala and told me: Moggallana, Moggallana, Brahmana, do not become delayed, cultivate the first $j h a \bar{a} n a . . . "$
- The subsequent suttā in the Moggallana Samyutta describe how the Buddha instructed him through each successive rūpavacara and arūpavacara jhāna up to nirodha samāpatti, where Ven. Moggallana developed all iddhi bala and became second only to the Buddha in supernormal powers.

14. Thus, one needs to be at least a Sotāpanna to start cultivating Ariya jhāna. However, one will truly be in the first Ariya jhāna only when one has REMOVED kāma rāga; see, for example, "WebLink: suttacentral: Jhāna Sutta (Anguttara Nikāya 9.36)." We will discuss this in detail in the next post.

- This means one is essentially an Anāgāmī by the time one is fully absorbed in the first Ariya jhāna. But a Sotāpanna could be in the vicinity of the first Ariya jhāna. There are three levels for a given jhāna: hīna (weak), majjhima (middle), and panīta (strong).
- After that one gets to higher Ariya jhānā by doing vipassana (insight meditation) on the anicca nature of that $j h \bar{a} n a$ that one is already in, i.e., by eliminating successive $\boldsymbol{j} h \bar{a} n a$ factors OR one may be able to attain Nibbāna directly form there; see, "WebLink: suttacentral: Sallekha Sutta (Majihim Nikāya 8)."
- Since any jhāna is associated with either a rūpa realm or an arūpa realm, those states are subject to the anicca nature, just like everything else that belongs to this world of 31 realms.

15. Those who have higher wisdom can attain even the Arahant stage before getting to any jhāna or from lower Ariya or anāriya jhāna; they are called paññāvimutti Arahants. They may cultivate (Ariya) jhāna after the Arahanthood to seek relief until the end of their current life. Jhānic pleasures are the only "pleasures" recommended by the Buddha; of course, they are not sensory pleasures belonging to kāma loka.

- It is said that those Arahants can cultivate all Ariya jhāna (and become cetovimutti as well) and then get into nirodha samāpatti, where complete Nibbānic bliss can be experienced for up to 7 days at a time.
- Such Arahants are called "liberated both ways" or ubhatovimutti.

16. A question arises as to whether one can get into anāriya jhāna while cultivating Ariya jhāna, i.e. while following kammatthāna that are based on contemplating the Tilakkhana and taking Nibbāna as the $\bar{a} r a m m a n a$. The unknown factor here is whether the meditator is really focused on those things.

- Therefore, that is a question that can be answered only by the person in question. Just because one is reciting Ariya kammatthana does not necessarily mean one will get to Ariya jhāna. What matters is whether one has attained the Sotāpanna stage first, because one needs to keep Nibbāna as the ärammaṇa, not a worldly object (even light).
- We know that Devadatta, who had cultivated anāriya jhāna AND attained iddhi powers, finally ended up in an apāya. Even though he had been exposed to the correct interpretation of Tilakkhaña, he had not grasped them
- I will discuss more on this in the next post, where I will present evidence from the Tipitaka to clarify things.

17. However, anāriya jhāna cannot be labeled as "bad." They are higher mental states, and those who have cultivated anāriya jhāna will have an easier time attaining magga phala. One needs to contemplate the anicca nature of $j h a \overline{n i c}$ states.

- One can attain any magga phala up to full Nibbāna (Arahanthood) from the vicinity of ANY of the anāriya jhāna. This is how the 89 citt $\bar{a}$ become 121 citt $\bar{a}$; see, "The 89 (121) Types of Citta."
- When it is said, "from the vicinity of ANY of the anāriya jhāna," that includes the vicinity of the first mundane jhāna, i.e., just upacara samādhi. This is why jhānā are not NECESSARY to attain magga phala, and it is "Sammā Samādhi" in the Noble Eightfold Path that gets to Sammā Ñāna and Sammā Vimutti (i.e., Arahanthood).

18. The critical question is "If mundane and supramundane $j h \bar{a} n a$ seem to have similar characteristics that one feels, then how does one determine whether one has attained mundane or supramundane jhāna?

- As we saw above, one gets to the first Ariya jhāna by REMOVING kāma rāga, not just by suppressing as in anāriya jhāna, i.e., one is essentially an Anāgāmī if one can be fully absorbed in the first Ariya jhāna.
- While it may not be straightforward to determine whether one is a Sotāpanna or not, it is fairly easy to determine whether one is an Anāgāmí, who has removed all kāma rāga: one's CRAVING for ALL sense pleasures (food, music, sex, etc) should not be there anymore. This DOES NOT mean, for example, one should not eat tasty foods, or that one will not taste the sweetness of sugar. But one will not have the urge to drink or to engage in sex, for example.

19. Finally, a common problem is that some people get attached to mundane jhānic pleasures and get trapped there (for some, even a state of calmness is enough!). They must realize that anāriya (mundane) jhānic states also belong to this world. Until those bonds to a given realm in this world are removed, one would remain in the rebirth process (and thus, future suffering in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$ is not eliminated). We have attained the highest anāriya jhānā numerous times in our deep past.

- Those who can easily get into anāriya (mundane) jhāna, can do so most likely because they had cultivated $j h a \bar{n} a$ in recent lives, possibly in the current human bhava.
- Furthermore, those who cannot get into even anāriya (mundane) jhāna, should not be concerned. It could just be that they had not cultivated jhāna in recent births. As discussed above, jhānā are not necessary to attain magga phala. Thus, some people may have even attained the Sotāpanna stage, but may be stressed unnecessarily because of their inability to get into jhāna.

The basic layout was presented in this post. We will get into details in the upcoming posts.

### 4.7.5 Paññāvimutti - Arahanthood without Jhāna

September 12, 2018; revised February 24, 2019
[paññāvimutti : [f.] emancipation through insight.][WebLink: suttacentral: Paññāvimutti Sutta (AN 9:44)]

1. One could get to magga phala without ever going through jhāna. The Noble Eightfold Path, at its completion, takes one to Sammā Samādhi. Then one becomes an Arahant by completing the next two steps - Sammā Nāana and Sammā Vimutti - to become an Arahant.

This is stated clearly in the WebLink: suttacentral: Mahā Cattārīika Sutta (Majjhima Nikāya 117): "..Tatra, bhikkhave, sammādiṭṭhi pubbañgamā hoti. Kathañca, bhikkhave, sammādiṭthi pubbañgamā hoti? Sammādiṭṭhissa, bhikkhave, sammāsaǹkappo pahoti, sammāsañkappassa sammā $\mathbf{v a} c \bar{a}$ pahoti, sammāvācassa sammākammanto pahoti, sammākammantassa sammāājīvo pahoti, sammāāj̄̄vassa sammāvāyāmo pahoti, sammāvāyāmassa sammāsati pahoti, sammāsatissa sammāsamādhi pahoti, sammāsamādhissa sammāñānamin pahoti, sammāñānassa sammāvimutti pahoti. Iti kho, bhikkhave, aṭthañgasamannāgato sekkho, dasañgasamannāgato Arahā hoti. Tatrapi sammāñānena aneke pāpakā akusalā dhammā vigatā bhāvanāpāripūrim gacchanti.."

- Thus the Noble Path starts with Sammā Ditthi and gets to Sammā Samādhi, at which point one is said to have completed 8 steps and is still a sekkha (in training): atṭhangasamannāgato sekkho.
- Then one fully comprehends the real nature with $\operatorname{Samma} \overline{\operatorname{N}} \tilde{a} n a$ and attains full release or $\operatorname{Samma} \bar{a}$ Vimutti (Arahantship). Now, one has completed all 10 steps and is no longer in training (dasañgasamannāgato Arahā hoti).

2. Each and every one of us have had attained anāriya jhāna in many births during our deep past. Thus attaining a jhāna is insignificant compared to attaining a magga phala.

- It is also clear that even a Sotāpanna Anugāmi is million-fold better than one with not just the ability to get into jhāna, but even abhiññā powers, including the ability to travel through the air, create things by mind power, etc.
- Attaining $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$ can sometimes become a hindrance since many people get attached to $j h \bar{a} n a$ and stop making an effort towards magga phala, which is sad to see.

3. It takes time to cultivate jhāna, especially for those who had not cultivated them in recent past lives. People who have high wisdom (paññā) may attain magga phala (even Arahanthood) within a very short time, and they are called pañ $\tilde{a}$ äimutti Arahants or "wisdom-liberated." Bahiya Daruchiriya, who attained Arahantship upon listening to a single verse by the Buddha is a good example; see, "WebLink: suttacentral: Bahiya Sutta (Udāna 1.10)."

- There are many who got to magga phala without ever getting to a jhāna. Alavaka Yaksa, Upatissa, Kolita, Anggulimāla, minister Santati, and many others attained various stages of Nibbāna by just listening to a single desanā.
- The Susima Sutta, also called "WebLink: suttacentral: Susimaparibbājaka Sutta (Samyutta Nikāya 12.70)" discusses a group of Arahants who were paññāvimutti Arahants.
- In that sutta, the Buddha explained to Susima that there are Arahants without any supernormal (iddhi) powers, because they were paññāvimutti Arahants. Once attaining Arahanthood, they have no desire to cultivate iddhi (abhiññā) powers, since they have seen the anicca nature of those powers too.

4. In some exceptional cases, one may simultaneously gain abhiññā powers together with the Arahanthood, within a very short time.

- There are many who got to magga phala without ever getting to a jhāna. Alavaka Yaksa, Upatissa, kolita, Angulimāla, minister Santati, and many others attained various stages of Nibbāna by just listening to a single desanā. The account of Santati can be found at: "WebLink: tipitaka.net: Dhammapada Verse 142."
- Another prominent example in the Tipitaka is the story about the Culapanthaka Thero. He almost disrobed because he could not even memorize a single gāthā after trying hard for months. But with Buddha's help, he was able to attain the Arahanthood in a day, and simultaneously achieved abhiñ $\tilde{\bar{a}} \bar{a}$ powers as well: "WebLink: suttacentral.net: Cūlapanthaka."

5. Some argue that WebLink: suttacentral: Sacca Vibhañga Sutta (MN 141) states that Sammā Samādhi is attained ONLY WHEN one attains the first four $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$. This is not correct. All one needs to do is to get to the vicinity of to ANY of those four $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$ (thus one could get to the upcāra samādhi for the first $j h \bar{a} n a$, for example), and attain magga phala from there.

- Here is the relevant verse from the above sutta: "..Katamo cāvuso, sammāsamādhi? Idhāvuso, bhikkhu vivicceva kāmehi vivicca akusalehi dhammehi savitakkaì savicāraì vivekajaì pītisukhaì paṭhamaì jhānaì upasampajja viharati, vitakkavicārānaì vūpasamā ajjhattaì sampasādanamं cetaso ekodibhāvaì avitakkaì avicāraì samādhijaín pītisukhaín dutiyain jhānaì upasampajja viharati, pītiyā ca virāgā upekkhako ca viharati ... pe ... tatiyamं jhānà் ... pe ... catutthamं jhānaì upasampajja viharati, ayamं vuccatāvuso: 'sammāsamādhi'..."
- The key is "upasampajja viharati," which means one stays close to any one of those jhāna ("upa" means close or in the vicinity), which means one can either get to that jhāna or can get to upcāra samādhi for that $j h \bar{a} n a$. This is why it is not labelled as "Sammā Jhāna" but "Sammā Samādhi."
- This becomes clear when you analyze how 89 types of citta become 121 citta, as explained below.

6. The 89 (or 121) citta existing in the 31 realms are discussed in "The 89 (121) Types of Citta."

- There are 54 citta that could arise mainly in the kamavacara realms; 15 and 12 citta respectively mainly arise in the rupāvacara and arupāvacara realms respectively. The total so far is 81 citta
- Without going through any jhāna at all, there are 8 citta associated with the attainment of the four stages of Nibbāna ( 4 magga citta and 4 phala citta). Then the total number of citta is $81+8=89$.
- Now, one can attain each magga phala from the vicinity of 5 rupāvacara jhāna. For example, the Arahanthood can be reached from the vicinity of each of those five jhāna. Thus in this case, the total number of citta becomes $81+40=121$.
- It is to be noted that the five $\boldsymbol{j} h \bar{a} n a$ in the terminology of $A b h i d h a m m a$ are the same as $\mathbf{4} \boldsymbol{j} h \bar{a} n a$ in the terminology of the suttia; the first jhāna in sutta terminology is split into two in Abhidhamma.

7. In Anhidhamma, the above explanation becomes even more clear when one looks at the citta vīthi to attain a magga phala):

## B B B B B "BC BU MD P U A G M P P" B B B B B.....

where, $\mathrm{B}=$ bhavañga, BC (bhavañga calana), BU (bhavañga upacceda), $\mathrm{MD}=\operatorname{mind}$ door, $\mathrm{P}=$ parikamma, $\mathbf{U}=$ upacāra, $\mathbf{A}=$ anuloma, $\mathbf{G}=$ gotrabhu (change of lineage), $\mathbf{M}=$ magga citta, $\mathrm{P}=$ phala citta. [Here, "anu" means "through the understanding of Tilakkhana," "lo" means "craving for worldly things," and "ma" means "removal," and thus "anuloma" means "removal of craving for worldly things to some extent via the comprehension of Tilakkhana."]

- So, there is no jhāna citta preceding the magga or phala citta in the citta vīthi for a magga phala. Once one gets to the upacāra samādhi, it goes through anuloma and gotrabhu (change of lineage) to the magga and phala citta. This is why upacāra samādhi (which is Sammā Samādhi) is enough to attain even the Arahanthood.

8. On the other hand, a citta vīthi to attain a jhāna:

B B B B B "BC BU MD P U A G J" B B B B B.....
where, $\mathbf{J}=\boldsymbol{j} h \bar{a} n a$ citta .

- Note that upacāra citta for jhāna is different from upacāra citta for magga phala, even though they are represented by the same symbol normally. upacāra means "close", either to the jhāna or to magga phala, which are two different attainments. As we discussed earlier, jhāna are associated with "this world" and magga phala are associated with Nibbāna.
- Gotrabhu (change of lineage) citta is the one that induce either a magga phala or a jhāna, and those are two very different changes: jhāna is just change of lineage to one of the 31 realms, whereas magga phala is to be dissociate from the 31 realms.
- For a discussion on citta vīthi, see, "Citta Vithi - Processing of Sense Inputs."

9. There is another piece of strong evidence from the Tipiṭaka that one does not need to attain even the first Ariya jhāna in order to attain the Sotāpanna stage. We all know that Ven.Moggallana (who was Kolita before becoming a bhikkhu), attained the Sotāpanna stage upon hearing a single verse uttered by Ven. Assaji.

- Then Kolita (and Upatissa) went to see the Buddha and were ordained. It took them a week to two weeks to attain the Arahanthood. The WebLink: suttacentral: Moggallana Samyutta in the Samyutta Nikāya has 9 suttā that describe step-by-step how Ven. Moggallana attained Ariya jhānā one by one starting with the first Ariya jhāna. This is conclusive evidence that one does not need to attain any Ariya jhāna before attaining even the Sotāpanna stage.
- In particular, the very first sutta there describes how the Buddha came to him by iddhi bala and encouraged him to cultivate the first Ariya jhāna (WebLink: suttacentral: Pathamajhāna Pañhā Sutta; SN 40.1): "..Atha kho maìn, āvuso, bhagavā iddhiyā upasañkamitvā etadavoca: 'moggallāna, moggallāna. Mā, brāhmaṇa, paṭhamaì jhānaì pamādo, paṭhame jhāne cittaì saṇthapehi, paṭhame jhāne cittaì ekodim karohi, paṭhame jhāne cittaì samādahā'ti.." OR "..the Buddha came to me by iddhi bala and told me: Moggallana, Moggallana, Brahmana, do not become delayed, cultivate the first jhāna..."
- The subsequent suttā in the Moggallana Samyutta describe how the Buddha instructed him through each successive rupāvacara and arupāvacara jhānā, where Ven. Moggallana developed all iddhi bala and became second only to the Buddha in supernormal powers; see, "Ascendance to Nibbāna via Jhāna (Dhyāna)."

10. Therefore, one could get to the higher stages of Nibbāna via two paths.

- One could cultivate $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$ and attain successively higher $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$ by comprehending the anicca nature of those $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$ (as we mentioned above, they still belong to this world), and REMOVING successive jhāna factors.
- I will write more about this in the future, but the point is that those jhānic states are still subjected to both the sañkhāra dukkha and the viparināma dukkha, even though exempt from dukkha dukkha temporarily.
- The second path does not require jhāna; Sammā Samādhi is enough. For those with higher levels of wisdom (pañña), higher stages of Nibbāna can be arrived without going through jhāna.

11. The second path is discussed in the WebLink: suttacentral: Kimatthiya Sutta (Añguttara Nikāya 11.1). Here one can start with comprehending dukkha, which leads to Nibbāna via the following steps: saddhā, piti, passadhi, sukha, samādhi, yathabhutananadassana, nibbida, viraga, and to vimutti; see, "WebLink: suttacentral: Upanisa Sutta (Samyutta Nikāya 12.23)."

- When one starts with lokuttara Sammā Ditṭhi and follows the ariyakānta sīla (Sammā Vaca, Sammā Kammanta, Sammā Ajiva), one will automatically get to Sammā Vāyāma, Sammā Sati and Sammā Samādhi (these three path factors constitute Samādhi). By the way, Sammā Ditṭhi and Sammā Sañkappa constitute pañ̃̄̄̄. So, the sequence is pañ̃̄̄a, silla, samādhi.
- That Sammā Samādhi is all one needs to get to Sammā Ñāna (ultimate wisdom) and Sammā Vimutti (ultimate release) and thus to attain the Arahanthood; fulfiling all ten factors lead to the Arahanthood ("dasahangehi samannagato").

12. One time a bhikkhuni asked Ven. Ānanda: ".. 'yāyami, bhante ānanda, samādhi na cābhinato na cāpanato na ca sasañkhāraniggayhavāritagato, vimuttattā ṭhito, ṭhitattā santusito, santusitattā no paritassati. Ayamं, bhante ānanda, samādhi kimphalo vutto bhagavatā 'ti?," OR
"bhante annanda, I have this samādhi which is stable, without defilements, contented, joyful, and without agitation. What did the Blessed One call this samādhi?"

Ven. Ānanda replied: ".. 'yāyami, bhagini, samādhi na cābhinato na cāpanato na ca sasañkhāraniggayhavāritagato, vimuttattā ṭhito, ṭhitattā santusito, santusitattā no paritassati. Ayamं, bhagini, samādhi aññāphalo vutto bhagavatā'ti. Evainsaññ̄̄i kho, āvuso, tadāyatanain no pațisainvedetī"ti,"OR,
'Yes, bhikkhnuni, there is such a samādhi. The Blessed One called it Arahant phala samādhi that is without any defilements."

- This is in the WebLink: suttacentral: Ānanda Sutta (Anguttara Nikāya 9.37). She was an Arahant and she did not even realize that!
- That samādhi, is tadāyatana or Nibbāna; see, "Nibbāna "Exists", but Not in This World."


### 4.7.6 Mundane versus Supramundane Jhāna

## October 12, 2017; revised February 9, 2018; June 8, 2018; June 17, 2022; August 17, 2022

Here we will discuss three key suttā from the Tipiṭaka to resolve controversial arguments about mundane (anāriya) and supramundane (Ariya) jhāna. I would appreciate any comments (la@@puredhamma.net) pointing out any errors in my analysis or suggestions.

- February 28, 2019: I have found several Tipitaka references to anāriya jhāna, and a short one is discussed at the end. The post, "Tapussa Sutta (AN 9.41)- Akuppā Cetovimutti" clearly explains the difference between Ariya and anāriya jhāna.
- It is interesting to note that some suttā do not specifically label jhāna as Ariya or anāriya. One has to read a given sutta carefully to figure out which jhāna are discussed, but the conclusion always is that anāriya jhāna are worthless by themselves unless used as a platform to attain magga phala; see, "Samādhi, Jhāna, Magga Phala - Introduction."
- June 8, 2018: Some suttā discuss the critical differences; see "Pathama Mettā Sutta." As can be seen in this sutta, a Sotāpanna can cultivate anāriya jhāna (i.e., without removing kāma rāga) and be born in lower Brahma realms. However, unlike those with anāriya jhāna without magga phala, that person will not return to kāma loka.

1. The main characteristics and purposes of Ariya (supermundane) jhāna are described in detail in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Jhāna Sutta (Añguttara Nikāya 9.36)." The English translation (WebLink: suttacentral: Mental Absorption) at that site is not good, so that I will translate most of the sutta here.
 course, anicca and anatta are translated incorrectly there too.

- I will use key Pāli terms without translating since anyone reading the post will likely understand them. I think that would make it easier to read.

2. Now, I will translate the sutta, and the numbers below correspond to the paragraphs in the Pāli version: "WebLink: suttacentral: Jhāna Sutta (Añguttara Nikāya 9.36)."
\#1. Bhikkhus, I will state the removal of $\overline{\text { asava }}$ (mental fermentations) via the first $j h \bar{a} n a$, second jhāna, third jhāna, fourth jhāna, ākāsānañcāyatana, viññānañcāyatana, ākiñcañ̃̄̄̄yatana, nevasañn̄̄̄nāsañn̄āyatana, saññāvedayitanirodha (the last four are the arūpavacara jhānic states). Also, I have minimized wording to keep the paragraph short, just giving the meaning. [āsava: mental effluent, pollutant, or fermentation, (lit: influxes), 'cankers', taints, corruption's, intoxicant biases. There is a list of four (as in D. 16, Pts. M. , Vibh.): the canker of (wrong) views (dittthāsava), of sense-desire (kāmāsava), of (desiring eternal) existence (bhavāsava), and of ignorance (avijjāsava).]

- Thus the main purpose of jhānic states is to do insight meditation and remove āsava, not to enjoy that jhānic "pleasure" or relief. Nibbāna is attained via the removal of āsava: "The Way to Nibbāna Removal of Āsavas."
- There is a lot of important information in the next paragraph.
\#2. Bhikkhus, I surely declare the removal of $\bar{a} s a v a$ (mental fermentations) via the first jhāna. On account of what do I say that? A bhikkhu abstaining from sense pleasures (vivicceva kāmehi), abstaining from akusala, arrives in the vicinity of the first jhāna (upasampajja viharati). He thus contemplates the anicca nature (aniccato), dukkha nature (dukkhato), disease-ridden nature (rogato), cancer-like nature (gandato), arrow-like nature (sallato), painful (aghato), danger-ridden (ābādhato), alien (parato), subject to destruction (palokato), an empty (suñ̃̃ato), not-fruitful and leading to helplessness (anatto) OF rūpa, vedanā, sañ̃̄a, sañkhāra, viññāna (rūpagataì vedanāgataì sañn̄āgataì sañkhārāgataì viññānagataì). He turns his mind away from those phenomena and, having done so, inclines his mind to
 taṇhäkkhayo virāgo nirodho nibbānan'ti. ["It is peaceful, it is serene, the expelling of all sañkhāra, breaking of bonds, removing greed and hate; Nibbāna.'] Thus he gets rid of āsava. If he does not complete the removal of āsava, he would remove the first five sainyojana and thus will be born opapātika (in brahma loka) and attain parinibbāna there and will not return to this world (No ce āsavānaì khayaì pāpunāti, teneva dhammarāgena tāya dhammanandiyā pañcannaì orambhāgiyānai் samiyojanānaì parikkhayā opapātiko hoti tattha parinibbāȳ̄ anāvattidhammo tasmā lokā).
- Thus one cannot attain Ariya jhāna without comprehending anicca, dukkha, and anatta nature of the pañcakkhandha.
- The common verse, "..(pathamam) jhānam upasampajja viharati.." is commonly translated as, "..enters and remains in the (first) jhāna..." However, "upasampajja viharati" ("upa" + "san" + "pajja") means "abiding in the vicinity of clarifying and removing 'san""; of course 'san' are lobha, dosa, moha or āsava. The prefix "upa" means "near or close." For example, "upasampadä" ("upa" + "san" + "padā") means a bhikkhu has advanced and is getting close to "sorting out 'san"" and thus to magga phala.
－Now，let us recapture the three important steps in the above paragraph：First，one gets to the $j h a ̄ n a$ by contemplating on a long list of faults（ $\bar{a} d \overline{i n} a v a$ ）of the five aggregates rūpa，vedan $\bar{a}$ ，sañña $\bar{a}$ ， sañkhāra，viññāna that make up one＇s world；see，＂The Five Aggregates （Pañcakkhandha）．＂［ādīnava：m．過患，患難，過失，危難．bad consequences（suffering），difficult and dangerous situation（trouble），fault（inadvertent［not resulting from or achieved through deliberate planning］mistakes），danger and disaster（distress）］
－Once one gets to the vicinity of the first jhāna，one can intensify it and be fully absorbed in it by contemplating the relief that is already seen：＇etaì santaì etaì pañ̄̄taì yadidam sabbasañkhārasamatho sabbūpadhipaṭinissaggo taṇhākkhayo virāgo nirodho nibbānan＇ti．This is the extra effort involved in cultivating the jhāna versus pañ$\tilde{\boldsymbol{n}} \boldsymbol{a} \boldsymbol{v i m u t t i}$ path．［It is peacefil，it is serene，the expelling of all sañkhāra，breaking of bonds，removing greed and hate；Nibbāna．］
－Thirdly，one can get to the higher jhāna by again contemplating the faults（ādinava）of the five aggregates．
\＃3．＂Bhikkhus，an archer or archer＇s apprentice，were to practice on a straw man or mound of clay，after a while，he would become able to shoot long distances，to fire accurate shots in rapid succession，and pierce great masses；in the same way，a bhikkhu abstaining from sensuality，abstaining from akusala，arrives in the vicinity（upasampajja）of the first jhāna．＂
－The rest is essentially the same as in \＃2 above from that point onward about how āsava are removed by contemplating those faults（ādinava）of the five aggregates，to the following confirmation statement at the end of the paragraph to emphasize the following：＂Bhikkhus，I surely declare removal of āsava（mental fermentations）via the first jhāna．＂
\＃4．This paragraph repeats the same paragraph of \＃2 above，for the second，third，and fourth jhāna．It is interesting that even at the fourth jhāna，one could only be guaranteed to become an Anāgāmī．However，as mentioned in \＃2，one could attain Arahanthood even from the first jhāna if all āsava are removed．That holds for any jhāna through the fourth．
\＃5．The same verse as \＃3 is repeated for the second，third，and fourth $j h a \bar{a} a$ ，with the paragraph ending，
＂．．Bhikkhus，I surely declare the removal of āsava（mental fermentations）via the fourth jhāna．＂
\＃6 ，\＃7．The paragraphs in \＃2 and \＃3 for the first jhāna are now repeated for the first arūpāvacara jhāna： ākāsānañcāyatana．
\＃8，\＃9．The paragraphs in \＃2 and \＃3 for the first jhāna are now repeated for the second and third arūpāvacara jhāna：viññāṇañcāyatana and $\bar{a} k i n ̃ c a n ̃ \tilde{n} a ̄ y a t a n a$ ．Again，it is interesting that even at such higher arūpāvacara jhānā，one could only be guaranteed to become an Anāgāmī．
\＃10．＂As for the two sañn̄̄asamāpatti āyatana－nevasaññā n̄̄ sañn̄āyatana samāpatti and saññ̄̄̄vedayitanirodho－they remove $\bar{a} s a v a$ and will lead to the faultless state of Nibbāna．＂
－Thus if one gets to the highest arūpāvacara Ariya jhāna，one will attain the Arahantship，and also will be able to get to nirodha samāpatti（saññ̄avedayitanirodho）．

3．That is，in essence，the complete sutta，which provides many key insights that have been hidden surprisingly．I almost fell off my chair when I first read it．I am unsure how and why modern translators failed to understand the importance of this sutta．
－Then I started reading more sutt $\bar{a}$ and realized that these key pieces of information are in many other suttā．See，for example，＂WebLink：suttacentral：Cūla Vvedalla Sutta（MN 44）＂AND＂WebLink： suttacentral：Kāvyagatāsati Sutta（MN 119）．＂

4．We can learn a lot of key aspects of Ariya jhāna from this important sutta．Let us begin with the fact that one gets to the vicinity（upasampajja）of the first jhāna by contemplating the faults（ādīnava）of
pañcakkhandha (rūpa, vedanā, sañña, sañkhāra, viññāṇa); once getting there, one further removes āsava by the same process.

- Thus, one gets to $j h a \bar{a} n a$ with insight meditation (Vipassanā) on the unsuitability (faults of) kāmāvacara states, and then once getting to jhāna, starts doing Vipassana $\bar{a}$ on the unsuitability of any jhānic state to transcend that state.
- There is a long list of such faults (ādīnava) (from \#1): anicca nature (aniccato), dukkha nature (dukkhato), disease-ridden nature (rogato), cancer-like nature (gandato), arrow-like nature (sallato), painful (aghato), danger-ridden (ābādhato), alien (parato), subject to destruction (palokato), an empty (suññato), not-fruitful and leading to helplessness (anatto).

5. Therefore, the main goal at any given Ariya jhāna is to contemplate all those faults (ādinava) of that state - thus move to the next higher state - and to finally arrive at Nibbāna at the last (8th) jhāna. Of course, one could completely remove all $\bar{a} s a v a$ and attain Nibbāna from any lower jhāna.

- If one attains Nibbāna from a lower jhānic state (below the highest arūpāvacara jhāna), one is said to attain pañ̃̄āvimutti. If one goes through to that highest jhāna and attains Nibbāna, one is said to have attained akuppā cetovimutti. I will have a separate post on this.
 Sinhala, meaning "burning").
- We will stick with the word "jhāna" instead of "dhyana" since it is commonly used. It is just useful to know where the meaning comes from.

6. One can think clearly in any jhāna. Even intermittent vitakka/vicāra ("wheeling around" with stray thoughts) will be absent after the second jhāna, i.e., one is in the avitakka/avicāra (free of vitakka/vicāra) mode after the second jhāna; I will discuss jhānanga or jhāna factors in a future post.

- This is why Ariya jhāna is helpful in insight (Vipassanā) meditation. The mind becomes clear when more and more sañkhāra are removed as one proceeds to higher jhāna states.

7. Even though the relief experienced in Ariya jhāna is the only "enjoyment" recommended by the Buddha, that is not the main purpose of Ariya jhāna. That is because if one gets attached to a jhāna, one cannot move up to the higher one. In any case, it is mainly those who get to anāriya jhāna who get attached to them (however, it is possible to attain any stage of magga phala even with anāriya jhāna or even without any jhāna). If one has seen the anicca nature, one will not get attached to a jhāna.

- In that context, in a previous post, it was discussed that any jhānic state is a mental state corresponding to "this world"; see "Ascendance to Nibbāna via Jhāna (Dhyāna)."

8. Pancanīvarana are also completely removed at the first Ariya jhāna. From the WebLink: suttacentral: Mahāvedalla Sutta (Majjhima Nikāya 43): ".. Idhāvuso, paṭhamaì jhānaí samāpannāssa bhikkhuno kāmacchando pahīno hoti, byāpādo pahīno hoti, thinamiddhai் pahīnai் hoti, uddhaccakukkuccamं pahīnaì hoti, vicikicchā pahīnā hoti..."

- Many suttā clearly state such conditions for the first supramundane jhāna.
- In contrast, neither the five samyojana nor the pañcanīvaraṇa is removed in any mundane jhāna. The reasons are obvious: none of the kilesa (klesha/defilements) can be removed by taking a neutral object as the arrammana.

9. This is why the Buddha told Ven. Saddhā: ".."Ājān̄̄yajhāyitaim kho, saddhā, jhāya; mā khaluñkajhāyitaim..", OR "Saddhā, cultivate the ajān̄̄ya (thoroughbred horse) jhāna, not the khalunka (mule) jhāna": WebLink: suttacentral: Saddhā Sutta (Añguttara Nikāya 11.9).

- In the WebLink: suttacentral: Sutta Central translation, khalunka is translated as a colt (a young horse). But the correct translation is a mule. As described in the sutta, a mule is lazy and useless compared to a thoroughbred horse.
- As described in the sutta, one who cultivates mundane jhāna takes worldly objects (kasiña, breath) as $\bar{a} r a m m a n ̃ a$, and even though can attain jhāna, they will not have the respect of the devas who can see the $\bar{a} r a m m a n a$.
- On the other hand, devas cannot see the ārammaṇa (Nibbāna) of those who have cultivated Ariya $j h a ̄ n a$, and they pay to him from a distance.

10. Therefore, there is a HUGE difference in HOW one arrives at a given jhāna.

- One using the anāriya path gets to jhānā by focusing one's mind on a mundane object, i.e., an object belonging to this world (for example, one's breath or a kasina object) and/or by contemplating mundane moral thoughts (benevolent, kind, etc.); we will discuss this in the next post.
- On the other hand, one on the Noble Path reaches a jhāna by contemplating Nibbāna, i.e., the anicca, $d u k k h a$, and anatta nature of this world of 31 realms. One may or may not get to Ariya jhāna that one can get into samāpatti (meaning uninterrupted jhāna, where the jhāna citta runs continuously without a break) before getting to the Arahanthood.
- However, jhāna sukha is the only sukha recommended by the Buddha since sense pleasures will bind one to the kāma loka. It is said that some pañ̃̃āvimutta Arahants cultivate jhāna after attaining Arahanthood.

11. Also see the previous post where it is discussed how Ven. Moggallana cultivated the first $j h a \bar{a} n a$ after attaining the Sotāpanna stage: "Ascendance to Nibbāna via Jhāna (Dhyāna)."

- One who can get fully absorbed in the first Ariya jhāna will be born in the Suddhāvāsa realms of the rūpa loka, and will not come back to the kāma loka, i.e., one is an $A n \bar{a} g \bar{a} m \bar{l}$, as clearly stated in the Jhāna Sutta and several other sutta.
- On the other hand, one who cultivates mundane first $\bar{j} h \bar{a} n a$ will be born in the first rūpāvacara Brahma realm in the next birth, but in later rebirths could even be born in the apāyā (since kāma rāga was only suppressed, not removed).

12. One can get into mundane (anāriya) jhāna via breath or kasiṇa meditation, and one could do Vipassanā from mundane jhānic states.

- But the problem is, in many cases, people get addicted to those states and cannot see their anicca nature of them.

13. In addition to the above sutt $\bar{a}$ (and more that I found) on Ariya jhāna, I found other suttō that discussed anāriya jhāna. In none of these suttā, there was a specific label saying Ariya jhāna or anāriya $j h \overline{a n a}$. However, one can see which is which when reading text.

- In the following reference, it is clearly stated that kama raga is only suppressed (vikkhambhanato) in all rūpāvacara and arūpāvacara jhāna. On the other hand, it states that kāma raga is removed (samucchedato) in stages via magga phala.
- The difference between vikkhambhana pahāna and samuccheda pahāna is discussed in, "Suffering in This Life - Role of Mental Impurities."

The following are the two relevant passages from the Khuddaka Nikāya, Mahāniddesa, Aț̣hakavagga: WebLink: suttacentral: 1. Kāmasuttaniddesa (Mnd 1) . There is no English translation there, but the Sinhala


Paṭhamaì jhānaì bhāventopi vikkhambhanato kāme parivajjeti ... pe ... dutiyaim jhānaì bhāventopi ... tatiyamं jhānaì bhāventopi ... catutthaì jhānai் bhāventopi ... ākāsānañcāyatanasamāpattim bhāventopi ... viññānañcāyatanasamāpattim bhāventopi ... ākiñcaññ̄yatanasamāpattim bhāventopi ... nevasaññānāsaññāyatanasamāpattim bhāventopi vikkhambhanato kāme parivajjeti. Evaì vikkhambhanato kāme parivajjeti.

- Translated: " $k \bar{a} m a$ " is suppressed (vikkhambhanato) in the first jhāna, ...to nevasañ̃̄ānāsaññāyatana (highest arupavacara jhāna). As we saw above, kāma is removed even before getting to Ariya jhāna. Thus, only anāriya (mundane) jhāna are meant here.
- See "WebLink: suttacentral: Tapussa Sutta (AN 9.41)" for another example.

Kathaì samucchedato kāme parivajjeti? Sotāpattimaggamं bhāventopi apāyagamanīye kāme samucchedato parivajjeti, sakadāgāmimaggaì bhāventopi olārike kāme samucchedato parivajjeti, anāgāmimaggaiं bhāventopi anusahagate kāme samucchedato parivajjeti, arahattamaggaì bhāventopi sabbena sabbaì sabbathā sabbai் asesaì nissesaì samucchedato kāme parivajjeti. Evamं samucchedato kāme parivajjetīti-yo kāme parivajjeti.

- Translated: "kāma" is removed (samucchedato) in stages via the Sotāpanna, Sakadāgām̄̄ stages and is removed at the Anāgāmi stage; it is removed without a trace at the Arahant stage.

14. The following sutta clearly states the difference between Ariya and anāriya jhānā.

WebLink: suttacentral: Pathamanānākarana Sutta (AN 4. 123): " Idha, bhikkhave, ekacco puggalo vivicceva kāmehi vivicca akusalehi dhammehi savitakkaiं savicāraì vivekajaì pītisukhaì paṭhamaì jhānaì upasampajja viharati. So tadassādeti, taì nikāmeti, tena ca vittim āpajjati. Tattha ṭhito tadadhimutto tabbahula-vihārī aparihīno kālaì kurumāno brahmakāyikānaì devānaì sahabyataì upapajjati. Brahmakāyikānaì, bhikkhave, devānaì kappo āyuppamānaì. Tattha puthujjano yāvatāyukaí ṭhatvā yāvatakaì tesaì devānaì āyuppamānaí taì sabbaí khepetvā nirayampi gacchati tiracchānayonimpi gacchati pettivisayampi gacchati. Bhagavato pana sāvako tattha yāvatāyukaì thatvā yāvatakaì tesaì devānai் āyuppamānaím taì sabbaì khepetvā tasmimyeva bhave parinibbāyati. Ayaiं kho, bhikkhave, viseso ayaì adhippayāso idamं nānākaraṇam sutavato ariyasāvakassa assutavatā puthujjanena, yadidam gatiyā upapattiyā sati."

Translated: 'There is the case where an individual, withdrawn from sensuality ( $k \bar{a} m a$ ), withdrawn from akusala, enters \& remains in the first jhāna: rapture \& pleasure born from withdrawal, accompanied by directed thought \& evaluation. He savors that, longs for that, and finds satisfaction through that. Staying there -fixed on that, dwelling there often, not losing the jhāna - then when he dies, he is born with the devas of Brahma's retinue. The devas of Brahma's retinue, monks, have a life span of an eon. A run-of-the-mill person, having stayed there, having used up all the life-span of those devas, goes to hell, to the animal realm, or the state of the hungry ghosts. But a disciple of the Blessed One, having stayed there, having used up all the life-span of those devas, attains Parinibbäna. This, monks, is the difference, this the distinction, this the distinguishing factor, between a Noble disciple and a normal person who had not heard the Noble Truths (assutavatā puthujjanena), in regards to the gati and birth."

- When one attains the first Ariya jhāna, one has become an Anāgāmī. He/she will be born in that Brahma realm and attain Parinibbāna there, as stated in the above sutta.
- In other words, kāma rāga must be completely REMOVED to get to the first Ariya jhāna. It is only temporarily suppressed (vikkhambana pahāna) for the anāriya jhāna.
- A Sotāpanna who gets to the first anāriya jhāna has not removed kāma rāga. But he/she will not come back to the kāma loka (will get the Anāgāmi phala moment in the Brahma loka and attain Nibbāna there). So, he/she is still an Anāgāmi ("na" + "āgami" or not coming back).
- Even some followers of Waharaka Thero in Sri Lanka do not seem to understand this point. However, Waharaka Thero has explained this in the following short desan $\bar{a}$ (in Sinhala): "WebLink: Ariya and Anāriya Jhāna (Audio)."

Nirodha samāpatti and various phala samāpatti are related to Nibbānā. Jhāna and jhāna samāpatti belong to "this world".

## Introduction

1. Nirodha samāpatti and various phala samāpatti are different, and they are very different from jhāna and jhānā samāpatti.

- The first two are related to Nibbāna. Jhāna belong to "this world." Jhāna are the mindsets that rūpāvacara and arūpāvacara Brahmā enjoy.

2. Before starting the discussion, I would like to emphasize the following. Concepts that we deal with in this post and that of Nibbāna (Arahanthood, in particular), are virtually impossible to imagine for most people. However, there could be a few people who have studied these concepts in detail and have some "nagging questions." Hopefully this information will be helpful.

- These concepts are contrary to ideas that normal humans are familiar with. Normal humans crave things in the material world so much it is almost impossible to rationalize why one would want to stop the rebirth process (i.e, to attain Arahanthood). Therefore, it is a waste of time to spend too much time thinking about such abstract concepts, at least until one gets to the Sotāpanna stage; these concepts start making sense only when one gets closer to the Anāgāmi stage.
- In the same way, it is hard to imagine for an average human how nirodha samāpatti (where all thoughts are stopped) can provide happiness. This is why I have explained in the "Nibbāna" subsection that Nibbānic bliss is NOT a feeling of pleasure (that would involve the vedana cetasika and thus would belong to this world). It is more like the relief one would feel when a long-lasting migraine headache goes away.
- With that out of the way, let us start the discussion.


## Life Maintained by Kammic Energy

3. First, it is essential to remember that life is maintained by kammic energy, not via citta vithi. Therefore, kammaja kāya is present at ALL TIMES. Kammaja ("kamma" +"ja") means "created by kamma (vipāka)."

- The kammaja kāya or the gandhabba (hadaya vatthu plus the five pasāda rūpa) is created at the cuti-patisandhi moment. The blueprint for our physical body is in the kammaja kāya (gandhabba), and thus the physical body grows according to the kammaja kāya (gandhabba).
- When kammaja kāya for the present bhava runs out of kammic energy, a new kammaja kāya matching the next bhava is initiated by kammic energy for the new bhava, at the cuti-patisandhi moment.

4. Therefore, each of us has had a kammaja kāya corresponding to most of the realms in this world from a time that cannot be traced to a beginning!

- Those unfamiliar with a specific term can use the "Search box" to find relevant posts. For example, we have four types of "kāya": kammaja, cittaja, utuja, and karaja (āhāraja) kāya. That last one is our physical body. Such a physical body is absent in rūpāvacara and arūpāvacara realms (basically just the gandhabba).

5. Cittaja kāya means the flow of citta vīthi. Remember that kāya is a "collection." Citta arise in the hadaya vatthu in the kammaja kāya.

- Cittā always run in "series" or vīthi. Each pañcadvāra (arising due to the five physical senses) citta vith ALWAYS has 17 cittā.
- A manodvāra (arising directly in mind) citta vīthi typically has 10-12 cittā. However, as we mentioned above, when in a samāpatti, manodvāra citta vīthi can run continuously. Therefore, there is no set upper limit to the number of manodvāra citta running continuously when in a samāpatti.
- The mind could be in different types of bhavañga states in between manodvāralpañcadvāra citta vīthi.


## Bhavañga State - Not a Citta

6. While the kammaja kāya is active AT ANY TIME, there CAN BE GAPS in the cittaja kāya.

- Bhavaña is a "state of mind" (other than bhavañga citta that sometimes appears inside a citta vith $h i$; see, "Bhava and Bhavañga - Simply Explained!"
- When in a bhavañga state, there are no citta vithi running, so not even universal cetasika present. One just knows that one is living, but there is no thought object (ārammana). No citta vīthi run inside a bhavañga state.
- A crude analogy of the bhavañga state is a TV set that is not tuned to a station. We can see the flickering white dots on the screen and hear a background "hum." But there is no picture. So, the mind is "on" but has no thought object.
- When an ārammaña comes to the mind, the mind captures that sound, picture, smell, etc. That is like that TV being tuned to a station and one can see the picture.


## Difference Between Samāpatti and Jhānā̄

7. The main difference between any samāpatti and jhāna is that jhāna citta do not run continuously. When one is in a jhāna, jhāna citta vīthi are interrupted by pañcadvāra citta vīthi running in between. Pañcadvāra citta vīthi are those coming through the five physical senses. Therefore, when one is in jhāna, one can see, hear, etc.

- But when one is in any type of samāpatti, corresponding manodvāra citta vīthi run continuously. Therefore, there is no opportunity for pañcadvāra citta vīthi to run, thus, one in a samāpatti is unaware of the external environment.

8. One could also be in a jhāna samāpatti. In this case also, there are no pañcadvāra citta vīthi are interrupting the flow of $j h a \overline{n a}$ citta vīthi. One in a jhāna samāpatti also will not see, hear, smell, etc.

- It is with practice that one who can get into jhāna can develop the ability to get into jhāna samāpatti. As one cultivates the jhāna, there will be less and less pañcadvāra citta vīthi coming in between successive jhāna citta vīthi. Initially, only 2-3 jhāna citta vīthi flow before a pañcadvāra citta vīthi comes in. With practice, one could be experiencing jhāna citta vīthi continuously for hours.


## Citta Absent in the Asañ̃ñalm

9. However, in the asañña realm, there is no cittaja k $\bar{a} y a$ or even a bhavañga state. One does not even know that one is alive. There is a fine physical body that is kept alive by kammic energy. So, the kammaja kāya is there.

- This is why the Buddha said it is a waste of time to be born in the asañ̃̃̄ $\bar{a}$ realm by cultivating asaññ $\bar{a}$ meditation techniques. One will live in the asañña realm for 500 mahā kappa (that is trillions of years), and just comes back to the human realm and start all over.
- In a previous post I provided evidence that viññāna cannot exist without a rūpakkhandha; see \#10 of "Gandhabba State - Evidence from Tipitaka." However, rūpakkhandha can exist without viññāna.
- If we become unconscious for some reason, that is like living in the asañña realm during that time.


## Phala Samāpatti

10. When one is in a phala samāpatti, that phala citta runs continuously.

- For example, if one is in the Arahant phala samāpatti, one has the Arahant phala citta running continuously.
- Not everyone with a magga phala can get into phala samāpatti automatically. Just like jhāna, they require a lot of practice unless one has cultivated jhāna in recent lives.


## Nirodha Samāpatti Versus Asaññā Realm

11. When in nirodha samāpatti, there is no citta vithi or a bhavañga state. It is sort of like in the asañña realm.

- But of course, there is a huge difference between nirodha samāpatti and being in the asañ̃̄̄̄ realm. One who can get to nirodha samāpatti has removed ALL DEFILEMENTS (and thus avijjā), but one in the asañ̃̃ $\bar{a}$ realm has not. So, at the end of the life in the asañ$\tilde{n} \bar{a}$ realm, that person would come back to the human realm and can be reborn even in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$ in later rebirths.
- This point explains why it is so peaceful not to have any citta running through the mind. That is the closest explanation that can be given to an average human as to how having no citta can be so peaceful. But this is hard even to imagine for a normal human, as I mentioned at the beginning. Those who cultivate jhāna, and get to higher jhānic states, can start seeing that this is true. That is why they cultivate jhāna up to the $8^{\text {th }}$ jhāna (neva saññā nā saññā).


## Nirodha Samāpatti

12. Nirodha samāpatti is succinctly described in a verse in the WebLink: suttacentral: Mahāvedalla Sutta (MN 43), where the difference between a dead body and the body of one in nirodha samāpatti is described: "Yvāyamं, āvuso, mato kālañkato tassa kāyasañkhārā niruddhā paṭippassaddhā, vacīsañkhārā niruddhā paṭippassaddhā, cittasañkhārā niruddhā paṭippassaddhā, āyu parikkhīno, usmā vūpasantā, indriyāni paribhinnāni. Yo cāyaì bhikkhu saññāvedayitanirodhaỉ samāpanno tassapi kāyasañkhārā niruddhā paṭippassaddhā, vacīsañkhārā niruddhā paṭippassaddhā, cittasañkhārā niruddhā patippassaddhā, āyu na parikkhīno, usmā avūpasantā, indriyāni vippasannāni. Yvāyaì, āvuso, mato kālañkato, yo cāyaí bhikkhu sañn̄̄̄vedayitanirodhai் samāpanno-idaì nesaì nānākaraṇan"ti.."

Translated: " $\bar{a} v u s o$, a dead body does not generate any kāya sañkhārā, vacī sañkhārā, or citta sañkhārā; its lifetime expired, and it does not breathe, and the body gets cold with all sense organs dead. But that bhikkhu in saññāvedayita-nirodha samāpatti, even though his kāya sañkhārā, vacī sañkhārā, and citta sañkhārā all have ceased, and does not breathe, his body does not get cold, and all sense organs are kept alive. This, āvuso, is the difference between a dead body and that bhikkhu in nirodha samāpatti."

- Since all sañkhāra are stopped, there is no citta with even the universal cetasika when in saññāvedayita nirodha samāpatti.
- This also clarifies that saññāvedayita means without any saññā or vedanā.


## Getting into Nirodha Samāpatti

13. Not all Arahants can get into nirodha samāpatti. Access to nirodha samāpatti is NOT by taking Nibbāna as the thought object, but via the $8^{\text {th }} j h a \bar{n} a$. As one gets to higher $j h a \bar{a} a$, number of cetasika in a citta get smaller, i.e., citta become less and less "burdened."

- An Arahant has to go through the following sequence to get to nirodha samāpatti. Cultivate all the $j h a ̄ n a \bar{a}$, get to the fourth $j h \bar{n} n a$ samāpatti, and access all arūpāvacara samāpatti up to the neva sañn̄̄ $n \bar{a}$ sañ̃̄ $\bar{n}$. The neva sañña n $\bar{a}$ sañña state is just a step away from stopping the arising of any citta.
- From there, the Arahant can make a determination of how long to stay in nirodha samāpatti, and make the transition from the neva sañña $n \bar{a}$ sañña $\bar{a}$ state to nirodha samāpatti.
- While anāriya yogis can get to the neva saññ̄ā n $\bar{a}$ saññ $\bar{a}$ state, they can make the transition to sañ̃̄̄̄vedayita nirodha samāpatti. Even an Anāgāmī who has cultivated arūpāvacara samāpatti can not get into sañ̃̃āvedayita nirodha samāpatti.
- By the way, this process of getting to nirodha samāpatti is described in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Anupada Sutta (MN 111)" and in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Pañcakañga Sutta (SN 36.19)."


## Nibbānic Bliss Is not a Cetasika Vedanā

14. The "WebLink: suttacentral: Pañcakanga Sutta (SN 36.19)" also clarifies another critical point. If there are no cittt̄ (with saññ̄̄ or vedan $\bar{a}$ ) when one is in saññ̄$v e d a y i t a ~ n i r o d h a ~ s a m a ̄ p a t t i, ~ h o w ~ c a n ~ o n e ~ s a y ~$ that it is the ultimate happiness (Nibbanic bliss)?

- Nibbānic bliss is not a cetasika vedanā, which would belong to this world. I have compared it to the relief one feels when a long-experienced migraine headache finally goes away; see "Nibbāna" subsection.

The above sutta, in the last verse, put it this way: "Thānaim kho panetaim, ānanda, vijjati yaín añ̃atitthiyā paribbājakā evai் vadeyyum: 'saññāvedayitanirodhaì samaṇo gotamo āha, tañca sukhasmimं paññapeti. Tayidamं kim̀su, tayidamं kathamisū ti?

Evaìvādino, ānanda, aññatitthiyā paribbājakā evamassu vacanīȳ̄: 'na kho, āvuso, bhagavā sukhaññeva vedanaì sandhāya sukhasmimं paññapeti. Yattha yattha, āvuso, sukhaì upalabbhati, yahimं yahim taì taì tathāgato sukhasmim paññapetī'" $t i$."

Translated: "It may happen, Ānanda, that Wanderers of other sects will be saying this: 'The recluse Gotama speaks of the sañ̃̄̄̄vedayita nirodha and describes it as pleasure. What is this pleasure and how is this a pleasure?
"Those who say so should be told: 'The Blessed One describes as pleasure not the feeling of pleasure. But a Tathägata describes as Nibbānic pleasure absence of suffering.'"

## Nirodha Samāpatti and Parinibbāna

15. No citta vīthi run in nirodha samāpatti, and bhavañga state is not present either. Life in the body is maintained with kammic energy. No vedanā, saññā, etc. The maximum time in nirodha samāpatti is 7 days. The Arahant can make a determination before getting into nirodha samāpatti, as to how long (up to 7 days) to stay in that state.

- Parinibbāna state is just like nirodha samāpatti. The only difference is that there is no "coming back" to this world upon entering Parinibbāna.
- Therefore, Arahants tend to get to nirodha samāpatti whenever possible, in order to experience the "Nibbānic bliss", and to get away from the "burdensome worldly thoughts." As I said, it is hard for normal humans to imagine this.


## Nirodha Samāpatti and Arahant Phala Samāpatti

16. In other types of samāpatti (other than the nirodha samāpatti), manodvāra citta vīthi will flow continuously. There is no falling to bhavañga or taking an external object with a pañcadvāra citta vīthi. Thus one cannot see, hear, etc. Normally, samāpatti will eventually break on its own or (when one gets good at it) one can pre-set the time to be in samappatti.

- Arahant phala samāpatti is where an Arahant experiences the pabhassara citta, a pure citta with just the universal cetasika, where the saññā cetasika is not contaminated. Nibbāna is the thought object made contact with phassa cetasika and vedana and sañña are based on that (we have no idea about that). One does not hear or see anything there, just like in jhānā samāpatti.
- When an Arahant is not in nirodha samāpatti or Arahant phala samāpatti, his/her citta gets only to the "mano" state, in the sequence that usually ends up in the viññānakkhandha state for an average human; see \#4 of "Pabhassara Citta, Radiant Mind, and Bhavañga."


## We Can Discuss Any Unresolved Issues

17. Hopefully, that should cover the questions raised in the discussion forum under the topics: "WebLink: Nirodha Samāpatti," "WebLink: Difference between "Arahant phala samāpatti" and "Nirodha samāpatti" ?," and "WebLink: Nirodha Samāpatti and Amoha."

- If there are more questions on this and related issues, please ask them under the topic "WebLink: Difference between "Arahant phala samāpatti" and "Nirodha samāpatti"?." I am going to close the other two topics in order not to have too many parallel and related discussions.
- Please also include any references from the Tipitaka, for above descriptions. This post was put together from what I have heard from Waharaka Thero's desanās, and I will also add references as I come across them in the Tipitaka.


### 4.8 Mental Body - Gandhabba

February 11, 2017

- Our Mental Body - Gandhabba
- Gandhabba State - Evidence from Tipitaka
- Antarabhava and Gandhabba
- Ānantariya Kamma - Connection to Gandhabba
- Mental Body (Gandhabba) - Personal Accounts
- Abnormal Births Due to Gandhabba Transformations
- Cattāro Āhāra for Mental Body or Gandhabba
- Micchā Ditthi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage
- Working of Kammā - Critical Role of Conditions

Deeper discussions on gandhabba can be found in the Abhidhamma subsection:

- Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya)


## Our Mental Body - Gandhabba

December 26, 2016; revised February 1, 2020; July 14, 2022

## Introduction

1. Grasping the message of the Buddha requires two essential ingredients. (i) It is easier done with a mind that has fewer defilements (kilesa or keles or klesha), and (ii) One needs to go beyond learning mundane interpretations of crucial concepts.

- If those two conditions are satisfied, grasping deeper Dhamma concepts will not be a difficult task. If one can comprehend - not merely to memorize - the key concepts, it becomes easy to avoid getting the "viparīta sañ̃n̄"̄" or the "incorrect impression" of a given concept. [viparīta : [adj.] reversed; changed; wrong.]
- This process gradually leads to the comprehension of "anicca sañ̃̃̄" which is the key to the Sotāpanna stage of Nibbāna.
- In this post, we will start a discussion that will lead to a better explanation of "sañ̃$\tilde{\tilde{a}}$ " (which is one of the five aggregates) generally translated as "perception."


## Mental Body Is Primary and Physical Body Is Secondary

2. We will discuss how we grasp a given concept using any one of many human languages that are in use today.

- It is essential to understand that the mental body (manomaya kāya or gandhabba) is primary initiating all our thoughts, speech, and actions. The physical body that we value so much is secondary.
- While our brains help us grasp what is expressed in a given language (and we have to learn a given language), a gandhabba can understand that message directly - without using a brain or eyes, ears, etc. that are associated with the physical body. The gandhabba - when outside the physical body - can see and hear without using eyes and ears, and grasp what is expressed by thoughts of other beings directly (where allowed by their kammic potential).
- Gandhabbā — and most living beings — communicate among themselves via "sañ̃̃ā." No "spoken language" is involved since they cannot "talk" like we do. See, "Ghost 1990 Movie - Good Depiction of Gandhabba Concept."
- That is somewhat similar to how we experience dreams. We do not use our ears to hear in our dreams. We "perceive" what others say in our dreams. That is the closest analogy to how a gandhabba hears when outside a physical body. Seeing is the same way. In dreams, we don't use our eyes to see; our eyes remain closed when we dream. Both hearing and seeing are done just with the sota and cakkhu pasāda rūpa and the mind.


## Why Do We Highly-Value Our Physical Bodies?

Of course, until a Buddha comes to this world and explains the existence of a mental body, we would not be even aware of that distinction. Even today, scientists believe that the physical body is all we have and that our thoughts arise in the inert brain!
3. We highly value our physical bodies because we enjoy sense pleasures associated with smells, tastes, and body touches.

- However, to experience those three types of sensory contact, our mental bodies need to be trapped inside physical bodies. We pay the price for those sense enjoyments because those physical bodies are subject to rapid and unexpected decay and have relatively short lifetimes around 100 years.
- Furthermore, when the mental body is enclosed or trapped inside a physical body, it loses the ability to see external objects directly, hear external sounds, and recall dhamma (memories/concepts). All six sensory inputs now need to be processed by the brain and converted to a form ("sañ̃ $\bar{a}$ ") that can be grasped by the trapped mental body (gandhabba). For a more in-depth analysis, see "Brain - Interface between Mind and Body."
- The sense of smell, taste, or body touch is unavailable to beings in the higher 20 (Brahma) realms. Those Brahmā have mental bodies (with just a trace of matter) like our gandhabbā. Just like those Brahmā, the gandhabbā cannot sense smell, taste, or body touches, but can "directly see, hear, and grasp concepts" without the aid of a brain when outside a physical body.
- Please contemplate and grasp what is meant by those statements before proceeding further.


## The "Mental Body" Lives Much Longer!

4. Another critical factor is the difference between the lifetime of a physical body and that of a mental body (gandhabba).

- A human gandhabba born at the cuti-patisandhi moment can live for hundreds to thousands of years. Within a given "human bhava," there can be many repeated births as a human with a human body; see "Bhava and Jāti - States of Existence and Births Therein."
- When a physical body dies (and if more kammic energy for the human bhava remains), that gandhabba comes out of the dead body and waits for a suitable womb to re-enter and make a new human body. This process can happen many times during a given human bhava. Each time a different physical body is acquired by the gandhabba, as discussed below.
- Therefore, it makes more sense to focus on the well-being of the mental body (gandhabba) than on the short-lived physical body.


## Some Exceptions To The Above Rules

5. There are a few exceptions to the above process.

- If one commits a ānantariya pāpa kamma (killing a parent, for example), then gandhabba that comes out of a dead physical body "cannot survive." Because of that strong kamma vipāka, it undergoes a cuti-patisandhi moment and will be instantaneously born in an apāya suitable for that strong kamma.
- If one develops Ariya or anāriya jhāna, it also becomes a "good" ānantariya kamma. One will be born in a Brahma realm (corresponding to the highest jhānic state attained) by skipping the remaining human births. However, those who get to brahma realms via anāriya jhāna will return to human or lower realms. Any Ariya (starting with a Sotāpanna) who attains Ariya jhānā will never come back to kāma loka. Of course, a Sotāpanna (Sakadāgāmī) without Ariya jhānā will be reborn in human (deva) realms.
- That is also why an Arahant is not reborn, even if there is kammic energy left over for the human bhava. The gandhabba that comes out "cannot bear" the mindset of an Arahant, and will instantaneously undergo a cuti-paṭisandhi moment. Still, since an Arahant will not grasp a new bhava, they will not be reborn.
- Those above cases - where the human bhava prematurely terminates - are similar to the burning of a heater coil used in an immersion heater, when the heated coil comes out of the water. The heater coil can "bear" the heat as long as it is in the water. But once out of the water, the heater coil will quickly burn out. The physical human body can "bear" any of those states (ānantariya kamma) discussed above. That is why a person who killed their mother will not be born in an apāya immediately; only when the gandhabba comes out of the body will it be burnt, and new birth in an apāya will start.


## Why Are Most People Not Aware of The Gandhabba Concept?

6. Even though there is no discussion about the gandhabba in Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga, it is a critical concept in Buddha Dhamma. The Buddha compared a gandhabba coming out of a physical body to a sword coming out of its sheath. The gandhabba is sometimes called a Tirokuddha in Suttā.

- People with abhiññā powers can move the gandhabba out of the physical body at will.
- Some people had cultivated abhiññā powers in recent previous births and can do it at will even though they have less control over the mental body. One can float to the ceiling and watch one's physical body lying on the bed, for example. Furthermore, during heart operations, the gandhabba can come out and view the process from the above, and provide details about it later. See. "Out-of-Body Experience (OBE) and Manomaya Kāya."

7. The gandhabba has only a trace of matter even hard to imagine. It is our mental body or manomaya $k a ̄ y a$.

- To give an analogy: A barely seen dust particle may have millions of atoms. The "material stuff" in a gandhabba is million-fold smaller than an atom! The gandhabba is more like an "energy field."
- This mental body is like a fine mesh spread throughout the physical body with the seat of the mind (hadaya vatthu) overlapping the physical heart.
- If that mental body comes out of the physical body, the physical body becomes as inert as a piece of wood (as a dead body is).


## How Can a "Mental Body" Control a Heavy Physical Body?

8. Let us start by addressing some fundamental objections to the mental body's control of the physical body. First, how can a "mental body" move a heavy physical body?

- A good analogy is to compare it to how a human operator controls a heavy military tank from the inside of that enclosed tank. There, the human operator plays the role of the gandhabba.
- The human operator, of course, does not have enough energy to move the tank. He merely controls the direction of the movement by instructing the on-board computer. The power to move the tank comes from the fuel stored in the military tank.
- In the same way, the mental body (gandhabba) instructs the brain to generate required bodily movements or speech. Here, the brain plays the role of the computer in the military tank analogy. The small amount of energy needed for the gandhabba comes from the kammic power that led to human bhava. The energy required for bodily movements (including speech) comes from our food.


## Details of The "Operator Analogy"

9. In the above analogy, the operator is totally shielded from the external world. He can monitor the outside environment only via the audio and video equipment mounted on the tank. The video cameras, for example, can feed videos to an on-board computer, which analyzes and displays it on a monitor for the operator to see.

- In the same way, our physical eyes send a picture to our brain, which analyzes them, and converts them to a form ("sañ̃̄̄"") that can be "seen" - or comprehended - by the gandhabba inside. So, our brain is the computer that conveys the information to the gandhabba that is really trapped inside the solid physical body; see, "Brain - Interface between Mind and Body."
- The gandhabba accesses the other four sensory inputs the same way, with the help of the ears, tongue, nose, and the body.
- Our memories, plans, etc. (all mental) are also "out there" (in the mano loka) but, of course, cannot be seen. They are collectively called "dhamma"; see, "What are Dhamma? - A Deeper Analysis." Gandhabba accesses those with the help of the mana indriya in the brain, which is the sixth sense input (like eyes for seeing, ears for hearing, etc.), and has not been identified by science yet.
- The mano loka co-exists with the rūpa loka (material world); see, "Our Two Worlds: Material and Mental."


## How Does A Gandhabba Hear When Outside a Physical Body?

10. Another possible question is: "How does the gandhabba see and hear when outside the human body?"

- It is only in the human (and animal) realms that beings communicate via speech (and bodily gestures). In other realms, living beings communicate directly via sañ̃̃̄a, one of the five aggregates (pañcakkhandha). While not all living beings can communicate with all other (it depends on each realm), where it is possible, communications take place via sañ̃̃̄ā generated in one's thoughts.
- This experience is similar to one's experience with dreams. In a dream, we do not "hear" what others say in the same way when we hear speech normally. In a dream, we perceive what they are saying.
- That is how those with abhiññ̄ powers (even a few of us with gati from previous lives where they had such abhiññā skills in recent lives) can communicate with beings in other realms.


## Why Do People Have Different Physical Bodies in Successive Human Lives?

11. It is the "same" gandhabba that is born with human bodies in successive human lives. Then another question may arise, "Why do people look different in successive rebirths?." That is because the physical body in each human birth (within the same human bhava) arises with contributions from the parents for that life.

- Even though the gandhabba brings in his/her gati (habits), āsava (cravings), kilesa (mental impurities), etc from the previous life, the physical body for each birth has significant contributions from the new parents.
- Therefore, the DNA of the physical bodies of two successive lives could be different due to this reason. The building of a new physical body is described in the post, "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception."
- Even then, a gandhabba needs to match the gati of the parents.


## One Can Travel to Deva or Brahma Realms With the Manomaya Kāya

12. Another interesting piece of information comes from how the Buddha (and others with Iddhi Bala) traveled to deva or Brahma loka with the manomaya kāya. Here the physical body is left behind (the physical body does not die in this case, and is kept alive by the rūpa jīvitindriya). Upon returning, the manomaya kāya can re-enter the physical body.

- Those who attain the fourth jhāna can develop iddhi powers can separate the manomaya kāya from the physical body. Then they can travel far with that manomaya kāya. Just as a sword comes out of its sheath, those with iddhi powers can pull the manomaya kāya out of the physical body.
- Suttā state that the Buddha visited deva or Brahma lokas "within the time that takes a bent arm to be straightened."
- It is also possible for some of those with iddhi powers to travel with their physical bodies. That involves a different mechanism that is not relevant to this discussion.


## Connection to "Astral Travel"

13. Even today, some ordinary people can dissociate their mental body from the physical body and "astral travel." That manomaya kāya can then go to distant places within short times (this is what is called astral travel in the present day; see the Wikipedia article, "WebLink: WIKI: Astral projection."

- A gandhabba is the same as an "astral body" that is described in such accounts; see, for example, "Journeys Out of the Body: The Classic Work on Out-of-Body Experience," by Robert Monroe (1992). There are two sequels to that book, as well as books by others. Accounts in at least some of those books are consistent with the above mechanism.
- Also, the gandhabba can come out of the physical body under stressfil conditions, particularly during heart operations. Many such accounts by a cardiologist have been documented in the book, "Consciousness Beyond Life," by Pim van Lommel (2010).


## Explanation of the "Time Gap" Between Two Successive Human Births

14. Many rebirth account features can be explained by the correct interpretation where the manomaya kāya (gandhabba) inherits many successive (but time separated) physical bodies.

- In rebirth stories, there is always a "time gap" between successive human births ( $j \bar{a} t i)$. That time gap can be several years or at least few years. In between those successive lives, that lifestream lives as a gandhabba, without a physical body.
- In most rebirth stories, the previous human life was terminated unexpectedly, like in an accident or a killing. Therefore, the kammic energy for the human bhava had not been exhausted. And the gandhabba just came out of the dead body and waited for another womb to enter.
- The Buddha told Vacchagotta that the gandhabba survives that intervening time by using tanhh $\bar{a}$ as $\bar{a} h a ̄ r a$. Some gandhabbā can "inhale" aroma from plants, fruits, etc., too.


## Further Information

15. If one has been following - and trying to "live" the moral life recommended in the previous posts in the "Living Dhamma" section - it would be easier to follow the upcoming posts as we will be diving deeper.

- One aspect of realizing the anicca nature is to see the futility of expecting a "future happy life" by trying to make one's physical body the "main focus."
- It is essential to keep one's body in good condition by eating well and engaging in a good exercise program. It is ALSO important to realize that this body will only last about 100 years. On the other hand, the mental body or the gandhabba can last many hundreds of years.
- Thus one should try to improve the condition of the mental body (gandhabba) by cultivating good gati and getting rid of bad gati.
- A detailed analysis of life, in general, is in the "Origin of Life" section.

Next, "Saññā - What It Really Means."

### 4.8.2 Gandhabba State - Evidence from Tipitaka

September 16, 2017; revised September 30, 2107; November 14, 2018; August 31, 2019; July 8, 2022; October 25, 2022

## Introduction

1. I will present extensive evidence from the Tipitaka that the gandhabba state is a necessary feature of human (and animal) bhava. It is not an antarābhava (a state "in-between two bhava"). It is within the same human bhava.

- One's mental body (gandhabba or manomaya kāya) controls the physical body.
- Gandhabba state remains through many successive human births within a given human bhava (which can last many hundreds of years). When a given physical body dies, the gandhabba can enter another womb, when a matching one becomes available. Rebirth stories confirm this account.
- However, the gandhabba concept is different from the idea of a "soul." A gandhabba (manomaya $k \bar{a} y a)$ will keep changing during its lifetime. Furthermore, it will make a drastic change when the human bhava's lifetime end.


## Clear Evidence from Patthāna

2. Those who believe that patisandhi takes place in a womb need to consult the "Patthānapakarana" a section on Abhidhamma Pitaka in the Tipiṭaka.

- Patisandhi is the moment of grasping a new bhava, for example, a human bhava. At that moment a human gandhabba is born.
- That gandhabba gets into a womb later, and that event is okkanti. Human bhava is long, thousands of years, and that is the lifetime of a human gandhabba. During that time, many okkanti events could lead to rebirths with "physical human bodies."
- Paṭisandhi takes place with kamma paccaya and okkanti takes place with sahajāta paccaya.
- We know that birth in the human realm (pattisandhi) is a rare event. However, once in the human realm, a human gandhabba can be reborn with different "physical bodies" (via many okkanti events.) Otherwise, how can we account for so many rebirth accounts by children?


## Background

3. At the Third Buddhist Council, Moggaliputta Tissa Thero proved that there is no antarābhava in a debate with the Mahāyānists. That correct interpretation is in the Kathavatthu of the Tipitaka.

- Most current Thervādins erroneously believe that the gandhabba state is an "antarābhava" state. That is incorrect; see, "Antarābhava and Gandhabba" and "Cuti-Patisandhi - An Abhidhamma Description."


## - A human gandhabba exists within the human bhava.

4. A critical factor contributing to this erroneous belief that the gandhabba state is an "antarābhava" is the inability to distinguish between bhava and jāti. They erroneously believe that paṭisandhi takes place in the womb. But it is evident in the sutta passages above, that it is okkanti (of the gandhabba) that happens, not patisandhi.

- A human existence (bhava) could last hundreds or even thousands of years. Many human births ( $j \bar{a} t i$ ) can occur during that time; see, "Bhava and jāti- States of Existence and Births Therein."
- In rebirth stories, there is always a "time gap" (typically several years) between successive human births ( $j \bar{a} t i)$. Between those successive lives, that lifestream lives as a gandhabba, without a physical body.
- Even during a given human life ( $j \bar{a} t i$ ), the gandhabba may come out of the physical body under certain conditions, see, "Out-of-Body Experience (OBE) and Manomaya Kāya."
- The human bhava that is hard to attain; see "Rebirth - Connection to Suffering in the First Noble Truth." However, there can be many births within a given human bhava until the kammic energy for that human bhava runs out. Otherwise, how can one explain all these rebirth stories, where a human is reborn only a few years after dying in the previous human life?

5. I understand the reluctance of many to discard the deeply embedded idea that gandhabba is a Mahāyāna concept. I used to have that wrong view too. But as I have discussed above, many things will be left unexplained, and there will be many inconsistencies without them.

- Most importantly, rejecting the idea of a gandhabba (i.e., the existence of a para loka) is a micch $\bar{a}$ diṭthi. Thus one cannot even become a Sotāpanna Anugami with that micchā dittthi; see, "Micchā Ditthi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage" and "Hidden World of the Gandhabba: Netherworld (Para loka)." So, I would urge everyone to sift through the evidence and make informed decisions.
- More evidence is in many other posts on the site. There are two subsections of the gandhabba state: "Mental Body - Gandhabba" and "Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya)."
- One can also use the "Search" box on the top right to locate all relevant posts by typing "gandhabba."
- A simple description of human conception is in "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception." It could be helpful to read that first.


## Three Conditions for Conception per Sutt $\bar{a}$

6. The Buddha has described how three conditions must be satisfied for a conception to occur. That includes how a gandhabba (nominative case singular is gandhabbo; plural is gandhabba$\overline{\text { a }}$ ) descending to the womb. For example, in the WebLink: suttacentral: Mahā Tanhāsankhaya Sutta (MN 38): "..Tiṇnaì kho pana, bhikkhave, sannipātā gabbhassāvakkanti hoti. Idha mātāpitaro ca sannipatitā honti, mātā ca na utunī hoti, gandhabbo ca na paccupațthito hoti, neva tāva gabbhassāvakkanti hoti. Idha mātāpitaro ca sannipatitā honti, mātā ca utun̄̄ hoti, gandhabbo ca na paccupatṭhito hoti, neva tāva gabbhassāvakkanti hoti. Yato ca kho, bhikkhave, mātāpitaro ca sannipatitā honti, mātā ca utun̄̄ hoti, gandhabbo ca paccupatțhito hoti-evaì tiṇnamं sannipātā gabbhassāvakkanti hoti. Tamenaì, bhikkhave, mātā nava vā dasa vā māse gabbhaì kucchinā pariharati mahatā samimayena garubhārami..."

Here is the WebLink: suttacentral: English translation from the Sutta Central website (I have slightly modified it): "..Bhikkhus, the descent to the womb takes place through the union of three things. Here, there
is the union of the mother and father, but the mother is not in season, and the gandhabba is not presentin this case, no descent of an embryo takes place. Here, there is the union of the mother and father, and the mother is in season, but the gandhabba is not present-in this case too no embryo can result. All three following conditions must be met. Union of the mother and father, the mother is in season, and a gandhabba is present. That leads to the formation of an embryo. The mother then carries the embryo in her womb for nine or ten months with much anxiety, as a heavy burden..."

- Even though the venerable Bhikkhus who manage the Sutta Central website do not believe in the concept of a gandhabba, they have at least correctly translated most of the Pāli verse.
- By the way, the Sutta Central site is a valuable resource. It provides access to not only the Pāli version but also translations into several languages. I encourage everyone to contribute to that website to maintain that valuable database.
- One needs to remember that some critical Pāli terms are mistranslated there. Those include anicca as impermanence and anatta as "no-self." Furthermore, translating complex Pāli words like viññāna and sañkhāra as just single words in English can lead to severe problems.

7. In the WebLink: suttacentral: Assalāyana Sutta (MN 93), there is more evidence that for conception to occur, a gandhabba needs to descend into the mother's womb at the right time. That needs to happen within a few days of the parents' union, and it needs to be during the mother's season.

Here, the Buddha explains to Assalayana how the seer Asita Devala questioned seven brahmanā who had the wrong view that they were heirs to Maha Brahm $\bar{a}$. Here are the questions that seer Asita Devala asked:

## "Jānanti pana bhonto-yathā gabbhassa avakkanti hotī'ti? "

- "But do you, sirs, know how there is a conception in the womb?"
"Jānāma mayaì, bho-yathā gabbhassa avakkanti hoti 'ti. Jānāma mayaì, bho - yathā gabbhassa avakkanti hoti. Idha mātāpitaro ca sannipatitā honti, mātā ca utunī hoti, gandhabbo ca paccupaṭ! hito hoti; evaì tinṇaì sannipātā gabbhassa avakkanti hotī'ti."
- 'We do know, sir, how there is conception. There is coitus of the parents, it is the mother's season, and a gandhabba is present; it is on the conjunction of these three things that there is conception.'
"Jānanti pana bhonto-taggha so gandhabbo khattiyo vā brāhmaṇo vā vesso vā suddo vā'ti?."
- "But do you, sirs, know whether that gandhabba is a noble, brahman, merchant or worker?"
"Na mayamं, bho, jānāma-taggha so gandhabbo khattiyo vā brāhmaṇo vā vesso vā suddo vā'ti."
- "We do not know, sir, whether that gandhabba is a noble, brahman, merchant, or worker."

Therefore, the concept of a gandhabba was accepted even by other yogis in Buddha's time.
8. In the WebLink: suttacentral: Mahā Nidana Sutta (DN 15): "..Viññānapaccayā nāmarūpan'ti iti kho panetaì vuttaì, tadānanda, imināpetaì pariyāyena veditabbaì, yathā viññānapaccayā nāmarūpaì. Viññ̄ạnañca hi, ānanda, mātukucchismimं na okkamissatha, api nu kho nāmarūpaì mātukucchismimं samuccissathā"ti? "No hetaì, bhante." "Viññānañca hi, ānanda, mātukucchismim okkamitvā vokkamissatha, api nu kho nāmarūpaì itthattāya abhinibbattissathā"ti? "No hetaí, bhante."

Translated: "..With consciousness as a condition, there is mentality-materiality (nāmarūpa). How that is so, Ānanda, should be understood in this way: If viñ $\tilde{n} a ̄ n a$ were not to descend into the mother's womb, would mentality-materiality ( $n \bar{a} m a$ rūpa) take shape in the womb?" "Certainly not, venerable sir." "If, the descended viñnäna were to depart, would mentality-materiality be generated into this present state of being?" "Certainly not, venerable sir."

- Here, it is clear that by "a viñ̃nāṇa descending to the womb," the Buddha meant the descent of the manomaya kāya (gandhabba), not the paṭisandhi citta. A paṭisandhi viñnäạa cannot come out (depart) of the womb! In \#7 below, we will present evidence that the other four khandhas always accompany viññāna. That includes the rūpakkhandha (and a gandhabba has all five khandhas).
- The Pāli word "Okkanti" is often mistranslated as "rebirth." But it means the "descend" of an already formed manomaya kāya (gandhabba). Rebirth happens (and a gandhabba is born) within a thought moment, at the cuti-paṭisandhi moment; see, "Cuti-Patisandhi - An Abhidhamma Description."


## More Details from Suttā

9. In the WebLink: suttacentral: Kutuhala Sutta (SN 44.9), Vacca asked the Buddha, "..Yasmiñca pana, bho gotama, samaye imañca kāyamं nikkhipati, satto ca aññataramं kāyamं anupapanno hoti, imassa pana bhavaì gotamo kimं upādānasmim paññāpetī"ti? OR "..and, Master Gotama, when a being has given up this body but has not yet been reborn in another body, what food does it consume?"

- The Buddha answered, "..Yasmimi kho, vaccha, samaye imañca kāyaì nikkhipati, satto ca aññataraì kāyà̇ anupapanno hoti, tamahaì taṇhūpādānaì vadāmi." OR "..When, Vaccha, a being has given up this body but has not yet been reborn in another body, I declare that it uses craving as food."
- Thus when a gandhabba leaves one physical and is not yet reborn in another body, its life is sustained by tanh $\bar{a}$ (craving). That is similar to a rūpi Brahma making use of pīti (mental happiness) as food. Both gandhabbā and rūpi Brahmā have subtle bodies (smaller than an atom in modern science; only a few suddhatthaka). However, some gandhabbā can inhale odors for food and become relatively denser.

10. In the WebLink: suttacentral: Sangiti Sutta (Digha Nikāya 33), it is described how a gandhabba can enter a womb in four ways: "..Catasso gabbhāvakkantiyo. Idhāvuso, ekacco asampajāno mātukucchim okkamati, asampajāno mātukucchismim thāti, asampajāno mātukucchimhā nikkhamati, ayaì paṭhamā gabbhāvakkanti. Puna caparaì, āvuso, idhekacco sampajāno mātukucchim okkamati, asampajāno mātukucchismim thā̄ti, asampajāno mātukucchimhā nikkhamati, ayaì dutiy $\bar{a}$ gabbhāvakkanti. Puna caparaì, āvuso, idhekacco sampajāno mātukucchim okkamati, sampajāno mātukucchismimi ṭāti, asampajāno mātukucchimhā nikkhamati, ayaì tatiyā gabbhāvakkanti. Puna caparaì, āvuso, idhekacco sampajāno mātukucchim okkamati, sampajāno mātukucchismimं ṭhāti, sampajāno mātukucchimhā nikkhamati, ayaỉ catutthā gabbhāvakkanti."

Translated: "..Four ways of entering the womb. Herein, bhikkhus, one descends into the mother's womb unknowingly, abides there unknowing, and departs thence unknowing. That is the first class of conception. Another descends deliberately, but abides and departs unknowingly. Another descends and abides deliberately, but departs unknowingly. Lastly, another descends, abides, and departs knowingly."

- That is okkanti (descending of the gandhabba) into the womb (gabba), as described in the Mahā Taṇhāsañkhaya Sutta discussed above.
- Almost the same description is in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Sampasādanīya Sutta (Digha Nikāya 28)." Another relevant sutta is "WebLink: suttacentral: Titthāyatana Sutta (AN 3.61)."

11. It is a Bodhisattva in the last birth that, ".. descends, abides and departs the womb knowingly", the fourth way of entering a womb, mentioned above.

- In the WebLink: suttacentral: Mahāpadāna Sutta (DN 14): "..Atha kho, bhikkhave, vipassī bodhisatto tusitā kāyā cavitvā sato sampajāno mātukucchim okkami. Ayamettha dhammatā."
- Translated: "...Now Vipassī bodhisattva, bhikkhus, left the Tusita realm and descended into his mother's womb mindful and knowingly. That is the rule."
- At the cuti-patisandhi moment in the Tusita realm, the deva died, and a human gandhabba was born, who entered the mother's womb on Earth.
- This sutta describes in detail the last seven Buddhas including Buddha Gotama, who have appeared in our cakk $\bar{a} v a \bar{t} t a$ within the past 31 mahā kappa (great eons). English translation of the Sutta at Sutta Central provides a helpful summary in a table WebLink: suttacentral: English translation of the Sutta at Sutta Central.
- However, in this sutta, gabbhāvakkantiyo and okkami are mistranslated at Sutta Central.


## Patisandhi Viññāṇa Same as Gandhabba

12. In the Bija Sutta (WebLink: suttacentral: Samyutta Nikāya 22.54), it is clear that viññ̄ạna cannot exist or "travel" without the other four aggregates, including the rūpakkhandha: "..Yo, bhikkhave, evain vadeyya: 'ahamaññatra rūpā añ̃atra vedanāya añnatra saññāya añnatra sañkhārehi viññānassa āgatim vā gatim vā cutim vā upapattim vā vuddhim vā virūlhim vā vepullaí vā pañ̃̄āpessāmītti, netaim ṭhānain vijjati."
"Bhikkhus, I say that it is impossible for viñnāna to exist, to grow, and to move at rebirth in the absence of form, feeling, perception, and sañkhāra.."

- Therefore, descending of a patisandhi viññāna to a womb MUST be accompanied by all five khandhas, which is the kammaja kāya of the gandhabba. Viññāna can never exist without a rūpa; even the Brahmā in arūpa realms have hadaya vatthu, a suddhatṭhaka made of cattāro mahā bhūta.


## Antarāparinibbayi State and Gandhabba

13. The first seven samiyojana include kāma rāga, rūpa rāga, and arūpa rāga. In the absence of those three saminyojana, one cannot be reborn in any of the 31 realms in the $k \bar{a} m a$, rūpa, and arūpa loka. For a discussion on samyojana, see, "Dasa Samyojana - Bonds in Rebirth Process."

- When a person dies, the gandhabba comes out of the dead body. If that person had removed the first seven samyojana by the time he died, that gandhabba could not grasp a bhava in any of the 31 realms.
- However, since the last three samiyojana of māna, uddhacca, and avijjā are still there, that person will not be able to attain Parinibbāna either. In other words, gandhabba cannot die either.
- Then "that person" will remain in the gandhabba state until his kammic energy for the human bhava runs out. That is called the "Anatarāpainibbiyāni" state.
- That is described in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Samyojana Sutta (AN 4:131): "..Katamassa, bhikkhave, puggalassa orambhāgiyāni samiyojanāni pahīnāni, upapattipaṭilābhiyāni sam̀yojanāni pahīn̄ni, bhavapaṭilābhiyāni samyyojanāni appahīnāni? Antarāparinibbāyissa."
- The first five samiyojanā are called orambhāgiyā samiyojanā. Rūpa rāga and arūpa rāga are collectively called upapattipațilābhiyā samiyojanā, and māna, uddhacca, avijjā are collectively called bhavapatilābhiyā sam̀yojana.
There are many posts on gandhabba: "Mental Body - Gandhabba," "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma," and "Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya)."


### 4.8.3 Antarābhava and Gandhabba

July 29, 2016; revised January 23, 2020; December 5, 2020; August 22, 2021
Title pronunciation:
WebLink: Listen to Pronunciation: Antarabhava and Gandhabba

## What Is Antarābhava?

1. There are many misinterpretations about the term "antarābhava." Just two to three hundred years after the Parinibbāna of the Buddha, Mahayanists started saying that there is an antarābhava, because they thought gandhabba belonged to an antarābhava.

- At the Third Buddhist Council, Moggaliputta Tissa Thero proved the non-existence of an antarābhava in a debate with the Mahāyānists. That correct interpretation is in the Kathavatthu of the Tipiṭaka.

2. Antarābhava ("antara" + "bhava," where antara is "in-between") means in between bhava or existences. For example, when a living being in the human bhava exhausts its kammic energy for that human existence, it grasps a new existence (bhava) at the cuti-patisandhi moment. Suppose the next existence or bhava is existence as a deer, for this example.

- The transition from a human to deer existence happens in a billionth of a second from the cuti citta (dying moment in the human bhava) to the patisandhi citta (first thought-moment in existence as a deer).
- Therefore, indeed there is no antarābhava. The time-lapse from the cuti citta to the pattisandhi citta is negligibly small; see, "Cuti-Patisandhi - An Abhidhamma Description." That was the point made by Moggaliputta Tissa Thero at the Third Buddhist Council: there is no "antarābhava" between the "human bhava" and the "deer bhava" in the above example.
- Gandhabba is in the same "human bhava" until the human bhava's kammic energy runs out (which could be many hundreds of years, compared to about 100 years of a lifetime for a human). In between successive human births within that human bhava, it is the gandhabba that lives in "para loka"; see, "Hidden World of the Gandhabba: Netherworld (Paraloka)."


## Bhava and Jāti Are Two Different Concepts

3. The critical point is that bhava and $j \bar{a} t i$ are two different things. That is why in Paticca Samuppāda, there is a step, "bhava paccayā jāti." There can be many "jāti" or births as a human within a single human bhava; see, "Bhava and Jāti- States of Existence and Births Therein."

- Living beings in human and animal realms are not born with fully-formed physical bodies. In all other 29 realms, beings are born with fully-formed bodies called opapātika or instantaneous births. Thus a deva or Brahma is born with fully-formed bodies.
- That means a deva or Brahma will have the same body during that bhava, even though that body will change. For them, there are only ONE $j \bar{j} t i \boldsymbol{w}$ whin that bhava.


## Humans (and Animals) Have Many Jäti Within That Bhava

4. In our example above, a human could have kammic energy supporting human existence (bhava) for thousands of years. However, a physical human body can last only for about 100 years.

- The kammic energy of a human bhava is not in the physical body (karaja kāya) but is in the "mental body" or the manomaya kāya of the gandhabba. There is a whole section on the gandhabba at this site; see "Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya)."
- As explained in the post, "Manomaya Kāya (Gandhabba) and the Physical Body," a gandhabba will inherit "many physical bodies" during a given human existence.
- As discussed in the post, "Ghost in the Machine - Synonym for the Manomaya Kāya?," the physical body is inert, and it is the gandhabba that "gives life" to that inert body.


## $\overline{A y u k k h a y a ~ M a r a n ̣ a ~ a n d ~ K a m m a k k h a y a ~ M a r a n ̣ a ~}$

5. That is why the physical body's death does not necessarily imply a cuti citta, i.e., one may be NOT released from the human bhava. One will lose the human bhava only if it is a "kammakkhaya marana" or death where the kammic energy is exhausted ("marana" in Pail or Sinhala is for death).

- But most human deaths are "āyukkhaya maraṇa," i.e., the end of life for the physical body (here "āyu" means the lifetime of a physical body.) More kammic energy for the human bhava left. There is no cuti citta at that time. In that case, there is no change in the gandhabba at the moment of death of the physical body.
- That gandhabba would come out of the dead body and wait for another womb.
- A housefly lives for about a week or so. But the "fly bhava" may last for thousands and millions of years. When a fly dies, a "fly gandhabba" comes out of that dead body. It will get into an egg laid by another fly and soon be born a fly. That process will repeat an uncountable number of times during that "fly bhava" (or the existence as a fly.)

6. Thus, if it is a "āyukkhaya marana," the gandhabba comes out of that dead body and waits for another womb. It is improbable that a matching womb will appear precisely at the death of a human physical body. In most cases, the gandhabba has to wait months and more likely years before a matching womb becomes available (gati of the gandhabba have to match the gati of the parents).

- Most deaths due to accidents are not due to "kammakkhaya marana," i.e., just the physical body dies. The human in question will be reborn with a new human body at a later time. That is why many rebirths accounts describe death in a previous life due to an accident, murder, etc.
- Of course, one could die with āyukkhaya maraṇa even at old age.


## Mahāyāna Concept of Antarābhava

7. The reason that the Mahāyānists say that there is an antarābhava is that they believe that the gandhabba is not human and is an "in-between state."

- The irony is that many current Therāvadins even refuse to believe the EXISTENCE of a gandhabba simply because they do not want to be seen as taking the side of the Mahāyānists. Those Tharāvadins believe that when a human dies - with kammic energy left in the human bhava - the second human fetus starts INSTANTANEOUSLY in a womb. In other words, the previous human dies at the cuti moment, and a billionth of a second later appears as a new baby in a human womb (patisandhi).
- However, that approach leads to many inconsistencies: (i) Such precise timing is an impossibility. (ii) The step "bhava paccayā jāti" in Paṭicca Samuppāda does not make sense: Is that new human birth a new bhava?. (iii) Patisandhi or grasping a new bhava happens within a thought-moment. However, the birth of a human body occurs via a series of steps described in \#8 below. (iv) As discussed in \#9 - \#11 below, rebirth accounts are also not compatible with rebirth occurring in the womb. (v) There is more evidence from the Tipitaka, as discussed in \#12, \#13 below.


## A Physical Human Body Versus Manomaya Kāya (Gandhabba)

8. According to the Tipiṭaka, a full-pledged human appears via a series of steps: "jāti, sañjāti, okkanti, abhinibbatti, khandhānaì pātubhāvo, āyatānānaì pāṭilābho. See, "Vibhañga Sutta (SN 12.2)" and "Manomaya Kāya (Gandhabba) and the Physical Body."

- Here, $j \bar{a} t i$ is the patisandhi moment, when the kammaja kāya for the new bhava appears in a thoughtmoment. Moments later, that kammaja kāya is augmented by the cittaja kāya and a utuja kāya, and a manomaya kāya (gandhabba) results. That is the sañjāti moment. This gandhabba comes out of the dead body in the previous life (bhava).
- When that gandhabba goes into a suitable womb, that is the okkanti moment. In many sutta, that is described as "viññāna of a boy or a girl descending into a womb." Note that by the time descending into a womb, the sex is already determined. It is a human gandhabba that comes into a womb.
- There is no place in the Tipiṭaka that says paṭisandhi happens in a womb. Rather it says, "... gandhabba okkanti hoti."

9. Many rebirth account features are consistent with that correct interpretation where the manomaya kāya (gandhabba) inherits many successive (but time separated) physical bodies.

- There is always a "time gap" between successive human births ( $j \bar{a} t i$ ). They are always separated by several years or at least a few years. In between those successive lives, that lifestream survives as a gandhabba. The Buddha told Vacchagotta that the gandhabba survives that intervening time by using taṇhā as āhāra. Some gandhabbā can "inhale" aroma from plants, too.
- We all know that human existence is difficult to get; see "Rebirth - Connection to Suffering in the First Noble Truth." If each human birth is a "brand new human existence or bhava," that would be inconsistent since human existence is a rare event.


## Human Births Within the Human Bhava

10. Then another question may arise, "Why do people look different in successive rebirths?" The physical body in each human life (within the same human bhava) arises from the parents' contributions to that life.

- Even though the gandhabba brings in gati (habits), āsava (cravings), kilesa (mental impurities), etc., from the previous life, the physical body for the new life has significant contributions from the parents. The DNA of the physical bodies of two successive lives will be very different due to this reason. For details, see "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception."


## Gandhabba's Gati Will Change With Time

11. Furthermore, even the mental body of the gandhabba WILL change in the next life. Thus gati (habits), $\bar{a} s a v a$ (cravings), kilesa (mental impurities), etc., will also change as one grows up in a new environment under a different set of influences.

- For example, one could have lived a moral life in the previous birth but may be born into a family of drug addicts due to a bad kamma vipäka. In that case, the new life could drastically change to an immoral life.
- However, in most cases, the successive lives are not drastically different unless one makes drastic changes. If one could attain the Sotāpanna stage, then one will not be born into an immoral family. If one reaches the Anāgāmī stage of Nibbāna, one will never be born a human and born in the Brahma realm.
- On the other hand, even if one is born in a moral family but under the influence of bad friends becomes a drug addict and commits crimes, one is likely to be born into an immoral family in the next birth. If one commits a $\bar{a}$ nantariya p $\bar{p} p a \operatorname{kamm} \bar{a}$ (say by killing a parent), then one will be born in the ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$ at death, even if there is more kammic energy left in the human bhava.


## More Evidence From Tipiṭaka

12. Now, let us discuss more evidence from the Tipitaka. During the night of his Enlightenment, the Buddha (or more accurately the ascetic Siddhartha) first attained the "pubbe nivāsānussati ñāna," before attaining the "cutupapāda ñāna" and finally the "āsavakkhaya ñāna." It is the $\bar{a} s a v a k k h a y a ~ n ̃ a ̄ ̣ ̣ a ~ t h a t ~ l e d ~ t o ~ t h e ~$ Buddhahood; see, "The Way to Nibbāna - Removal of Āsavā."

- The first two pieces of knowledge (ñāna; pronounced "gnana";) can be attained even with anāriya $j h a ̄ n \bar{a}$ (with limited capabilities). Both those deal with the ability to look back at previous lives. But with the first one, pubbe nivāsānussati ñāna, one could only look at the previous human births.
- Here, "pubbe" means "previous," "nivasa" means "house," and "anussati" means "recall," i.e., the knowledge to recall successive residences of a given gandhabba. In a given human bhava, a gandhabba could have many different "houses," i.e., physical bodies. Thus with this ñāna, one could look at human births in the past, in multiple human bhava going back to very long times, depending on the yogi's capability.
- The second one, cutupapāda ñāna, extends the capability to see all previous rebirths in any realm. Here cutupapāda (cuti means the end of a bhava and upapāda means birth) refers to all types of rebirths in various realms (niraya, animal, deva, etc.) in the past.


## Connection to Pubbe Nivāsānussati Nāạna

13. Furthermore, the Buddha described how he saw human gandhabbā moving from one physical body to the next (in a single human bhava) with the pubbe nivāsānussati ñāna. He explained that with the following simile: If one is in an upper level of a multi-story building (yes, there were multi-storied buildings at the time of the Buddha) located at a busy junction, one could see people meandering in the streets below.

- Some people stay on the street, sometimes sitting in a bench or standing by the road, etc.; this is analogous to gandhabbā just waiting for a physical body (i.e., a womb).
- Sometimes, a person enters a house and stays there for a long time; this is comparable to a gandhabba in a physical body for a long time, i.e., until old age.
- Other times, a person may enter a house and come out after a few hours. That is comparable to death at a young age.
- Also, a person could enter a house and immediately come out. That corresponds to abortion or an unsuccessful pregnancy.

14. Thus, the pubbe nivāsānussati ñāna is limited to looking at past human lives. That is an excellent example that the Buddha clearly stated the concept of the gandhabba. The cutupapāda ñāna extends the capability to see all previous rebirths in any realm.

- In the Tirokudda Sutta, the gandhabba is called a "tirokudda"; see, "Hidden World of the Gandhabba: Netherworld (Paraloka)."


## Change of Bhava

15. If a human dies at the end of the kammic energy for the human bhava, then the cuti-patisandhi transition happens at the death moment. In the specific example of a human to deer transition, now a "deer gandhabba" comes out of that dead body and has to wait for a matching "deer womb" to become available.

- However, if the human was to become a deva, then a fully formed deva will appear instantaneously in a deva realm, the moment the human dies in a kammakkhaya marana. A gandhabba is involved only in human and animal realms; see, "Gandhabba - Only in Human and Animal Realms."


## Connection to Astral Travel

16. Another interesting piece of information is how the Buddha (and others with iddhi powers [bala]) traveled to deva or Brahma loka with the manomaya kāya (the same as gandhabba.) Here, the physical body is left behind. Yet, the physical body does not die, and is kept alive by the rūpa jivitindriya (kammic energy.) Upon returning, the gandhabba can re-enter the physical body.

- Those who attain the fourth jhāna can develop iddhi powers to be able to separate the manomaya $k \bar{a} y a$ from the physical body and travel far with that manomaya k $\bar{a} y a$. The Buddha stated that just as a sword comes out of its sheath, those with iddhi powers can pull the manomaya kāya out of the physical body. There are many suttā in the Dīgha Nikāya with that exact statement.
- That manomaya kaya can then go to distant places within very short times (this is what is called "astral travel" in the present day; see the Wikipedia article, "WebLink: Wiki: Astral projection." A gandhabba is the same as an "astral body."
- In many suttā, it is stated that the Buddha visited deva or Brahma lok $\bar{a}$ "within the time that takes a bent arm to be straightened."
- Some yogis with iddhi powers can travel with the physical body. Of course, the Buddha did that too. That involves a different mechanism that is not relevant to this discussion.

17. If you have any other questions or unresolved issues about this discussion, please send me a comment (lal@puredhamma.net) or post at the discussion forum. I can add to the post to address such questions.

### 4.8.4 <br> Ānantarika Kamma - Connection to Gandhabba

## June 2, 2018; revised December 14, 2021

1. Ānantarika or ānantariya comes from " $n a$ " + "an" + "antara." That rhymes like "ānantara." There are many words like this, meanings of which remain unclear to many. Pāli is a phonetic language, where some meanings can never be found grammatically.

- Anatta is the negation of "atta" or having refuge/having substance: "na" + "atta" (which rhymes as "anatta"): there is no substance/does not hold any ultimate truth; see, "Anatta - the Opposite of Which Atta?."
- The word $A n a \bar{a} g \bar{a} m \bar{\imath}$ comes from "na" + " $\bar{a} g \bar{a} m \vec{\imath} "$ or "not coming back": "na" + "āgām $\vec{\imath}$ ' rhymes as "anāgāmī." It means "not coming back to the kama loka." He/she will attain Nibbāna from those brahma realms.
- Words like this cannot be analyzed grammatically. This is why current Pāli experts are wrong in interpreting such words (and are unable to interpret many key words).
- By the way, anantara means the opposite of ānantara; see, "Anantara and Samanantara Paccaya."

2. Going back to the word "ānantarika": "An" means food or, in this case, the kamma seed; "antara" means in storage, waiting to bear fruit. Thus, anantara ("an" + "antara") means a kamma seed waiting to germinate. Now, "na" means "not." Therefore, if a kamma can bring vipāka right away, it is "na + anantara" which rhymes like "ānantara." Therefore, ānantarika means "not stored away to come back when conditions are right", i.e., it will bring vipāka "right away."

- When one does a kamma that is NOT ānantarika, its kammic energy is "stored away" at "antara" and can bring suitable kamma vipāka, when suitable CONDITIONS appear. Some kamma vipāka may not be realized for many lives simply because suitable conditions had not appeared.
- However, an ānantarika kamma vipāka SHOULD override any existing other kamma vipāka. Our life experiences (citta vīthi) ALWAYS start with a kamma vipāka (see, "How Are Paticca Samuppāda Cycles Initiated?‘). Therefore, an ānantarika kamma vipāka SHOULD BE enforced right after the kamma is done, even before any other pavutti kamma vipāka (like a seeing, hearing event) is initiated, i.e., instantaneously. There should be no need for a delay until the death of the human. [pavutti : happening, proceeding, fate, event]

3. However, an ānantarika kamma will bring vipāka "right away" ONLY in realms other than the human realm (ānantarika kamma are not relevant in the animal realm). In order to see why that is, let us first look at what types of kamma belong to ānantarika kamma.

- The BAD ānantarika kamma are five: killing one's mother, killing one's father, killing an Arahant, shedding the blood of a Buddha, creating Sañgha bheda. These are listed towards the end of the following link in the Tipiṭaka: WEBLINK: suttacentral: Nānakathā [bheda : [m.] breach; disunion; dissension.]
- Then, there are several GOOD ānantarika kamma: magga phala (stages of Nibbāna) and attainment of (Ariya or anāriya) jhānā.
- Any of these, by definition, should lead to their vipāka right away. However, there is another factor that comes into play for humans, which we will discuss now.

4. All of the five bad annantarika kamma are done by humans. Therefore, we need look at the good annantarika kamma in order to see how they work in other realms.

- For example, if a deva attains the Anāgāmī stage, that deva will instantaneously be born in a rūpāvacara brahma realm. [deva : (lit: the Radiant Ones; related to Lat. deus) : heavenly beings, deities, celestials, are beings who live in happy worlds, and who, as a rule, are invisible to the human eye. They are subject, however, just like all human and other beings, to ever-repeated rebirth, old age and death, and thus are not freed from the cycle of existence and from misery.]
- If a rūpāvacara Brahma attains the Arahant stage, that Brahma will instantaneously attain Parinibbāna, i.e., will cease to exist in the 31 realms.
- In both those cases, the true meaning of the term ānantarika kamma will be enforced, i.e., the vipāka will take place without a delay, instantaneously.

5. In the human realm, the enforcement of an anantarika kamma will be DELAYED due to the following reason.

- The primary "body" that is directly subjected to annantarika kamma vipāka is the kammaja kaya, the "primary body" created by kamma for that bhava at the cuti-patiisandhi moment. All living beings are born with a "mental body" (called "trija kaya" or three bodies) consisting of the kammaja kaya, cittaja kaya, and utuja kaya.
- Brahmā only have trija kaya. Even though devas in the six deva realms have a fourth "physical body" or a "karaja kaya," that is very fine. Thus, the trija kaya (specifically the kammaja kaya) of a deva is not shielded sufficiently and any ānantarika kamma vipāka will take place without a delay.
- This trija kaya in human and animal realms is given a special name "gandhabba."

6. The trija kaya or the gandhabba of a human is shielded by the "dense human physical body." Therefore, the instantaneous enforcement of the annantarika kamma vipāka on the kammaja kaya cannot take place. It will have to wait until the death of the physical body.

- When the physical body of a human dies, the trija kaya (which is given the special name gandhabba) comes out and is no longer shielded by the physical body. At that time, the ānantarika kamma vipāka will be enforced instantaneously.
- This is the reason that the term annantarika kamma vipāka does not apply to a human in the true sense of ānantarika (no delay).
- Therefore, the working of ānantarika kamma wipāka cannot be explained without the concept of gandhabba.

7. Now we can explain many applications of the ānantarika kamma vipāka for humans.

- On the "bad side", for example, one can kill a parent or cause Sañgha bheda and can live a full life. However, at the death of the physical body, one would be instantaneously born in the ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$ (even if there is more kammic energy for the current human bhava leff).
- On the "good side", one attaining a jhāna will be born in the appropriate Brahma realm only after death. One attaining the $A n \bar{a} g \bar{a} m \bar{\imath}$ stage will be born in the appropriate Brahma realm only after death, and one attaining the Arahant stage would undergo Parinibbāna (i.e., cease to exist in the 31 realms and immediately get to Nibbāna) only at death.

8. Now, another question may come up regarding the following situation: an Arahant's or an Anāgām $\bar{\imath} \mathrm{s}$ gandhabba may have to come out of the physical body when performing a supernormal action (abhiñ $\tilde{n} \bar{a}$ ). Wouldn't that gandhabba undergo instantaneous transformation at that time?

- The answer is no. The reason is that the gandhabba is still firmly connected to the living physical body (that is they can re-enter that body any time). It is as if the gandhabba is still protected by the physical body; the shielding is still active.
- This explanation holds also in the cases of astral projection and out-of-body experiences (OBE); see, "Manomaya Kāya and Out-of-Body Experience (OBE)." In the case of astral projection or astral travel, it is said that the astral body is kept "attached" to the physical body by "silver cord."

9. Now we can address another related issue. There seems to be two issues that may be difficult to grasp.

- A LIVING Arahant is subjected to kamma vipāka DURING his/her life.
- No kamma vipāka will come to an Arahant AFTER his/her death.

10. As we discussed above, a human Arahant will not attain Parinibbāna at the moment of attaining Arahanthood, because of the presence of the human physical body. Thus, a human Arahant has to wait until the death of the physical body to attain Parinibbāna.

- Now, attaining a magga phala does NOT mean the removal of kammic energies for previous kamma (see below). Therefore, those kamma vipāka will be still effective for the Arahant until death.
- This is why even the Buddha had to suffer from an injury to his toe, had back problems, and also had pains after the last meal.

11. There could be many more kamma vipāka left for an Arahant at the time of death. However, at death, the gandhabba comes out of the dead body and will instantaneously disappear from the 31 realms of this world, i.e., attain Parinibbāna.

- Therefore, any remaining kamma vipāka will NEVER be able to materialize. They are said to have become "ahosi kamma," or "ineffective kamma."
- So, now we have answers to the two questions raised in \#9 above.

12. However, some kamma vipāka other than an ānantarika kamma vipāka will be overcome by attaining a magga phala (at least the Sotāpanna stage), i.e., some kamma vipāka will become ahosi kamma. Of course, all kamma vipāka will become ahosi kamma at Parinibbāna.

- Let us discuss how some kamma vipāka can become ahosi kamma upon attaining stages of magga phala.
- In order to do that we need first to discuss what happens at the Arahant stage.

13. One attains the final stage of Nibbāna (Arahanthood), not by removing or exhausting all kamma vipāka from the past.

- One attains the Arahanthood by cultivating one's pañ̃̃ā (wisdom) to the level where one truly understands the real nature of this world. At that point, one's mind will not be tempted by ANY desire ( $\tanh \bar{a}$ ) to be born ANYWHERE in the 31 realms. That is a CRITICAL POINT to understand.
- Now when the gandhabba comes out of the dead body of an Arahant, it immediately undergoes the cuti (separation from the human bhava), due to the ānantarika kamma vipāka associated with the Arahant phala.
- But now, that lifestream CANNOT grasp a new bhava (patisandhi) anywhere in the 31 realms since there is no "upādāna" in the step of "upādāna paccayā bhava" in the Paṭicca Samuppāda process. This is because there is no taṇh $\bar{a}$ left for any existence in the 31 realms and thus "taṇh $\bar{a}$ paccay $\bar{a}$ upādāna" step will not happen.

14. Therefore, even though there are many good and bad kamma vipāka may be associated with that Arahant, all those will have become "ahosi kamma" (are not able to bring out vipāka), simply because one has lost ALL cravings (taṇhā).

- This is why Angulimāla became free of the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$, even though he killed 999 people. That was not an ānantarika kamma. Only those kamma listed in \#3 above are ānantarika kamma.

15. However, in the case of the death of an Anāgāmī, the gandhabba comes out, undergoes cuti, but can grasp a bhava in the rūpāvacara brahma realms reserved for the Anāgāmiss. Therefore, a cuti-patisandhi transition takes place leading to the rebirth in such a realm.

- But an Anāgām $\bar{\imath}^{s}$ mind would not grasp a bhava anywhere in the $k \bar{a} m \bar{a} v a c a r a ~ r e a l m s, ~ s i n c e ~ h e / s h e ~ h a s ~$ lost all "upādāna" (tied to cravings via taṇhā) for such realms. Therefore, any previous kamma vipāka that could have led to a rebirth in the lower realms will have become ahosi kamma.

16. In the same way, a Sotāpanna's mind would not grasp a bhava in the apāyā. Any "apāyagāmī kamma" he/she had done have now become "ahosi kamma." If one has "apāyagāmī kamma vipāka" waiting to bear fruit (as almost all normal humans do), attaining the Sotāpanna stage will OVERRIDE those kamma vipāka.

- To put it in another way: at the dying moment, a Sotāpanna WILL NOT grasp (upādāna) birth in the apāy $\bar{a}$. His/her mindset has PERMANENTLY changed. Therefore, such kamma vipāka will NEVER materialize even in future lives for a Sotāpanna.
- His/her diṭthi anusaya and dițthāsava have been permanently removed, and the three samyojanā that binds one to the ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$ have been cut off, these terms describe the Sotāpanna attainment in different ways; see below.

17. Even though one who attained an anāriya jhāna would grasp a bhava in the appropriate Brahma realm, that is just for that particular cuti-patisandhi transition.

- Since he/she had not attained a magga phala (and thus has not "seen" the futility/danger of "apāyagām̄̄ actions"), a birth in the apa$y \bar{a}$ can happen in the future.
- One with an anāriya jhāna has only SUPPRESSED cravings for kāma loka, but such cravings remain as anusaya: One has not removed avijj $\bar{a}$ to the level of truly realizing the dangers of $k \bar{a} m a$ rāga, by comprehending Tilakkhaṇa. Thus, kāma rāga anusaya remains together with kāmāsava, and one has not broken through the kāma rāga samyojanā. These terms are explained in, "Gathi (Gati), Anusaya, and Āsava" and "Dasa Samyojana - Bonds in Rebirth Process."

18. Therefore, ultimately it is the true understanding of Tilakkhana at various levels that lead to various magga phala.

- However, understanding of Tilakkhana is possible only for one who has cultivated the mundane eightfold path, via discarding ALL 10 types of micchā ditṭhi. [See the 10 types of micch $\bar{a}$ ditṭhi at Mahā Chattārisaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty), Micchā Ditthi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage, Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala), and Three Kinds of Ditthi, Eightfold Paths, and Samadhi] [WebLink: suttacentral: 62 views at WebLink: suttacentral: Brahmajala Sutta]
- To put it another way, attaining magga phala at various stages is associated with getting rid of dasa akusala at various levels.
- Micchā dittthi is the worst of the dasa akusala, and at the root of miccha ditṭhi is are the 10 types of micch $\bar{a}$ ditṭhi. The second level of micchā diṭthi is removed with the comprehension of Tilakkhaṇa (that is when one starts on the Noble Eightfold Path).
- All wrong views (ditthi) are removed when one attains the Arahanthood. When all wrong views are removed, all other nine akusala are prevented. However, abstaining from other dasa akusala is necessary to remove wrong views, so they are all inter-connected.
- I keep repeating this, but I am not sure how many pay attention to these basic facts. Many people seem to waste time trying to comprehend Tilakkhana, before getting rid of the $\mathbf{1 0}$ types of micchā ditthi.


## Discussion at: "Anantariya Kamma, Euthanasia and Assisted Suicides."

### 4.8.5 <br> Mental Body (Gandhabba) - Personal Accounts

## February 5, 2017; revised April 25, 2020

The evidence comes in three general types of accounts, as we discuss below.

1. Many people have at least briefly experienced an "out-of-body experience" (OBE), where the mental body just comes out of the physical body, and one sees one's own physical body from above.

- In his book, "Travels", the famous author of the Jurassic Park, Michael Crichton (1988, p. 307) mentions his ability to "shift my awareness out of my body and move it around the bedroom", and he says, "..I didn't think anything about it... I assumed that anybody could do it..".
- A similar account has been given by a woman recently who also thought that "everybody could do it": WebLink: ABCNews: Woman Has 'Out of Body' Experiences Whenever She Wants.
- Robert Monroe (see \#6 below) says mental bodies of most of us come out and wander around even without us realizing it. Sometimes, we are in a dream state (we believe) and then feel a "sudden fall" and wake up. He says this "dream state" is actually the mental body wandering around and we feel the "sudden fall" when the mental body re-enters the physical body.
- So it is not correct to assume that a gandhabba or the mental body as a "ghost." In a sense, it is a better representation of us than our physical bodies that are discarded after about $\mathbf{1 0 0}$ years, because it may live for many hundreds of years until the kammic energy for this human bhava is exhausted.

2. There are other - more dramatic - reported cases of OBE and some of them involve "near-death experiences" (NDE), where the person was presumed to be dead but revived later on. During that time, the mental body usually "went through a tunnel" to another dimension, but then came back to re-enter the body.

- Of course, there are many books written on OBE and NDE. "Consciousness Beyond Life", by Pim van Lommel (2010) gives detailed accounts of case studies of OBE and NDE experienced by people undergoing heart operations, some of whom were declared dead but came back to life.
- A third category involves the rebirth accounts from children, who were killed in an accident in the previous life. They can recall that incident from the previous life, where the mental body came out of a physical body and they watched the accident scene from above. They have provided accurate accounts of that scene. I will discuss one such account at the end of the post.

3. The experiences described in the accounts below need to be evaluated with the following nuances (subtle aspects) in mind. Once the mental body comes out, first it can be an exhilarating experience to be free of the heavy physical body. So, most people describe it as a "liberating experience."

- However, without the physical body, one cannot enjoy smells (in many cases), the taste of food, and also bodily pleasures. Thus, if one had to live without a physical body for a long-time, one could become frustrated, and one could suffer. This is the status of a gandhabba in between two consecutive human births.
- Therefore, even though it could be a "liberating experience" to come out from the shackles of the physical body for a short time as in OBE and NDE, it may not be that pleasant to stay in that state state if one has not given up the desire for sensual pleasures since one cannot "enjoy" sense pleasures without a physical body.

4. The other point to keep in mind is that many experiences (especially those from the Western world) are from people who have other religious backgrounds. In a way, this is good because we can get an unbiased opinion. But, unfortunately, they have a different bias due to their own religious beliefs. For example, many people say they visited heaven, which in reality could be a "good locality" of the gandhabbā.

- It must be kept in mind that gandhabba world is not just "one place", even though physical locations cannot be assigned. It is much better to say that "good gandhabba"" with higher moral values hang out together (such localities may be referred to as "heaven"), and "bad gandhabb $\vec{a}$ " segregate away from those. And there can be many varieties in between.
- It is similar to the case of people with similar gathi hanging together.
- So, it can be thought of as there being many "gandhabbā worlds" in the nether world or para loka.
- Some of the gandhabbā have very fine bodies, but others may have more dense bodies (still much less dense than our bodies). Some may "look" like humans, but some may have started already transforming to animal forms (due to types sañkhāra they cultivate) and may look half human and half animal. It is a very complex world.

5. Robert Monroe has written several books about the OBE experiences of himself and others. Two of his books are: "Journeys Out of the Body: The Classic Work on Out-of-Body Experience" and "Far Journeys."

- Here is how he describes his first OBE experience (there are many other youtube videos on his accounts):


## WebLink: Youtube: Robert Monroe explains his first OOBE

6. Here is an interesting documentary, "Beyond Our Sight - documentary." Thanks to Mr. Johnny Lim from Singapore for sending me this video.

## WebLink: YouTube: Beyond Our Sight - documentary (52')

7. In their book, "Soul Survivor: The Reincarnation of a World War II Fighter Pilot", by Bruce and Andrea Leininger detail the amazing story of their son's recount of a past life, mentioned in the above video. There the little boy vividly describes how he died in his previous life. This falls into the third category that I mentioned in \#1 above. Here is a ABC News report on the story:

WebLink: YouTube: Reincarnation - Airplane Boy (abc Primetime)

- Another youtube video link was sent to me by a reader from Sri Lanka who did not want to be identified. This video is in Sinhala and is the account of a boy. This boy was an adult in the previous life and was killed in an accident. He describes how his mental body came out of the dead body and how he watched from above the scene of the accident.
- The actual account starts at 3 minutes into the video.

WebLink: YouTube: wenasa (Video not avaliable 21 August 2018)
Several years later (during which time he was in the gandhabba world or para loka), he was born to a family in a different village in Sri Lanka.

- As is evident from the above two stories, successive births within a given bhava are likely to be- but not always - in similar geographic regions because of the tendency to match one's gathi.

8. Some scientists believe that these are mind-made hallucinations. Here is a researcher's account of his investigations into that possibility. He started the project to prove that it is a hallucination but ended up convincing himself otherwise.

## WebLink: YouTube: Larry King Interview with Melvin Morse

9. There are some people trying to make money saying they can teach how to do "astral projection." Astral projection is another name for OBE.

- This is not something that can be taught. So, don't waste money.
- The only way to do it systematically is to cultivate Ariya or anāriya jhānā to the fourth jhāna. Then one can practice further and learn how to remove the mental body from the physical. The Buddha compared this to removing a sword from its sheath.
- However, most people who can naturally do it get it as a sansāric habit. They are likely to have cultivated $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$ and developed abhiñ̃̃ $\bar{a}$ powers in recent past lives.
- The most common situation is when the mental body just pops out of the physical body in highly stressful situations where the stress is affecting the heart. The hadaya vatthu of the gandhabba overlaps the physical heart, and thus when the heart is stressed out, gandhabba may just pop out of the physical body.

10. The idea of a mental body controlling the physical body discussed in the previous post in this section ("Our Mental Body - Gandhabba.")

By the way, the mental body is not all mental. It has a fine material component at suddhatthaka level; see, "Gandhabba (Manomaya Kaya)- Introduction."

- There are many reported instances of this mental body coming out of the physical body, and I have mentioned some of those in other posts. But I would like to have some of that evidence in one place so that one can get an idea of why it is not an alien concept.
- But there are many made-up stories too. So, my advice is not to get carried away too much about watching these youtube videos. That is a waste of time. I just wanted to provide some idea that the mental body (gandhabba) is real.
- More information at, "Mental Body - Gandhabba," "Gandhabba (Manomaya Kaya)," and "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma."


### 4.8.6 Abnormal Births Due to Gandhabba Transformations

## September 30, 2017

1. Modern science and technology, especially the internet, is a very useful resource to understand and confirm some concepts in Buddha Dhamma. All of us can now access rare events in remote places, that we would never have known without the internet.

- I started thinking about this post when I received a youtube video of a "strange looking animal" sent to me by Mr. Tobias Große from Germany. Then I did a Google search and found that there are many such "abnormal" human and animal birth reports from all over the world.
- Such observations can be explained with the concept of gandhabba, which is an essential concept for describing the life in the human and animal realms. I have two sub-sections at the website devoted to the important concept of gandhabba: "Mental Body - Gandhabba" and "Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya)."
- Of course, gandhabba is NOT a Mahāyāna concept, see, "Gandhabba State - Evidence from Tipitaka," and without that there will be many inconsistencies, including the observed fact that there are gaps of several years in between successive human rebirths; see, "Bhava and Jāti- States of Existence and Births Therein."

2. As we have discussed in those posts, a human bhava (existence) could last for many hundreds or even thousand of years. Within that time, one could be born with a human body many times. When one is born with a human body and when that "physical body" dies, the "mental body" or the gandhabba state could have many hundreds of years of life left.

- Thus, unless the kammic energy for that "human bhava" has been exhausted, the mental body (gandhabba) comes of the dead physical body unharmed. Since we cannot see that very fine body, it is
said that the gandhabba lives in "paralowa" (other world, sometime called nether world), compared to "this world" that we can see.
- That gandhabba has to wait for a suitable womb to become available, and at that time it is pulled into that "matching womb." This is why there is normally a gap of several years exists in between successive rebirths per rebirth stories; see, "Evidence for Rebirth."

3. During one's lifetime, the kammaja kaya of the gandhabba changes, and sometimes those changes can be drastic. If one kills a parent, that kammaja kaya does not change instantly only because it is "enclosed" in the dense physical body.

- But when the physical body dies, the gandhabba is automatically kicked out of that body, and will instantly transform to a kamma kaya suitable for a being in an apāya. Therefore, even if the original gandhabba had more kammic energy left for the human bhava, a cuti-patisandhi to a "hell being" will occur, and he/she will be instantly born in an apāya.
- There are such ānantariya kamma that can instantly lead to births in rūpa and arūpa loka: If one had cultivated jhāna, then when the gandhabba comes out of the dead body, it will instantly undergo a cutipatisandhi transition to a brahma and will be born instantly in the corresponding brahma realm.

4. Sometimes, a human gandhabba starts making the transformation to another bhava while in the gandhabba state after coming out of a dead body. This happens especially for those who are engaged in highly immoral deeds.

- For example, if one is cultivating "animal gati" (thinking and behaving like an animal), then the gandhabba will continue to generate such "animal sañkhāra" after coming out of the dead body, and may gradually transform to an animal while in the gandhabba state. Then, if a matching animal womb comes available, that half-human creature will be pulled into that womb.
- Now, by "matching womb" what is meant is the mental state of the mother at that time. She could be a "good moral person", but if for some reason her mental state at that time became "abnormal", then it could become a matching womb for that creature, who could be half human, half animal.
- Depending on how far that transformation had taken place, that gandhabba could be pulled into a human womb or an animal womb, i.e., be born to a human or animal mother. Here is the video sent to me by Mr. Tobias Große from an animal birth that looks partly human:
WebLink: gmx.net: Halb Mensch, halb Tier: Kuh sieht aus wie Fabelwesen

5. The following are some more examples of (both abnormal human and animal births) available as youtube videos (of course, in some cases "photoshop" may have been used; there are many on the internet and I have picked a couple that appear to be genuine):

WebLink: Youtube: Half Animal Half Human Found In Real Life
WebLink: Youtube: South African Sheep Births Half Human Half Beast (Video not avaliable 21 August 2018)

- Here is more information on the above "beast":

WebLink: Youtube: HALF HUMAN-HALF BEAST CREATURE SENT BY THE DEVIL

- Thanks to Mr. C. Saket from India for the following video. Some abnormalities shown there could also be due to gandhabba transformation together with bad kamma vipāka:


## WebLink: Youtube: 10 REAL People With Shocking Genetic Mutations

- Please send me any good videos that you come across, so that I can add them to this collection.

6. Anything and everything in this world happens due to a cause, or more correctly due to multiple causes. The foundation of science is causes and effects. If things happen arbitrarily, then there is no way to predict the outcome of a scientific experiment.

- But modern science deals mainly with the properties of material objects. Also, material objects only have a short "history"; a building or a car is assembled and eventually destroyed. Thus it is easier to see the link between causes and effects.
- But living beings have minds and each living being has a past that extends to the deep past (due to rebirth). So, the causes that bring about results now, may have been done in the deep past. That is why it is hard to see the connection between causes and effects for living beings.

7. My late Noble teacher, Waharaka Thero, has mentioned in several desanās how he saw such "gandhabba transformations" while in samādhi.

- When an immoral human dies, the gandhabba that comes out will keep cultivating those 'bad sañkhāra," and if they get strong enough the fine body of the gandhabba will start changing to match those "sañkhāra" and thus "gatí"; see, "Gati and Bhava - Many Varieties" and "Gati to Bhava to Jāti Ours to Control."
- For example, he had seen how a human gandhabba transforms to a bird. It started with the head getting longer and forming a beak. The rest of the body then changed gradually from top to bottom. When I heard that, those Egyptian pictures seen on pyramids of "bird men" with bird heads immediately came to my mind.

8. By the way, even some normal people can see those gandhabbas with fine bodies; this is due to "puñña $i d d h i$ " due to some past good kamma.

- There are different types of "puñña iddhi." Surviving without food and water is known as "breatharianism" and has been documented or claimed by many. an extreme case of a Hindu yogi, Prahlad Jani, is baffling to many modern scientists:


## WebLink: Youtube: Snippet from "IN THE BEGINNING THERE WAS LIGHT" - Yogi Prahlad Jani

- Thanks again to Mr. C. Saket for sending this video and the related comments above.
- The ability to have very detailed memories from this life is also such a "puñña iddhi," see, "Recent Evidence for Unbroken Memory Records (HSAM)", where a woman describes her memories from this life going back to many years. The level of detail she can remember is amazing.
- In fact, I am beginning to believe that in those early Buddhist Councils (Sangāyana), where Arahants recited the whole Tipitaka, they were likely to have VERIFIED then by actually re-visiting each sutta's delivery by iddhi power. When you listen to the woman describing past events in such detail, it is as if she is re-visiting that event.
- The ability of some people to see gandhabbas with fine bodies could be responsible for the misty "ghost figures" like the ones that we see in popular culture (in books, movies and on the internet).

9. A human gandhabba is a finer version of a human. When a human, say a middle aged person dies, the gandhabba that comes out looks very similar to that person (if one can see it). Then with time it will show normal changes that could be expected of a human: His hair and fingernails will grow, for example. In a few years, that gandhabba WILL look like ghost with long hair and long finger nails. Imagine what will happen to one's human body if one doesn't cut one's hair, finger nails, or shave. One will look like a ghost. That is why some gandhabbas look like ghosts, according to Waharaka Thero.

- Some of them get a bit denser by inhaling aroma and may become easier to see for those people with "puñña iddhi" that we mentioned earlier. However, when that gandhabba is pulled into a womb, it will shed all "added" mass (utuja kaya), and only the basic "kammaja kaya" with the hadaya vatthu and the pasāda rūpa (combined to be smaller than an atom in modern science) will merge with the zygote (the single cell formed by the union of mother and father) that is in the womb.
- Now that "new baby" will have a different body than the body in the previous life, because it have many features inherited from the parents (via DNA) in the zygote.
- But it is essentially the evolved kammaja kaya formed at the cuti-patisandhi moment that is still there for that next "birth" in the human world. Thus while the gandhabba keep its kammaja kaya, but the physical body will be influenced by the parents.
- This is discussed in detail in, "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception."

This world is much more complex than we realize, and the "paralowa" of the gandhabbas is even more complex; see "Hidden World of the Gandhabba: Netherworld (Paraloka)."

### 4.8.7 Cattāro Āhāra for Mental Body or Gandhabba

## February 11, 2017

1. As we have discussed in this subsection and elsewhere at the site, we have two bodies: the physical body (karaja kāya) and mental body (gandhabba). Both these bodies need food to survive.

- The food we eat to sustain the physical body is called kabalink $\bar{a} r a ~ a ̄ h a ̄ r a . ~$
- Our mental body consumes three more types of food: phassa, mano sañcetanā, and viññāna.
- The four types of food are called "satara āhāra." We will see that all four can be food for the mental body (gandhabba).

2. Food is essential for all living beings. If one stops taking kabalinkāra āhāra (which includes water) for about seven days or so, one's physical body will die.

- However, unless one is an Arahant, one will be reborn somewhere in the 31 realms upon death, because one's mental body (gandhabba) will not die.
- We cannot stop suffering by committing suicide, i.e., via the death of the physical body. The mental body needs to die in order to stop the rebirth process.

3. If one can stop giving food to the mental body for seven days, it will die, and one will never be reborn anywhere in the 31 realms, i.e., one will attain Nibbāna; then that Arahant will not be reborn upon death of the physical body. Thus the unimaginable suffering associated with the rebirth process will be over (as I discussed in the beginning of this section on "Living Dhamma," stopping the rebirth process seems scary and it should not be contemplated when one is starting on the Path).

- This is why in the Mahā Satipattthāna Sutta, the Buddha said that if one can practice the sutta without making any mistakes, one will attain Nibbāna in seven days.
- Let us discuss how this is possible.

4. There are two conditions that must be satisfied to generate a new mental body at the cuti-patisandhi moment: (i) There must be a kamma bija available to grasp, and (ii) one's mind must willingly grasp that kamma bīja.

- We all have accumulated numerous kamma bīja, so the first condition is always satisfied for anyone. Therefore, it is the second condition - grasping a new existence (bhava) at the cuti-patisandhi moment that can stop the rebirth process.
- At the beginning, we need to just focus on not grasping a bhava in the four lowest realms (apāyā).
- As we have discussed before, this grasping of a new bhava is not done consciously, but automatically.
- For example, a Sotāpanna's mind will not grasp a bhava in the apāy $\bar{a}$; A Sakadāgām $\bar{\imath} \mathrm{s}$ mind will not grasp a human bhava in addition, an Anāgām $\bar{\imath}$ will not grasp a bhava in the kāma loka, and an Arahant will not grasp any.

5. There is another way to look at this mechanism of grasping a new bhava at the cuti-patisandhi moment. In the upapatti Pațicca Samuppāda (PS) cycle, a certain bhava is grasped at "upādāna paccayā bhava."

- When we trace the cycle backwards, we see that it starts at "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" and "sañkhāra paccayā viññāna."
- The grasping (upādāna) happens only if that PS starts with avijjā and generates an appropriate viññāna for grasping that bhava.

6. Therefore, it is important to realize the two roles that viññaña play. We can understand this by examining how a Sot $\bar{a} p a n n a$ avoids birth in the apa$y \bar{a}$.
(i) If one cultivates "apāyagāmī viññanna" by doing extremely hateful/greedy actions, viññanna will keep GENRERATING kamma bīja (energy) that fuel a new bhava in the apāy $\bar{a}$. When one attains the Sotāpanna stage, one will automatically stop generating any more such kamma bïja, but those ones that had been created will be there.
(ii) However, after someone attains the Sotāpanna stage, his/her mind will not start a upapatti PS cycle with an apāyagāmī viññanna, because that level of avijjā has been removed. That type of viññāna has been "killed" or removed from her mind and is no longer able to grasp a new bhava in the apa$y \bar{a}$, even though apāyagāmī kamma būja will still be there.
7. A good example from the Tipitaka is Ven. Angulimāla. He killed almost 1000 people and definitely had accumulated enough strong kamma bīja to be born in the apāy $\bar{a}$.

- But at death his mind was devoid of that kind of bad viñ̃ān̄a to grasp any type of bhava in the 31 realms. Therefore, he was not reborn anywhere in the 31 realms.

8. Therefore, the word viñ̃ñạna represents much more than just consciousness: It can be "food" for accumulating new kamma bïja AND also "food" or "fuel" that leads to grasping a new bhava.

- Viññāṇa is opposite of ñāna (pronounced "gnana") or wisdom. When one cultivates ñāna, one's avijjā is reduced and certain types of viññanna are concomitantly reduced.
- Pronunciation of viññāna:

WebLink: Pronunciation of Viññāna

- Pronunciation of $\tilde{n} a ̄ n a:$

WebLink: Pronunciation of ñāna

- There are many types of viññāna; see, " ${ }^{2}$. Viññāña (Consciousness) can be of Many Different Types and Forms."
- As one attains the four stages of Nibbāna, avijj $\bar{a}$ is removed in four stages and the strength of all types of viññāna are accordingly reduced (removed) and all are eventually removed at the Arahant stage.
- This pure level of consciousness - without any defilements and thus any cravings - is called pabhasvara citta; see, "Pabhassara Citta, Radiant Mind, and Bhavañga."
- In other words, an Arahant can experience the world with a purified mind that is not blemished by even a trace of greed, hate, or ignorance. Therefore, at death, his purified mind will not grasp any existence (bhava).

9. As long as one has viññāna, one will be born somewhere in the 31 realms. This is why viññāna is called a type of food for the mental body.

- As one proceeds at successive stages of Nibbāna, one will crave for less and less things in this world. For example, at the $A n \bar{a} g \bar{a} m \bar{\imath}$ stage, one would have lost all cravings (and hopes) - or viññāna - for any type of sensual pleasures.
- It must be noted that the birth in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$ is not due to cravings to be willingly born there (no one has such cravings), but due to immoral deeds one one had done to enjoy sensual pleasures AND has not yet removed that mentality (desire to enjoy sense pleasures at any cost) or bad viñ̃̃āṇa.

10. Any type of viññāna is cultivated by thinking, speaking, and acting in such a manner. Thinking, speaking, and acting is done based on mano, vacī, and kāya sañkhāra which arise due to sañcetanā ("san" + "cetana"" or defiled intentions; cetanā is pronounced "chethanā").

- For example, an alcoholic regularly thinks about drinking, likes to speak about it and likes to drink. The more he does those, the more that viññāna will grow.
- It is easy to see how a gambler, smoker, etc grow their corresponding viññanna the same way.
- Having such viññāna can lead to other immoral activities and corresponding viñ̃āṇa, say tendency to lie, steal, and even murder.
- Therefore, all activities done in cultivating such viñ̃āana are based on mano sañcetanā. That is why mano sañcetanā are also food for the mental body.

11. The triggers for such sañcetana are sense contacts or phassa. These are not mere sense contacts, but those that give rise to "samphassa ja vedanā."

- Phassa is a sense contact. When one just looks at something that is phassa. But if one looks at it with greed or hate (and ignorance) in mind, that is samphassa ("san" + "phassa"); see, "Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways."
- This is why sense contacts or phassa (more precisely samphassa) are food for the mental body. Such sense contacts can lead to thoughts about bad actions and can give rise to future kammaja kāya.
- Therefore, one needs to avoid sense contacts with sense objects that one has taṇh $\bar{a}$ for. We need to remember that tanhh $\bar{a}$ is attachment to something via greed or hate; see, "Tanhā - How We Attach Via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance."
- So, it is a bad idea for a gambler to visit casinos, an alcoholic to make visits to bars, etc. Furthermore, one needs to avoid friends who encourage such activities too.
- It is best to avoid any type of contacts that can lead to sense exposures that provide "food" for the mental body, i.e, get us started thinking about those bad activities.

12. Now we can see how those three types of food act in sequence to feed the mental body: Sense contacts (phassa) can lead to mano sañcetanā, which in turn cultivate viññāna.

- Such sense contacts (samphassa) automatically start mano sañkhāra; then we start thinking and speaking about those favorite activities, i.e., we start vacī sañkhāra (consciously think about them and even speaking about them). Then when the feelings get strong, we will start doing them (using kāya sañkhāra).
- It is important to realize that mano sañkhāra, vacī sañkhāra, and kāya sañkhāra are all generated in the mind: Vacī sañkhāra are conscious thoughts that can lead to speech; kāya sañkhāra are conscious thoughts that move the physical body.
- All three types of sañkhāra arise due to mano sañcetanā. We cannot think, speak or do things without generating appropriate mano sañcetana $\overline{\text { a }}$.

13. As we discussed before, the physical body is just a shell; it is controlled by the mental body (gandhabba).

- Sense contacts come through the physical body. When we get attached to them, we generate mano sañcetanā and think, speak, and act accordingly, generating various types of viññāna.
- Kabalinka āhāra or the food that we eat are experienced through one of the six sense contacts (tongue or jivha pasāda). If we eat food with greed, that also lead to mano sañcetana and corresponding "greedy viññāna." Therefore, kabaliñkāra āhāra can also be a food for the mental body. More details can be found at "Āhāra (Food) in Udayavaya Ñāna."
- That is why all four types can be food for the mental body.

A deeper discussion on the four types of food (āhāra) is in the post, "Āhāra (Food) in Udayavaya Ñāna."
Next, "Micchā Ditthi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage",..
4.8.8 Micchā Diṭ̣̣hi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage

May 6, 2017; Revised September 24, 2019; May 16, 2021; May 21, 2022

## Two Eightfold Paths

1. There are two Eightfold Paths: mundane and Noble. See, "Mahā Cattārīsaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty).."

- First, one starts on the mundane Eightfold Path by removing the ten types of micchā dittthi or wrong views.
- Only then one's mind can see the "bigger picture," and one could comprehend the Three Characteristics or Tilakkhana (anicca, dukkha, anatta) of this world of 31 realms. When one starts comprehending Tilakkhana, one starts on the Noble Eightfold Path.
- Once one comprehends Tilakkhaṇa to some extent, one becomes a Sotāpanna. Subsequently, one can attain higher stages of Nibbāna.

2. Many people today have at least some of the 10 types of micch $\bar{a}$ ditthi and believe that they are on the Noble Path. But it is clear from above that some may not even be on the mundane Path.

- Just by saying to oneself that one believes in them, one cannot get rid of the 10 types of micchā ditṭhi. One must be convinced of it, and that conviction comes by learning Dhamma, the true nature of this world.
- This post focuses on the para loka and gandhabba because many Theravadins incorrectly assume that gandhabba is a Mahāyāna concept.


## The Ten Types of Micchā Diṭthi (Wrong Views)

3. The 10 types of micch $\bar{a}$ ditṭhi are listed in many suttā, including the WebLink: suttacentral: Mah $\bar{a}$ Cattarisaka Sutta (MN 117) and Pathama Niraya Sagga Sutta (WebLink: suttacentral: Añguttara Nikāya: AN 10.211): "Natthi dinnamं, natthi yittham, natthi hutaím, natthi sukatadukkaṭānamं kammānaì phalaì vipāko, natthi ayà̀ loko, natthi paro loko, natthi mātā, natthi pitā, natthi sattā opapātikā, natthi loke samanabrāhmañā sammaggatā sammāpaṭipannā ye imañca lokaì parañca lokaì sayaí abhiññā sacchikatvā pavedentī'ti." Translated, the wrong views are:

- Giving (dāna) has no merits
- being grateful and responding in kind (for what others have done for oneself) has no merits
- respecting and making offerings to those with higher virtues has no merits
- We enjoy/suffer in this life not due to kamma vipāka, but they "just happen."
- this world does not exist
- para loka or the world of gandhabba does not exist
- there is no special person as a mother
- no special person as a father
- there are no opapātika (instantaneous) births
- there are no Samana brahmana (basically Ariyā or yogis) with abhiññā powers who can see both this world (imanca lokam) and para loka (paranca lokam)


## Micchā Diț̣hi (Wrong Views) About the Gandhabba

4. I have highlighted three types of micchā ditthi that are common. They are somewhat interrelated. But the one about the gandhabba is a common micchā ditṭhi. Even those who believe themselves to be "devout Buddhists" seem to have that wrong view. They believe that the Buddha did not teach about gandhabba or the para loka.

- There is WebLink: suttcentral: Tirokutta petavatthu in the Petavatthu in the Khuddaka Nikāya (KN). This has been translated to English (not very good), but one can get the idea: WebLink: accesstoinsight: Tirokudda Kanda: Hungry Shades Outside the Walls.
- The following verse in "15. Mogharājamānavapucchāniddesa" of "Cūlaniddesa" of the Tipiṭaka clearly states that para loka is part of the "manussa loka" or the "human world:" "Ayam loko paro lokoti. Ayam lokoti manussaloko. Paro lokoti manussalokam ṭhapetvā sabbo paro lokoti-ayam loko paro loko."
- Also, see "Antarabhava and Gandhabba."

5. In many suttā, including WebLink: suttcentral: Mahāsaccaka Sutta (MN 36) and WebLink: suttcentral: Bodhirājakumāra Sutta (MN 85) the Buddha described how he saw human gandhabbā moving from one physical body to the next (in a single human bhava) with the Pubbenivāsānussati Nāṇa on the night he attained the Buddhahood.

- While Ariyā with jhānā can attain both the Pubbenivāsānussati Nāṇa (about previous human rebirths) and the Cutūpapāda Ñāna (about past births in all realms), other yogis can mostly acquire only the first one, i.e., they can see only their previous human births. Note that this is related to the last type of micch $\bar{a}$ dittthi, i.e., to believe that no such Ariyā or yogis exist.
- In the sutta links above, the Pāli version is correct. Still, English and Sinhala translations are not correct, because there is no distinction made between the Pubbenivāsānussati Ñanna and the Cutūpapāda $\tilde{N} a ̄ n a$. With the first N$\tilde{N} a n a$, one can see previous human births, and with the second, one can see previous births in all 31 realms.
- By the way, hereafter, I will try to provide sutta references at the WebLink: suttcentral: SuttaCentral site. They have not only the Pāli version but also translations in different languages. However, we must keep in mind that some translations are incorrect, as mentioned above, and with the translations of anicca and anatta.


## Gandhabba is a Human Without a Human Body

6. We also need to realize that para loka, or the world of gandhabba (of both humans and animals,) is NOT a separate realm.

- In all other 29 realms, beings are born fully-formed instantaneously (opapātika) contrary to the 9th micch $\bar{a}$ ditthi on the list above. Those instantaneous births, of course, do not involve a mother's womb, and one bhava means just one $j \bar{a} t i$ (birth). For example, a deva or a Brahma is born once instantaneously. That Brahma dies only once.
- The difference in the human and animal realms is that those dense physical bodies have lifetimes much smaller than the kammic energies for the two bhava; see, "Gandhabba - Only in Human and Animal Realms."
- When a human or an animal dies - and if there is leftover kammic energy for the human or animal bhava - then a gandhabba comes out of the dead body and waits for a suitable womb to be born ( $j \bar{a} t i$ ) again in the same bhava (same realm).
- Thus, contrary to the widespread belief, gandhabba is not an "antarābhava" (in between bhava; "antara" means "in-between"), but rather is in the same bhava. The confusion arises with not knowing the difference between bhava and $j \bar{a} t i$.


## Gandhabba Lives in Para Loka

7. Until they find a suitable womb, those gandhabba are in "para loka" or the netherworld, which co-exists with our world (but normally we cannot see those fine bodies of gandhabbā).

- This is why one has miccha dittthi if one does not believe in the gandhabba concept (natthi paro loko in \#3 above.)
- Thus a human may be reborn many times before switching to another existence (deva, Brahma, animal, preta, etc.).
- This is why rebirth stories are common. The "human bhava" is extremely hard to get as the Buddha explained. But once in the human bhava, one could be born many times as human; see, "Rebirth Connection to Suffering in the First Noble Truth."
- The difference between bhava and $j \bar{a} t i$ is explained in "Bhava and Jāti - States of Existence and Births Therein."

8. So, I hope one can understand that one still has micchā ditṭhi if one adamantly rejects the concept of gandhabba or the concept of opapatika births.

- If one has any one of the ten micchā ditṭhi, one is not yet on even the mundane Eightfold Path; see, "Buddha Dhamma - In a Chart"" and the post referred to in that chart, "What is Unique in Buddha Dhamma?."
- The Buddha discussed this clearly in the "Mahā Cattārīisaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty)."


## It is a Step-by-Step Process

9. To get to the Sotāpanna stage, the first step is to make sure that one learns Dhamma and clear up any remaining doubts about those ten types of micchā ditṭhi.

- When one gets rid of all ten micchā diṭthi, one is truly on the Noble Eightfold Path.
- At that point, one's mind has been cleansed to a stage where one can comprehend deeper Dhamma concepts. In particular, the Three Characteristics of Nature (Tilakkhaṇa): anicca, dukkha, anatta. This is a deeper micch $\bar{a}$ dittthi, the second type described in the Mahā Cattarisaka Sutta.
- When one comprehends the Tilakkhaṇa to some extent, one attains the Sotāpanna stage of Nibbāna. That is when one gets to the Lokuttara (Noble) Eightfold Path.
- Then, by following the Noble Eightfold Path, one reaches the higher stages of Nibbāna, culminating at the Arahant stage.

10. The Path to Nibbāna has been covered for hundreds of years because the above steps have not been clear. Furthermore, the meanings of those keywords, anicca, dukkha, and anatta have been distorted.

- That slow process of degradation of Buddha Dhamma took place over about 1500 years. In the late 1800s, when the Europeans discovered the ancient Sanskrit and Pāli documents, they did more damage.
- They first discovered Sanskrit Hindu Vedic literature in India (Buddhism had disappeared from India long before). They later came across the Pāli Tipiṭaka in Sri Lanka, Burma, and other Asian countries.
- The key problem arose when they ASSUMED that Sanskrit words "anitya" and "anātma" are the same as the Pāli words "anicca" and "anatta." The Sanskrit words "anitya" and "anātma" do mean
"impermanent' and "no-self," but the Pāli words "anicca" and "anatta" have totally different meanings. See, "Misinterpretation of Anicca and Anatta by Early European Scholars."


## More Information

11. Many posts in the "Historical Background" section fully explained that historical background. But at least read the posts starting with "Incorrect Theravāda Interpretations - Historical Timeline."

- The correct meanings of anicca, dukkha, and anatta have been discussed in the section, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta."

12. As for instantaneous births, instances of such opapātika births occur in many suttā. For example, in the WebLink: suttcentral: Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta (DN 16), the Buddha told Ven. Ānanda about opapātika births of many people who died in a certain village: "..Nandā, ānanda, bhikkhun̄̄ pañcannaì orambhāgiyānaì saimyojanānaì parikkhayā opapātika tattha parinibbāyinī anāvattidhammā tasmā lokā.."

- As I mentioned, the translations are available in several languages in the above SuttaCentral link for the sutta. For example, the above verse is translated into English as "..The nun Nandā, Ānanda, through the destruction of the five lower fetters have arisen spontaneously in the Brahmā worlds, and will attain Final Emancipation there, without returning from that world..."



- However, please keep in mind that those SuttaCentral translations also can have errors (as is the case at most online sites and books), as I pointed out in $\# 5$ above.


## Grasping the Real Nature

13. Finally, there may be people who attain magga phala but had never even heard about gandhabba in this life. If one comprehends the Tilakkhaña, that is all needed.

- In such cases, they had not rejected the concept of a gandhabba. If someone explained the concept to them, they would accept it since they can see that it must be true.
- However, if one hears those explanations and rejects them as "nonsense," that is micchā dittthi. Those are the concept of a gandhabba (and para loka), instantaneous births, the existence of other realms, and the existence of Ariyā or yogis who have the ability to see such realms as well as para loka.
- The only way to get rid of such micchā ditthi is to examine those concepts and convince oneself that they must be true.

14. In that process, it is also necessary that one lives a moral life staying away from dasa akusala as much as possible, as explained in the "Living Dhamma" section. Anyone needs to experience the mental clarity (and the "peace of mind" or "niveema") that comes with staying away from dasa akusala.

- By the way, the strongest of the dasa akusala is micchā dittthi, which includes not only the 10 types but also ignorance about Tilakkhaṇa. This is why a Sotāpanna removes $99 \%$ or more of the defilements by getting rid of the BOTH types of micchā ditṭhi; see, "What is the only Akusala Removed by a Sotāpanna?."
- The first type of micchā ditthi is about the 10 types discussed in \#3 above, which includes believing that nothing happens without a cause; bad causes (dasa akusala) lead to bad consequences. The second type is about not knowing the true nature of this world of 31 realms, i.e., that it is not possible to maintain anything to one's satisfaction (anicca), one is subjected to suffering because of that (dukkha), and thus, one is truly helpless in this rebirth process (anatta).
- However, it is difficult to "see" those Tilakkhaṇa until one believes in that bigger picture. That "bigger picture" includes the 31 realms, and the rebirth process, and the concept of para loka with gandhabb $\bar{a}$.


### 4.8.9 Working of kammā - Critical Role of Conditions

## May 21, 2017, revised May 11, 2022

1. We can see various human happiness/suffering levels around us. Some people live with relatively higher levels of health, wealth, and happiness, while others live in poverty, ill-health, and misery.

- We become distraught upon hearing that a child died prematurely or someone brutally murdered. Of course, we should generate empathy and sympathy and do our utmost to prevent such horrible occurrences.
- However, we also need to look at the CAUSES of such happenings. Once we understand the underlying causes, we will be able to prevent such things happening to us in the future, if not in this life, in future lives.
- Nothing happens without reason or a cause (commonly multiple causes). If we understand that specific causes can lead to bad outcomes, we need to block such causes. If we suspect suc causes are already there, we must stop making conditions for those causes to bear fruit.
- That is the key message of the Buddha: It is not possible to eliminate the suffering that has arisen (we can minimize it), but we can eradicate FUTURE suffering.

2. The principle of cause and effect (hetu/phala) is a key principle in Buddha Dhamma, as in modern science.

- Science is all about finding out HOW things HAPPEN around us due to CAUSES. A pebble on the ground will not go up by itself, ie., we have to pick it up and throw it up.
- We receive sunlight because the Sun puts out a vast amount of energy every second. And science has figured out how that happens: That energy comes from nuclear reactions; Sun is a giant fusion reactor.
- With the development of modern science we have figured out that nothing happens without a cause; usually, more than one cause leads to an effect.

3. However, science has not yet figured out that humans (and other living beings) are also subject to the principle of causes and conditions. That is Paticca Samuppāda in Buddha Dhamma.

- Does it just happen that X is born healthy and wealthy, Y is born healthy but poor, and Z is born handicapped and poor?
- There must be REASONS why $\mathrm{X}, \mathrm{Y}$, and Z are born that way.
- Not only that, a person born rich can become poor, and vice versa. Or a person in good health can die suddenly in an accident or by a heart attack. There must be reasons for such "turnarounds" too!
- The laws of kammā can explain all the above. But the laws of kammā are not just based on causes and effects; they DEPEND on CONDITIONS. That is what prevents laws of kamm $\bar{a}$ from being deterministic, i.e., one's future is NOT determined solely by past actions or kammā. Past kamma cannot bring vipāka unless suitable conditions are present.

4. Science has been unable to come up with explanations for the effects discussed above. There are two critical reasons for this lack of progress in science.

- First, unlike inert objects like a pebble, a living being has a mind. When a person moves, the cause originates in that person's mind, i.e., the person decides to move. Your hand will not move until you choose to move it. And you have the power to STOP its movement too!
- The second difference is that there is a rebirth process for living beings. The laws of kamm $\bar{a}$ cannot operate without the rebirth process. That is why not believing in rebirth is wrong (micchā dittthi.) With that wrong view, one will never be able to figure out the true nature of the world; see "Complexity of Life
and the Way to Seek "Good Rebirths"" and "Micchā Ditthi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage." [May need this: Vagaries of Life and the Way to Seek "Good Rebirths]
- The human life of about 100 years is extremely short compared to the samsāric journey (rebirth process). Our mental states and physical appearance chage as we go from life to life; see "What Reincarnates? Concept of a Lifestream."

5. So, anything and everything happens due to reasons or causes. However, just because there is a cause, it is not guaranteed to give rise to the corresponding effect.

- In the terminology of Buddha Dhamma, past kammā do not necessarily lead to kammā vipāka.
- We can grasp this key idea with an example.

6. A seed CAN give rise to a tree. It has the POTENTIAL to bring a tree to existence. However, for that to happen, suitable CONDITIONS must be present.

- If we keep a seed in a cool, dry place, it will not give rise to a tree, and will remain a seed with that POTENTIAL for hundreds of years.
- Eventually, that potential to bring about a tree will disappear, and the seed will be "dead."

7. A strong kamm $\bar{a}$ creates a kamm $\bar{a} b \bar{j} \bar{j}$, or a kamm $\bar{a}$ seed, that works pretty much like an ordinary seed that we discussed above.

- For that kammā bīja to bring about its result, i.e., kammā vipāka, suitable CONDITIONS must exist.
- If suitable conditions do not materialize for a long time, then that kammā $b \bar{j} j a$ will lose its energy and it is said that it will become an ahosi $\operatorname{kamm} \bar{a}$, i.e., that kammā will not bring about any kammā vipāka.

8. As mentioned above, the other important factor in this complex process is that a living being goes through a rebirth that has no discoverable beginning.

- In this unimaginably long rebirth process, we all have accumulated uncountable kammā seeds, both good and bad.
- Those good kamm $\bar{a}$ seeds can bring about good results (health, wealth, beauty, etc.), and bad kamm $\bar{a}$ seeds lead to bad results (ailments, handicaps, poverty, etc.).
- But either kind can run out of energy without giving results (vipāka), if suitable CONDITIONS do not appear.

9. A seed cannot germinate unless suitable CONDITIONS appear (i.e., it should be in the ground, and water, sunlight, and nutrients must be present).

- In the same way, we can avoid many possible bad kammā vipāka by being mindful and not providing conditions for them to appear. We can also MAKE conditions for good kammā vipāka to bring about good results.
- For example, if one goes into a bad neighborhood at night, that provides conditions for any suitable bad kamm $\bar{a}$ seeds waiting to bring about their bad vipāka. On the other hand, we cannot be successful in any project unless we are willing to provide the right conditions: to pass an examination, we must study.
- Even if one is born poor, one could work hard and overcome poverty. If one is prone to catching diseases, one could eat healthily and exercise, to overcome at least some recurring ailments. Kamm $\bar{a}$ is not deterministic, see, "What is Kamma? - Is Everything Determined by Kamma?."

10. But of course it will be difficult to overcome the results of very strong kamm $\bar{a}$ seeds. One may be born handicapped due to a strong kammā seed that was generated in a previous birth.

- In the same way, strong good $k a m m \bar{a}$ seeds can bring about good results without much effort. Some are born rich, healthy, and wealthy due to a past strong good $\operatorname{kamma} \bar{a}$ seed coming to fruition.

11. So, I hope it is clear that one's happiness in this life could be determined by several different factors.

- In relatively few cases, one could automatically (without much effort) receive health, wealth, and RELATIVE happiness due to strong kamm $\bar{a}$ seeds. In the same way, some others could be facing miserable lives.
- However, on the average, one's happiness in this life is to a large extent is determined by one's willingness to make right CONDITIONS for good vipāka to take place and prevent bad vipāka from appearing.
- Even more importantly, one could make conditions for health, wealth, etc in future lives by living moral lives and doing good deeds.

12. Now let us look at what happens when a result materializes due to a kammā vipāka. Once a bad $v i p a \bar{k} a$ materializes, we can certainly manage it to minimize its effects, and in some cases even get rid of it by working to making conditions for a goodkamm $\bar{a}$ seed to overcome it.

- For example, if one comes down with cancer, in some cases it can be overcome by good medical treatment, i.e., making conditions to counter the initial effect.
- If one is born tall or short, there is nothing much one can do about it. If one is born handicapped, one will have to live the whole life that way.
- As we can see, we can improve some of those kammā vipāka, while we cannot do much about some others.
- Even the Buddha could not avoid certain vipāka. He had back aches and Devadatta was able to injure his foot. Ven. Moggallana was beaten to death.

13. Another observation we can make from the above discussion is that when one becomes an Arahant (or even a Buddha), his suffering is not completely ended at the Arahanthood. He still had to suffer due to the physical body that had already "started."

- So, what was meant by "removal of suffering" when one attains Nibbāna? It is the future suffering (i.e., suffering in future lives) that is ended. When an Arahant attains Parinibbāna (i.e., physical death), he/she will not be reborn in this suffering-filled world of 31 realms, and that is when the suffering completely ends.
- However, as we have discussed, part of suffering ends with the attainment of Arahanthood: suffering associated with "sañkhāra dukkhä" or what is called "samphassa jā vedana""; see, "Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways."

14. Of course, IN THE LONG RUN (in the rebirth process), no matter how hard one strives, it will be IMPOSSIBLE to attain PERMANENT happiness anywhere in this world. This is called anicca nature. That is why we need to strive to attain Nibbāna to avoid future suffering.

- However, it is not an easy task to even to beginning to comprehend the anicca nature, until one enters the mundane Eightfold Path by getting rid of the 10 types of micchā ditthi, which include not believing in rebirth or the concept of a gandhabba; see, "Micchā Ditthi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage."
- Only when one enters the mundane Eightfold Path that one will be able to grasp the Three Characteristics of Nature (anicca, dukkha, anatta), and start on the Noble Eightfold Path to attain Nibbāna.
- The two types of Eightfold Paths were discussed by the Buddha in the "Mahā Cattārīsaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty)." Also see, "Buddha Dhamma - In a Chart."

15. Finally, the role of conditions in the laws of kammā are inherent in the Paticca Samuppāda; see, "What Does "Paccaya" Mean in Paticca Samuppāda?" and "Patthāna Dhamma - Connection to Cause and Effect (Hetu Phala)."

- Paṭicca Samuppāda is discussed in the section: "Paticca Samuppāda."


## v Dhamma and Science

- Dhamma and Science - Introduction
- Subsection: Origin of Life
- Origin of Life - There is No Traceable Origin
- Human Life - A Mental Base (Gandhabba) and a Material Base (Cell)
- Clarification of "Mental Body" and "Physical Body" - Different Types of "Kāya"
- Four Types of Births in Buddhism
- Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception
- Cloning and Gandhabba
- Living Cell - How Did the First Cell Come to Existence?
- Views on Life
- Views on Life - Wrong View of Materialism
- Wrong View of Creationism (and Eternal Future Life) - Part 1
- Wrong View of Creationism (and Eternal Future Life) - Part 2
- Worldview of the Buddha
- Buddhist Worldview - Introduction
- Contact Between Āyatana Leads to Vipāka Viññāna
- How Do Sense Faculties Become Internal Āyatana?
- Is There a "Self"?
- Citta - Basis of Our Experience and Actions
- Vipāka Vedanā and "Samphassa jā Vedanā" in a Sensory Event
- Kāma Guna - Origin of Attachment (Tanhā)
- Vision Is a Series of "Snapshots" - Movie Analogy
- Chachakka Sutta - Six Types of Vipāka Viññān̄a
- Sakkāya Ditthi in Terms of Attā or "Self" or "Ātma"
- An Apparent "Self" Is Involved in Kamma Generation
- Paticca Samuppāda - Not "Self" or 'No-Self"
$\circ$ Tanhā - The Origin of Suffering
- Paticca Samuppāda - A "Self" Exists Due to Avijjā
- Kamma, Sañkhāra, and Abhisañkhāra
- Vacī Sañkhāra - Sañkappa (Conscious Thoughts) and Vācā (Speech)
- Tanhā Paccayā Upādāna - Critical Step in Paticcca Samuppāda
- Moha/Avijiā and Vipāka Viññāna/Kamma Viññāna
- Icchā (Cravings) Lead to Upādāna and to Eventual Suffering
- Dhammā, Kamma, Sañkhāra, Mind - Critical Connections
- Paticca Samuppāda - From Mind to Matter
- Kamma and Paticca Samuppāda
- Kamma and Paticca Samuppāda - Introduction
- Kāma Assāda - A Root Cause of Suffering
- Gati (Habits/Character) Determine Births - Samsappanīya Sutta
- Wider Worldview of the Buddha
- The Framework of Buddha Dhamma
- The Suffering (Dukkha) in the First Noble Truth
- Dangers of Ten Types of Wrong Views and Four Possible Paths
- Sammā Ditthī - Only One Leads to the Noble Path
- Fear of Nibbāna (Enlightenment)
- Worldview of the Buddha - Explanatory Material
- Ghost 1990 Movie - Good Depiction of Gandhabba Concept
- Mental Body Versus the Physical Body
- "Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars - Part 1
- "Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars - Part 2
o Subsection: Good Explanations - Key to Weed Out Bad Versions of Dhamma
- Consciousness and the Brain
- Matter Creates Mind or Mind Creates Matter?
- Subsection: Consciousness - A Dhamma Perspective
- What is Consciousness?
- Consciousness Dependence on Number of Dimensions
- Six Kinds of Consciousness in Our 3-D World
- Expanding "Consciousness" by Using Technology
- Expanding "Consciousness" by Purifying the Mind
- What is Mind? How do we Experience the Outside World?
- Subsection: Consistencies with Science
- Second Law of Thermodynamics is Part of Anicca!
- Quantum Entanglement - We Are All Connected
- Infinity - How Big Is It?
- Godel's Incompleteness Theorem
- Truine Brain: How the Mind Rewires the Brain via Meditation/Habits
- How Habits are Formed and Broken - A Scientific View
- Subsection: Inconsistencies with Science
- Neuroscience says there is no Free Will? - That is a Misinterpretation!
- The Double Slit Experiment - Correlation between Mind and Matter?
- Vision (Cakkhu Viññāna) is Not Just Seeing


### 5.1 Dhamma and Science - Introduction

Revised January 22, 2019; August 22, 2019; February 26, 2020; August 27, 2022

1. Whether it is a scientist or a Buddha, each is "discovering" the way nature works, i.e., revealing to the world what the fundamental laws of nature are. To appreciate a Buddha compared to a scientist, contemplate the following. The scientific knowledge we have today is the CUMULATIVE effort of thousands of scientists, each taking the knowledge base a little further. As Newton said, "I was fortunate to stand on the shoulders of giants to see further."

- Not all scientists make similar contributions. Galileo, Newton, and Einstein made "giant leaps" compared to the smaller steps taken by other scientists.
- Now with cumulative effort over many hundreds of years, science has made significant advances concerning understanding some of the fundamental laws relevant to INERT MATTER.
- On the other hand, there is virtually no progress in understanding how the mind works; see "Consciousness - A Dhamma Perspective."

2. As I build up this site, anyone can see that Buddha Dhamma is the ultimate Grand Unified Theory. It explains the behavior of inert matter and living beings that we can see. And it also describes the existence of an infinite number of worlds with living beings in 29 other realms (other than the human and animal realms that we cannot see). See "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma."

- Buddha Dhamma is not a religion in the sense of providing salvation. The Buddha was not a God, a prophet, or a messenger. He was a human being who purified his mind to perfection so that he could see the whole of existence.
- The Buddha was the greatest scientist who investigated the problem of existence and found a complete solution. We all need to find our salvation by following his prescribed path to purify our minds.

3. Newton could not have discovered the laws of gravity if it were not for the efforts of scientists like Brahe and Copernicus. Similarly, Einstein could not have discovered relativity without the knowledge passed down by other scientists. Quantum mechanics would not have been possible without the efforts of multiple scientists who moved forward with the evidence gathered by hundreds of other scientists.

- The Buddha, in comparison, discovered the complete set of laws about the WHOLE EXISTENCE through his efforts. That includes the way inert matter behaves on this Earth and all of existence in the 31 realms (that science is not even aware of). That includes how inert matter behaves in all 31 realms AND the minds of beings in those 31 realms.
- I recently proposed an explanation for the controversy over the "non-locality" issue in quantum mechanics. Everything in this universe is inter-connected (or entangled) at a deep level; "Quantum Mechanics and Dhamma."

4. We could say that the minds of the caliber of Newton and Einstein appear roughly every 100 years. The mind of a Buddha is infinitely more advanced and appears once in many billions of years if beings are lucky.

- There have been four Buddhas in this Mahā kappa, but the last Buddha before them was born 30 Mah $\bar{a}$ kapp $\bar{a}$ ago. Thus, there was a gap of 30 Mahā kappā (roughly a trillion years) without a Buddha appearing in this world.
- The Buddhas use a method different from the "scientific method" used by scientists. Instead of conducting experiments on inert matter, they conduct mind experiments. Answers to ultimate questions on the existence of living beings with complex minds can be found only by PURIFYING a human mind to the ultimate level. That is what a Buddha does.

5. I will try to provide at least some details of the complex world view that the Buddha provided. Buddha Dhamma has been muddled and distorted over the past 2500 years.

- "Our world" is much more complicated than what is grasped by our senses; see "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma."
- And our lives do not end with this one; see "Evidence for Rebirth."
- Those two facts constitute the basis of the true nature of existence. They need to be thought about carefully. One cannot comprehend the message of the Buddha until one at least has some idea about this "big picture."

Now let us examine one case where it took 2500 years for science to come to be consistent with one part of Buddha Dhamma's world view.

## It Took 2500 Years...

Here is a picture of our Milky Way galaxy. We can see only a couple of thousand stars. But there are hundreds of BILLIONS of stars in our galaxy, and there are about an equal number of GALAXIES in our universe. Thus, there is a whole galaxy for each star in our galaxy. It is truly mind-boggling.


Milky Way

1. Even a few hundred years ago, even scientists believed our Earth was at the center of the universe: WebLink: WIKI: Geocentric model

- Therefore, Buddha's view of the universe as consisting of innumerable "world systems" was not looked at favorably even a few hundred years ago.
- Of course, that has changed now. Buddha's statement that "there is no discernible beginning to life" is also becoming vindicated with each new scientific discovery. See "Origin of Life."

2. In Buddha Dhamma, there is no First Cause (no Creator): Life always existed and will always exist. Each living being has gone through innumerable birth-rebirth processes without a conceivable beginning. However, everything in the "world around us" is impermanent, including our universe (a "major world system" in Buddha Dhamma).

- Everything is born, has a transient existence, and finally decays. And this includes our universe as well. Like everything else, stars (and associated planetary systems) come into existence and eventually fade away.

3. if there is no beginning to life, then where did life exist before the "big bang," i.e., before our universe came into existence? (actually, life is believed to have evolved on Earth much later).

- People who lived even a hundred years ago had to take Buddha's words on this point solely on faith. But we are lucky to be assured by the fact that modern science gives us some rather persuasive reasons to believe that life existed forever. Let us look at the emerging evidence.

4. Even as recently as at the beginning of the 1900s, Lord Kelvin (one of the top scientists of the day) estimated that the age of the Sun was $<40$ million years. He estimated that time based on gravitational contraction (scientists did not know about nuclear fusion then). Our knowledge of the universe was also pretty much limited to the Solar system. So, this meant the age of our 'known universe" was very short, and thus the Buddha's teachings on a beginning-less samisāra (or saysāra) seemed like a myth.

- Vindication of the Buddha's teachings started at the beginning of the 1900s with the advent of quantum mechanics and relativity. The discovery of radioactivity in 1898 by Becquerel and Einstein's explanation of the photoelectric effect in 1905 led to the quantum theory of atomic structure. That, in turn, led to the correct picture of nuclear fusion as the source of solar energy.
- So, by 1956, the solar system's age was $>4$ billion years, and the universe's age was estimated to be around 14 billion years. Even billions of years are hardly the same as "beginning-less time"!

5. By 1929, Edwin Hubble proved that distant galaxies were moving away from each other. And that our galaxy is but just one of many galaxies. That was a vast understatement since now we know that there are 400 billion galaxies in our observable universe!

- The currently accepted theory of the "big bang" is the inflationary theory of Alan Guth. See WebLink: PDF Download: "The Inflationary Universe" by Alan Guth (1997).
- However, a minority of scientists do not believe in the "Big Bang." They have proposed alternate theories; see WebLink: PDF Download: "Endless Universe" by Paul J. Steinhardt and Neil Turok (2007). In this view, universes are destroyed and reborn.

6. Buddha's world view does not have a "Big Bang" beginning either. Life always existed, and it will always exist in the future.

- See "Origin of Life."
- The post "Buddhism and Evolution - Aggañña Sutta (DN 27)" also discusses some key concepts.

7. By the way, there are several theories currently being explored in quantum mechanics related to cosmology. One theory requires a universe to exist for each possible event! So, there may be an infinite number of parallel universes. For example, see "The Beginning of Infinity" by David Deutsch (2011). In all these theories, multiple universes always exist.

- In any case, the Buddha did not say which of these theories is correct. He just said life always existed, and it always will. But he did say that "star systems" - like our Solar system - come into being, survive for long times, and are destroyed at the end.
- And that process repeats over and over!

8. More information at "Dhamma and Science" and "Quantum Mechanics and Dhamma."

### 5.2 Origin of Life

Origin of Life - There is No Traceable Origin
Human Life - A Mental Base (Gandhabba) and a Material Base (Cell)
Clarification of "Mental Body" and "Physical Body" - Different Types of"Kāya"
Four Types of Births in Buddhism
Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception replaces (11Nov2018) "What does Buddha Dhamma (Buddhism) say about Contraception?"

Cloning and Gandhabba
Living Cell - How Did the First Cell Come to Existence?
Views on Life

- Views on Life - Wrong View of Materialism
- Wrong View of Creationism (and Eternal Future Life) - Part 1
- Wrong View of Creationism (and Eternal Future Life) - Part 2
- Worldview of the Buddha
- Buddhist Worldview - Introduction
- Contact Between Āyatana Leads to Vipāka Viññāna
- How Do Sense Faculties Become Internal Āyatana?
- Indriya Make Phassa and Āyatana Make Samphassa
- Is There a "Self"?
- Citta - Basis of Our Experience and Actions
- Vipāka Vedanā and "Samphassa jā Vedanā" in a Sensory Event
- Kāma Guna - Origin of Attachment (Tanhā)
- Vision Is a Series of "Snapshots" - Movie Analogy
- Chachakka Sutta - Six Types of Vipāka Viññāna
- Sakkāya Ditthi in Terms of Attā or "Self" or "Ātma"
- An Apparent "Self" Is Involved in Kamma Generation
- Paticca Samuppāda - Not "Self" or 'No-Self"
- Tanhā - The Origin of Suffering
- Paticca Samuppāda - A "Self" Exists Due to Avijiā
- Kamma, Sañkhāra, and Abhisañkhāra
- Vacī Sañkhāra - Sañkappa (Conscious Thoughts) and Vācā (Speech)
- Tanhā Paccayā Upādāna - Critical Step in Paticca Samuppāda
- Moha/Avijijā and Vipāka Viññāna/Kamma Viññāna
- Icchā (Cravings) Lead to Upādāna and to Eventual Suffering
- Dhammā, Kamma, Sañkhāra, Mind - Critical Connections
- Paticca Samuppāda - From Mind to Matter
- Wider Worldview of the Buddha
- The Framework of Buddha Dhamma
- The Suffering (Dukkha) in the First Noble Truth
- Dangers of Ten Types of Wrong Views and Four Possible Paths
- Sammā Ditthī - Only One Leads to the Noble Path
- Fear of Nibbāna (Enlightenment)
- Worldview of the Buddha - Explanatory Material
- Ghost 1990 Movie - Good Depiction of Gandhabba Concept
- Mental Body Versus the Physical Body
- "Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars - Part 1

O "Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars - Part 2

### 5.2.1 Origin of Life - There is No Traceable Origin

July 10, 2019; revised July 11, 2019; June 21,2022

## Why Is This Issue Important?

1. As I explained in my previous post, we CREATE OUR OWN future lives, as described by Uppatti Pațicca Samuppāda; "Uppatti Paticca Samuppāda (How We Create Our Own Rebirths)."

- Pațicca Samuppāda cycle starts with "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra." As long as there is avijjā (no comprehension of the Four Noble Truths), one is bound to do (abhi)sañkhāra - and generate kamma - there will be bhava and $j \bar{a} t i$ (i.e., rebirth). That cycle will continue forever (just as it had no beginning).
- All types of births ( $j \bar{a} t i)$ lead to suffering, without exception.
- This cycle ends ONLY WHEN one's avijija is removed via comprehension of the real nature of this world of 31 realms and one voluntarily gives craving ( $\tanh \bar{a}$ ) for existence in this world of 31 realms. That is the attainment of Nibbāna or Arahanthood.
- This understanding is the FOUNDATION of Buddha Dhamma.

2. Therefore, the question, "What is the origin of life?" is very much relevant to UNDERSTANDING Buddha Dhamma.

- Most scientists believe that our universe came to existence only about 14 billion years ago with the "Big Bang."
- Furthermore, current scientific theories say that life first formed in a primitive state (single-cell entities) and evolved into more complex life forms. And that humans came into existence less than five hundred thousand years ago.
- Most scientists do not agree with the "Creation hypothesis" that is the foundation of Abrahamic religions (Christianity, Judaism, Islam) simply because it is not compatible with the Principle of Causality. It says nothing can come to existence without a cause(s). If a Creator created life, how did that Creator come into existence?
- The compatibility of a "Big Bang" origin with causality is also not clear. Scientists are exploring possibilities like the "multiverse theory", but those are still speculative.
- However, our focus in this series of posts is not on the actual origin of the universe, but on the origin of life on Earth.


## Buddha's Explanation

3. According to the Buddha, life has no traceable beginning. This is certainly compatible with causality.

- For example, in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Gaddulabaddha Sutta (SN 22.99)": "Anamataggoyamं, bhikkhave, samisāro" means "bhikkhus, there is no discernible beginning to the rebirth process." It also describes how living beings are bound to samisāra, because they do not realize the anicca, dukkha, and anatta nature, which we recently discussed: "Sotāpanna Stage and Tilakkhana."
- The above verse appears in all suttō in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Anamatagga Samyutta (SN 15.1 ~ 15.20)" of the Saimyutta Nikāya, where each sutta gives a simile to illustrate how long each of us has been in this rebirth process and how much suffering we have endured.
- However, it must be noted that Buddha's message is NOT a depressing one.
- Whether there is a Buddha in the world or not, this suffering exists. This suffering is real but there is a way to overcome that suffering.
- Without a Buddha, we will not even be aware of this hidden suffering. Furthermore, a Buddha FOUND A WAY (Noble Eightfold Path) to stop this perpetual suffering. That is the uplifting message.

4. As many of you may have observed, learning deeper aspects of Buddha Dhamma is not easy. It requires one to spend considerable time learning and then contemplating.

- Without an understanding of how long the sansāric journey is and how much suffering is encountered in most births, it is difficult to generate the MOTIVATION to study Buddha Dhamma. Most people turn to Buddha Dhamma only when they come down with harsh suffering, seeking relief. But the best time to learn is when one is healthy with a sharp mind, and I hope I can motivate those people too with this series.
- In the "WebLink: suttacentral: Upanisa Sutta (SN 12.23)," the Buddha discussed the proximate causes/conditions (upanisa) for various factors leading to Nibbāna. Understanding how various births ( $\bar{a} t i$ ) arise and how ALL those births give rise to $d u k k h a$ (suffering) is the key. When one comprehends the Four Noble Truths, one understands how dukkha arises (and that it can be stopped from arising); that leads to saddh $\bar{a}$ (faith). Starting there one can follow the Noble Eightfold Path and attain Nibbāna! That is the essence of the sutta, even though it may not be clear from the translation in the link.
- That understanding cannot be attained until one can clearly see that there has not been a BEGINNING to this rebirth process, and we all have suffered so much in each and every birth. Regarding the perpetual suffering, I will also discuss the "WebLink: suttacentral: Pathama Niraya Sagga Sutta (AN 10.211)" in the future. It explains the causes of rebirth in good and bad realms, and why most births are in bad realms.

5. Life has always existed, but planetary systems (like our Solar system) are destroyed periodically and reformed over long times.

- This is the only explanation that is consistent with the Principle of Causality: There is no "first beginning to life." Life always existed, and it evolves according to the Principle of Causality, which is Paticca

Samuppāda; see my previous post: "Uppatti Paticca Samuppāda (How We Create Our Own Rebirths)."

- If we go by the Principle of Causality (which is THE basis of modern science), there CANNOT be an origin of life, unless life can start with inert matter.
- What the video below explains is that it is NOT POSSIBLE to create EVEN A SINGLE CELL (a basic building block of life) in the laboratory starting with inter matter. If it cannot be created in a laboratory under controlled conditions, it WILL NOT be possible for life to arise in a natural process starting with inert matter.
- In a newly-formed Earth, the first cells are created by kammic energy. In other words, it is the "mental energy" in javana citta that is really responsible for a "first cell". I will discuss this in future posts on Aggañña Sutta.


## Evolutionists Versus Creationists

6. Of course, there is an ongoing debate between the evolutionists and creationists. Evolutionists believe that life evolved into complex entities like humans over billions of years. Furthermore, they believe that even the first cell (which is the building block of all life forms) evolved in the early Earth starting with inert molecules. Creationists, on the other hand, believe that a Creator God created life.

- I am providing a few references at the end of the post for both sides.
- It is to be noted that most evolutionists do not discuss the origin of a cell that much. They mainly focus on the "evolution of the species" STARTING WITH a fully functioning cell and progressing into more complex species with more and more cells of complex structure. Evolutionists are just speculating that a cell evolved in the primitive Earth due to random events. For example, Dr. Richard Dawkins writes in the reference given below, "How long would we have to wait before random chemical events on a planet, random thermal jostling of atoms and molecules, resulted in a self-replicating molecule? Chemists don't know the answer to this question" (p. 144).
- On the other hand, creationists focus on the issue of why it is not possible to "create a cell" via evolution. Many of them agree that complex life possibly evolved starting with simpler life forms.
- I agree with the creationists that it is not possible for a cell to come to existence "starting with inert molecules" via random events. You can decide for yourself based on the videos below (and the references if you are really interested). Of course, we can discuss at the discussion forum.

7. The video below is by a scientist (Dr. James Tour) who has a different viewpoint than most other scientists. He provides solid evidence that life could not have evolved starting with inert matter. It is too complex to have evolved by natural processes.

- At the end of the video, Dr. Tour comes to the conclusion that since life is too complex to evolve, it must have been CREATED by a Creator God. That is the other extreme view.
- According to Buddha Dhamma, life did not evolve from inert matter, nor it was created by a Creator God. Life always existed and it just takes different forms when a given "lifestream" is reborn a human, animal, deva, etc. We all have been born in most of the 31 realms in our deep past! When the conditions on Earth became suitable cells came into existence via kammic energy.


## Mind Is the Creator of (New Forms of) Life! No Beginning to Life

8. Of course, it is very likely that Dr. Tour is not aware of the extensive and scientific explanation by the Buddha in the Aggañña sutta: Life has ALWAYS existed. A given lifestream (you or I) have existed without a traceable beginning.

- I will not be able to discuss that complex process any time soon. But I have discussed the main points in the Aggañña sutta in the post:"Buddhism and Evolution - Aggañña Sutta (DN 27)."
- It is just that we ourselves CREATE OUR OWN future lives, as described via Uppatti Paticca Samuppāda (which I discussed in my previous post).

9. A cell is the building block of life. Setting aside a complex life form like a human (made of trillions of different types of cells), science WILL NOT be able to create even a single cell. In fact, even in any CURRENT living being, individual cells are not formed. Instead, an existing cell divides to make two cells, and that is how more and more living cells come into existence!

- Each of our bodies started with just a single cell (zygote), and it became alive only when a gandhabba (or paṭisandhi viñnāạa) "descended to the womb" and merged with that single cell. It is cell division that led to the current physical body with trillions of cells; see, "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception."
- No scientist has been able to CREATE even a primitive single cell. In cloning experiments, they deal only with existing cells; see, "Cloning and Gandhabba."
- As explained by Dr. Tour, a living cell is very complex and is like a working factory. He does a good job in his explanations.


## WebLink: youtube: James Tour: The Mystery of the Origin of Life

10. Here is an introductory video on a living cell (you may need to copy the URL below and paste in a browser window if the video does not show up):

## WebLink: youtube: Introduction to Cells: The Grand Cell Tour

## REFERENCES

## For evolution:

Richard Dawkins, "The Blind Watchmaker: Why the Evidence of Evolution Reveals a Universe without Design" (2015).

Jerry A. Coyne, "Why Evolution is True" (2010).
(Note that both these and other books/research papers do not provide ANY evidence for the evolution of a cell)

## For creation:

Stephen Meyer, "Signature in the Cell: DNA and the Evidence for Intelligent Design" (2010).
Richard Behe, "Darwin's Black Box: The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution" (2006).

## Both evolution and creation not adequate:

Thomas Nagel, "Mind \& Cosmos: Why the Materialist Neo-Darwinian Conception of Nature is Almost Certainly False" (2012).

- Professor Nagel (who is a philosopher) obviously has had no exposure to Buddha Dhamma. But I am very much impressed that he came to the conclusion that mind MUST play a central role. I will write more on that in future posts.
5.2.2 Human Life - A Mental Base (Gandhabba) and a Material Base (Cell)

July 15, 2019; revised July 16, 2019

## Current Scientific Understanding of a Human Birth

1. Of course, science assumes that life is only associated with a physical body and when the physical body dies, that is the end of the story. This is what we called "uccheda dittthi" in the post, "Sakkāya Ditthi Getting Rid of Deeper Wrong Views." Here is a summary of the current scientific understanding of the beginning of a human life.

- During the mother's menstrual cycle, one egg (ovum) is usually released from one of the ovaries and is swept into the funnel-shaped end of one of the fallopian tubes.
- After intercourse with the father, If a sperm penetrates the egg there, fertilization results and the fertilized egg (zygote) moves down the fallopian tube and ends up in the uterus. This zygote divides into two cells, those two to four cells, etc.
- This collection of cells enters the uterus in 3 to 5 days. In the uterus, the cells continue to divide, becoming a ball of cells called a blastocyst. Inside the uterus, the blastocyst implants in the wall of the uterus, where it develops into an embryo attached to a placenta and surrounded by fluid-filled membranes; see, WebLink: merckmanuals.com: Stages of Development of the Fetus

2. This cell division is what causes that baby to grow (first inside the womb and then outside the womb) to become a full-grown human with trillions of cells. It is that first cell (which cannot even be seen with the naked eye) that eventually multiplied to a mass of trillion of cells in a grown human!

- However, there is much confusion about WHEN that zygote becomes alive, i.e., when it can be called "a human." This "time of conception" varies widely based on personal and religious beliefs.
- Some people believe life starts at the moment of the merger of the egg and sperm (to form the zygote). At the other end, some say the actual birth of the baby (i.e., coming out of the womb) is the start of the human life! Some others define the life to start when the embryo's heart starts beating.
- This confusion goes away when one understands the complete process described by the Buddha.


## Buddhist Description of a Human Life - Bhava and Jāti

One needs to understand the concepts of bhava, okkanti, and $\boldsymbol{j} \boldsymbol{a} \boldsymbol{t} \boldsymbol{i}$ in order to understand how a human being is conceived in the womb (conception) and is born 9 months later.
3. According to the sutt $\bar{a}$ as well as Abhidhamma in the Tipiṭaka, a new human existence (bhava) does not start in a womb. It starts at the cuti-patisandhi moment when the previous bhava comes to an end. For example, if a deva dies and becomes a human, a human gandhabba (fine mental body) will be formed at the time of death of that deva; see, "Bhava and Jāti- States of Existence and Births Therein."

- A human bhava can last thousands of years. On the other hand, a physical human body lasts only about 100 years. In between successive births with "human bodies", the gandhabba (mental body) lives in what is called "para loka." The para loka co-exists with our human loka, but we cannot see those fine mental bodies of gandhabbas; see, "Micchā Ditthi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage."
- It must be noted that all living beings have a mental body and it is called "manomaya kāya." Gandhabba is a special case of a manomaya kāya; see \#12 below.
- That human gandhabba will have to wait until a suitable womb becomes available. By "suitable" it means that the gati (loosely related to character/habits) of the gandhabba have to match those of the parents, especially the mother. Gati is an important concept in Buddha Dhamma that has been ignored for a long time; do a search for "gati" on the top right search box to find about "gati." A starting post is, "The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Āsavas)."
- Anytime after the egg and sperm are merged to form the zygote, a "matching gandhabba" can descend to the womb. Now a new human life starts with a mental body and the seed for a physical body (zygote).

4. Therefore, the time of conception is very precise in Buddha Dhamma: It happens at the time when the lifeless zygote becomes "alive" with the merging of the gandhabba. That is the time of conception and it happens very early, normally within a day after intercourse.

- In suttā, this is called "okkanthi" (a gandhabba or a pațisandhi viññāna descending to a womb); see, "Gandhabba State - Evidence from Tipitaka." When the baby is born that is $j \bar{a} t i$.
- The moral issues involving contraception and abortions are discussed in the post, "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception."

5. What happens in a womb (when an egg is fertilized with a sperm) is just to provide the "material basis" (zygote or the "first cell") for the gandhabba to start a new "human being" that will eventually grow to become an adult with trillions of cells.

- The "blueprint" for that physical body (i.e., the gandhabba) was created at the dying moment in the previous life. The gandhabba brings his/her own gati as well as a set of kamma vipāka that would come into play during the existence of that human body.
- However, the physical body will also take into account the features of the mother and father via that zygote; see, \#1 above.
- Therefore, the new baby will have a complex mixture of physical and mental characteristics of all three.
- All this is discussed in more detail in several posts, including "Ghost in the Machine - Synonym for the Manomaya Kāya?," "Manomaya Kāya (Gandhabba) and the Physical Body", and a more technical description in "Cuti-Patisandhi - An Abhidhamma Description."


## Connection to Sakkāya Diṭthi

6. I will take this opportunity to point out that is it only series of events that lead to a "new human being." That gandhabba which led to a new life arose due to a "paṭisandhi viñnäạa," which is nothing other than a "packet of kammic energy" created in a previous life. Therefore, it was NOT an existing "living being" that "became the new human being."

- This is why the Buddha said there is no "self" traveling from life-to-life. Any living being just CREATES energy (kammic energy in terms of a paṭisandhi viñ̃̄ānaa) to start a new "life form."
- However, there is a "continuity of life" that was CAUSED in a previous life (when a strong kamma was done and this patisandhi viññāna was created). Therefore, it is also not correct to say that a new life arises without a previous life making causes for it. There is a causal connection between adjacent lives.
- If one can grasp this key point, that will help to remove sakkāya dittthi (which is the key to the Sotāpanna stage).

7. There is no NEW living being and there has not been a FIXED living being (i.e., a "soul" or an "atma") either. Life just moves from one existence to another based on what types of pattisandhi viñ̃̄āṇa have been created in the past!

- For example, one may be born many times with a human body while in the "human bhava," but when the energy for that "human bhava" runs out, that lifestream gets hold of a new bhava (as a brahma, deva, animal, etc) which is the strongest paṭisandhi viñ̃̄äna, i.e., the strongest kamma (good or bad) done in the past.
- If one is able to follow that "chain of past lives", one will go through billions of past lives per minute, but will never be able to find a "beginning" life!
- According to the Buddha, life has no traceable beginning. "WebLink: suttacentral: Gaddulabaddha Sutta (SN 22.99)" is about how long the rebirth process. At the very beginning of the sutta: "Anamataggoyaì, bhikkhave, saïsāro" means "bhikkhus, there is no discernible beginning to
the rebirth process." This verse is in many suttā including all the suttā in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Anamatagga Samyuutta."


## A Mental Base (Gandhabba) and a Material Base (Cell)

8. A human life requires two basic components: a mental body (gandhabbalpatisandhi viñ̃̃̄āna) and a physical body (consisting of cells).

- A mental body or gandhabba (in different forms) has existed forever with any existing life-form, as explained in \#6 and \#7 above.
- The material body starts with a single cell created by the union of mother and father; that single cell (zygote) multiplies over time and the body of an adult has trillions of cells.

9. As I pointed out towards the end of the previous post, a cell is the basic building block of a live physical body. All living things (sentient beings and plants) are made of cells.

- Each of these cells comes into existence from pre-existing cells! No new cells are produced individually. This is a very important point.
- However, the first cells that appeared in the Earth were created by kammic energy (in javana cittō); I will discuss this below.
- Therefore, both mental and physical components of a human life have origins in the MIND.

10. Of course, there are many scientists today with the view that a "first cell" was created solely with inert matter early in Earth's history, within a billion years of the formation of the Earth.

- This "first formation time" comes just from archeological studies. As new studies find fossilized cells going back to earlier rocks, the time it took to form the "first cell" has now been pushed back within 300 million years of the formation of the Earth!
- However, living is cell is too complex to be formed via random combinations of inert molecules no matter how long a time is given. It not just forming complex molecules of DNA, but those DNA strands have a built-in program for life, just like a computer program.
- Random re-arrangement of inert molecules CANNOT lead to the formation of a "programmed cell." More on that in the next post.


## All Life on Earth is Made of Cells

11. All life that we see (whether sentient or not, i.e., whether have a mind or not) are made of cells. To be more precise, human and animal bodies - and plants - are made of cells.

- Some of them (plants) are not conscious, i.e., they do not have a mind.
- On the other hand, humans and animals are also made of cells, but they have a mind too.

12. So, we must realize that being alive and being conscious are two different things. Plants are alive but they cannot think: plant cells just mechanically perform "pre-programmed" functions. On the other hand, humans and animals are also made up of cells, but there is an additional entity associated with them: gandhabba or the mental body!

- (It must be noted that all living beings have a mental body, and it is called manomaya k $\bar{a} y a$. A manomaya kāya of a human or an animal is called a gandhabba because it can inhale aroma gandhabba comes from "gandha" + "abba" or "taking in aroma or scents" -, and become dense; see, '"Manomaya Kāya and Out-of-Body Experience (OBE)").
- It is amazing to see that even plant cells are very active, buzzing with activity. All cells are programmed for various functions. Of course, different types of cells are programmed for carrying out different tasks.

This is an interesting topic that we do not want to get too much involved in, because that can be a real distraction to the main task of learning Dhamma and following the Noble Eightfold Path.

- However, having at least a rough idea about the complexities of life can be a motivation to learn more about Buddha Dhamma.


## Complex Structure of a Cell

13. Here are two videos that explain the current status of understanding of cells. I will get to more relevant aspects in the next post.

## WebLink: youtube: Organelles of the Cell (updated)

14. Energy for ALL cells come from Solar energy. Plant cells first convert Solar energy to forms of energy that can be used by animal cells. Therefore, plant cells play a major role in sustaining human and animal life!

## WebLink: youtube: Cells: Structure and Function

### 5.2.3 <br> Clarification of "Mental Body" and "Physical Body" - Different Types of "Kāya"

July 19, 2019; revised September 8, 2019

## Introduction

1. There are words in Pāli that can have similar meanings. But one word may be better than another word in a particular situation. That is also true in English or any other language.

- In Buddha Dhamma, several Pāli words are used in different contexts regarding the "mental body." They are manomaya kāya, kammaja kāya, gandhabba, and paṭisandhi viñ̃ñana. I will try to make things a bit clear in this post.
- We need to keep in mind that the mind is very complex, and living beings in different realms have different types of "mental bodies." It is good to have a basic idea of these differences.

2. Most important here is to realize that these "mental bodies" are very different from the "physical bodies" we see in humans and animals.

- In particular, a brahma does not have a physical body at all. Then how can a Brahma see and hear without physical eyes and ears, and a brain to process those signals? These are questions that naturally arise in our minds. That is because we are not used to the concept of a "living being" without a solid body.
- The following discussion lays out a simple picture (with a few omissions to keep it more uncomplicated).


## Mental Body and Physical Body

3. All living beings have a "mental body" ("manomaya kāya"). Living beings in some realms also have a "physical body" (āhāraja kāya).

- So, the very first thing we need to realize is that such a "kāya" is not the same as a "physical body" that we are used to, weighing tens of kilograms or hundreds of pounds. The Pāli word "kāya" means a collection. Even in English "body" is sometimes implies a collection of parts. Some examples are, a "body of evidence" or "a body of water." [kāya : (m.), a heap; a collection; the body.]
- "Manomaya" means "made by the mind." Therefore, a manomaya kāya is a collection of very fine parts (hadaya vatthu and several pasāda rūpa) that are necessary for any living being. A manomaya
$k \bar{a} y a$ arises out of kammic energy created in our thoughts (citta). Abhidhamma is even more specific and says that our javana citta generates this energy.
- "Kammaja kāya" is the primary component of the manomaya kāya. This is because it is the first $\boldsymbol{k} \bar{a} y a$ "created by kammic energy."

4. Now we can look at the two words kammaja kāya and āhāraja kāya. Here each composite word is made from two parts: The common component, in this case, is " $j a$," which means "generated by" or "born due to."

- The collection of parts that arise due to kammic energy is "kammaja kāya." This "kāya" or "body" is very fine. A whole "kammaja kāya" is a billion times smaller than an atom. But as we will see, this "kaya" is the more powerful one. That is where the seat of the mind (hadaya vatthu) and the five real sensing elements of "pasāda rūpa" are located.
- Those six elements are made of the smallest units of matter (suddhattthaka) in Buddha Dhamma.
- Therefore, a whole "kammaja kāya" is unimaginably small, by our standards. One would not be able to see one even with an electron microscope. As we see below, that is all a brahma has!
 eating food. In humans and animals, this is the "physical body" that we see.
- Therefore, an "āhāraja kāya" is a "collection of heavy components of a body" like the head, arms, legs, eyes, ears, etc. That is what we call the "physical body." A physical body grows by using energy intake from the food we eat.
- For beings like us with solid physical bodies, the sensory signals are first received by the five physical senses (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body). Then the brain processes those signals and sends them to the manomaya kāya. The manomaya kāya senses those signals.
- Eyes and ears, for example, do not actually see or hear. Eyes and ears pass those signals to the brain. The brain processes those signals send them to the corresponding pasāda rupa in the manomaya kāya; see, "Brain - Interface between Mind and Body."
- In other words, for beings like us with physical bodies, the sensory signals received by the five physical senses (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body). Then processes those signals and send to the manomaya $k \bar{a} y a$. The manomaya kāya senses those signals.
- As we have discussed in recent posts in this series, a physical body (of a human or an animal) starts with a single cell called a zygote. The development of a complete human body, beginning with that one cell is another fascinating story. Scientists have no idea how that happens via a program that is in the DNA of that single cell. Who designed that program? See "Origin of Life."


## Beings in Brahma and Deva Realms

6. Brahmā do not have an āhāraja kāya, and just have the kammaja kāya. The kammaja kāya of a brahma has only a hadaya vatthu and TWO pasāda rūpa (cakkhu and sota) for seeing and hearing. Still, they can see and hear with that ultra-fine "body" without having any eyes or ears (and brains) like ours. Of course, it is tough for us to imagine such a living being.

- Therefore, a brahma with just a manomaya kāya has a mass less than that of an electron. We cannot see even a cell or an atom, let alone an electron. Now we can understand why we should not think of "Brahma bodies" in the same sense as a "solid body."
- Those Brahmā cannot taste the food, smell odors, or touch things physically like we do. In other words, they do not have ghāna, jivhā, and kāya pasāda rūpa.
- By the way, Brahmā do not need food. Kammic energy sustains their lives. Only the hadaya vatthu and the two pasāda rūpa of cakkhu pasāda and sota pasāda need to be maintained.

7. Devās do have āhāraja kāya, but that is much finer, and we would not a deva if we come face-to-face with one.

- They have all five physical senses. Their food is just a drink called "amurta." That is probably not the correct Päli word, but that is the Sinhala - and probably Sanskrit - name for it.
- Therefore, we need to be careful not to carry over our perceptions of "heavy bodies" to bodies of other beings in other realms. Millions of devas and Brahmā were present to hear the first discourse by the Buddha, according to the Vinaya Pitaka. However, those five ascetics probably did not even realize that at that time.


## What is Gandhabba?

8. A human (or an animal) has a both a manomaya kāya and a āhāraja kāya. But the manomaya kāya of a human has a special name of gandhabba due to the following reason.

- A human bhava starts with the generation of a manomaya kāya (or kammaja kāya) by kammic energy. For example, if an animal dies and gets a human bhava (which is extremely rare), a human manomaya kāya will come out of that dead animal. If a deva dies and gets a human bhava, a human manomaya k $\bar{a} y a$ will appear in the human realm.
- That human manomaya kāya has a hadaya vatthu and five pasāda rūpa as mentioned above. However, it has the ability to absorb aroma (scents from plants and even food), and to get a bit denser (unlike a brahma). Thus the name gandhabba ("gandha" + "abba" or "inhaling aroma") for the manomaya kāya of a human (or an animal).
- Therefore, the name gandhabba is used only for the manomaya kāya of humans and animals.
- Normal humans cannot see that relatively dense "body" of a gandhabba. They are in the "para loka" (which is within the human realm).


## What is the Connection of Gandhabba to Paṭisandhi Viññāṇa?

9. Another phrase used in some suttā to indicate a manomaya kāya of a human or animal (i.e., a gandhabba) is patisandhi viññāna.

- As we had discussed before, a human gandhabba could live for thousands of years until the end of that human existence of "human bhava." During that time, it can give rise to many "human lives" ( $j \bar{a} t i$ ) with different physical bodies.
- For example, suppose one of those human $j \bar{a} t i$ ends. At that moment, the gandhabba comes out of the dead body and waits for another "matching womb." (Gati of the gandhabba has to match those of the parents, especially the mother). When a matching womb becomes available, gandhabba is drawn to that womb. That is described in the post, "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception."
- The WebLink: suttacentral: Mahā Tanhāsañkhava Sutta (Majjhima Nikāya 38), describes that as "descending of the gandhabba to the womb." WebLink: suttacentral: The Mahā Nidana Sutta (Dīgha Nikāya 15) it is stated as "paṭisandhi viñ̃̄̄ana descending to the womb." That is because a paṭisandhi viññāna created that gandhabba. That is discussed in detail in the post, "Gandhabba State - Evidence from Tipitaka."


## The Physical Body Shields Manomaya Kāya of Humans and Animals

10. A question may have come up in the mind of some readers. Why cannot a gandhabba in a human physical body directly sense the outside world without the help of the five physical senses (eyes, ears, etc), if the brahmā can do that?

- The dense physical body shields the manomaya kāya of the gandhabba. As long as the gandhabba is inside the physical body, it is unable to get those "sense inputs" directly. Those sensory inputs come through our "sense doors", eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and the body. The brain processes those signal and transmit them to the gandhabba (manomaya kāya). See, "Brain - Interface between Mind and Body."
- We can compare this situation to a human operator inside an enclosed military tank. That operator cannot see or hear anything outside. Audio and video equipment mounted on the tank sends those signals to an on-board computer, which analyzes and displays them for the operator.
- In that analogy, video camera and audio equipment mounted on the tank act like the eyes and ears of a human. The computer is like the brain. Without getting those signals, the operator is totally blind and deaf to the outside world. In the same way, the manomaya kaya cannot receive those sense inputs if the eyes are ears are damaged.
- A detailed discussion at: "Our Mental Body - Gandhabba."

11. But that manomaya kāya can be "kicked out of the physical body" in a traumatic situation, mostly in cases of heart operations; such claims are categorized as "out-of-body experiences" (OBE). In such cases, some patients have reported being able to see doctors perform operations on their own bodies from the ceiling (with their manomaya kāya).

- It may also happen to people whom the doctors thought had died, but "come back to life" within a short time. They report being able to travel with their manomaya kāya. Such cases are "near-death experiences" (NDE).
- Some others report being able to do "astral travel" with their manomaya kāya whenever they like, see, "WebLink: wikipedia.org: Astral projection." At least some reports in this category seem to be valid. Reports of OBE and NDE are more trustworthy, because doctors and nurses confirm the accounts of those patients.
- These are discussed in the post, "Manomaya Kāya and Out-of-Body Experience (OBE)."


### 5.2.4 Four Types of Births in Buddhism

July 30, 2022 (revised \#11, \#12 same day); revised \#3, \#9 on Aug. 1, 2022
Buddha explained that there are four types of births: jalābuja (womb), aṇlaja (egg), samisedaja (chemical), and opapātika (spontaneous). However, the other three types depend on an opapātika birth first occurring at the cuti-patisandhi moment. [jaläbuja : [adj.] born in a placenta; viviparous. andaja : [adj.] oviparous; born of an egg. (m.) a bird; a serpent. samsedaja : [adj.] born from moisture. opapātika : [adj.] arisen without visible cause; born spontaneously.]

## Introduction

1. There are several suttas where the Buddha explained the four types of births: andaja, jalābuja, samisedaja, and opapātika. For example, in "WebLink: suttacentral: Mahāsīhanāda Sutta (MN 12)." the Buddha explains, "Catasso kho imā, sāriputta, yoniyo-Aṇ̣dajā yoni, jalābujā yoni, samisedaja yoni, opapātika yoni." That means "Sāriputta, there are four kinds of births-Born from an egg, from a womb, from chemical composition, or spontane ously."

- It is a good idea to read the English translation there, even if not perfect, to get an idea of not only the four types of birth but also about births in various realms, including the four lowest realms. One could start at, "Sāriputta, there are these four kinds of reproduction. What four?"


## Spontaneous (Opapātika) Birth Is the "Seed" for the Other Three Types of Birth

2. Let us briefly discuss the four types of births listed above. As we will see below, the spontaneous or opapātika birth must occur first for the other three types to proceed (in situations where one or more of those three types come into play.) Those three types of births are predominant only in the human and animal realms.

- In the six Deva and twenty Brahma realms, only opapātika births take place. Devas and Brahmas are born in their "final form" spontaneously. They live their whole lives (ranging from millions to billions of years) in that form. Of course, they have subtle "energy bodies" that are invisible to us.
- When a human existence (bhava) is grasped at the pattisandhi moment (after leaving previous existence in one of the 31 realms), kammic energy creates a gandhabba/manomaya kāya first via an opapātika birth. A gandhabba also has an invisible "energy body" (like Devas and Brahmas) with a hadaya $v a t t h u$ and five pasāda rūpa. That gandhabba MAY NOT be born with a physical body of a human (with a jalābuja birth) for years after that.
- As explained in the post, "Bhava and Jāti - States of Existence and Births Therein" a human gandhabba's lifetime could be many thousands of years. That gandhabba may be born with a physical human body many times during that lifetime. Many "rebirth accounts" by children worldwide confirm that rebirths with human bodies happen with gaps of several years between consecutive births. Those are consecutive "womb-born" (jalābuja) births for a single human gandhabba. On the other hand, getting another human bhava is extremely rare; see "How the Buddha Described the Chance of Rebirth in the Human Realm."


## Births With Physical Human Bodies Are "Jalābuja" Births

3. Any birth among the 31 realms occurs due to a kamma vipāka. The first step is to be "born into a certain bhava," for example, "human bhava" or Deva bhava. But there is a crucial difference between what happens next in those two cases.

- A fully-formed Deva is born with an opapātika birth and will live through the whole life in that Deva realm.
- Similarly, only the subtle (and invisible) manomaya kāya of a gandhabba is born when a human bhava is grasped with an opapātika birth. But that will be followed by a jalābuja birth at some point. That gandhabba is pulled into a mother's womb when a "matching womb" becomes available. Then a human baby will be born with a physical body after nine months. Such a birth belongs to the "jalābuja" type of 31 above.
- A human with a physical body lives in "this world (ayam loka)," and that same human in the absence of a physical body lives in the "other world (para loka)." Thus, until the end of the human bhava, many "back and forth" between the "two worlds" occur. See "Gandhabba Sensing the World - With and Without a Physical Body."
- Let us summarize for clarity.


## Devas/Brahmas Have Only Opapātika Births, Humans Have Opapātika and Jalābuja Births

4. Any Deva or a Brahma has only the opapātika birth (i.e., one $j \bar{a} t i$ per bhava.)

- On the other hand, to be born with a physical human body like ours, there must be two stages. First, a human gandhabba is born in an opapātika birth (in the "upādāna paccayā bhava" step in Paticca Samuppāda.) Then that gandhabba gets into a mother's womb and will be born a human baby nine months later. That second birth is a jalābuja birth or "birth from a womb" with "breaking out of the amniotic sac." As mentioned above, there can be many jalābuja births for a human gandhabba. These are the "bhava paccayā jāti" in Paticca Samuppāda.
- That explains many rebirth accounts. The Buddha emphasized that it is extremely rare to be born human; see."How the Buddha Described the Chance of Rebirth in the Human Realm." Does that mean there is a contradiction with rebirth accounts? No.
- It is extremely rare to be born in the human realm as a human gandhabba with an opapātika birth. But once becoming a human gandhabba, there can be many births with different physical bodies (jalābuja birth). A physical human body dies in about 100 years. But that is not the end of the human bhava. The human gandhabba comes out of the dead body and can be reborn with a different body. There was a good discussion on a fascinating rebirth account at the forum that could be informative: "WebLink: suttacentral: PureDhamma Forums: Rebirth Account of Dorothy Eady."


## Animal Realm Has All Four Types of Births

5. For an animal, the first opapātika birth produces an animal gandhabba. Then, one of the remaining three modes can apply to give birth to an animal with a physical body that we can see.

- Some animal gandhabbā are born with physical bodies via womb-births (jalābujā) like humans. Some examples are monkeys, lions, deer, etc.
- Chicken, birds, etc., are born from an egg (aṇdajā birth). Here, for example, a "chicken gandhabba" will be drawn into an egg growing inside a chicken. After the chicken lays eggs, those eggs will hatch, and chicks will come out.
- The last mode of samisedaja is rare for big animals and applies primarily to microscopic animals. Here the required "chemical base" for the gandhabba evolves naturally in rotten meat or leaves. This type of birth has not been confirmed by science yet.
- Note that in all those cases, a "seed" (manomaya kāyalgandhabba) must have been first produced by kammic energy, just like in the case of a human.

6. Let us discuss an animal's birth for clarification.

- For example, a fly lives in a physical body only for a few weeks before dying. However, that "fly existence" (bhava) may last thousands/millions of years. When a fly dies, its manomaya $k \bar{a} y a / g a n d h a b b a$ will come out and wait until getting into another "fly egg." It will be reborn countless times as a fly with wings (of course, the "fly gandhabba" will be invisible, just like a "human gandhabba.") That is an "egg-born" (andaja) birth.
- Many animals, especially small ones, have lifetimes much shorter than humans. But their "animal bhava" can be millions of years long. Regardless of which of the three types of births is followed by an opapātika birth of an animal, there will be many "births with physical bodies" for that "animal gandhabba." That is why it is critical to understand that there can be many $j \bar{a} t i s$ within a bhava for humans and animals. See "Jāti- Different Types of Births."


## Current Confusion About "When a Baby Becomes Conscious/Human"

7. We see a lot of confusion these days about "when a baby can be called human"?

- These days in the US, there are many "theories/speculations" about when a baby becomes "fully conscious." Then that evolves into arguments about "a baby not being human" up to a few days, a few months, or even at birth. Some even speculate that since a child cannot "think rationally" until at least a couple of years of age, they may not be "human." That is ridiculous!
- With that argument, a person in sleep or under anesthesia can be categorized as a "non-person" because they are unconscious! That would mean killing a person while in sleep, under anesthesia, in a vegetative state due to brain damage, etc., would be legal!
- I have discussed situations where people in vegetative states fully recovered; see "Persistent Vegetative State - Buddhist View." Further details in "Brain and the Gandhabba."

8. A zygote in a womb becomes human as soon as a gandhabba merges with it!

- See "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception"
- It does not matter whether people can make ridiculous arguments like those in \#7. Aborting a baby anytime after conception is a pān $\bar{a} t i p a ̄ t \bar{a}$ or "taking a life," not just any life, but a human life!


## The Physical Human Body Is Just a Shell - Gandhabba Makes It Alive

9. Recent accounts of Near-Death Experiences (NDE) show that human life is much more complex than many believe. A physical body without a gandhabba inside is lifeless.

- NDE accounts confirm that the physical body shows no sign of life (heartbeat, pulse, brain activity, etc.) for many minutes. The startling fact is that during that time, that person had been watching the whole situation from the ceiling of the hospital room!
- A gandhabba can see without "physical eyes" while outside a physical body. This critical point has been illustrated in the following video. The woman had never experienced vision (due to her physical eyes being damaged), and she could see for the first time in her life when she had an NDE. The ability to see goes away after the NDE experience once the gandhabba goes inside the physical body.
WebLink: youtube: Near Death Experience - Blind woman 'sees' while out of body
- Details: "Near-Death Experiences (NDE): Brain Is Not the Mind."


## Scientific Consensus - Life Begins With a Zygote

10. Most scientists agree that human life begins at conception, i.e., fertilization or the "joining of an egg and a sperm" to produce a zygote.

- See, for example, "WebLink: PDF Download: Embryonic Human Persons-2009" and "WebLink: PDF Download: Personhood status of the human zygote,-2017."
- That position is close to the Buddhist position.
- The only difference is that, in Buddha Dhamma, a human gandhabba must merge with a zygote for that zygote to become alive. A zygote by itself is inert, just like an egg or a sperm.

11. We don't need scientific evidence to realize that a fetus inside a womb is alive. How can anyone watching the following videos say that a baby growing inside a womb is not alive?

WebLink: youtube: Is an Embryo a Person? | When Does Life Begin?
WebLink: youtube: Fetal Development Week by Week Overview

- The following additional information may be helpfil to some readers.


## Javana Power in Kamma Viññạ̄a Responsible for All Births

11. As discussed above, any type of birth starts with an opapātika birth. Furthermore, the subtle manomaya kāya produced by kammic energy is unimaginably "small." We can consider an analogy to get an idea. If you take a drop of water and put it on a hot pan, it will vaporize instantly, and you will barely see a plume of water vapor. Now, imagine that drop of water to be a million-fold smaller. That is an analogy of the "size" of the manomaya kāya. That is why scientists cannot detect any change in the zygote when a gandhabba merges with a zygote at conception.

- When a baby grows inside a womb, food to grow the baby's physical body comes from the mother through the umbilical cord. As that physical body grows, the manomaya kāya/gandhabba expands (like that plume of water vapor) to spread throughout the physical body.
- Several posts have explained that the all-important sensing elements (hadaya vatthu and five pasāda $r \bar{u} p a$ ) are in that invisible gandhabba kāya. See "Brain and the Gandhabba."

12. It is a good idea to make the connection to Paticca Samuppāda as well.

- The uppatti Pațicca Samuppāda starts with "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" and ends with "upādāna paccayā bhava" and "bhava paccayā jāti." The "upādāna paccayā bhava" step is where a new opapātika birth takes place. (Then, the "bhava paccayā jāti" step leads to a jalābuja birth for a human; for an animal, it could be any of the aṇ̣aj $\bar{a}$, jalābuj $\bar{a}$, or samisedaja birth, depending on the type of animal.)
- The steps "avijjā paccayā (abhi)sañkhāra" through "(kamma)viññāna paccayā nāmarūpa" steps MUST produce energy to create the manomaya kāya associated with the opapātika birth. That energy is the javana power in kamma viññāna! See "Javana of a Citta - The Root of Mental Power."
- It is, in fact, in the key step of "(kamma) viñnāṇa paccayā nāmarūpa" that the mind "combines nāma and rūpa" to generate kammic energy for future salāyatana (i.e., sensing elements) in manomaya kāya of future opapātika births. That is a subtle point. See "Viññāna Paccayā Nāmarūpa."


### 5.2.5 Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception

Revised with a new title: November 10, 2018; revised November 14, 2018 (rewritten and replaces What does Buddha Dhamma (Buddhism) say about Birth Control?); revised January 5, 2020; revised \#8 on December 28, 2020

## Introduction

This completely revised post is necessary to continue our discussion on Paticca Samuppāda: "Paticca Samuppāda - Not 'Self' or 'No-Self."

1. Buddhist explanation of conception is in several Tipitaka sutta . Following is a simple account based on those sutt $\overline{\text {. It }}$ is compatible with modern science but provides more details than science.

- Moral issues regarding abortion and birth control have clear answers in Buddha Dhamma. In particular, at what stage of pregnancy does a human life first appear in a womb?
- Modern science cannot determine the "time of conception" or "when a human life starts in a womb."
- Let us first review the current scientific knowledge base.


## Current Scientific Knowledge

2. First of all, there must be a fertilized egg (zygote) in the womb. The fertilization happens when a sperm from the father combines with an egg from the mother to form a zygote or a fertilized egg.

- During the mother's menstrual cycle, one egg (ovum) is usually released from one of the ovaries and swept into the funnel-shaped end of one of the fallopian tubes.
- After intercourse with the father, If a sperm penetrates the egg there, fertilization results, and the fertilized egg (zygote) moves down the fallopian tube toward the uterus.
- The "live zygote" enters the uterus in 3 to 5 days. In the womb, the cells continue to divide, becoming a hollow ball of cells called a blastocyst. Inside the womb, the blastocyst implants in the wall of the uterus, where it develops into an embryo attached to the placenta and surrounded by fluid-filled membranes.
- See,"WebLink: merckmanuals.com: Stages of Development of the Fetus."

3. It is important to note that science does not have an answer to the question of why all zygotes do not result in pregnancies, and why some couples who could not have babies for many years all of a sudden have success.

- Science cannot explain how an inert zygote (a cell) becomes "alive" and a living baby comes out of the womb.
- Furthermore, science cannot say WHEN that inert cell, the zygote, becomes alive. Some say a live baby is there as soon as a zygote is formed, and others say there is no life there until a heartbeat can be seen.
- For more details on the controversy on the "time of conception" see, "WebLink: wikipedia.org: Beginning of pregnancy controversy."


## Buddhist Explanation - Mind is in the "Mental Body" or Manomaya Kāya

4. We humans have two "bodies." Manomaya kāya is the "mental body" (with a trace of matter) born at the beginning of the human existence or human bhava.

- Here is "body" means a "collection." The physical body is a collection of "physical body parts." The mental body has only a trace of matter and is a collection of "mental parts" (vedanā, saññ̄a, Sañkhāra, and viññāna.) For details, see "Human Life - A Mental Base (Gandhabba) and a Material Base (Cell)" and "Clarification of"Mental Body" and "Physical Body" - Different Types of 'Kāya'." Those two were posted earlier in this series of posts.
- The mental body is referred to as "gandhabba" in the Tipitaka. See, "Gandhabba State - Evidence from Tipitika." However, for the current discussion, we do not need details on the gandhabba.
- Thus, a "human gandhabba" has only a trace of matter, and thus, we cannot see it. Some sutt $\bar{a}$ refer to the gandhabba state as "paṭisandhi viññāna." See, "Gandhabba State - Evidence from Tipitaka."


## A Human Existence Can Last Thousands of Years

5. A human existence (bhava) can last thousands of years, and that is the lifetime of the gandhabba or the mental body.

- On the other hand, a physical human body lasts only about 100 years. With the death of the physical body, the gandhabba comes out and waits for another womb. Thus, there can be many births ( $j \bar{a} t i$ ) as a human within a given human existence (bhava). See, "Bhava and Jäti - States of Existence and Births Therein."
- In between successive births with "human bodies," the gandhabba (mental "body") lives in the "para loka." The para loka co-exists with our human loka, but we cannot see those subtle "mental bodies" of gandhabbas.

6. A new human existence (bhava) does not start in a womb. It begins at the cuti-patisandhi moment when the previous bhava comes to an end. For example, if a deva dies and becomes a human, a human gandhabba (fine "mental body") will be formed at the time of death of that deva.

- Then that human gandhabba will have to wait until a suitable womb becomes available. By "suitable," it means that the gati (loosely related to character/habits) of the gandhabba have to match those of the parents, especially the mother.
- Gati is an essential concept in Buddha Dhamma. But it is absent in modern texts. Search "gati" on the top right search box to find about "gati." I have discussed Tipiṭaka references in several posts. See, "The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Āsava)" and references therein.


## A Zygote Becomes Alive When a Gandhabba Takes Possession of It

7. With the above background, now we can make the connection to current scientific understanding and extend that understanding. As science has shown, human life arises with a single cell called a zygote; see \#2 and \#3 above.

- A gandhabba may have to wait for even many years until a suitable womb becomes available. Then, kammic energy will pull it into that womb. And the gandhabba will merge with the zygote in the womb that was created by a sperm fertilizing an egg.
- A gandhabba entering a womb is sometimes referred to as "paṭisandhi viñnãạa descending to a womb" as stated in the Mahā Nidāna Sutta (DN 15.) In the Mahā Taṇhāsañkhaya Sutta (MN 38) it is stated as, "a gandhabba descending to a womb."
- As we saw above, Nature automatically matches the "gati" the parents (we can say that matching the zygote that was formed by the union of the mother and father), and a "matching" gandhabba will be "pulled in" by the kammic energy.
- However, the gandhabba concept is different from the idea of a "soul." A gandhabba will keep changing during its lifetime. Furthermore, it will make a drastic change when the lifetime of the human bhava comes to an end. At that time, it can become an animal, a Deva, a Brahma, etc.

8. Therefore, a zygote just provides the "material basis" (zygote) for the gandhabba to form a physical body. (That zygote develops when an egg combines with a sperm.)

- The "blueprint" for that physical body (i.e., the gandhabba) is in the patisandhi viññāna. However, the physical body will also take into account the features of the mother and father via that zygote; see \#3 and \#4 above.
- If the mother (and father) are unable to have a child due to a previous kamma vipāka, the resulting zygote will be a "dud." Thus no gandhabba can "descend to the womb," i.e., pregnancy is not possible.
- All this is discussed in more detail in several posts, including "Ghost in the Machine - Synonym for the Manomaya Kāya?," "Manomaya Kāya (Gandhabba) and the Physical Body," and a more technical description in "Cuti-Patisandhi - An Abhidhamma Description."
- Once a gandhabba takes possession of a zygote that zygote grows into a baby in the mother's womb via several steps (consistent with current science.) Those stages are listed in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Indaka Sutta (SN 10.1)"


## The 'Time of Conception" is Precise

9. A gandhabba can take hold of that fertilized egg (zygote) any time after its formed.

- Therefore, the conception of a new baby happens when the life-less zygote becomes "alive" with the merging of the gandhabba. That is the time of conception, and it happens very early, generally within a day after intercourse.
- Once a gandhabba merges with the zygote, the cells of the zygote start repeatedly dividing as the zygote moves down the fallopian tube. Thus cell division and the formation of a baby DOES NOT start unless and until a gandhabba merges with the zygote.


## Effects of Condoms/Birth Control Pills

10. Now let us see what happens with a condom or with birth control pills.

- With the use of a condom, an egg will not be able to come to contact with a sperm to form a zygote. Thus there will be no "material basis" or a zygote in the womb.
- If the mother is taking birth control pills, again, that will prevent the formation of a zygote for a gandhabba to start a new life.
- Thus it is clear that there are no moral issues involved in either of those two cases. Terminating a life does not happen in either case.

If a Gandhabba Is in the Womb, There Is a Human There
11. On the other hand, once a gandhabba "is in the womb," then there is a living being in the womb.

- Any procedure to remove the live gandhabba after this "real conception" is equivalent to killing a human. The exact time of the removal procedure does not matter. It could be a month before the birth of the baby or just a day after the gandhabba came into the womb.
- The only uncertainty about the "time of conception" is a few days. Conception happens when the gandhabba takes hold of the zygote. That could happen immediately after intercourse or a few days after sex.
- Thus Buddha Dhamma provides an unambiguous picture of the moral issues involved in the birth control process.


## Other Aspects

12. The death of a physical body of a human does not mean its existence as a human has ended. If there is remaining "kammic energy" for the human bhava left, the mental body (gandhabba) will come of the dead physical body and will wait for another suitable womb.

- However, if the "kammic energy for the present human bhava" is exhausted at the time of death, then the transition to the next "bhava" or existence happens at the dying moment. If that new existence is that of a cat, a "cat gandhabba" will leave the dead body.
- Here again, the "cat gandhabba" will have to wait until a suitable "cat womb" becomes available. At that time it will go into the womb of the "cat mother." And a baby cat will be born later on.
- However, except for humans and animals, a gandhabba is not involved in most other realms. That is true, for example, in Deva and Brahma realms.

13. Sometimes the child may have different "gati" compared to the parents. For example, a "fairly moral" couple may have a child with violent character qualities. That could be due to a drastic change in the mindset of the mother during that "conception window." (Between the formation of the zygote and a gandhabba "descending" to the womb.) Violent rape is one possibility.

- Furthermore, this is also why mothers who could not get pregnant for years, suddenly get pregnant. This happens during a time when the mother most likely has a "personality shift" or a significant change in her mental state.


## Cloning - A Detailed Analysis

14. I have revised and updated another relevant post, "Cloning and Gandhabba."

- More details on the formation of the zygote are discussed there, before the discussion on cloning.
- We will make the connection to Paticca Samuppāda in the next post.


### 5.2.6 Cloning and Gandhabba

March 5, 2018; revised January 5, 2020; January 8, 2020

## Introduction - Cloning of Dolly the Sheep

1. Cloning of various types of animals has become common since Dolly was cloned in 1996. Three sheep contributed to the birth of Dolly. One provided the egg, another the DNA (donor), and a third (surrogate mother) carried the cloned embryo to term.

- Obviously, a clone has most similarities with the donor and there is no "father" involved (no sperm is needed). Are these consistent with the Buddha Dhamma, and how does a gandhabba play a role?
- Also, there are some myths associated with cloning, such as whether "totally unexpected creatures or monsters" can result from cloning.
- Therefore, it is good to review the key steps in the cloning process and to clarify these issues.


## What Happens in a Normal Conception?

2. But, first, we need to look at what happens in a "normal conception" where an egg and a sperm combine to form the unique cell called a zygote. This was explained in the post, "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception." Here, we will first extend that discussion.

- The "material base" for a new life is a zygote. In a natural conception, the zygote is formed by the fertilization of a female egg by a sperm from a male. Then a gandhabba can come into the womb and provide the "mental basis" for the new life, as explained in the above post.
- There are two things REQUIRED to make a zygote. The first requirement is the egg that comes from the mother and is unique. However, eggs have only 23 chromosomes instead of 46 chromosomes in all other cells. Therefore, the second requirement is to somehow have 46 chromosomes in the nucleus of an egg.
- Let us discuss the two factors in a bit more detail since this was not discussed in the previous post.


## An Egg Is Unique

3. Eggs are the most remarkable of cells. They can give rise to a completely new individual within a matter of days or weeks in some animals. No other cell in a higher animal has this ability. Egg cells also contain many mitochondria which supply the energy required for cell replication and division.

- However, an egg must be "activated" first in order to start the cell division process. It is activated only when its nucleus has a full complement of 46 chromosomes or 23 pairs.
- You can read more about the role of the egg at, "WebLink: discovermagazine.com: How Does a Single Cell Become a Whole Body?."


## Activation of the Egg by the Presence of 46 Chromosomes

4. Now, to the second factor. Most cells in a body have 23 pairs of chromosomes, for a total of 46. The egg and sperm are different. Each egg and each sperm has only one set of 23 chromosomes, not a pair.

- When fertilization occurs in normal conception, the 23 chromosomes from the egg combine with the 23 from the sperm to create a zygote or a fertilized egg with the full complement of $\mathbf{2 3}$ pairs of chromosomes. This is shown in the following diagram (Fertilization. Zygote is egg plus sperm genetically different individuals. Fusion of two haploid gametes to form a diploid zygote):

- In this case of normal conception, those two nuclei from mother and father will combine to form a single nucleus in the yellow cell (egg), which is now the zygote.
- So, we see that in normal conception, the nucleus of the zygote - or the result of the merger of the egg with the sperm - will be a cell with a nucleus that has half chromosomes from the mother and the other half from the father. Thus, DNA from mother and father BOTH contribute to the zygote in normal conception. This is why the baby will have bodily features from both parents (a mix).


## Science Cannot Explain Why Some Zygotes Are "Duds"

5. When the above process is complete, the egg becomes a zygote. At this point, the cell division is supposed to activate. However, some zygotes do not activate and thus do not lead to a fetus or a baby.

- Scientists do not know why the zygotes formed by the union of some couples do not lead to cell division, i.e., why certain couples cannot have babies.


## It Is a Gandhabba That "Activates" the Zygote!

6. The only difference in Buddha Dhamma is that the cell division starts ONLY IF (and when) a gandhabba descends to the womb and merges with that zygote.

- A new animal or human life cannot be initiated without a gandhabba (or the "mental body" or "manomaya kāya.")
- In the case of a natural conception, the matching gandhabba (or pațisandhi viñ̃āạa) will descend to the womb and will be merged with that fertilized egg to complete the conception. However, if a previous kamma vipāka for the mother and father does not allow a conception, a gandhabba WILL NOT be drawn into the womb.
- Otherwise, a matching gandhabba with gati that are a mix of gati of mother and father will be drawn into the womb. That is why a child is likely to have gati which are a mix of the two parents. That is in addition to having physical features of the parents.


## A Gandhabba (Mental Body) Makes the Zygote Alive

7. Without the "mental component" or the gandhabba, there is no life! A zygote is an inert cell and has no "sentient life." The zygote that results from the merger of the egg and the sperm is just the "material base" and not a "new life."

- It is only when the gandhabba descends to the womb and takes possession of that zygote that it "becomes alive."


## The Procedure of Cloning Versus Natural Conception

8. The zygote formation is different in cloning compared to the natural conception. In the case of cloning, a sperm from a father is not involved.

- Here the nucleus of the egg is REMOVED, and the nucleus of the "donor cell" with the full set of 46 chromosomes is INSERTED in the egg. That is the key difference in cloning. So, now the nucleus of the egg has the full set of chromosomes needed to start cell division. The basic process involved in cloning is nicely represented by the following diagram:

Somatic body cell with desired genes

9. However, it seems that is not enough to initiate the cell division. An electric shock is required to activate the process (i.e., to initiate cell division of this artificially created zygote.) This is the second difference compared to the natural process.

- Therefore, the artificially modified egg is placed in the womb of the surrogate mother, and an electrical shock is applied to start the cell division.
- The above figure is from the article, " $\underline{20}$ years after Dolly: Everything you always wanted to know about the cloned sheep and what came next." You may want to read that article too.


## A Gandhabba Is Still Needed in Cloning

10. Even though that is the whole picture according to science, Buddha Dhamma says, there MUST be a gandhabba merging with that cell in order to "give it life."

- Just like in the case of natural conception we discussed above, there is no "new life" created with cloning. It just created a suitable "temporary home" for the gandhabba.
- When that physical body dies, the gandhabba would come out and wait for another womb to be ready. Dolly has now died and it is possible that she was reborn as another sheep somewhere.


## Genetic Material Is From One Cell in Cloning

11. The main thing from the above figure in \#8 on cloning for our discussion is that the yellow cell is the egg from the mother. The other cell on the top is from the "donor." It is not sperm but any kind of cell. No sperm is in the picture. Instead of half the genetic material coming from sperm and half from an egg, it all comes from a single cell.

- The unique feature of the egg from the mother is that it allows the growth of a whole animal (with many body parts for doing very different things) just starting with that single cell.
- However, the egg needs to have a full set of 46 chromosomes to form the zygote. In cloning, the whole set comes from the "donor" as shown in the above figure. In a natural conception, half of the
chromosomes come from the mother (egg), and the other half comes from the father (sperm), as shown in the figure above in \#4.
- When an egg starts cell division, it splits - first into 2 , then 4 , then $8,16,32,64$, and so on - it is not merely splitting. It is a complex process that produces descendant cells with a huge variety of shapes and functions: bone cells, nerve cells, red and white blood cells; the cells of the eyes, fingernails, stomach, skin, etc.


## More Information From Scientific Studies

12. Now, in the case of cloning, the following should be clear, according to science:

- The mother that provides the egg, provides the all-important platform for cell division that leads to the formation of the new offspring.
- However, $99 \%$ of the DNA comes from the donor. Therefore, the physical resemblance of the offspring would be to the donor, as is the case with Dolly the sheep.
- The surrogate mother who carries the embryo to term would provide no real contribution to the physical appearance of the offspring, according to science.


## No "Monsters" Will be Created With Cloning

13. Studies done over the past 20 years with different types of animals show that:

- Some people are afraid that cloning can lead to unexpected outcomes like "creating monsters." However, from the above discussion, it is clear that monstrous creatures cannot be expected to form due to cloning. This is because the source of DNA is the donor. Therefore, the clone will look like the donor.
- It is not possible to clone an animal that is identical to the donor. Even if they look similar, their character traits are different.
- The success rate is low, around $10 \%$.
- Those are observations from the cloning studies over the past 20 years. They are consistent with our picture of the gandhabba having gati close to that of the donor. No two animals can be the same. In the case of natural birth, gandhabba's gati will be close to those of both parents.


## Additional Points From Buddha Dhamma

14. That is pretty much the picture in Buddha Dhamma too, but with the following exceptions:

- All three involved in the cloning process would contribute to some extent to the "mental qualities" in selecting a matching gandhabba (which happens automatically.) However, the major contribution is likely to come from the donor.
- Of course, we can only make a guess, since the Buddha never had to explain this particular case. The Buddha specifically mentioned that the "mental state of the mother" at the time of gandhabba descending to the womb is a factor. This is why even the most moral mother may, in a few cases, end up with a baby who turns out to have immoral gati.
- Therefore, the surrogate mother - within whose womb the actual descending of the gandhabba would occur - could play some minor role in determining the behavior of the baby, but not the physical appearance, i.e., the developing embryo would be affected by the mood and health of the surrogate mother.


## Conclusion - New Life Cannot Be Created

15. The word "clone" is defined as, "an organism or cell produced asexually from one ancestor or stock, to which they are genetically identical."

- However, a clone will NEVER be exactly the same as the "donor." They are two different "lifestreams." The Buddha taught that each lifestream has existed "forever" and we discussed Tipiṭaka references in, "Origin of Life - There is No Traceable Origin."
- All living beings in existence now have been in the rebirth process forever. The Buddha said that there is no discernible beginning to any living being.

16. The main point from Buddha Dhamma is that a new life cannot be created by any means, whether in a laboratory or anywhere in the universe. This is the only inconsistency with science here, and it is a major inconsistency.

- Living beings just keep switching from realm to realm, but most are trapped in the lower realms. While in the human or animal realms, they spend a lot of time as gandhabbas; see, "Gandhabba - Only in Human and Animal Realms."
- So, an animal like Dolly would be switching from a "sheep gandhabba" to a sheep to a "sheep gandhabba" to a sheep... until the kammic energy for the "sheep bhava" or "sheep existence" runs out.
- When the kammic energy for the "sheep bhava" runs out, it will grasp another existence. There is no end to this process until reaching the Arahanthood.

17. So, I hope it is clear that cloning itself is consistent with Buddha Dhamma, and specifically with the concept of gandhabba.

- I wrote this post in response to a question at the discussion forum: "Gandhabba and Cloning." If there are more questions or comments, we can discuss them there.


### 5.2.7 Living Cell - How Did the First Cell Come to Existence?

July 24, 2019

## Relevance to Buddha Dhamma

1. A discussion on the origins of a first cell will help understand the fundamentals of Buddha Dhamma, in particular, the power of kammic energy.

- This discussion is about how modern science is beginning to confirm Buddha Dhamma. Modern science (biochemistry) provides additional information from a "material aspect," i.e., on the basic building block of a physical body (cell). Even though many scientists believe that a living cell can arise by random combinations of inert molecules, there is no evidence to support that hypothesis.
- Of course, science has not yet even realized that there is a "mental body" too, i.e., the vital role of the manomaya kāya.

2. Human life requires two primary components: a mental body (manomaya kāya or a kammaja kāya) and a material body (āhāraja kāya), as I pointed out in the previous post; see, "Clarification of "Mental Body" and "Physical Body" - Different Types of "Kāya."

- The mental body has existed forever (in different forms); it is called a gandhabba for humans and animals. Even though we are all humans at present, we had been born devās, brahmā, animals, and of course "hell beings"; it is just an unbroken "lifestream."
- A cell is the basic building block of a physical body, which starts with a single cell (zygote) created by the union of mother and father. That single-cell multiplies over time (the physical body of an adult has trillions of cells); see, "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception."
- For any given conscious living being, there is no traceable beginning to a first manomaya kāya. When an existing manomaya kāya dies, mental energy or kammic energy creates a "new manomaya
$k \bar{a} y a . "$ Furthermore, cells make up human (and animal) bodies, and the "first cells" on this Earth were created by kammic energy long ago as we discuss below. All cells of current living beings come from those first cells!


## How Cells Come to Existence

3. Biochemistry says all cells existing now come from pre-existing cells. How did the first cells on Earth come to existence? Creationists and evolutionists say those "first cells" could only have come from one of two possible places:

- Spontaneous creation - Random chemical processes created the first living cell.
- Supernatural creation - God or some other supernatural power created the first living cell.
- However, both sides have not even realized that there is a third possibility, i.e., "first cells" were created via kammic energy, which is the same as "mental energy."

4. The Buddha taught that there is "no traceable beginning" to life. Therefore, it is not possible to trace back to a "first manomaya kāya (mental body)." When a human (or an animal) is born, it has a physical body in addition to the manomaya kāya. That physical body is made with cells.

- Of course, the Buddha did not talk about cells. I am just bridging that part of the puzzle, based on modern science and Aggañña Sutta; see, "Buddhism and Evolution - Aggañña Sutta (DN 27)."
- Now scientists can perform the "cloning" of animals. That is not the same as the creation of a new life form. Two existing cells create a zygote, and then an existing gandhabba can the "take possession" of that zygote; see, "Cloning and Gandhabba."


## Origins of "First Cells" on Earth

5. It is essential to realize that Darwin's theory of evolution is NOT about the "evolution of a cell." It is about the evolution of advanced species of plants and animals STARTING WITH simpler lifeforms with a single cell.

- Most scientists who believe in the theory of evolution of SPECIES do also think that it MAY BE possible that A FIRST CELL also evolved starting with inert matter.
- Some scientists have concluded that random interactions of inert molecules cannot lead to the formation of a living cell. But they erroneously concluded that therefore life must have been created by a Creator God.

6. Since Robert Hook discovered the existence of cells in 1665, scientists have uncovered a lot of information about cells. The current "cell theory" in biochemistry has two fundamental axioms:
i. All living things (living beings or living plants) are made of cells,
ii. New cells are made by "cell division," i.e., by the division of existing cells.

- Biochemistry books do not discuss how "first cells" came into existence!

7. Therefore, the question remains as to how the "first cells" on Earth came to life. Evolutionists say random combinations of inert molecules created them.

- Despite what you may have heard in science fiction or popular science literature, scientists are NOT EVEN CLOSE to making even the simplest cell in a laboratory.
- They will NEVER be able to do so. Once we discuss the current status of cell research, you will see why.
- On the other hand, creationists say a Creator God created all life.


## Buddhist Explanation of Life

According to Buddha Dhamma, a conscious living being has a mental body (manomaya kāya), and some may have a physical body (āhāraja kāya). In Brahma realms, there are no physical bodies like ours (therefore no cells).
8. A NEW living being can never be created starting from scratch. A dying manomaya kāya gives rise to a new one. Any living being creates CAUSES and CONDITIONS that lead to the next existence (bhava)!

- For example, one may be born many times with a human body while in the "human bhava," but when the energy for that "human bhava" runs out, that lifestream gets hold of a new bhava (as a Brahma, deva, animal, etc.) because of a strong kamma done in the past, as we discussed in previous posts. Therefore, it is kammic energy that gives rise to a manomaya kāya!
- A new manomaya kāya is ALWAYS associated with a past life. It is just that the form of the gandhabba keeps changing from bhava to bhava, i.e., an "animal gandhabba" or "Brahma manomaya kaya" is different from a "human gandhabba," but the same lifestream can take all those various forms.
- If one can follow that "chain of past lives," one will go through billions of past lives a minute, but will never be able to find a "beginning" life! The Buddha did that upon attaining the Buddhahood, and stated: "bhikkhus, there is no discernible beginning to the rebirth process."; see, for example, "WebLink: suttacentral: Gaddulabaddha Sutta (SN 22.99)":

9. A physical body for a human or an animal is a collection of cells. It starts with a single cell (called a zygote) and grows to a large mass with trillions of cells after a gandhabba (born of a paṭisandhi viñ̃āạa) "descends to the womb" and gets possession of that zygote. For Tipitaka references, see, "Gandhabba State - Evidence from Tipitaka."

- On the other hand, a brahma has no physical body made of cells. It is just the mental body (gandhabba) with a trace of matter at the suddhatthaka level.
- Below, we will discuss how "first cells" on Earth came to existence. We first need to consider how complex a cell is.


## The complexity of a Cell

10. Even the simplest cell is very complex and surprising. Even though nanotechnology has made significant advances, it is nowhere close to being able to make a functioning cell.

- The critical issue is not making new complex DNA molecules, but the following: Those DNA strands in a cell nucleus are "coded with information," just like a computer is programmed.
- Just like a computer program can run by itself and manage a factory, information coded in those DNA strands in the nucleus of the cell control cell's functions.
- This "information" comes not by a Creator and not created via random jostling of molecules in early Earth. It comes from kammic energy, just like a gandhabba is created by kammic energy.

11. In the following video, one can get a good idea about the basic layout and the complexity of a cell.

## WebLink: youtube: Organelles of the Cell (updated)

12. It becomes even more impressive when we look at how small an animal cell is. Here are some rough numbers (in comparison, a mustard seed is 1 to 2 mm in diameter):

- Cell (per side) 0.050 mm (or 50 micrometers).
- Cell membrane 0.000007 mm thick.
- Nucleus (diameter) 0.007 mm .
- Nucleolus (diameter) 0.0025 mm .
- Endoplasmic reticulum: each layer 0.0002 mm ( 0.0001 mm gap between layers)
- Golgi complex 0.007 mm thick, each layer.
- Ribosomes 0.00003 mm ( 30 nanometers) in diameter.

13. But the most amazing thing is not that such a small cell has all that complexity. It is that a cell has a "builtin computer-like program" that manages all cell functions, including what kind of proteins are to produce. Yes. A living cell is a factory that makes proteins in addition to making copies of its DNA.

- In humans, a copy of the entire genome - more than 3 billion DNA base pairs-is contained in all cells that have a nucleus. The DNA from a single human cell has a length of $\sim 1.8 \mathrm{~m}$ or about 6 feet (but at a width of $\sim 2.4$ nanometers).
- This genome has the blueprint for a given human (animal) body.

14. The machinery and the activities inside a cell - which we cannot see with the naked eye - are impressive. As mentioned, a living cell is a pre-programmed, very sophisticated factory. Whatever progress that nanotechnology has made cannot even come close to the level of a cell, as can be seen with the following video:

## WebLink: youtube: Ron Vale (UCSF, HHMI) 1: Molecular Motor Proteins

## First Cells on Earth Created via Kammic Energy (Same as a Gandhabba)

15. At present, the division of existing cells creates new cells of different properties (scientists do not understand how!). A new human baby starts with a single cell (zygote) that is formed by the merger of two cells from the mother and father.

- In the newly-formed Earth, kammic energy created the first cells. That happened a long time after the "first humans" who were without physical bodies. The early humans had very subtle bodies (like brahmã), and thus, they did not have physical bodies with cells. Hundreds of million years later, those early (Brahma-like) humans got back their "human gati," and their bodies become visible with a physical body made of cells.
- The "first cells" come into existence via kammic energies from the past. Once they get started, then the "normal method" of cell division led to more cells (what we see now).
- In the same way, there are no new gandhabbas in the sense of starting a new lifestream. When an existing gandhabba dies (at cuti-patisandhi), a new gandhabba takes its place because of a new paṭisandhi viññāna (via Paticca Samuppāda).
- Therefore, the MIND is the precursor to EVERYTHING. Even plant life has origins in collective kammic energies of all conscious beings on Earth. Thus the Buddha declared, "Manopubbangamā Dhammā.." or "mind is at the forefront of everything in this world."

16. It is essential to realize that the dense physical body, say of a human being, is not directly created by mental energy.

- Mind energy provides the two seeds: gandhabba and the first cell, the zygote. The fusion of two cells from mother and father creates a zygote.
- When a gandhabba merges with a zygote in a womb, that starts a process where no more kammic energy is needed. That first "live cell" multiplies and leads to more and more cells using sustenance from the mother, and that is how an embryo grows. After birth, a baby grows by eating its food.

17. Another critical point is that the cells of ALL LIVING THINGS are similar, and they depend on each other.

- Cells of humans and animals are very similar. The differences come from the variations in the genome (DNA that is inside the cell nucleus).
- Even cells of plants are not that different. The main difference in a plant cell is the presence of chloroplast, which generates energy using sunlight.
- Energy to sustain bodies of humans and animals can be traced back to plants. Even though humans and animals do eat other animals, it is those animals like cows who first extract energy from plants.
- Now we can see how inter-related and inter-dependent ALL LIFE is. And how complicated life is, even at the physical level.
- The mental body (gandhabba) is even more complicated. Only a Buddha can sort out these complexities of life. We are fortunate to live at a time when modern science helps us clarify some of his teachings.


### 5.2.8 Mystical Phenomena in Buddhism?

July 28, 2019; rivised June 9, 2020

## Introduction

Some phenomena may be labeled "mystical" or "incomprehensible" only because there are no rational explanations yet. However, logical explanations become available as science makes progress.

1. There are two essential points to make regarding the series of posts on the "origin of Life," and in general, regarding Buddha's teachings.

- Some characteristics of the other 29 realms in this world may not be compatible with our ordinary sensory experiences. Some phenomena are not "perceivable" or "easily understood" to humans. The Pāli word for "perceivable" is "gocara" pronounced "gochara."
- The second issue is how kammic energy can create a manomaya kāya with the ability to "see" and "hear" without physical eyes or ears. Also, how did those "first living cells" on Earth come to existence? See. "Origin of Life - There is No Traceable Origin."
- However, with the advances made in science, it is now possible to convince ourselves that such phenomena are scientifically plausible. There are no contradictions with science, at least theoretically (i.e., in principle).
- We are fortunate to live at a time when scientific findings show that some of the "hard-to-believe" phenomena discussed in the Tipitaka are consistent with science. In this post, I will start with a couple of such issues (associated with "supernormal powers").


## Non-Perceivability of Some Phenomena

2. First, let me clarify what I mean by "perceivable" or "easily understood." Our six senses can "detect" only a tiny fraction of the "our world."

- We directly experience only the human and animal realms, where living beings can be "seen with our eyes." We have no idea about the "bodies" those living beings in other realms. If we visit a Brahma or a deva domain, for example, we may think that there is "no one there." Their bodies are too wispy to be seen with our eyes.
- Even when scientists probe the universe with their best equipment, they also see only a small fraction of "things" out there. At a base level, science today can account for only 4 percent of the mass of our
universe; see, "The 4 Percent Universe: Dark Matter, Dark Energy, and the Race to Discover the Rest of Reality", by Richard Panek (2011).
- Many things have not been "discovered" by science yet. In particular, nothing significant about the MIND.


## Buddha Dhamma Is Self-Consistent

3. Trying to gauge the validity of Buddha Dhamma with just what we can see with our eyes is foolish. That is like a blind man trying to figure out what an elephant is like, by touching just a leg of the elephant; see, "How do we Decide which View is Wrong View (Ditthi)?."

- A frog living in a well does not know anything about the wider world of 31 realms. Similarly, an average human - including scientists - faces the problem of trying to figure out the "reality" by only using data available through our limited six senses. With the help of scientific instruments, we are making progress.
- Thus a scientific theory can't be ever "complete" as proven by the mathematician Kurt Gödel; see, "Gödel's Incompleteness Theorem." However, science is helping to clarify some concepts.
- Unless one attains abhiññā powers and can visit those realms, one would not be able to verify such characteristics of other domains. For example, we cannot see their ultra-fine bodies; see, "Clarification of "Mental Body" and "Physical Body" - Different Types of "Kāya"."
- However, if one spends time learning Dhamma, one would be able to see the truth of them. We will discuss a few examples below. Also, see "Buddha Dhamma: Non-Perceivability and Self-Consistency."


## Touching the Sun - Is That Possible?

4. Some phenomena described in the Tipițaka seem to be "mystical" or "beyond comprehension." But they are entirely feasible based on the advances in science. I will discuss a couple of examples in the Tipitaka to illustrate this point. In the "WebLink: suttacentral: Sāmaññaphala Sutta (DN 2)", it is stated, ".. imepi candimasūriye evaimmahiddhike evaimmahānubhāve pāninā parāmasati parimajjati.." or, ". he touches and strokes the Sun and the moon, so mighty and powerful..."

- This verse describes the powers of a yogi with supernormal capabilities (Iddhividha ñāna). How can one 'touch and stroke the Sun?" Isn't the Sun supposed to be extremely hot?
- Here, the yogi is in the manomaya kāya, not with his physical body. Of course, a physical body will burn well before it gets close to the Sun. The key is to note that the manomaya kāya has just a few suddhaṭthaka. For example, a human manomaya kāya has a hadaya vatthu and five pasāda rūpa and each is a suddhatthaka; see, "Clarification of "Mental Body" and "Physical Body" - Different Types of"Kāya."
- A suddhatthaka is the smallest unit of matter in Buddha Dhamma and is billion times smaller than an atom in modern science. Therefore, the manomaya kāya of a yogi is unimaginably tiny; it is a "packet of energy."

5. An entity at the level of suddhatthaka will not be affected by the Sun's high temperatures or even by a supernova explosion. We can understand that from modern science as follows: A regular fire can burn dense things like wood or paper. At higher temperatures, melting ovens can melt steel bars. But neither of those can burn molecular gases like hydrogen or nitrogen. Those gases burn at even higher temperatures.

- However, even at the temperatures generated by a supernova explosion, matter at the suddhatthaka level is not affected. A supernova is the blowing up of a star.
- The Earth and the Sun are destroyed at the end of a mahā kappa. However, the brahma realms lying at or above the Abhassara brahma realm survove. Those Brahmā have very fine bodies (with only a trace of matter) that are not affected even by a supernova; see, "Buddhism and Evolution - Aggañña Sutta (DN 27)."
- Well before that destruction, all living beings in our world move up to the Abhassara brahma realm.
- Now we can see how a yogi with a manomaya kāya of a Brahma CAN indeed touch the Sun. That is not a miracle. It is just that a manomaya $k \bar{a} y a$ is so fine (subtle) that it is not affected by even a supernova, which has much more power than the Sun.


## How Can One Go Through Walls?

6. The same sutta (and many other sutt $\bar{a}$ ) also describe the ability of yogis with iddhi powers to go through walls and dive into the Earth and come out from a different location, among others.

The following verse appears in many suttā in the WebLink: suttacentral: Iddhipāda Samyutta of the Samiyutta Nikāya (SN 51.11 through SN 51.32): "Ye hi keci, bhikkhave, etarahi samanā vā brāhmaṇā $\boldsymbol{v} \overline{\boldsymbol{a}}$ anekavihitaì iddhividhaim paccanubhonti-ekopi hutvā bahudhā honti, bahudhāpi hutvā eko honti; āvibhāvamं, tirobhāvaì; tirokuțtaì tiropākāraì tiropabbatam asajjamānā gacchanti, seyyathāpi ākāse; pathaviyāpi ummujjanimujjaì karonti, seyyathāpi udake; udakepi abhijjamāne gacchanti, seyyathāpi pathaviyamं; ākāsepi pallañkena kamanti, seyyathāpi pakkhī sakuṇo; imepi candimasūriye evaimmahiddhike evaimmahānubhāve pāninā parimasanti parimajjanti; yāva brahmalokāpi kāyena vasamं vattenti, .."

Translated: "Bhikkhus, a bhikkhu or a brāhmana who has developed supernormal powers (iddhi) wields various psychic powers: He can become many copies of himself. He appears and vanishes. He travels unimpeded through walls, ramparts, and mountains, and dives in and out of the Earth as if it were water. He walks on water without sinking as if it were the Earth. Sitting cross-legged, he travels through space like a winged bird. With his hand, he touches and strokes the Sun and the Moon, so mighty and powerful. He displays mastery as far as the brahmā -realms..."

- It is also evident in this verse that it could be anyone who can cultivate these powers, not just Buddhists.
- Let us first clarify a few things with science, and then we will discuss how it is possible to "go through walls and dive into the Earth."
- We need to first discuss some aspects of atoms and molecules uncovered by modern science.


## An Atom is Virtually Empty!

7. Here is a simplified version of some relevant properties of an atom. An atom has a tiny nucleus with $99.9 \%$ of the mass (or "weight" in ordinary language.) It is surrounded by an "electron cloud" that takes up almost all the "space occupied by the atom." In other words, it is analogous to a miniaturized version of our Solar system, where the massive Sun is at the center, and several planets revolve around the Sun.

- The main difference is that those electrons are not in circular orbits. They have complicated "orbitals," and the easiest is to visualize an "electron cloud" around the nucleus.
- The nucleus is tiny but has all the mass of the atom essentially. Electrons are spread out in a large volume around the nucleus (core.)
- We can use the following analogy to get a perspective on the size of an atom compared to the nucleus. If a mustard seed with a millimeter diameter represents the nucleus, the "electron cloud" would occupy a volume with 100 meters in diameter. We could say a nucleus would be like a grain of sand in the chamber of a large cathedral or a football stadium.

8. Therefore, an atom (or a molecule) is mostly empty. That means our bodies that we think are very solid are also basically empty. Even steel or diamond would be similarly "empty."

- P.S. If it is possible to take out all that empty space in our bodies (which of course, is not possible), all the matter in the physical bodies of 9 billion humans in the world today would fit inside a sugar cube!
- If our atoms are mostly space, why can't we pass through walls like those ghosts in movies?
- Electrical repulsion among the electron clouds of neighboring atoms forces them to stay away without getting close.
- Therefore, we cannot go through walls or any other "solid object" with our physical bodies.


## Go Through Walls and Dive Into the Earth?

9. Even though our physical bodies cannot go through other "solid objects," our manomaya kāya (gandhabba) made of very fine suddhatṭhaka can!

- That level of "matter" is much more refined and subtle than even electrons. Furthermore, "particles" at the suddhatthaka level are not electrically charged. So, they do not have any problem going through the electron cloud.
- Therefore, modern science (physics) helps us understand why this is not a miracle at all.

10. Those objects that appear to be "highly condensed" - such as walls or even steel - are mostly hollow at the atomic level. An atom has a tiny nucleus surrounded by an "electron cloud." The size of an atom is defined by the electron cloud, which is spreads out over a relatively large volume. Two adjacent atoms cannot come too close to each other because of the mutual repulsion between their electron clouds.

- Therefore, an atom is "virtually empty." The dense nucleus takes only a little volume, and the electron cloud is far away. Therefore, a manomaya kāya made of only a few suddhatthaka can freely move through "solid matter" made of atoms and molecules.
- A yogi with such abhiññ̄a powers could use the manomaya kāya to travel through "solid objects."
- One with even more developed abilities may be able to reduce one's physical body to the suddhatt level, go through the "solid object" and then "reassemble" at the other end. That sounds like science fiction ("teleportation"), but that is precisely how it may be done in the future with further progress in science. Of course, one with such abhiññ̄ powers would be able to do that right now.
- P.S. An account from the Tipitaka regarding "teleportation": Ven. Ananda attained the Arahanthood only the day before the first Buddhist Council held 3 months after the Parinibbāna of the Buddha. Only Arahants participated. Everyone was waiting for the arrival of Ven. Ananda. In order to remove any doubts of those who were present that he had indeed attained the Arahanthood - complete with all iddhi powers - Ven. Ananda is said to have entered the room through the keyhole in the door. So, this is an example of teleportation.


## Summary and Other Implications

11. Other "mysterious phenomena" in verse in \#6 above can also be explained to be consistent with science.

As science makes progress, these clarifications will have more support.

- I will be discussing some of those other phenomena in the future after covering the necessary background material.

12. On a side note, this clarification also helps us understand that our concept of "touching someone" is not as intimate as we think. When we "touch" something, it is only the outer electrons of the atoms (molecules) on our body "touching" the same on the other object.

- I am very serious about this. Suppose you are blind-folded and someone touches you on the arm. If you think it is your girl (boy) friend, that will make you generate sensual thoughts. However, you will 0feel only affectionate feelings of a different kind if you are under the impression that it is your parent. If you think it is a total stranger (and not good looking!), you may barely notice him/her.

Buddha Discouraged "Magic Shows" by Those With Iddhi Powers
13. I must also emphasize that the Buddha not only discouraged but banned in most cases, display of such supernormal powers by bhikkhus. The main reason for that was explained to Kevatta by the Buddha in the WebLink: suttacentral: Kevatta Sutta (DN 11). The English translation there: "WebLink: suttacentral: To Kevatta (DN 11)."

- So, there were people at the time of the Buddha who could do such "miracles" using special techniques like "Gandhāra magic trick" (gandhārī nāma vijjā). Some others cultivated supernormal powers via anāriya jhāna. Then such people can put down Buddha Dhamma, saying that "I can also do those things without Buddha's teachings."
- Even today, some magicians perform such "miracles." Here is a video showing "WebLink: youtube: Criss Angel walking on water."

Of course, it is an illusion. But it looks real! Criss Angel discusses these illusions or magic tricks in his book, "Mindfreak" (2007).

- However, only Buddha Dhamma can make it possible to stop future suffering, and that is not possible with magic tricks!


### 5.2.9 Views on Life

## Views on Life - Wrong View of Materialism

Wrong View of Creationism (and Eternal Future Life) - Part 1
Wrong View of Creationism (and Eternal Future Life) - Part 2

## Worldview of the Buddha

Buddhist Worldview - Introduction
Contact Between Āyatana Leads to Vipāka Viññ̄n̄a
How Do Sense Faculties Become Internal Āyatana?
Indriya Make Phassa and Āyatana Make Samphassa
Is There a "Self"?
Citta - Basis of Our Experience and Actions
Vipāka Vedanā and "Samphassa jā Vedanā" in a Sensory Event
Kāma Guna - Origin of Attachment (Tanhā)
Vision Is a Series of "Snapshots" - Movie Analogy
Chachakka Sutta - Six Types of Vipāka Viññāna
Sakkāya Ditthi in Terms of Attā or "Self" or "Ātma"
An Apparent "Self" Is Involved in Kamma Generation
Paticca Samuppāda - Not "Self" or 'No-Self"
Tanhā - The Origin of Suffering
Paticca Samuppāda - A "Self" Exists Due to Avijijā
Kamma, Sañkhāra, and Abhisaṅkhāra
Vacī Sañkhāra - Sañkappa (Conscious Thoughts) and Vācā (Speech)
Tanhhā Paccayā Upādāna - Critical Step in Paticca Samuppāda
Moha/Avijjā and Vipāka Viññāna/Kamma Viññāna
Icchā (Cravings) Lead to Upādāna and to Eventual Suffering
Dhammā, Kamma, Sañkhāra, Mind - Critical Connections
Paticca Samuppāda - From Mind to Matter
Wider Worldview of the Buddha
The Framework of Buddha Dhamma
The Suffering (Dukkha) in the First Noble Truth
Dangers of Ten Types of Wrong Views and Four Possible Paths
Sammā Ditthī- Only One Leads to the Noble Path
Fear of Nibbāna (Enlightenment)
Worldview of the Buddha - Explanatory Material
Ghost 1990 Movie - Good Depiction of Gandhabba Concept
Mental Body Versus the Physical Body
"Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars - Part 1
"Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars - Part 2
Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception
5.2.9.1 Views on Life - Wrong View of Materialism

## August 4, 2019; revised August 15, 2021

Materialism says life has origins in inert matter. This view is held by many scientists and atheists. It was called "uccheda ditṭhi" by the Buddha.

## Introduction

The issue of the origin of life is critical to Sakkāya Ditthi, which is one of the key wrong views to be removed to attain the Sotāpanna stage. I have discussed some background material in the past several posts. It is time to take an in-depth look at each of the three views on the origin of life.

1. As I have already mentioned in the past few posts, there are two wrong views regarding life.

- The materialistic view says life has origins in inert matter. Science says 108 or so atoms make everything in this world. Somehow consciousness with feelings, perceptions, desires, and hopes arise out of inert matter. Many scientists and atheists hold this view.
- Those who are faithful followers of the Abrahamic religions (Christianity, Judaism, Islam) or Hinduism believe that there is a separate "mental component" that makes the inert physical body "alive" with feelings, perceptions, desires, and hopes (four mental aggregates). A Creator God or Mahā Brahma created life according to them.

2. We also need to keep in mind the "endpoints of a life" according to those two views.

- In the materialistic view, one lives only the present life, and it all ends with the death of the physical body. This view was called "uccheda dittthi" by the Buddha because here the life ends (uccheda means "cut off") with the death of the physical body.
- In the opposite view, the "mental body" survives even after the physical body dies. In Abrahamic religions, the "soul" either is either born in heaven or "hell" forever. In Hinduism, the "ātma" keeps going through the rebirth process until one is born in the Mahā Brahma realm, which is again eternal. In either case, one will eventually live forever (in heaven, hell, or the Brahma realm). This view was called "sassata ditt"hi" (sassata means "eternal") by the Buddha.

3. In refuting those two views, the Buddha taught that there is a "mental component" to life, but that is not a "soul" or "a a atma" going from one life to the next.

- That is because everything in this world arises due to causes. Life can take many different forms (human, deva, Brahma, animal, peta, hell-beings, etc.). When one such existence ends, another arises depending on which causes (kamma vipāka) come into play.
- "Good" or "bad" forms of life arise due to "good" or "bad" actions done in the past, and the net result of existence in the "long term" is suffering (mainly because most kamma lead to "bad births").
- There is no "soul" or a "àtma" that can be considered to be "me" or "my essence." As long as one has that perception, the rebirth process will continue with much suffering.
- When one realizes the truth of this reality, one will stop grasping (upādāna) new existences.


## The Conception and Birth of a Baby

4. Let us focus on human life. When the fertile mother (i.e., who has ovulated) has sex with the father, that leads to seed for a new life. The following is a summary extracted from "WebLink: Stages of Development of the Fetus."

- During each normal menstrual cycle, one of the ovaries release an egg. The release of the egg is called ovulation. The egg enters the funnel-shaped end of one of the fallopian tubes.
- Within 5 minutes of having sex, sperms from the father move from the vagina to the fallopian tube.
- Suppose a sperm penetrates the egg, fertilization results. The fusion of the egg and sperm produces a new cell called a zygote, the seed of life for a brand new baby.

5. Tiny hairlike cilia lining the fallopian tube propel the zygote toward the uterus. The cells of the zygote repeatedly divide as the zygote moves down the fallopian tube. The zygote enters the uterus in 3 to 5 days.

- The cells continue to divide in the uterus, becoming a hollow ball of cells called a blastocyst. Between five and eight days after fertilization, the blastocyst attaches to the lining of the uterus lining, usually near the top. This process, called implantation, is completed by day 9 or 10 . The inner cells develop into the embryo, and the outer cells develop into the placenta.
- Some of the cells from the placenta develop into an outer layer of membranes (chorion) around the developing blastocyst. Other cells develop into an inner layer of membranes (amnion), which form the amniotic sac. The blastocyst is considered an embryo when the sac is formed (by about day 10 to 12). The amniotic sac fills with a clear liquid (amniotic fluid) and expands to envelop the developing fetus, which floats within it.

6. Most internal organs and external body structures get built in this stage. Most organs begin to form about three weeks after fertilization, which equals five weeks of pregnancy. (Doctors date pregnancy from the first day of the woman's last menstrual period, typically two weeks before fertilization).

- The embryo is considered a fetus at the end of the 8th week after fertilization (10 weeks of pregnancy). Almost all organs are formed about ten weeks after fertilization (which equals 12 weeks of pregnancy). The exceptions are the brain and spinal cord, which continue to form and develop throughout pregnancy.
- By about 24 weeks: The fetus has a chance of survival outside the uterus. The lungs continue to mature until near the time of delivery. The brain accumulates new cells throughout pregnancy and the first year of life after birth.


## Materialistic View

7. The above process describes the steps in forming the "physical body" of a new human being. It cannot identify the time "when the mental stuff" is activated, i.e., when that inert zygote becomes alive.

- Some say "life of the new baby" starts when the heartbeat starts, and at the other extreme, some say when the baby is capable of surviving outside the womb; see, for example, "WebLink: lozierinstitute.org: A Scientific View of When Life Begins."
- According to Buddha Dhamma, the new life starts when a gandhabba (or patisandhi viñ̃̃āna) "descends to the womb and takes possession of the zygote." That happens very early, within a day or two of the formation of the zygote; see, "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception."

8. Besides the above hurdle, the materialistic view cannot explain how that single cell or the zygote gives rise to a complex human with many trillions of different types of cells.

- Even though we all start with a single cell, the cells in different parts of our bodies are very different. Liver cells are different from heart cells, and the cells in the brain - called neural cells or neurons - are much more diverse.
- Furthermore, how do these cells know when to start building different cells for the liver, heart, brain, arms, legs, etc.?

9. These issues have been studied in detail even since Watson and Crick discovered the double-helix structure of the DNA (Deoxyribonucleic acid) molecule back in 1953. We have discussed the complexity of a cell, so now we can summarize these findings as follows: [WebLink: What is DNA?]

- DNA strand in a cell has the necessary "code" (similar to computer code) to build the whole body consisting of trillions of cells.
- This DNA, or the blueprint for the whole body, is in every cell. However, the proteins and body parts generated by each cell are different. How does each cell "know" which part of the "code" to read?
- I am skipping a lot of details. Those who are interested should read two excellent books (Ref. 1 and Ref. 2 below). The former is by an evolutionist and the latter by a creationist. However, studying this complex issue in detail; it is enough to "get the basic idea."

structure are colour-coded by element and the detailed structures of two base pairs are shown in the bottom right.


## Fundamental Problems with the Materialistic View

10. Two key issues remain unresolved. The first is, how did this complex DNA structure evolve, starting with simple molecules?

- In 1953, Stanley Miller and Harold Urey mixed chemicals in a simulated "early-Earth atmosphere" and produced amino acids - precursors of DNA. It received much publicity as a significant clue to the origin
of life. But that is a far cry from making a working cell in a laboratory. No one has even come close to that in the 65 years following that "breakthrough."
- The videos in my previous posts discuss this problem at length; see "Origin of Life - There is No Traceable Origin" and "Living Cell - How Did the First Cell Come to Existence?."

11. There is an even more critical issue: Is it even possible for such a complex "genetic code" to evolve?

- Those of us who have written computer programs know that even a simple program requires "planning" and would not work unless it is free of "bugs." Even though it is relatively easy to "fix a bug" with KNOWLEDGE of the code, it is unimaginable that a bug in such a sophisticated program can "get fixed" via a random "trial and error" process. It is more likely to "add more errors" to code than fixing an existing error in such a random process.
- The following review paper summarizes current status: "WebLink: pdf file: Koonin and NovozhilovOrigin and Evolution of Universal Genetic Code - 2017."
- For those who like to find more details, I recommend Ref. 3 below. The author is offering 10 million dollars to anyone illustrating the feasibility of genetic code evolution; see, "WebLink: evo2.org: Evolution 2.0." I recommend watching the video there. It is not really about the prize; he explains why it is an impossibility.

12. Darwin's original theory of evolution predicted a "gradual evolution" of SPECIES, i.e., simple lifeforms evolving to complex lifeforms. However, the "neo Darwinism" of the present time is trying to tackling the following key issues.

- Recent studies reveal that the GENETIC CODE is virtually the same for many species, ranging from mice to humans (in animals with a few cells, the genome is small). In other words, the DNA in mice essentially has the code to start a human life, but those sections in the program are NOT TRIGGERED for mice; see Ref. 1 for details.
- That is a critical point. The CODE Is virtually the same in many lifeforms, but the "correct sections of the code" must be triggered for each species. It is as if someone had planned for all lifeforms in advance!
- It is just that different parts of the code get activated for different species! That raises another issue. WHO (or WHAT in the code) triggers specific genes to be enabled in different species AND at the right time (e.g., fingers come after the arms)?
- That is possibly why some evolutionist scientists are switching to the creationist side (Dr. Francis Collins, the director of the Human Genome Project, is an example). There has not been a third alternative (because most people do not know - or understand - Buddha's version).

In the next post, I will discuss problems associated with the creationist view (sassata ditthi).

## REFERENCES

1. "Endless Forms Most Beautiful" by Sean B. Carrol (2005).
2. "Signature in the Cell" by Stephen C. Meyer (2009).
3. "Evolution 2.0: Breaking the Deadlock Between Darwin and Design" by Perry Marshall (2017).

### 5.2.9.2 Wrong View of Creationism (and Eternal Future Life) - Part 1

August 12, 2019

## Introduction

1. The concept of eternal future life is built into most of the religions today. It comes in two varieties.

- In Abrahamic religions (Christianity, Judaism, and Islam), one is born only once. Then at the end of this life, one is either taken to heaven or hell for eternity.
- In Hinduism, one has born before, will reborn again and again, until one is born in the Mahā Brahma realm. Then one will live there forever.
- Both varieties require a Creator (God or Mahā Brahma).
- (Please note that the intent of my post is just to lay down the facts (to my knowledge). If I have miswritten something, please post a comment at the discussion forum or send me an email at lal@puredhamma.net. I would be happy to correct any errors.)

2. In the time of the Buddha, there was only the latter view associated with a future eternal life. However, in both the above cases, the expectation is that one will have eternal life at the end. Such a view of eternal life was called sassata ditṭhi by the Buddha ("sassata" means eternal).

- As we recall from my previous post, "Views on Life - Wrong View of Materialism," this is the opposite of the wrong that life ends with death in this life. That was called uccheda ditthi ("ucceda" means cut off) by the Buddha.
- As we know, the Buddha explained 62 types of wrong views in the WebLink: suttacentral: Brahmajāla Sutta (DN 1). However, the two main wrong views REGARDING LIFE are the above. Some of those 62 wrong views are on whether the world is eternal or not, and whether the world is finite or not.


## Eternal Life in Hinduism and Abrahamic Religions

3. In the WebLink: suttacentral: Brahmajāla Sutta (DN 1), the Buddha explained how some people at that time concluded eternal soul or atta (ātma in Sanskrit/Hinduism).

- There were yogis, even before the Buddha, who could attain (anāriya) jhāna and with them the ability to recall past lives. Some were able to recall hundreds and thousands of past lives. One may change the form of birth (human, deva, etc.), but each birth associated with "oneself."
- Some of them had cultivated abhiññ̄ powers to higher levels, where they could "see" very far back. They could see many destructions/re-formations of the world (i.e., many mahā kappās). Even for such long times, they could see their "ātma" or "atta" taking different forms, but it was the "same self" who acquired such various forms.
- The Buddha gave an analogy in the Brahmajāla Sutta. A person may live in a particular city for several years during childhood, move to another to go to school, get a job in a yet another city, and eventually retire in yet a different country. But that person has the perception that it was "me" who was at all those different places, with different physical bodies. Going through different lives is similar; there is a perception of "me" or "self" or "soul" (ātma/atta).

4. Now we can see a difference in views of Abrahamic religions and Hinduism.

- The concept of rebirth is firmly in Hinduism. That is coming for a long time even before the Buddha Gotama. It is based on the experience of ancient yogis who had cultivated the ability to look at past lives.
- On the other hand, rebirth is entirely absent in Abrahamic religions. So, the origin of human life in Abrahamic religions is purely materialistic. The only requirement is to have a zygote created by the union of the mother's egg and father's sperm. Therefore, there is some overlap here with the materialistic view of life; see, "Views on Life - Wrong View of Materialism."
- However, as far as the end of life is concerned, both Abrahamic religions and Hinduism have a similar view. That one attains eternal life at the end.


## Issues Only Relevant to Abrahamic Religions

5. The other difference between Abrahamic religions and Hinduism is that in the former, one is born only once AND gets only this life to work towards getting eternal life in heaven. If one misses that opportunity, one will be committed to the hell for eternity.

- The Bible clearly says one dies only once and then faces judgment (WebLink: biblia.com: Hebrews 9:27). The Bible never mentions people having a second chance at life or coming back as different people or animals. WebLink: biblia.com: Matthew 25:46 says explicitly that believers go on to eternal life while unbelievers go onto eternal punishment. As I understand, Judaism and Islam have the same concept.
- I wonder what happens to a baby dying very young. Does it go to heaven or hell? What about a mentally disabled person? It does not seem to be fair if they are committed to hell for eternity. If they do get qualified to be born in heaven, it would be better to skip this life (be killed as a baby) and be born in heaven right away.
- I may not be aware of the details on that issue. But it is an important issue. As I mentioned earlier, I welcome comments. The goal is to have a clear and correct picture of different world views.

6. Since this is the "first life" for any human alive today (since there is no rebirth process in Abrahamic religions), the following question arises. Why is it that people are born healthy/with disabilities, poor/rich, beautifu/ugly, etc.?

- To put it another way, is each of us a "new creations of the Creator"? If so, why did he choose to create some of us with disabilities, for example? If we did not have prior lives, there was no basis to differentiate among new births.
- Furthermore, was the "soul" of an existing individual created at the time of his/her conception or birth?
- There are simple questions that need answers, in my opinion.

7. I do understand that the Creator God is supposed to have "breathed life" to Adam and Eve made them in his image. But not to animals; they do not have a soul in Abrahamic religions).

- Animals are made of the same "stuff" as humans. As I discussed in the previous post, many animals have DNA that is $99 \%$ the same as those for humans; see, "Views on Life - Wrong View of Materialism."
- Animals are supposed to be there for the consumption of humans. That also does not seem to be logical.


## Issues Only Relevant to Hinduism

8. The Purush-Sukta, a section of the Rig Veda, describes the divine origin of human beings into the four social groups, or castes, that comprise Hindu society: Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Sudra. According to the Purush-Sukta, brahmins born from the mouth of the Brahma, kshatriya from the arms, vaishya from the thighs, and sudra from the calves.

- This categorization comes at the beginning of the Agganna Sutta (DN 27). Vāseṭ̣ha, himself a brahmin, tells the Buddha that other brahmins say to him that he should not associate with lower-caste people. Followers of the Buddha came from all four castes. They tell him that, "Only brahmins are genuine children of Brahma, born of his mouth, offspring of Brahma $\bar{a}$, created by Brahm $\bar{a}$, heirs of Brahm $\bar{a}$."
- The Buddha tells Vāsetṭha that all people today are womb-born.
- Then he proceeded to give an account of how all "first humans" at the beginning of this Mahā Kappa were born instantaneously (opapātika births) with brahma-like bodies, and how they "evolved" over the past several billions of years to end up with "womb-born births"; see, "Buddhism and Evolution Aggañ̃̃a Sutta (DN 27)."
- The current series on the "Origin of Life" will provide more details from that sutta. Darwin's theory of evolution is somewhat correct for the appearance of increasingly complex animal species over time. It is
not right to say that humans have "evolved from animals." Furthermore, a "first living cell" can't evolve from inert matter to form the primitive animal species either, as we have discussed in recent posts.

9. As in the case of a Creator God in Abrahamic religions, why did Mahā Brahma create four classes of humans at the beginning, per \#7 above? Why not create them all equal?

- Did Mahā Brahma also create animals as well? Can humans be born as animals? If so, do animals have a $\bar{a} t m a$ ?
- I may be ignorant of these issues. One problem that I have had with Hinduism is that there are so many different versions. One good example is that in some Hindu temples animal sacrifice is carried out regularly. On the other hand, there are other Hindus who abstain from eating meat, let alone killing animals!
- The best way to clarify these issues is to start a discussion at the discussion forum. Then I can revise this post based on that discussion if needed. I have opened a new topic to discuss any of the posts in the "Origin of Life" series: "Questions on Posts in the "Origin of Life" Subsection."

I will discuss apparent problems associated with all creator-based religions in the next post.

### 5.2.9.3 Wrong View of Creationism (and Eternal Future Life) - Part 2

August 19, 2019; revised August 28, 2022
In the previous post, "Wrong View of Creationism (and Eternal Future Life) - Part 1," we discussed some problems associated with creationism. We will continue that discussion.

## How Did the Creator Come to Existence?

Now we can get to the issues common to Abrahamic religions and Hinduism.

1. First, the inevitable question is, how did the Creator (God or Mahā Brahma) come to existence? The Principle of Causality, the foundation of modern science, says things do not happen or materialize without causes.

- The idea of a Creator as "the First Cause" has a long history; see the Wikipedia article, "WebLink: wikipedia: Cosmological argument."
- Logically it cannot be defended, but it has come to be a belief for those who have faith in a Creator.

2. In the previous post, we saw a crucial difference between Buddhism and Hinduism. (Even though the concept of rebirth is there in both.) In Hinduism, there is the belief in an everlasting existence in the Mah $\bar{a}$ Brahma realm (or reunification with the Brahman).

- Of course, a similar concept is there with Abrahamic religions, with eternal life in heaven or hell.
- However, the idea of rebirth is absent in Abrahamic faiths.
- Let us now focus on the issue of "eternal life" after death in Abrahamic religions and Hinduism.

3. In Abrahamic religions, the Creator God lives in the heavens. If one lives a moral life, one will get to live "in the heavens" forever; see the Wikipedia article, "WebLink: wikipedia: Heaven in Christianity."

- In Hinduism, the Creator Brahma lives in a Brahma realm; see the Wikipedia article, "WebLink: wikipedia: Brahma." One can be born there by living a moral life and cultivating $j h a ̄ n a$.
- Therefore, all Creator-based religions assume the existence of a heavenly plane where life is permanent. Once born there, one will live forever without ever dying.


## Nothing in This World Is Forever

4. Stars in the heavens appear to be serene and shiny. Even though we see beautiful and calm "starry nights," outer space is a violent place.

- In reality, a typical star converts millions of tons of mass into energy every second, with each gram releasing as much energy as an atomic bomb!
- Within the range of our telescopes, there are several supernova explosions per second. A supernova is the explosion of a star at the end of its lifetime.
- Therefore, even though our ancestors thought that Gods reside among those nice-looking stars and the heavens are stable and peaceful, the reality is very different.

5. The Buddha's worldview (as discussed in upcoming posts) is that no existence is everlasting. Life in any heavenly realm (Deva or Brahma realms) is finite, even though some can be long lifetimes.

- At the time of the Buddha, Abrahamic religions were not there. He has addressed the issue of everlasting life in the Mahā Brahma realm in several suttā. We will discuss that in future posts.
- Before that, let us look at the scientific evidence that any type of matter (which is essential for life) has a finite lifetime.

6. A permanently-existing heavenly body contradicts modern science as well as with Buddha's description of 31 realms where every life ends at some point. Even though Deva and Brahma realms have long lifetimes, they are not free of death.

- According to current scientific theories, the whole universe will run down in several billion years. In contrast, the Buddha taught that life has no "discernible beginning." See "Origin of Life."
- Furthermore, each star is either destroyed in a violent blast (some are called "supernova") or will be subjected to "heat death" reaching the white dwarf stage; see the Wikipedia article, "WebLink: wikipedia: Star."
- In Buddha Dhamma, clusters of star systems (cakkavāla) get destroyed periodically. Even though higher-lying realms survive, living beings in those realms also have finite lifetimes. After many billions of years, those star systems reformed. So, it is a cyclic process where destruction is followed by rebirth (reformation), just like for a living being; see "Buddhism and Evolution - Aggañña Sutta (DN 27)."


## The Problem of Suffering

7. Then there is the critical issue of why a Creator would let the man he created suffer. He could have created a suffering-free world.

- The general explanation in Christianity is that Adam and Eve sinned.
- But the Creator could have made it not possible for Adam and Eve to sin. Furthermore, it does not make sense for the descendants to punished for Adam and Eve's sins.
- And why are some born to suffer (mentally retarded or handicapped, for example)? What is the explanation for some people born that way? Also, why are some born poor compared to others born rich?

8. As I mentioned in a previous post, "Views on Life - Wrong View of Materialism," some scientists like Francis Collins and James Tour have given up their belief in the theory of evolution. They have become proponents of creationism since they do not see another option.

- We discussed James Tour's views in the post, "Origin of Life - There is No Traceable Origin."

9. Francis Collins has written a book about why he changed his views to become a creationist. I have written a post to critically examine the issues he could not explain with creationism: ""The Language of God" by Francis Collins." Please read that post for details, but the following are the key points.

- As I pointed out, Dr. Collins faced the same difficulties as C. S. Lewis in explaining why God left room for suffering.
- Why would God allow the existence of Satan and the associated immoral behavior by people? The main conclusion was that God chose to give man free will, and man abused it. But God could have given free will without the existence of Satan or the ability to sin.
- The existence of "Moral Law" (the ability to differentiate right from wrong) is the fundamental basis for his belief in God. However, that argument works for all religions.
- These are critical issues that do not have answers in the creationism worldview.


## Debate Between Materialists and Creationists

10. In the last few posts, I presented the two sides as Evolutionists and creationists. However, some creationists do not have a problem with Darwin's theory of evolution if it just pertains to the "evolution of species."

- The critical issue for them is about the "origin of life" and not the evolution of species. In other words, many creationists agree that once life started with simple life forms, more complex life forms evolved gradually.
- In fundamental terms, the critical question is, "how did the first cell come to existence"?

11. Of course, evolutionists believe that the first living cell also evolved, starting from inert atoms and molecules.

- However, evolutionists have very little to say about how the first cell came into existence. I have read many books by evolutionists, and they mainly discuss just the evolution of species. They have little evidence or feasibility of how complex DNA molecules are assembled, starting with simple atoms and molecules in random chemical reactions.
- They have even less to say about how the genetic code could have evolved. As I emphasized in previous posts, it is hard to imagine how such a program could develop in a random process. We know that computer codes do not "evolve." Furthermore, any accidental changes in the working computer code will only break that code, not make it better!


## Intelligent Design Argument

12. As I mentioned above, some scientists have been convinced that a living cell with DNA code can't evolve. However, they are not comfortable with the concept of a Creator God.

- They have come up with the concept of "intelligent design." They do not explicitly invoke a Creator God but insist that a higher intelligence must have designed a living cell.
- That is also called the "Teleological argument." See the Wikipedia article, "WebLink: wikipedia: Teleological argument."

13. As explained in that Wikipedia article, the phrase "argument from design" was first used by William Paley, an English clergyman, in 1802. He said that if one finds a clock on the beach, one can safely conclude that the watch must have had a designer. In the same way, complex living beings must have had a "designer."

- Modern advocates of the intelligent design argument point out that a cell is much more complicated than a watch and could not have evolved due to random processes.
- However, that does not solve the problem. Such a "designer" must have super-human capabilities and thus is not that different from the idea of a Creator. The idea of a creator or a designer runs contradictory to the Principle of Causation, upon which science is based (see \#1 above).


## Summary

14. The existence of permanent life and suffering are two critical problems with the creator-based origin of life. However, there are many related issues.

- Can the life of a human arise randomly? In other words, why are humans born under very different health, wealth, beauty, etc.? Neither evolutionists nor creationists (or "intelligent designers") can explain it. They all say, "it just happens that way."
- The second issue concerns the origin of life (not the evolution of species). How did life originate? For example, how did the first cell with its complex double-helix DNA structure AND genetic code come into existence? The two sides have different explanations for that issue.

15. Materialists believe that a living cell can arise via random jostling of atoms and molecules which are inert "matter." The critical question is, is it possible for that to happen in a random process? Another significant issue that we have not even discussed is: How can feelings, perceptions, desires, hopes, etc. arise from "dead matter"?

- Creationists (and those who believe that a creator or a designer with super-human intelligence in "intelligent design") created living cells. That creator gave life to inert matter. The question is, how did that creator or designer come to existence?


## Buddhist Explanation

16. In Buddha Dhamma, this "intelligent designer" is none other than Nature. Life itself was not created but has existed forever. That is consistent with the Principle of Causality. Of course, Buddha provided (indirect) evidence in terms of a fully self-consistent "theory."

- Furthermore, the mental qualities of a human are the CAUSES of existence (rebirth): It is impossible to create a lifestream. All existing life-streams have ALWAYS existed. That life-form takes different forms in different existences (not only human and animal, but among 31 possible realms). See "What Reincarnates? - Concept of a Lifestream."
- Future existences of a given lifestream DEPEND on the "mental qualities" (and actions, speech, thoughts that arise BASED ON those mental qualities) of that lifestream.
- Suffering and pleasure exist in this world. Both arise due to previous actions (kamma). And one's deeds are based on one's mental state.

17. When one understands those key concepts, one will "see" that there is no "atta" or "soul" or "ātma" going from birth to birth. That is the first stage of Sammā Ditṭhi. Causes (kamma) and conditions lead to corresponding outcomes (kamma vipāka) per Paṭicca Samuppāda. That understanding is the key to removing "sakkāya ditṭhi."

- We will first discuss those "mental qualities" next. It is essential to understand those to discuss Buddha's teachings of life. His world views were not speculation but based on his ability to "see" how life progressed over trillions of years in the past. It is NOT JUST a logical or philosophical argument, even though it is self-consistent.
- Understanding the essential points discussed so far is critical to continue with upcoming posts. I recommend re-reading \#16 and \#17 until those key ideas are grasped, at least vaguely.

18. The "Origin of Life" section discusses all possible theories in detail.

### 5.2.9.4 Worldview of the Buddha

August 26, 2019

## Buddhist Worldview - Introduction

Contact Between Āyatana Leads to Vipāka Viññāṇa

How Do Sense Faculties Become Internal Āyatana?
Indriya Make Phassa and Āyatana Make Samphassa
Is There a "Self"?
Citta - Basis of Our Experience and Actions
Vipāka Vedanā and "Samphassa jā Vedanā" in a Sensory Event
Kāma Guna - Origin of Attachment (Tanhā)
Vision Is a Series of "Snapshots" - Movie Analogy
Chachakka Sutta - Six Types of Vipāka Viññ̄āa
Sakkāya Ditthi in Terms of Attā or "Self" or "Ātma"
An Apparent "Self" Is Involved in Kamma Generation
Paticca Samuppāda - Not "Self" or 'No-Self"
Tanhā - The Origin of Suffering
Paticca Samuppāda - A "Self" Exists Due to Avijjā
Kamma, Sañkhāra, and Abhisañkhāra
Vacī Sañkhāra - Sañkappa (Conscious Thoughts) and Vācā (Speech)
Tanhhā Paccayā Upādāna - Critical Step in Paticca Samuppāda
Moha/Avijjā and Vipāka Viññāna/Kamma Viññāna
Icchā (Cravings) Lead to Upādāna and to Eventual Suffering
Dhammā, Kamma, Sañkhāra, Mind - Critical Connections
Paticca Samuppāda - From Mind to Matter
Wider Worldview of the Buddha
The Framework of Buddha Dhamma
The Suffering (Dukkha) in the First Noble Truth
Dangers of Ten Types of Wrong Views and Four Possible Paths
Sammā Ditthī - Only One Leads to the Noble Path
Worldview of the Buddha - Explanatory Material
Ghost 1990 Movie - Good Depiction of Gandhabba Concept
Mental Body Versus the Physical Body

### 5.2.9.4 <br> Buddhist Worldview - Introduction

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August 26, 2019

## Introduction

1. The Buddhist worldview is somewhat complicated but is self-consistent. In the previous three posts, we discussed the two dominant world views of evolutionism and creationism. The Buddha categorized them respectively as uccheda ditṭhi and sassata ditṭhi in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Brahmajāla Sutta (DN 1)." When one removes both those wrong views, one would have removed sakkāya diṭthi and attained the Sotāpanna stage of Nibbāna.

- In both those world views, there is the idea of an "existing person." Evolutionists say that "a person" ends with the death of the physical body. Creationists say that the "soul" or the "ātma" of "a person" will get an "everlasting life" at some point. See the discussion so far at "Origin of Life."
- The Buddha taught that the existence of such "a person" is illusory. At each moment, there is an experience that arises due to past causes AND based on prevailing conditions. That "conditional cause and effect" or the Principle of Causality is called Paticca Samuppāda. However, those experiences and any physical sufferings are real.

2. Thus, in the Buddhist worldview, "a person," at a given time, may be defined as a "set of gati" or "character qualities." Those gati are the conditions to bring about the results (vipāka) of past actions (kamma). When one gets rid of those "gati," that will lead to the stopping of those sense experiences burdened with suffering. That is Parinibbāna or "full release from suffering." However, the perception (sañña $)$ of such "a person" will be there until one attains the Arahanthood.

- That is a very brief summary. With this post, we will start discussing the details.

3. The "material or physical world" takes precedence in current dominant world views of evolutionism and creationism. Evolutionists consider mental aspects as secondary and to arise from inert matter. Thus, they believe the mind is an emergent phenomenon.

- Even the creationists do not pay much attention to the diverse mind phenomena. They believe that the mind is separate from matter and that the Creator created both.
- Buddha has taught material aspects briefly but focused on the mind in great detail. Furthermore, he has explained that the opposite of materialism is the correct worldview. That is, instead of mind phenomena arising from inert matter, the mind is the precursor to matter.
- That may sound astounding. That is why we need to go through the steps slowly. But it is essential first to remind ourselves that it is not possible to create a brand-new "lifestream" or a "new living being."


## A Life-Stream (Rebirth Process) Has No Beginning

4. All living beings (an infinite number of them) have lived from a time that has "no traceable beginning." That is a cornerstone of the Buddhist worldview.

- The Buddha declared that as, "Anamataggoyamं, bhikkhave, samisāro." That means "bhikkhus, there is no discernible beginning to the rebirth process." This statement is in every sutta in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Anamatagga Samyutta" in Samiyutta Nikāya (SN).
- You and I have existed "forever." We will continue to live in one of the 31 realms until we attain the Arahanthood and then attain Parinibbāna. Parinibbāna means "complete Nibbāna." That is completely separating from this world of 31 realms. No more rebirths in this world. No more suffering.
- I have discussed this in detail in the post, "Origin of Life - There is No Traceable Origin."

5. The above statement of a life existing from a time with no traceable beginning may seem to be contradictory to the fundamental concept that nothing in this world lasts forever. There is no contradiction.

- At any time, a given "lifestream" has a hadaya vatthu (seat of mind) and several pasāda rūpa ranging from zero (in arūpāvacara realms or planes) to five (in kāma realms). Hadaya vatthu and a set of pasāda rūpa are the "manomaya kāya" that every living being has. It is unimaginably small (smaller than


## an atom in modern science). That manomaya kāya keeps changing as the lifestream moves among the 31 realms.

- The manomaya kāya is a "mental body." But "body" here means a "collection," the collection of hadaya vatthu and a set of pasāda rūpa. One's "mental body" weighs much less than a mustard seed. In fact, at the moment of conception ("pațisandhi viñ̃̄̄aña descending to the womb), our "physical body" consists only of a single cell (zygote), as we discussed in "Clarification of "Mental Body" and "Physical Body" - Different Types of "Kāya"."
- In humans and animals, this manomaya kāya is the same as gandhabba. For brahmā, manomaya $k \bar{a} y a$ is all they have!
- The "mental body" (gandhabba) is what controls the massive physical body of a human or an animal.


## A Worldview Based on Experience

6. The Buddhist worldview is not a theory or speculation. The Buddha could "see" each of the 31 realms of this world. He could "see" how a lifestream moves from one realm to another based on kamma vipāka and prevailing conditions, i.e., Paticca Samuppāda.

- Many suttā describe Buddha's and his disciples' visits to brahma and deva planes. Others describe visits of brahmā and devas to the human world (mainly to listen to the discourses of the Buddha and to ask questions from the Buddha).
- For example, in the Vinaya Piṭaka, it is described that billions of devas and brahmā were there to listen to the first discourse of the Buddha, Dhammacappavattana Sutta (SN 56.11). The Brahmanimantanika Sutta (MN 49), describes how the Buddha visited the realm of the Mahā Brahma to explain to him that his existence is not eternal; see, "Anidassana Viññ̄ña - What It Really Means."
- One time, a brahmin came to the Buddha and asked whether the Buddha believes in the existence of devas, brahma $\bar{a}, ~ a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$, etc. The Buddha told him that he "sees" them and communicates with them. If someone comes across the name of that sutta, please let me know: lal@puredhamma.net. I will add that reference here.
- August 28, 2019: Reader Siebe sent me the following reference: "WebLink: suttacentral: Devadūta Sutta (MN 130)" that describes "hells" or "niraya." A translation at: "WebLink: accesstoinsight.org: Devaduta Sutta: The Deva Messengers." A similar sutta about some realms located close to Earth are described in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Ātānātiva Sutta (DN 23)." A translation there, "WebLink: suttacentral: The Ātānātiya Discourse (DN 23)." Also, see my post on August 28, 2019, at the discussion forum on, "WebLink: Pure Dhamma Forums: Questions on Posts in the "Origin of Life" Subsection." It discusses "life in hell."
- More information on hells at: "Does the Hell (Niraya) Exist?." I revised and updated that post on August 29, 2019.

7. More than 2500 years ago, the Buddha described the "physical world" consisting of billions of galaxies with billions of stars in each galaxy (with different names of course).

- On the other hand, even a few hundred years ago, modern science's view of the universe was that it included only the Solar system.
- In the early 1600 s, Galileo invented the telescope. He first saw that the Moon is similar to the Earth in composition, that the stars are no different from our Sun. With more powerful telescopes, we now know that there is an unbelievable number of stars (with planets around them) out there.

8. However, the Buddha taught that studying the physical structure of the universe is not beneficial. While it is an exciting subject, studying that would not solve the "problem of suffering." We have only a limited time in this life, and we must focus on the task of removing future suffering.

- Regarding that aspect, one should focus on one's inner world. In particular, on the issue of how sufferingfilled rebirths materialize due to one's thoughts, speech, and actions. We do not need telescopes or other fancy instruments for that. We can use our minds.
- By the way, by focusing on the mental phenomena, one can also find much more about the physical world with billions of galaxies WITHOUT any scientific instrument. That is how the Buddha knew more about the universe than modern scientists.
- Therefore, the Buddhist worldview can provide a complete description of how our world. The Buddha explained how an infinite number of "lifestreams" takes different forms in a rebirth process that has no beginning.


## What is One's World?

9. A given person's world is what he/she experiences. What exactly do we experience?

- We see forms with our eyes, hear sounds with ears, taste with tongues, smell with the nose, body touches with physical bodies. Those are the five physical sense faculties and the five types of "external entities" experienced by them. Modern science still thinks the mind is an "emergent phenomenon" arising from the brain.
- However, in Buddha Dhamma, the mind is much more critical than those five physical senses, and we will see why.

10. With the mind, we remember past events, think about concepts like mathematics or Buddha Dhamma, and plan for the future. That latter is the most crucial task by the mind. We think about, plan, and initiate activities by generating sañkhāra in mind.

- Most such activities start due to ignorance (avijja) about the real nature of this world. That is why the akusala-mūla Paticca Samuppāda cycle begins with "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra." We create good/bad kamma via sañkhāra, which lead to defiled viññāṇa via "sañkhāra paccayā viñ̃̄āṇa."
- When viññāna become strong enough, they can become pațisandhi viññāna that fuel the rebirth process. We will discuss this later. That is how the mind creates future existences in the Buddhist worldview.


## Our World Consists of Twelve Ayatanas

11. The "WebLink: suttacentral: Chachakka Sutta (MN 148)" describes in detail the sensory experience in the Buddhist worldview. For an English translation see, "WebLink: suttacentral: The Six Sets of Six (MN 148)." We will discuss this sutta in detail.

- In that sutta, the Buddha labeled our six types of internal sense faculties as six "internal $\bar{a} y a t a n a "$ (ajjhattikāni āyatanāni). Furthermore, he called the six external entities sensed by them as "external āyatana" (bāhirāni āyatanāni). From now on, we will use the terms "internal āyatana" and "external āyatana."
- As I emphasize often, it is best to learn what is meant by some critical Pāli words and use those Pāli words. In many cases, there are no exact English translations. Note that in the above English translation of the sutta, the word "āyatana" translated as "base." When we start discussing Paticca Samuppāda, you will see why it is better to use the Pāli term, āyatana.
- In summary, our world consists of twelve āyatana. Material wise, there is NOTHING ELSE in the world. The Buddha called those twelve "sabba" or "all"; see, WebLink: suttacentral: Sabba Sutta (SN 35.23).

12. The WebLink: suttacentral: Āyatanavibhanga provides details on the twelve āyatana. For example: "Tattha katamaì cakkhāyatanaì? Yaì cakkhu catunnaì mahābhūtānaì upādāya pasādo attabhāvapariyāpanno anidassano sappatigho, yena cakkhunā anidassanena sappaṭighena rūpaì
sanidassanaì sappaṭighaì passi v $\bar{a}$ passati v $\bar{a}$ passissati $v \bar{a}$ passe $v \bar{a}$, cakkhumpetaì cakkhāyatanampetaì cakkhudhātupesā cakkhundriyampetaì lokopeso dvārāpesā samuddopeso pandarampetaï khettampetai் vatthumpetai் nettampetai் nayanampetai் orimai் tīrampetaì suñño gāmopeso. Idam̀ vuccati "cakkhāyatanaì."

Translated: "What is cakkhāyatana? It is that cakkhu pasāda derived from the four great elements. It is invisible (anidassano), makes contact (sappatighena) with visible (object)."

- I have just translated the first part with an important fact: One cannot see the cakkhāyatana. It is NOT the eyes. We will discuss in the next post how eyes act like cameras, just capturing the signal from the object. The brain processes that signal, which then is passed on to the cakkhāyatana.
- In the same way, sotāyatana, ghānāyatana, jivhāyatana, kāyāyatana are all invisible. Those five are the pasāda rūpa that I mentioned above. They are in the manomaya kaya, around the hadaya vatthu (seat of mind). Also see, "Rūpa (Material Form)."
- The hadaya vatthu and five pasāda rūpa are in the manomaya kāya overlap the heart in the physical body. That is why the manomaya kāya comes out when the heart is stressed, like during some heart operations; see, "Manomaya Kāya and Out-of-Body Experience (OBE)."


## Internal and External Āyatana

13. The six INTERNAL āyatana (cakkhu, sota, ghāna, jivhā, kāya, and mana) are responsible for detecting sensory inputs.

- They are all very fine $r \bar{u} p a$ (traces of matter) at the suddhatt thaka level, i.e., they are the smallest units of matter.
- However, their ability to detect external rūpa comes from the kammic energy embedded in them. Those kammic energies induce rotation and spin modes, i.e., those suddhatthaka start turning and spinning just like electrons in an atom. That is why they called units of ten or dasaka. For example, cakkhu rūpa is called a cakkhu dasaka. It has a suddhatthaka (eight units of matter) and two units of energy (one in rotation and one in spin). See, "The Origin of Matter - Suddhatthaka."
- Yes. The Buddha knew about rotation and spin before modern science. "Energy" can be in spin



14. There are six types of EXTERNAL $\bar{a} y a t a n a ~(v a n n ̣ a ~ r u ̄ p a, ~ s a d d a ~ r u ̄ p a, ~ g a n d h a ~ r u ̄ p a, ~ r a s a ~ r u ̄ p a, ~$ photṭhabba rūpa, and dhamma rūpa or dhammā).

- Most times, vaṇna rūpa are called rūpa rūpa or just rūpa. In the Chachakka Sutta, they are just called $r \bar{u} p a$. Those are the ones we see with our eyes. Many people assume that those are the only $r \bar{u} p a$. That is because they do not perceive sound as a form of $r \bar{u} p a$, for example. But a sound-wave carries energy.
- Even modern science accepted that energy and matter are indistinguishable only after Einstein found the connection between energy and matter with his famous equation, $\mathrm{E}=\mathrm{mc}^{\wedge} 2$.
- Gandha or smell is associated with fine particles of odor that flow through the air and get into our noses. Rasa or taste comes from the food we eat. Photthabba or touch is with solid matter. So, those are also rūpa.
- Yes. Some of dhamma rūpa or dhammā (sensed by the mind) are also rūpa. Dhammā are called sukhuma rūpa because they are below the suddhatṭhaka stage. See, "What are Rūpa? - Dhammā are Rūpa too!." Also, the mind can detect memories (nama gotta) and concepts (like mathematics) too.

15. We have discussed all types of matter (and energy) in our world within the Buddhist worldview. In the next post, we will discuss how our mental experience (through vedanā, saññā, sañkhāra, and viñ̃āạa) arise when internal āyatana come into contact with external āyatana.

### 5.2.9.4 Contact Between Āyatana Leads to Vipāka Viññāṇa

September 2, 2019; revised November 14, 2019; January 15, 2021 (\#8); October 9, 2022

## Introduction

1. Vipāka viññāna arise due to kamma vipāka. In the previous post, we introduced the concept that our sensory experiences occur due to six internal $r \bar{u} p \bar{a}$ and six external $r \bar{u} p \bar{a}$.

- Those six types of internal types of $r \bar{u} p \bar{a}$ are "internal $\bar{a} y a t a n a$." In mundane terms, those are our eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind.
- With those, we experience sights, sounds, smells, tastes, body touches, and dhammā (memories, concepts, and hopes). Those $r \bar{u} p \bar{a}$ are external to us and "external āyatana."
- You may wish to review the previous post, "Buddhist Worldview - Introduction."


## Awareness of Living Things and Living Beings

2. When we look at a tree, for example, that is contact between our internal ayatana (eyes or, more correctly cakkhu pasāda rūpa) and external āyatana (tree in this case). That leads to a mental phenomenon called consciousness (in this case, cakkhu viññanna). It just means we are "aware of that tree."

- Humans and animals generate such "awareness" or consciousness when seeing, hearing, smelling, and tasting external $r \bar{u} p \bar{a}$.
- However, we know that plants and trees also seem aware of the external world and can even respond in some cases. For example, a plant or a tree can "turn" towards sunlight. Their roots grow towards water sources, away from dry soil, etc.

3. There are a couple of "mental factors" (or cetasika) that are not exclusively "mental." They can arise even without a mind. Those two are vedanā and sañ̃̄̄̄.
 aware") in Sinhala. That means to "become aware of something." When we make contact with an "external $\bar{a} y a t a n a " ~ v i a ~ o u r ~ s i x ~ s e n s e s, ~ w e ~ b e c o m e ~ a w a r e ~ o f ~ t h a t ~ e x t e r n a l ~ r u \bar{u} \bar{a}$; that is vedana. See, "Vedanā (Feelings)."

- At the fundamental level, Saññ̄ā means "recognition" of an object, person, or concept, for example. Generally, it is the recognition of an "external āyatana" or "external $r \bar{u} p \bar{a}$." See "Saññā - What It Really Means."
- Therefore, plants and trees have a basic form of vedanā and sañ̃̃̄̄. A plant can "feel" when sunlight falls on it (vedanā) and recognize that as sunlight (sañña $\bar{a}$ ).

4. However, a plant CANNOT generate sañkhārā (thoughts) about those vedanā and saññā. One may ask: "Then how does a plant turn towards sunlight?."

- Plants are like robots. A moving robot may have sensors that can detect obstacles in the way. That involves vedanā and saññā in the elementary sense.
- For example, that robot may also have a computer that can instruct how to go around an obstacle.
- The working of a plant is very similar. A plant seed has necessary "programs" installed in its cells to deal with the external environment. I briefly discussed this in my posts on "living cells." See the old posts in "Origin of Life."
- Therefore, some "live things" like plants can generate vedanā and saññ̄a, but they CANNOT create sañkhārā and viññanna. We remember that sañkhārā and viññāna arise via, "avijjā paccayā sañkhārā" and "sañkhārā paccayā viññāṇa."


## Two Types of Viññạ̄a of a Living Being

5. A living thing like a tree may have vedanā and sañña. But only a living being like a human or an animal has a full set of mental phenomena: vedanā, saññā, sañkhārā, and viññāna.

- In other words, only living beings have minds with which they can generate sañkhārā (loosely called thoughts), which in turn leads to viññāna.
- Now we will focus on two types of viññāna that arise in a living being upon a sensory contact between one of its "internal ayatana" and the corresponding "external äyatana."
- For simplicity, let us consider the contact between cakkhu and vaṇna ru$p \bar{a}$ (or rūpa $r \bar{u} \bar{p} \bar{a}$ or simply $r \bar{u} p \bar{a}$ ). In mundane terms, this means "contact" between eyes and a form or an object (such as a tree).
- However, It is essential to keep in mind that it is the cakkhu pas $\bar{a} d a$ r $\bar{u} p \bar{a}$ in the mental body (gandhabba) that "sees" the vannna rūp $\overline{\text { or }}$ or the image captured by the eyes. See \#11 through \#14 in the post, "Buddhist Worldview - Introduction."


## Vipāka Viññāṇa - No Strong Kamma Done

All our INITIAL sensory experiences are due to the results of our past kamma, i.e., they are kamma vipāka.
6. When eyes (or, more correctly, cakkhu pasāda rūpa) and vaṇṇa rūpā come into contact, cakkhu viññāna arises. Cakkhu viññāna is "seeing."

- Cakkhu viñnāṇa arises due to kamma vipāka. In the same way, sota, ghāna, jivhā, and kāya viññāna are ALL "vipāka viññāna."
- Some mano viññāna are vipāka viññāna. For example, when we recall a past event, that is a mano viññāna that cannot generate strong kamma.
- There is no strong kamma done by vipāka viññāna. By "strong kamma," I mean kamma, which can lead to future rebirths. Only mano sañkhārā are involved in kamma viññāna Kamma leading future rebirths done via "avijjā paccayā sañkhārā" and "sañkhārā paccayā viññāna." Those involve $v a c i ̄$ and $k \bar{a} y a ~ s a n ̃ k h a ̄ r a ̄ . ~ S e e ~ " A b h i s a n ̃ k h a ̄ r a ~ L e a d ~ t o ~ K a m m a ~ V i n ̃ n ̃ a ̄ n a . " ~ " ~$
- What is essential at this point is to remember that only mano viññāna can be either vipāka viññāṇa or kamma viññāna (we discuss below the second category). The other five types of viññāna (cakkhu, sota, ghāna, jivhā, and kāya viññāṇa) are only vipāka viññāna.

7. "WebLink: suttacentral: Chachakka Sutta (MN 148)" describes the arising of such vipāka viññāna: "Cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññānaì, sotañca paṭicca sadde ca uppajjati sotaviññānaì, ghānañca pațicca gandhe ca uppajjati ghānaviññānain, jivhāñca paṭicca rase ca uppajjati jivhāviññānam், kāyañca paṭicca phoṭthabbe ca uppajjati kāyaviññānaim, manañca paṭicca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviññānam.."

- For example, cakkhu viññāna arises when a rūpa makes contact (paṭicca) with cakkhu pasāda rūpā. As we discussed in \#12 of the previous post "Buddhist Worldview - Introduction," cakkhu here DOES NOT mean "eyes"; it means "cakkhu pasāda rūpa."
- When the eyes capture an image of a tree, that image is processed by the brain and then passed along to the cakkhu pasāda rūpa, which is in the mental body or manomaya kāya. In the case of a human or an animal, manomaya kāya is the same as gandhabba.
- Vipāka viñ̃̃āṇa do not generate strong kamma. For example, cakkhu viñãāṇa means just "seeing," sota viññāna means only "hearing," etc. Just because one sees or hears, one does not do any strong kamma.


## Vipāka Viñ̃̄āña Could be "Consciousness"?

8. Therefore, vipāka viññāṇa DO NOT arise directly with Paṭicca Samuppāda. They occur when our sense faculties come to contact with external $r \bar{u} p \bar{a}$, as described in $\# 7$ above. Those $r \bar{u} p \bar{a}$ can be six types: vaṇna rūpā, sadda, gandha, rasa, photṭhabba, and dhammā.

- Note: However, immediately following the arising of a vipāka viññāna, a Paṭicca Samuppāda process takes place in the very next citta. This is a deeper aspect that would be of interest to those who are deep into Abhidhamma: "Avyākata Paticca Samuppāda for Vipāka Viññāna."
- The contact of an internal āyatana with an external āyatana leads to the "awareness" of that external rūpā.
- Therefore, vipāka viññāna could be the closest to the English word, "consciousness." Even then, there are some mano sañkhārā that arise with a vipāka viññāna. Therefore, it is better not to refer to even vipāka viññāna as just consciousness.
- That is why the Buddha described viññana as a magician. But this "magic show nature" is easier to see with the kamma viññāna that we discuss below. The mind on its own creates kamma viññāna via sañkhārā ("sañkhārā paccayā viññāṇa").

9. When we become conscious of an external āyatana (or an external $r \bar{u} p \bar{a}$ ), we may get interested in it. (We need to remember that external $r \bar{u} p \bar{a}$ include visible objects, sounds, smells, tastes, bodily touches, or memories),

- That is when we start generating NEW KAMMA. That will happen IF we get attached to that sensory experience via greed or anger, for example.
- Those CONSCIOUS thoughts (called sañkhārā) lead to a new type of mano viññāna. Those viññāna arise via "avijjā paccayā sañkhārā" followed by "sañkhārā paccayā viññāna." Such viññāna are kamma viññāna.
- Such kamma viññāna MAY arise as the next step following the generation of any of the six types of vipāka viññāna. That happens ONLY IF we get attached to the initial vipāka viññāna.


## Kamma Viññāna - How We Create New Kamma

10. We do kamma when we start generating conscious thoughts (vacī and kāya sañkhārā) with INTENTION. The Buddha said, "Cetanāhaim, bhikkhave, kammaí vadāmi" or, "bhikkhus, I say that kamma is one's intention." (WebLink: suttacentral: Nibbedhika Sutta - AN 6.63.) When we think, speak, and act with specific INTENTION (good or bad) that leads to the generation of kamma (good or bad).

- However, those initial mano sañkhārā (associated with vipāka viññāña) arise AUTOMATICALLY. Since the intention is involved indirectly, those mano sañkhārā cannot bring about rebirth.
- To generate strong kamma, we must CONSCIOUSLY and DELIBERATELY create sañkhārāa.
- Such "strong sañkhārä" are vacī and kāya sañkhārā. As we have discussed before, vacī sañkhāra involves 'talking to oneself' and speech. Kāya sañkhāra leads to bodily actions.
- In other words, we do vacī kamma and kāya kamma with those vacī sañkhārā and kāya sañkhār $\bar{a}$. Of course, vacī kammā are lying, gossiping, etc., and $k \bar{a} y a$ kamm $\bar{a}$ are stealing, killing, etc.
- Stated yet another way, we generate speech and actions that can lead to future rebirths only via $v a c \bar{\imath}$ and kāya sañkhārā.

11. For those familiar with Abhidhamma (others can skip this and move on to \#12): A sensory event discussed in \#7 starts a pañcadvāra citta vīthi with 17 cittt̄. The vipāka viññāña occurs at the beginning of the citta vīthi. For example, a "seeing event" is a cakkhu viñ̃n̄ạna.

- Then, the mind accepts that sensory input with sampațicchana and santīraṇa citta. It is in the next citta of votthapana that our minds MAKE decisions on how to respond to that sense input BASED ON our gati (character qualities).
- Then based on that determination, seven javana cittā run consecutively. With javana cittā, we respond (think, speak, and act).
- That is a very brief summary. More details at " Citta Vithi - Processing of Sense Inputs."


## Kamma Viññạna Arise Due to "Sañkhāra Paccayā Viññāna"

12. Suppose one sees an appealing object and gets attached to it. One may start thinking, speaking, and even taking action to enjoy that sight again and again. That leads to the generation of kamma via mano viñ̃āṇa (generated via vacī and kāya sañkhārā.)

- The same happens if we get annoyed or angry about something we see. Then we would be generating angry thoughts, speech, and action. Those are also mano viññāna. Such mano viññāna are "kamma viñ̃̄̄ạna."
- Of course, both those cases arise due to $a v i j j \bar{a}$. We get attached (or get stuck) to a given sensory input because we like it or dislike it (both are done with tanhā; see below). Both happen due to $a v i j j \bar{a}$, not knowing the "true nature." One comprehends the true nature when one attains "yathäbhūta $\tilde{n} a ̈ \underline{a} a . "$ We will discuss this in future posts.

13. We can sort out the difference by seeing that all kamma viñ̃̃āna have sañkhāra as precursors. They arise when we think, speak, and act based on greed, anger, and ignorance. I will explain just the case of attachment (tanh $\bar{a})$ via greed.

- For example, when we first see something attractive, we AUTOMATICALLY get the perception of "liking it." Those INITIAL and AUTOMATIC thoughts are mano sañkhārā. These arise due to our gati.
- If we start pursuing such thoughts CONSCIOUSLY AND WILLFULLY, we are generating vitakka and vicāra (which means consciously thinking about it). Those are vacī sañkhārā. We may also speak out with vitakka/vicāra, and vacī sañkhārā are also responsible for speech.
- If our mind gets firmly attached, we may take action using the body. Those bodily actions are due to kāya sañkhārā generated in the mind.

14. Now, we can see the difference between vipāka viññ̄ṇa and kamma viññāna. Vipāka viñ̃̄āṇa do not have sañkhārā involved.

- On the other hand, kamma viññ̄ạna ALWAYS arise due to sañkhārā generated via avijjā. Those are the viñṇ̃̄̄na that can lead to future vipāka (and even rebirth) via akusala-mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda.
- In other words, kamma viññāṇa are the viññāna arising via "avijjā paccayā sañkhārā" followed by "sañkhārā paccayā viñ̃n̄ạna."
- That process continues with "viññāṇa paccayā nāmarūpa," etc., and ends up in "bhava paccayā jāti, "jāti paccayā jarā, marana," and "the whole mass of suffering."
- That is why those created with sañkhārā are kamma viññāṇa.


## Summary

15. To summarize what we discussed in this post:

- Cakkhu, sota, ghāna, jivhā, and kāya viññāna are ONLY vipāka viññāna. They cannot lead to new rebirths.
- Kamma viññāna are those viññāṇa that COULD lead to future rebirths.
- Mano viññāna can be "vipāka viññạ̄a" or "kamma viññạna."

16. We will discuss more details in the next post. I am proceeding slowly to emphasize these fundamental ideas. It is crucial to understand what is MEANT by a given critical key Pāli word. Then we can use that Pāli word, without explaining its meaning again.

- I hope you can now understand why it is incorrect to translate viññaña as just "consciousness'.
- In the same way, taṇh $\bar{a}$ is NOT just greed. Taṇh $\bar{a}$ includes getting attached via anger too; see "Tanhh $\bar{a}-$ How We Attach Via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance." Also, see \#12 above.
- There are several keywords like that, including anicca and anatta.
- Understanding the meanings of such vital Pāli words is critical since there are no equivalent English words.

All posts on this general topic are at "Origin of Life." Please direct any questions on the above post to the discussion forum at "Questions on Posts in the "Origin of Life" Subsection." If not registered at the forum, send questions to my email address, la@puredhamma.net.

### 5.2.9.4 How Do Sense Faculties Become Internal Āyatana?

September 8, 2019; revised October 13, 2022

## Introduction

1. Sense faculties are a crucial concept in Buddha Dhamma. In mundane usage, we are used to identifying sensory faculties such as eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and the body.

- However, in Buddha Dhamma, there are two different Pāli words depending on the usage of those sensory faculties.
- The sensory faculties of an average human are "internal ayatana." With those, an average person experiences the outside world AND forms attachments to them.
- Then those external rūpā become "external āyatana" (for example, "my house", "my friend", etc); see, "Contact Between Āyatana Leads to Vipāka Viññāna." Therefore, external āyatana are the external $r \bar{u} p \bar{a}$ that one gets attached to. For an Arahant, external $r \bar{u} p \bar{a}$ never become external āyatana; they are just external $r \bar{u} p \bar{a}$.

2. An Arahant has removed all greed, anger, and ignorance from the mind. The sense faculties of an Arahant are indriya. With his sensory faculties, an Arahant experiences "external r $\bar{u} p \bar{a}$ " such as "a house," "a person," etc., without any attachment. That house may be an elegant house where he lived some time back. But now it is just a house. That person could have been a "close friend" at that time, but now just another human being. Of course, the Arahant will recognize the house he lived in as a child and that the person was his friend.

- In brief, a sense faculty is an indriya if there is no "attachment." It becomes an internal $\bar{a} y a t a n a$ if one is attracted to or repulsed by it. In the same way, an external ru$p a$ becomes an external ayatana if one becomes attached to it.
- The Pāli word for attachment is "tanhhā." It is critical to realize that "attachment" can occur via greed, anger, or ignorance. Once "attached," one just keeps thinking about it (that means generating sañkhāra; see below). Also, see "Tanhā - How We Attach Via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance."


## How Do Indriya Become Internal Āyatana?

3. First, let us clarify the difference between an internal ay yatana and an indriya.

- We have six sense faculties, not just the five mentioned above. They are the eyes (cakkhu), ears (sota), nose (ghāna), tongue (jivhā), body (kāya), and mind (mano).
- Our initial sensory inputs (what we see, hear, etc) are due to kamma vipāka. At the moment of initial sensory contact, such sensory faculties operate as indriya. For example, when we see an attractive person on the road, we just "see that person" with the cakkhu indriya. This is like taking a picture with a camera; the picture registers in mind.

4. However, based on that initial sensory experience, we may INTENTIONALLY use those indriya to enjoy that sensory experience again and again. Then those indriya become āyatana. In the above example, if we get attached to that attractive person and keep looking at that person, then we are using our eyes as cakkhāyatana (cakkhu āyatana rhymes as cakkhāyatana.)

- Therefore, an initial sensory event is captured by an indriya. But immediately after receiving that sensory input, we tend to use that sense faculty as an internal āyatana. That happens if we get attached or form "tanh $\bar{a}$ "; see \#2 above.
- The "mechanical parts" associated with vision (eyes, nerves, brain circuit, etc., and also cakkhu pasāda rūpa) are parts of cakkhu indriya. It is only when one attaches to what is seen that it becomes cakkhuāyatana or cakkāyatana. Thus, an Arahant has cakkhu indriya, but it will not become cakkāyatana.
- There is no equivalent English word for āyatana, so we will keep using indriya and āyatana from now on.

5. Let us take the example of two people eating a delicious cake. One is an average human (X), and the other is an Arahant. Here the sense faculty is taste ( $j i v h \bar{a})$.

- Both will generate the same kind of jivhā viññanna when they first taste it. That is just the taste of the cake. If the sensory elements in the tongue and the brain work normally, both will likely find that cake "tasty." That "good taste" is a kamma vipāka. (By the way, an infinite number of kamma bïja are waiting to bear fruit, including such a "small vipāka" as tasting a piece of cake.)
- The difference becomes apparent just after tasting the cake. The Arahant would forget all about that taste, even though he/she would have felt the "good taste." It was just a sensory experience; thus, the Arahant was using that sense faculty as an indriya.
- On the other hand, X may "fall in love" with that tasty cake. She may ask for another serving. Now she is using that sense faculty as a āyatana. She will be accumulating NEW kamma with such actions.


## How One Indriya Can Lead to Many Āyatana (Saḷāyatana)

6. In many cases, when we experience a sensory event due to one indriya, we may start using some or all of the indriya as $\bar{a} y a t a n a$. Then the set of indriya becomes salāyatana.

- In the above example of a tasty cake (a kamma vipāka for both), they experience "a tasty cake." While the Arahant will not have any more thoughts about that taste, the average human ( X ) may be just getting started. She may ask for another piece even if she is not hungry.
- Let us analyze the situation carefully. The Arahant may accept a second piece if he is hungry. That request was not made because of greedy thoughts. Thus, jivhā indriya (tongue, nerves, etc., and the $j i v h \bar{a}$ pasāda) has NOT led to the arising of jivhā āyatana. Arising of an ayatana is a mental construct.
- If $X$ asks for another piece, even if she is not hungry, that is definitely due to a craving for that taste. Then her tongue has become a āyatana. Her request could be based on BOTH hunger and craving (if she is hungry.) So, now her tongue (more precisely jivhā pasāda) is still a $\bar{a} y a t a n a$, but the difference is not as clear cut.

7. Whether or not X's jivhā pasāda rūpā (internal indriya for tasting) has become a a $\overline{\text { anatana }}$ or not may become more apparent if she takes further action.

- She may smell it and say, "it smells good too." She may keep saying how good the taste is and ask about the recipe or where to buy one.
- Now she is using her sensory faculties as $\bar{a} y a t a n a$. Ghana pasāda rūp $\bar{a}$ (for smelling) has now become ghānāyatana (ghāna + āyatana). Eating cake is not limited to quenching hunger; many sensory faculties are used for pleasure. "Indriya to āyatana" is a "mental transition."
- She is thinking about how to go about tasting that cake again. Therefore, the mind (mana) has become manāyatana (mana $+\bar{a} y a t a n a)$. If she starts writing down the recipe, her body (kāya) is helping out, too, acting as a kāyāyatana (kāya $+\bar{a} y a t a n a)$.
- Therefore, when more than one $\bar{a} y a t a n a$ becomes engaged, the set of āyatana (called salāyatana) may come into play. But it all started with just one sensory input, in this case, eating a piece of cake.


## Indriya Become Āyatana With Saìkhāra

8. The easiest way to figure out whether an indriya has become an ayatana or not is to check whether one has started generating CONSCIOUS thoughts about that sensory input or experience.

- Interest in a sensory input leads to attachment to it via greed, revulsion, or ignorance.
- For example, the smell of good perfume can lead to thinking about buying it. Seeing an enemy, one may generate angry thoughts. In some situations, one may get confused about what to do and make the wrong decisions.
- Such CONSCIOUS thoughts are vacī and kāya sañkhāra.
- Vacī sañkhāra are "talking to oneself" and possibly speaking too. First, greedy/angry/ignorant thoughts are generated, which may lead to speaking out (lying, gossiping, etc).
- Kāya sañkhāra involves bodily actions, for example, hitting, stealing, killings, etc. Here, one would use more ayatana since one would need to look and hear in addition to moving body parts.

9. Most of the time we use our sensory faculties as indriya: we see, hear, etc many things in a day but ignore most of them. But when we experience something we have a craving for, then we start using our sense faculties as āyatana.

- The akusala-mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda cycle operates only when we use our sense faculties as āyatana.
- Those sañkhāra do not arise in an Arahant. That is because such sañkhāra arise due to avijjā, i.e., they arise via "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra."
- An Arahant ALWAYS uses his/her sensory faculties as indriyās. He/she will see, hear, etc just like an average human, but will not get "attached to" anything. Therefore, the akusala-mūla Pațicca Samuppāda cycle does not operate for an Arahant.


## Abhisañkhāra Are Stronger Versions of Sañkhāra

10. Some of those "extra activities" that we do with āyatana could be abhisañkhāra. Just eating a cake is not abhisañkhāra; see, "Kāma Guna, Kāma, Kāma Rāga, Kāmacchanda."

- The distinction between sañkhāra and abhisañkhāra is clear-cut when those conscious thoughts (and therefore speech and actions) become immoral.
- Generating thoughts of anger in a person is abhisañkhāra. Then telling a lie about that person is also abhisañkhāra. Both are vacī kamma done with vacī (abhi)sañkhāra.
- Stealing something or hitting someone is a kāya kamma done with kāya (abhi)sañkhāra.
- Therefore, immoral thoughts, speech, and actions are based on abhisañkhāra. They are apuññābhisañkhāra (apuñña $+a b h i+$ sañkhāra) or immoral strong sañkhāra.

11. We can get some insights by analyzing the case of a young person $(\mathrm{Z})$ becoming an alcoholic due to an association with bad friends. As a child, Z may see a bottle of alcohol and would not generate any second thoughts about it. It would just be a "seeing event' and Z would only use his eyes (or more precisely, cakkhu pasāda rūpā) as cakkhu indriya.

- But Z had some bad friends and they persuaded him to start drinking. He has now become an alcoholic. If he sees a bottle of alcohol now, he immediately thinks about having a drink. Of course, he would have a drink If he was at a party. If he is at home, and the bottle belongs to his father, he may steal a drink from it. If he travels by himself and sees a bar, he may go in and have a drink.
- It could get even worse. He may be drinking at a party and may get into an argument with someone. Suppose that leads to a fight and he kills that person. He may get the death sentence or go to jail for a long time. But a much worse outcome awaits him at his death. He would be born in an apāya.
- I hope you can see that vacī and kāya sañkhāra are behind all those. They are strong sañkhāra. They are thus abhisañkhāra. If he kills someone, that is due to an apuñ̃̄ābhisañkhāra. That would qualify him to be born in an apāya.

12. There are also puññābhisañkhāra (puñña + abhi + sañkhāra) or strong moral sañkhāra.

- For example, feeding a hungry person or giving to charity are kāya kamma done with strong kāya sañkhāra. They are both puññäbhisañkhāra.
- Such strong puñña kamma done with puññābhisañkhāra lead to good rebirths (in human and higher realms).


## How Do External Rūpā Become External Āyatana?

13. The moment an indriya becomes an internal $\bar{a} y a t a n a$, the corresponding external r $\bar{u} p \bar{a}$ becomes an external āyatana.

- Let us consider the following example. You are walking down a street and see a person approaching you at a distance. Without recognizing who it is, your eyes are working only as indriya. But as the person gets closer, you recognize him as one of your friends. At that moment, your cakkhu indriya has become a cakkhāyatana. At the same time, that external rūp $\bar{a}$ of a "person" has now become a "friend."
- To take that one step further, suppose after some time you get into an argument with that friend and it escalates to the point that he has become an enemy. Now if you see him on the road, you will recognize him as an enemy. When you see him, your cakkhu indriya will again become an internal ayatana, and the body you see will become an external āyatana.
－However，those two external $\bar{a} y a t a n a \bar{s}$ are very different．In one case，you saw a friend and in the other an enemy，even though that external $r \bar{u} p \bar{a}$（body of that other person）was the same．

14．We can find many examples in our daily lives to see how an indriya becomes a āyatana．In another example，suppose you park the car on the side of the road and go to a restaurant to eat．When you come back，you see that someone has bumped his car into it，and there is a scratch on it．You，of course，get upset．
－Suppose，after a while you sell that car．Then a few days later，you see it was destroyed in an accident． But now you are not upset about the same car getting destroyed．When you see that badly－damaged car， your cakkhu indriya does not become an internal āyatana．And that external rūpa（the car）does not become an external āyatana．
－The only difference was that you had given up the attachment to that car the moment you sold it．It is no longer＂your car．＂It became just another car the moment you gave up the＂ownership＂of the car．

## How to Stop Indriya Becoming Ayatana？

15．That last example illustrates how one ends suffering at Arahanthood．When one no longer attaches to ANYTHING in this world，one＇s mind will not be perturbed by anything．That includes knowing that one day one＇s own body will die．
－However，that state of mind of Arahanthood cannot even be comprehended by an average human．It is a long process，from being an average human to becoming an Arahant．
－We must follow the path step－by－step．Those attachments to＂worldly things＂CANNOT be forcefully removed from one＇s mind．The first step is comprehending the unfruitfuiness AND danger of doing IMMORAL things to get sensory enjoyment．See＂Is It Necessary for a Buddhist to Eliminate Sensual Desires？．＂
－However，in the beginning，it is good to get an overview of the＂big picture＂or the fundamentals of Buddha Dhamma．That is necessary to discard the wrong views about this world including kamma and kamma vipäka，and the validity of the rebirth process．One cannot even start on the Noble Eightfold Path with wrong views about such fundamental concepts．
－This series on＂Origin of Life＂is so important．One must evaluate all existing views（which we summarized in the early posts in this series）．The Buddhist view is more complex and will take several more posts to complete．

## 5．2．9．4 Indriya Make Phassa and Āyatana Make Samphassa

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## Summary of＂Worldview of The Buddha＂So Far

1．We are discussing the＂WebLink：suttacentral：Chachakka Sutta（MN 148）＂which describes the sensory experience in the Buddhist worldview in detail．As we will see，this sutta explains how each person＇s world arises due to his／her actions．
－Each living being＇s existence as a human，deva，animal，etc．has arisen due to past actions．Those previous actions（kamma）resulted due to sensory experiences．
－If one does immoral actions（pāpa kamma）to gain／maintain sensory pleasures，kamma vipāka of those kamma lead to rebirths in＂bad realms＂called dugati．The word dugati comes from＂du＂＋＂gati＂or ＂bad gati．＂［du－：dur－prefix［Sk．duḥ，duṣ］Evil，bad，difficult．惡的，不好的，（困）難的．］
－On the other hand，meritorious deeds（puñña kamma）lead to rebirths in＂good realms＂or sugati realms．The word sugati comes from＂su＂＋＂gati＂or＂good gati．＂［su－prefix ：kind，good，easy．善的，好的，容易的］

- However, due to ignorance, living beings tend to do many more immoral deeds than moral ones. Therefore, more than $99 \%$ of the rebirths are in dugati realms. That is why the rebirth process is "filled with suffering." See, "Rebirth - Connection to Suffering in the First Noble Truth."


## With Taṇhā, Indriya Become Āyatana

2. Our sensory experiences constitute "our world." We experience six types of sensory inputs (rūpa rūpa, sadda rūpa, gandha rūpa, rasa rūpa, phottthabba rūpa, dhammā rūpa) with six kinds of indriya we have (cakkhu, sota, ghāna, jivhā, kāya, mano). When the corresponding pairs make "contact" (phassa), one of the six matching types of viññāna arise (cakkhu, sota, ghāna, jivhā, kāya, and mano viñ̃ān̄na.) Those are vipāka viññāna. See, "Buddhist Worldview - Introduction."

- Average humans go beyond experiencing vipāka viññ̄ạna. They deliberately make more sensory contacts to "enjoy them more." Then the six indriya become six internal ayatana, and the six types of external rūpa become external āyatana. See, "Contact Between Āyatana Leads to Vipāka Viññāna."
- An indriya makes "just contact" or "phassa." When sensory contacts are done "with attachment or tanh $\bar{a}$," those indriya become internal $\bar{a} y a t a n a$. That is the crucial concept explained in the previous post, "How Do Sense Faculties Become Internal Āyatana?."
- You may want to re-read the above posts if something is not clear. Of course, I would be happy to answer any questions.


## The Transition from Just a Sensory Contact to Kamma Formation

3. Even for an average human, the INITIAL CONTACT between an internal ayatana and an external $\bar{a} y a t a n a$ does not lead to the generation of strong kamma. For example, only when we see a beautiful thing or a person (called rūpa rūpa or just $r \bar{u} p a$ ), that we become aware of that $r \bar{u} p a$. (There are mano sañkhāra that arise automatically. Mano sañkhāra cannot lead to a strong kamma responsible for rebirth. We will discuss that later.)

- However, for anyone who has not reached the Arahant stage, sense faculties is labeled as "internal $\bar{a} y a t a n a, "$ and external rūpa are labeled "external $\bar{a} y a t a n a$." That is evident in the Chachakka Sutta (MN 148).
- Only Arahant uses his/her sense faculties as indriya all the time.

4. In the Chachakka Sutta (MN 148), that initial contact - for example between cakkhāyatana (cakkhu) and rūpāyatana (rūpa) - is stated as "Cakkhuñca pațicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhu viññānaain." Similar statements are there for the other five pairs, the last one being "manañca paṭicca dhamme ca uppajjati mano viñ̃̄ānaam."

- We will focus on the progression of what happens due to the contact between cakkhu and rūpa (eyes and an external object in mundane terms.) Other types of contacts will lead to similar results.
- The sutta states that the "attachment" step starts with the next paragraph. Regarding the contact between cakkhu and rūpa, it says, "Cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhu viñ̃ān̄ami, tiṇnam sangati phasso." (Note that each successive paragraph of the sutta is the next step the mind takes.)


## What is "tiṇuam sañgati phasso"?

5. The phrase "tinnaim sañgati phasso" is commonly mistranslated as "the meeting of the three is contact." What are those three? Are they cakkhu, rūpa, and cakkhuviññāna? That is not correct because the "contact" (phasso) leads to "phassa paccayā vedanā," as we will discuss below. This "phassa paccay $\bar{a}$ vedanä" arises AFTER cakkhu viññāṇa.

- That short verse is a KEY verse in the whole sutta. It expresses how an indriya becomes āyatana due to one's gati. Those are the gati for attachment (taṇhā) via craving or dislike.
- "Tiṇ̣am"" is three and "sañgati" ("san" + "gati") are "gati contaminated with san." Normal humans have gati based on three fundamental root causes: lobha (greed), dosa (anger/hate), and moha (no comprehension of the Four Noble Truths). That is why "san" is a keyword in Buddha Dhamma; see, "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Samsāra)." [sañgati :[f.] association with. gati :[f.] going; career; course; passing on to another existence; destiny; behaviour.]
- Just like the word "san," another critical Pāli word that has lost its significance over the years is "gati." I have explained this word in detail in many posts. See, for example, "The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Asavas)" and "9. Key to Anapanasati - How to Change Habits and Character (Gati)."


## Phassa in "Tiṇ̣am Sañgati Phasso" Is Samphassa

6. Therefore, following that initial sensory contact, one MAY form a like/dislike for the seen, heard, smelled, tasted, touched, or memory that came to mind (dhammā). But it happens within a fraction of a second of the initial cakkhu viññāna.

- For example, a young lady looking at a dress may form a liking for it. Another person seeing his enemy will develop a dislike. A teenager may get attached to a particular song, etc.
- Such mental contacts - with likes/dislikes or "san" - happen instantaneously due to our "gati." We do not have any control over it.
- However, there is a lag between that initial reaction and our subsequent conscious actions. Therefore, we still have time to control our speech or bodily actions. Even if bad thoughts come to our minds, we can stop speech or bodily actions. That is what we do in "kāyānupassana"" in Satipatthāna meditations. See "9. Key to Anapanasati - How to Change Habits and Character (Gati)" and "Mahā Satipatthāna Sutta."
- Those contacts (phassa) done with "san" are samphassa. Here, "san" + "phassa" combine to rhyme as "sanphassa." But "samphassa" rhymes better. In the same way, "sansāra" ("san" + "sāra" or "good") is commonly pronounced — and written - as "samisāra."


## No Samphassa for an Arahant

7. An Arahant has no "gati" left. All defiled "gati" arise due to lobha, dosa, moha. Therefore, an Arahant does not attach (tanh $\bar{a})$ to any sensory event. In other words, "tiṇnamं sañgati phasso" does not take place in an Arahant's mind. Also, note that attachment (tanhhā) can be due to attraction (liking) or aversion (dislike). See "Tanhā - How We Attach Via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance."

- That is why an Arahant will never elevate his indriya to "internal āyatana." Therefore, any external rūpa sensed by a given indriya will be "just a rūpa." No matter how attractive a person is or how tasty a given food, etc., there will be no attachment to it. A bribe of any value will not be able to entice an Arahant.
- In the same way, even if someone cuts his/her arm off, there will be no anger generated in Arahant's mind.
- Such a mindset is incomprehensible to an average human. That is WHY one should not even contemplate that far on the Path. When on a long journey on foot, we focus on the next mile, not the final stretch hundreds of miles down the road. However, having a general idea about the whole terrain is good.

8. The state of mind of an Arahant could seem "hard to achieve" even to an Anāgāmi, even though it may no longer seem incomprehensible.

- For a Sotāpanna, the mindset of an Anāgāmi seems "out-of-reach." As we know, the Anāgāmi stage is reached by getting rid of cravings for sensory pleasures. It is not easy to remove our deeply-embedded
desires for sensory pleasures. For an average human, this would be impossible. But a Sotāpanna has seen the "anicca nature."
- However, a Sotāpanna will not be tempted to do immoral actions to enjoy sensory pleasures. A Sotāpanna could be living a normal life of a "householder" but will NEVER engage in any "apāyagāmi actions." Those immoral deeds make one eligible to be born in the apāyā. For example, a Sotāpanna will not engage in extra-marital affairs.


## "Phassa Paccayā Vedanā" Is Actually "Samphassa jā Vedanā"

9. Now we get to the next verse in the Chachakka Sutta (MN 148): "Cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhu viñnānain, tiṇnaì sañgati phasso, phassa paccay $\bar{a}$ vedanā."

- (I hope you see the way the sutta makes gradual progression. "Phassa paccayā vedanā" is the third step in the progress of the sensory experience. But all these steps - including more steps in the rest of sutta - happen within a split second. Only a Buddha can "see" these details in this fast process that occurs in mind.)
- From the above discussion, it is clear that "phassa paccay $\bar{a}$ vedana $\bar{a}$ " should be "samphassa paccay $\bar{a}$ vedanā." In some suttā, it is written as "samphassa jā vedanā." Here "jä" means "born due to." In other words, a vedanā arises due to "samphassa."
- Therefore, this is the SECOND TYPE of vedanā that can arise due to a sensory event. That CAN BE stopped from arising. That type of vedana does not occur in an Arahant.


## The difference in Sensory Experience Between an Average Human and an Arahant

10. "Tiṇ̂amin sañgati phasso" and "phassa paccaya vedanä" are two critical steps in the progression of the sensory experience.

- Those two steps state how anyone without full comprehension of Tilakkhaṇa (anicca, dukkha, anatta nature) COULD generate additional types of vedan $\bar{a}$.
- Now we need to recall something important from the earlier posts, "Contact Between Āyatana Leads to Vipāka Viññāna" and "How Do Sense Faculties Become Internal Āyatana?." In those two posts, we discussed the initial sensory contact, for example, "cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhu viññānami." That gave rise to a vedanā common to an average human and an Arahant.
- As we discussed in the previous post, an average human and an Arahant would feel the "sweetness" of a piece of cake. You may want to go back and read those two posts to refresh your memory.
- Now it is those two steps of "tinnuain sañgati phasso" and "phassa paccay $\bar{a}$ vedan $\vec{a}$ " that COULD generate ADDITIONAL vedan $\bar{a}$ of attachment (to the cake in that example) in an average human. Such vedana DO NOT arise in an Arahant since there are no attachments left.


## Summary

11. I am taking the two extreme cases of an average human and an Arahant to explain the critical concepts in the Chachakka Sutta (MN 148). In many suttā, key ideas are just briefly stated, i.e., they are in either "uddesa" or "niddesa" versions. See "Sutta Interpretation - Uddesa, Niddesa, Patiniddesa."

- I hope you can see that key suttā like the Chachakka Sutta (MN 148) need detailed explanations. That is the "patiniddesa" version of a sutta.
- That is why translating such a sutta word-by-word is of minimal benefit. There is no need to study many sutt $\bar{a}$. Understanding a few suttā in detail can lead to a good understanding of the Buddha's core teachings.
- Therefore, it is essential to understand these fundamental ideas. If something is not clear, I would be happy to explain further.

12. We will discuss the types of vedana that can arise due to "phassa paccay $\bar{a}$ vedan $\vec{a}$ " or more accurately, "samphassa jā vedanā." See, "Vipāka Vedanā and "Samphassa jā Vedanā" in a Sensory Event."

## An Aside (Extra Information)

13. The steps we have discussed so far, "Cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhu viññānaín, tiṇ̂am sañgati phasso, phassa paccaya vedanä" are just a part of the more general statement, "saḷāyatana paccayā phasso; phassapaccayā vedanā,.." in Paticca Samuppāda.

- In the WebLink: suttacentral: Vibhañga Sutta (SN 12.2), the terms "phassa" and "vedana"" are clarified as "samphassa" and "samphassa jā vedanā." That applies only to the average human acting with avijjā (i.e., in Paṭicca Samuppāda and the Chachakka Sutta (MN 148).
- "Phassa" in Paṭicca Samuppāda is explained in the Vibhañga Sutta (SN 12.2): "Katamo ca, bhikkhave, phasso? Chayime, bhikkhave, phassakāyā-cakkhusamphasso, sotasamphasso, ghānasamphasso, jivhāsamphasso, kāyasamphasso, manosamphasso. Ayamं vuccati, bhikkhave, phasso."
- "Vedana" in Pațicca Samuppāda is explained in the Vibhañga Sutta (SN 12.2): "Katamā ca, bhikkhave, vedanā? Chayime, bhikkhave, vedanākāy $\bar{a}-$ cakkhusamphassajā vedanā, sotasamphassaj $\bar{a}$ vedana $\bar{a}, \quad$ ghānasamphassaja $\bar{a}$ vedana $\bar{a}$ jivhāsamphassaj $\bar{a}$ vedana $\bar{a}$, $k \bar{a} y a s a m p h a s s a j \bar{a} ~ v e d a n \bar{a}$, manosamphassajā vedanā. Ayamं vuccati, bhikkhave, vedanā."
- If you do not see the connection, don't worry about it. We will discuss all types of vedanā in the next post, "Vipāka Vedanā and "Samphassa jā Vedanā" in a Sensory Event." Understanding that will help get rid of sakkāya ditṭhi; see "Paticca Samuppāda - A "Self" Exists Due to Avijjā."


### 5.2.9.5 Wider Worldview of the Buddha

## The Framework of Buddha Dhamma

## The Suffering (Dukkha) in the First Noble Truth

Dangers of Ten Types of Wrong Views and Four Possible Paths
Sammā Ditthī - Only One Leads to the Noble Path
Fear of Nibbāna (Enlightenment)

### 5.2.9.5 The Framework of Buddha Dhamma

February 22, 2020; revised February 25, 2020

## Introduction

The framework of Buddha Dhamma identifies the critical foundation upon which Buddha's teachings can be understood.

1. We have finished the section on "Worldview of the Buddha." There we discussed Buddha's analysis of sensory events, i.e., how we experience the external world. However, we have not addressed the "real nature" of that external world.

- With this post, I will be starting a new section on the "Wider Worldview of the Buddha." This section describes a world that includes 29 more realms than the two that we are familiar with, i.e., human and
animal realms. The Buddha explained how any living being keeps moving from one realm to another in the rebirth process that has no discernible beginning (and no end until attaining Nibbāna.)
- The First Noble Truth on suffering is NOT about the suffering that we feel due to diseases, bodily pains, etc. even though that is a tiny fraction. It is about the much worse possible suffering in future lives, where most suffering will be in "undesirable realms."
- To understand the "suffering" that the Buddha said we could stop, it is essential to understand that "wider worldview."
- The Buddha laid out the critical components of that framework in the first two discourses that he delivered. In the word-by-word translations of the sutta, this "wider worldview" of the Buddha is just glossed over. No one seems to pay much attention to these key concepts, without which there is no point in doing further analysis. It is like trying to learn calculus without learning addition/subtraction first.


## The First Two Discourses of the Buddha

2. Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta (SN 56.11) was the first discourse delivered by the Buddha. The five ascetics Koṇ̣añña, Bhaddiya, Vappa, Mahānāma, and Assaji, listened to it several days after the Buddha attained Enlightenment (Buddhahood.) All five ascetics reached the Sotāpanna stage after several days of explaining by the Buddha.

- Then with the delivery of the second sutta, WebLink: suttacentral: Anattalakkhana Sutta (SN 22.59), all five ascetics attained the Arahanthood.
- Later on, Ven. Sariputta delivered the WebLink: suttacentral: Saccavibhañga Sutta (MN 141) to a gathering of bhikkhus to explain further details of the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta.
- Therefore, a good understanding of Buddha Dhamma is possible with a discussion of those three suttā.


## The Framework of Buddha Dhamma

3. Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta has most of the essential concepts, even though it is in a highly condensed form.

In the document, WebLink: pdf download: Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta - Printout, I have divided the sutta to 14 sections, You may want to download and print for reference. We will discuss that document first. It has the framework of Buddha Dhamma.

- The name of the sutta comes from the combination of three terms: Dhamma, Cakka, and Pavattana. Dhamma here means the Buddha Dhamma or the true nature of existence. Cakka means "wheel." Pavattana means to "set in motion" AND to "maintain."
- Therefore, this first sutta "gets the Wheel of Dhamma in Motion." It has all the critical concepts of Buddha Dhamma.
- As in many Pāli terms, the word "dhammacakkappavattana" comes from the combination of three above words, with an additional " p " just before pavattana. As we discussed before, pañcakkhandha is the combination of pañca with khandha with an extra k in tying up the two words.
- Sometimes the sutta referred to as the Dhamma Cakka Pavattana Sutta without combining those three words.
- Let us go through the sutta from the beginning. I will refer to sections \#1 through \#14 in the document above. We will frst go through the main ideas without going to detail.


## The "Middle Path" Recommended by the Buddha - Sections 1 and 2

4. Section \#1 can be summarized as follows. "Bhikkhus, two extremes should not be followed by you. What two? The pursuit of sensual pleasures, which is low, vulgar, the way of the average ignorant person. The
other is the pursuit of rituals that involve subjecting one to extreme hardships. Without veering towards either of these extremes, the Tathāgata followed the middle way of living a simple life leading to Nibbāna."

- That middle path is the Noble Eightfold Path of Sammā Diṭthi, Sammā Sañkappa, Sammā Vācā, Sammā Kammanta, Sammā Āj̄̄̄va, Sammā Vāyāma, Sammā Sati, and, Sammā Samādhi.


## Four Noble Truths - Section 3

5. The First Noble Truth of suffering: Birth is suffering, aging is suffering, illness is suffering; death is suffering. Union with what is undesirable is suffering. Separation from what is desirable is suffering. Not to get what one wants (icch $\overline{\boldsymbol{a}}$ ) is suffering. In brief, clinging (upādāna) to the five aggregates is suffering.

- The Second Noble Truth of the origin of suffering: It is this $\boldsymbol{t} \boldsymbol{a} \boldsymbol{\eta} h \bar{a}$ which leads to repeated rebirths.

- The Third Noble Truth of the cessation of suffering: It is the remainderless fading away and cessation of the three types of $\boldsymbol{t a n h} \overline{\boldsymbol{a}}$.
- The Fourth Noble Truth of the way to the cessation of suffering: It is the Noble Eightfold Path or the Middle Path of Sammā Ditṭhi, Sammā Sañkappa, Sammā Vācā, Sammā Kammanta, Sammā $\bar{A} j \bar{i} v a, S a m m a ̄ ~ V a ̄ y a ̄ m a, ~ S a m m a ̄ ~ S a t i, ~ a n d, ~ S a m m a ̄ ~ S a m a ̄ d h i . ~$


## The Previously Unheard Dhamma (Teaching) of Suffering in The Wider World - Sections 4-7

6. Sections 4 through 7 state how the Buddha attained the Buddhahood via comprehending — through Paticca Samuppāda - the tiparivatttaya (three ramparts or walls of bondage to this world) that has never been known to the world (except during the times of previous Buddhā): "..pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu.. ."

- We will discuss Sections 4 through 7 in more detail later. Right now, we are taking a quick look at the framework of Buddha Dhamma outlined in the sutta.
- However, it is essential to discuss the verse, "..pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhum udapādi, $\tilde{n} a ̄ n a \dot{m}$ udapādi, paññā udapādi, vijjā udapādi, āloko udapādi," that appears 12 times in the Sections 4 through 7. It is critical to understand this verse.

7. When the Buddha attained the Buddhahood via comprehending this Dhamma that has never been known to the world, five unique pieces of knowledge arose in him at that moment: cakkhu, $\tilde{n} \bar{a} n a$, pañ $\tilde{n} \bar{a}, v i j j \bar{a}$, and āloka.

- Here "cakkhu" is the "Dhamma eye," the ability to "see" the true nature of this world. We can loosely translate $\tilde{n} a n a$ and pañ̃̃ā as "knowledge" and "wisdom."
- The next one is " $v i j j \vec{a}$ " (the Sanskrit word is " $v i d y \vec{a}$ "). That is the "ultimate science" about the world, what I called the "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma." A Buddha Is the greatest scientist that comes to the world very infrequently.
- Simultaneously with the comprehension of vijja, one is removed from "this material world" or "āloka" ("a" + "loka"). The word "āloka" has other meanings, including "light," which we will discuss later.


## Three "Rounds" or Bondage to Overcome - Section 8

8. "Tiparivatta" means the three rounds of bondage. One may visualize a living-being trapped inside the inner wall, a prison with three concentric walls or ramparts. To be freed (i.e., to get to Nibbāna,) all three barriers must be overcome. The 31 realms of this world (discussed below) divide into three sections with those three walls.

- The first is to be released from the apāyā (four lowest realms), via the Sotāpanna stage, by removing the wrong views about existence in the 31 realms. This requires the first stage of Sammā Ditṭhi or grasping the framework of Buddha Dhamma that we are discussing now.
- In the second round, one overcomes the kāma loka (realms 5 through 11, which include the human realm and 6 Deva realms). That happens via two stages. A Sakadāgāmi will not be reborn with bodies subjected to diseases. Thus there will be no more rebirths for a Sakadāgāmi in the five lowest realms (apāyā and the human realm.) Then, at the Anāgāmi stage, kāma rāga and pațigha go away, and one is released from births anywhere in the kāma loka. That means complete cessation of $\boldsymbol{k} \overline{\boldsymbol{a} m a} \tanh \overline{\boldsymbol{a}}$.
- In the third round, any linkage to anywhere in the 31 realms removed. The mind becomes free of attachment to any trace of matter, and the Arahant stage attained. See, "What Are Rūpa? (Relation to Nibbāna)." That is complete cessation of bhava tanhēa and vibhava tanhā.


## The Result of Arahanthood (Parinibbāna) Is No More Rebirths - Section 9

9. The rebirth process among the 31 realms in this world is a crucial concept to understand. More details in \#13 below. The "suffering" in the First Noble Truth is the harsh levels of suffering in the four lowest realms (apāy $\bar{a}$.) Even if one spends millions of years in a Deva realm, that "pleasurable time" is insignificant because one will spend much more time in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$ in the LONG RUN.

- We will discuss that in detail, with Tipitaka references, as we proceed. But here I want to point out that the verse, "Nānañea pana me dassanamं udapādi: 'akuppā me vimutti, ayamantimā jāti, natthi dāni punabbhavo'" $t$.
- There, ayamantimā is "ayam antima," where "ayam" is "this" and "antima" means "last"), and punabbhavo is "puna bhava," where "puna" is "repeated," and "bhava" is "existence in THIS WORLD."
- Thus, the above verse means: "The knowledge and vision arose in me: 'Unshakable is the liberation of my mind. This is my last birth. There will be no more rebirths for me."
- Upon Parinibbāna, one is no longer born anywhere in the 31 realms of THIS WORLD. One is free of any future suffering.


## Venerable Koṇ̣̣añña Attains The Sotāpanna Stage - Section 10 and 14

10. At the end of the discourse, Venerable Koṇạañña attained the Sotāpanna stage of Nibbāna. Venerable Koṇ̣añña understood the essence of the "framework of Buddha Dhamma": "yain kiñci samudaya dhammain sabbaì taim nirodha dhamman" ti.

- That verse means: "Whatever dhammā that give rise to things in this world are subject to cessation." Therefore, it is possible to stop any existence in this world from arising."
- We all have gone through innumerable lives filled with suffering in the rebirth process because we never understood how to stop future lives from arising. Of course, until a Buddha is born in the world, humans are NOT AWARE of the existence of the other 29 realms, including the four lowest realms ( $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a})$ filled with suffering.
- Many of you must be wondering WHY would one ever want to stop future lives! That is an important issue that we will discuss in the next post.
- That involves the rebirth process in the "wider world of 31 realms" that only a Buddha can "see" upon Enlightenment. That is the "..pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu.." or "previously unknown nature of this world" that we discussed in \#6 above.

11. At the end of the sutta (in Section 13), it says that the Buddha saw that Ven. Konḍañña has attained the Sotāpanna stage and declared: "Koṇạañña has understood! Koṇạañña has indeed understood!"

- That is how Venerable Koṇdañña acquired the name "Añña Koṇ̣añña-Koṇ̣añña Who Has Understood."


## The Wheel of the Dhamma Set in Motion - Section 11 and 12

12. With the Wheel of the Dhamma set in motion by the Blessed One, the earth-dwelling devā (bhumma $\overline{\boldsymbol{a}}$ $\boldsymbol{d e v} \overline{\boldsymbol{a}}$ ) belonging to the cātumahārājikā $\operatorname{dev} \overline{\boldsymbol{a}}$ realm raised a cry. "At Baraṇasi, in the Deer Park at Isipatana, the Wheel of the Dhamma has been set in motion by the Blessed One. It cannot be stopped by any ascetic or brahmin or Deva or Māra or Brahma or by anyone in the world."

- That Wheel of the Dhamma is still in motion. It is supposed to be in effect for roughly 2500 more years for a total of 5000 years.
- Those bhummā devā are part of the Cātumahārājika Deva realm but reside among humans (even though we cannot see them). They first became aware of the desan $\bar{a}$ and notified their higher-lying main realm with their cries.
- Devā of the higher-lying cātumahārājikā devā realm then repeated that cry which then progressively transmitted to the other Deva realms lying further away from the Earth.


## The 31 Realms of Existence - Section 13

13. Section 13 is long and takes a significant part of the sutta. That section names the 6 Deva realms and 15 out of 16 rūpi Brahma realms. See the document, WebLink: pdf download: Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta - Printout. Most of this section missing in many published versions of the sutta, including that at Sutta Central. However, this section is essential for a couple of reasons.

- First, it clearly shows that the Buddha indeed described a "wider world" than experienced by us, consisting of 31 realms; see, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma" and " 31 Realms of Existence."
- Second, it says that many Devā/Brahmā from those realms listened to the desanā. Starting from the 6 Deva realms, it lists 15 rūpi Brahma realms (except the asañña realms, where beings have only a physical body and thus cannot listen to a desanā ). Numerous Devā and Brahma attained various stages of Nibbāna.
- Note that the Buddha discussed the contents of the sutta in detail with the five ascetics overnight, until Ven. Koṇ̣añña reached the Sotāpanna stage. It took further discussions over several days before all five reached the Sotāpanna stage. Delivery of the second sutta, Anattalakkhaṇa Sutta (SN 22.59), took place after that.

14. Section 13 lists how the news progressively propagated to higher-lying realms, and eventually, Dev $\bar{a}$ from all those 21 realms came to listen to the desana $\overline{\text { a }}$

- As you can see those realms match the names listed in the following post: " 31 Realms of Existence" and " 31 Realms Associated with the Earth."
- Note that all of those realms referred to as Deva realms in the sutta, regardless of whether they belong to the 6 Deva realms or the rūpi Brahma realms.
- Of course, only five humans (the five ascetics) were present. Any living-being in the lowest four realms cannot comprehend Dhamma. Also, Brahmā in the four arūpi realms do not have ears to listen to. Thus section 13 lists 21 realms. Not listed are the four lowest realms, the asañña realm, and the four arūpi Brahma realms. Many other suttā mention those other realms.

We will discuss the details of this "framework of Buddha Dhamma" in upcoming posts.

### 5.2.9.5 . 2

February 29, 2020

## Introduction

1. In the previous post, "The Framework of Buddha Dhamma" we discussed the framework of Buddha Dhamma as laid out by the Buddha in the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta (SN 56.11.) That is the "view from the 30,000 feet."

- The " 30,000 -foot view" is a common phrase that describes getting to a high enough level to see the "big picture." The next time you are in a commercial airplane and cruising around 30,000 feet, take a look out the window and note what you see-some clouds, large swaths of land, maybe a mountain range. The reality is you're too high up to see much of anything with any precision.
- Take a helicopter-ride between 500 to 1,000 feet, and you'll be able to recognize what you're looking at, with the benefit of seeing it from a new, higher perspective.
- Starting with this post, we will take a " 1000 -foot view" of the Buddha Dhamma by getting into a bit more detail, specifically on the First Noble Truth.
- First of all, we need to figure out "the suffering" that the Buddha wanted us to understand.
- By the way, I have discussed these ideas previously over the past five years. However, the website now has over 500 posts. Therefore, this series of posts is an excellent way to present a systematic approach. I will refer to existing posts as needed. Please make sure to read them.


## What Is the "Previous Unheard" Suffering (Dukkha)?

2. In \#6 and \#7 of the previous post, we mentioned that the verse, "..pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhumं udapādi, ñānamं udapādi, paññā udapādi, vijjā udapādi, äloko udapādi," that appears 12 times in the Sections 4 through 7 of the sutta. See, WebLink: pdf download: Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta - Printout.

- The word "ananussutesu" comes from "na" + "anussuta" or "not heard." Pubbe means "previous," and thus "..pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu.." means a Dhamma (teaching) that has never been known to the world (except during the times of previous Buddhā.)
- The First Noble Truth is "Dukkha Sacca" so it should state "the previously unheard suffering." That is in Section 3 of the printout and \#5 of the previous post. Remember that "sacca" is pronounced as "sachcha." See the two posts on "Tipiṭaka English" at ""Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars - Part 1" and "Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars Part 2."
- The First Noble Truth of suffering: Birth is suffering, aging is suffering, illness is suffering; death is suffering. Union with what is undesirable is suffering. Separation from what is desirable is suffering. Not to get what one wants (icchā) is suffering. In brief, clinging (upādāna) to the five aggregates is suffering.


## First Noble Truth of suffering

3. In the above statement on the First Noble Truth of suffering, I have highlighted in orange the "previously unheard parts."

- Anyone knows that "aging is suffering, illness is suffering; death is suffering. Union with what is undesirable is suffering. Separation from what is desirable is suffering."
- Anyone would also agree that "Not to get what one wants (icchā) is suffering." But it has more profound implications that an average human would not contemplate. One needs to know the "broader worldview" to see those more profound implications, as we will see later.
- But why did the Buddha say that "Birth is suffering?" Why did he state that "In brief, clinging (upādāna) to the five aggregates is suffering?"
- It is NOT correct to translate the word "sañkhittena" as "in brief." The verse, sañkhittena pañcupādānakkhandhā dukkhä" has a deeper meaning than "In brief, clinging (upādāna) to the five aggregates is suffering"? We will discuss that later. [sañkhittena means being overthrown by defilements]
- Instead, it is easier to get started with Section 8 of the printout on "Tiparivatta." We discussed that briefly in \#8 of the previous post. We will expand it a bit more here.


## Tiparivatta - The Three Rounds of Bondage

4. The word "tiparivatta" comes from "ti" for three and "vatta" for "round" (actually a circular wall.) A "parivatta" is a complete circular wall. Thus, the word tiparivatt!a provides a good visualization of a livingbeing trapped in the middle of prison with three concentric walls.

- Most suffering is within the first barrier or the first round. Once one overcomes the first barrier, one is free from the four lowest realms (niraya, peta, asura, and animal.)
- The next reduced level of suffering is in between the first and second walls, which correspond to seven realms (human and six Deva realms.) Suffering and happiness both present in the human realm. The six Deva realms have much less suffering and much higher levels of "pleasures" compared to the human realm.
- The twenty Brahma realms lie between the second and third "walls." Sixteen of those are in the rūpāvacara Brahma realms and the other four in higher arupāvacara Brahma realms. There is hardly any suffering in these higher realms. Even humans, who can cultivate $j h a \bar{n} a$, can experience such " $j h a \bar{a} i c$ pleasures."
- The 31 reams discussed in " 31 Realms of Existence" and " 31 Realms Associated with the Earth."


## Much More Suffering Than Pleasures in the Rebirth Process

5. So, why don't we just do good deeds (kamma) and be born in a Deva realm and enjoy such "heavenly pleasures"? Or, cultivate jhāna, be born in a Brahma realm, and enjoy jhānic pleasures" for millions of years? The problem is that such "pleasures" are very short-lived (in the rebirth process.) The overall rebirth process subjects any living-being to much more suffering due to the following reasons.

- Any given living-being spends MUCH MORE time in the lowest four realms compared to the higherlying reams. In particular, getting a human existence is VERY rare. See "Rebirth - Connection to Suffering in the First Noble Truth."
- Suffering in the lowest four realms is unbearable, as described in many sutt $\bar{a}$, for example, Devaduta Sutta (MN 130.) The animal realm is relatively better than the other three, and we can see the suffering in that realm.


## Power of Kammic Energy

6. Birth in any realm is due to one's deeds (kamma.) Good deeds lead to "good births" and evil deeds to "bad births." There is a high-level of "mental energy" (kammic energy) associated with strong (good or bad) kamma.

We can get a good idea of this "kammic energy" by looking at an angry person. Angry thoughts manifest as changes in the physical body. His/her face becomes distorted and unpleasant to look at. That angry person also has "pumped up" energy to strike another person or even to kill another person.

- Such "powerful thoughts" (javana citta) can arise while doing bad or good deeds. They are the source of kammic energy that gives rise to births in different realms.
- The lifetime in any realm depends on the strength of the corresponding kammic energy.
- Humans tend to do immoral deeds (akusala kamma) in their desire (icch $\overline{\boldsymbol{a}}$ ) to "enjoy life." Akusala kamma lead to rebirths in the lowest four realms (apayy $\bar{a}$.) Thus it is essential to learn about the laws of kamma. However, they are NOT deterministic, as we will discuss.
- A good sutta to read about rebirths in bad realms due to dasa akusala and also rebirths in good realms due to the avoidance of dasa akusala is "WebLink: suttacentral: Pathamanirayasagga Sutta (AN 10.211)." That link gives two English translations.
- Also, see "Anguttara Nikāya - Suttā on Key Concepts" where dasa akusala and dasa kusala discussed with many short suttā.


## Wider Worldview Is Necessary to Understand the "Previously Unheard Suffering"

7. From the above, it must be clear that "suffering" in the First Noble Truth is NOT what we perceive to be suffering. Everyone KNOWS about that "mundane suffering" associated with aches and pains, diseases, injuries, etc.

- As we saw in \#4 above, we need to be MOST concerned with possible future suffering in the four lowest realms (apayy $\bar{a}$.) Thus, we first need to figure out how to stop rebirths in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$. As we saw in the previous post, that is accomplished by reaching the Sotāpanna stage of Nibbāna.
- Some people engage in "breath mediation" to alleviate their day-to-day stresses, or even to cultivate mundane jhāna. Although that will give temporary relief, that is not the "suffering" that the Buddha was concerned with.
- To put it in a different way, the "mundane suffering" is included in vedanā. Specifically, it is the "kāyika dukkha vedan $\vec{a}$ " associated with the physical body or "domanassa vedana" associated with mental stress. Even "jhānic pleasures" are vedanā and belong to "this world" (specifically to Brahma realms.)
- But one needs to "see" the "previously unheard suffering" in future rebirths (especially in the apāyā) with wisdom (pañ̃̃̄ $\bar{a}$.) That is "lokuttara Sammā Ditṭhi" needed to comprehend the First Noble Truth.


## How Can We Believe This "Previously Unheard Teachings" of the Buddha?

8. This is another critical issue that we need to discuss. Many concepts discussed above are not self-evident. We have not seen first hand any harsh suffering in the apāyā, except for in the animal realm.

- We do that by first looking at the "preliminary material" taught by the Buddha. When we can see the selfevident truth in them, our confidence in Buddha's teachings on things that we cannot see for ourselves will grow. That is building faith/confidence (or saddh $\bar{a}$ ) in the Buddha and his teachings (Buddha Dhamma.)
- One needs to go through primary and secondary schools before being eligible for a college education. In the same way, one needs to learn the fundamental principles in Buddha Dhamma first.
- Understanding the laws of kamma, the validity of the rebirth process and associated concepts are essential. That is cultivating "conventional Sammā Ditṭhi."
- Only after that one can comprehend "lokuttara Sammā Ditthi" (and the ability to "see" the harsh sufferings in the apāyā.)
- The Buddha clarified that in the Mahā Cattārīsaka Sutta (MN 117). I will discuss it in the next post.


## Good or Bad Deeds May Bring Their Results Much Later

9. That is another CRITICAL issue. We tend to think only about "near-term results" of our actions. For example, person X may kill someone while robbing that person's house. X may not be caught and live a luxurious life with the valuables stolen from that house.

- However, person X's immoral deed (kamma) will not go unpunished by Nature. The corresponding result (kamma vipāka) can materialize in a future life, if not in this life. A strong bad kamma like killing a human can even be responsible for rebirth in one of the four lowest realms. In the same way, one who does a good kamma like engaging in compassionate deeds may be reborn in a Deva realm.
- Kammic consequences of either kind of action (good and bad) are stringent. Nature enforces them automatically. There is no "higher-being" reviewing one's deeds. There is a built-in mechanism in Nature to take into account various complexities automatically. Such laws of kamma can be complicated, but we can get a good general idea. We will discuss them in the future.
- But most people tend to believe just what they can experience for themselves. Not believing in rebirth is a strong wrong view that, by itself, can lead to rebirth in the apāy $\bar{a}$. That is why one needs to remove the ten types of wrong views well before being able to grasp the "previously-unheard teachings" of the Buddha.


## There is No Permanently "Good" or "Bad" Person

10. No one is a "good person" or a "bad person" forever. Until one becomes at least a Sotāpanna Anugāmi, one's character/habits (gati) can change. Gati (pronounced "gathi") is a crucial Pāli word even though very few people are aware of it these days. So, that is another topic that I will be discussing in detail.

- One with "good gati" is likely to do more "good deeds," and another with "bad gati" is likely to do more of"bad deeds."
- However, even one with "good character" may do evil deeds if the temptation is high enough. For example, we often hear about "good people" arrested for bribery or rape charges.
- In the same way, even a person labeled as a 'bad person' may do meritorious deeds under certain conditions.
- One's family, friends, and associates play significant roles in the formation of new gati and getting rid of old gati (good or bad.)
- More details at, " 9 . Key to Ānāpānasati- How to Change Habits and Character (Gati)."


## Having Wrong Views Is a Major Akusala Kamma

11. Any realm has a finite lifetime. One will NEVER live in a "good realm" forever or be trapped forever in a "bad realm." Each of us has been in most of the 31 realms, many times over. The rebirth process has no discernible beginning. See, "Origin of Life - There is No Traceable Origin."

- In general, good deeds (kusala kamma) lead to good rebirths (those in the human and higher realms.) Evil deeds (akusala kamma) lead to bad existences (the lowest four realms or the apāy $\bar{a}$.)
- One key factor that many people are not aware of is the following. Even if one does not do any "conventional immoral deeds," just having wrong views about the world is one of the dasa akusala. See "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)."
- Most people consider immoral deeds to be only "bad bodily deeds" (killing, stealing, sexual misconduct) and "bad speech" (lying, gossiping, slandering, harsh speech.)
- That is the key to understand the first stage (first round in the tiparivatta) of the First Noble Truth.

12. However, there are three akusala kamma done with the mind, i.e., just with one's THOUGHTS. Those are greedy thoughts (abhijjhā), angry thoughts (vyāpāda), and wrong views (micchā ditthi).

- Those three kinds of evil THOUGHTS lead to bad speech and bodily actions. Furthermore, wrong views are the root cause of greed and anger as well, as we will see.
- It may be hardl to believe, but wrong views are the main reason that most humans are reborn in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$. See "Rebirth - Connection to Suffering in the First Noble Truth."
- With this post, we are just expanding the worldview a bit more. Some people may be aware of these facts, but many people are not aware of them. I want to make sure everyone is on-board.

In the upcoming posts, we will discuss the above issues in detail. It is not beneficial to try to understand deep suttā without having a good understanding of the "essential fundamentals."

### 5.2.9.5 Dangers of Ten Types of Wrong Views and Four Possible Paths

March 7, 2020; revised March 9, 2020; August 20, 2022; August 29, 2022

## Introduction

1. We started this series of posts with "The Framework of Buddha Dhamma" to understand the details in the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta (SN 56.11.) As we noted, Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta provides only an outline of the framework of Buddha Dhamma. Then in the subsequent post, "The Suffering (Dukkha) in the First Noble Truth," we noted that the Buddha pointed out that there are two "good paths" and "two bad paths."
The WebLink: suttacentral: Mahācattārīsaka Sutta (MN 117) describes those four paths. Any person is on one of those four paths at a given time.

- One could be on two paths leading to much suffering in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$.
- There are also two "good" paths. One COULD lead to rebirths in "good" realms. The other is the Noble Path leading to Nibbāna.
- It all depends on the types of views about the world. One with the ten types of micchā ditṭh $\bar{\imath}$ (wrong views) will be on one of the two paths leading to much future suffering.
- We will discuss the "two bad paths" in this post and the "two good paths" in the next post.

2. One who has removed the ten types of micchā diṭth $\bar{\imath}$ initially have mundane Sammā Ditṭhī. They are on the path toward "good rebirths." However, that is NOT a guarantee for all future rebirths since one could switch back to having wrong views in the future.

- Someone who has removed the ten types of micchā dittthī CAN go beyond that and remove the possibility of switching back to wrong views by comprehending the "real Nature," i.e., gain "yathābhūta ñāna." That means comprehending Tilakkhaṇa or the anicca, dukkha, and anatta nature. At that point, one will be on the Noble Path and reach Nibbāna within a limited number of rebirths in good realms.
- I will only discuss sections of the WebLink: suttacentral: Mahācattārīsaka Sutta (MN 117) to discuss the four types of possible paths. The Pāli version and translations to several languages are at that link.

Steps to Nibbāna - Sammā ditṭhi, Sammā Samādhi, Sammā Vimutti
3. At the beginning of the sutta, the Buddha says: "Bhikkhus, I shall teach you samma $\operatorname{a}$ samādhi with its necessary supports ( saupanisain or "with upanisa") and essentials (saparikkhāram or "with parikkhāra.")
"What is Noble samm $\bar{a}$ samādhi with its necessary supports? Those are sammā ditthi, sammā sañkappo, samm $\bar{a} v \bar{a} c \bar{a}, ~ s a m m a \bar{a}$ kammanto, sammā $\overline{a j} \bar{i} v o$, samm $\bar{a} v \bar{a} y \bar{a} m o, ~ s a m m a \bar{a}$ sati. That is samma samādhi, reached with the purification of mind, and equipped with those seven supporting factors."

- It is to be noted that one starts the Noble Path with Sammā Ditṭhi or the "right views." That sequentially leads to Samma $\bar{a}$ Samādhi or the eighth factor.
- Sammā Ditt of mundane Sammā Ditṭhi is reached by getting rid of the ten types of wrong views (micch $\bar{a}$ diṭth $\bar{u}$.)
- Once one completes the mundane path with mundane Sammā Ditthi, one can start comprehending Tilakkhaña (anicca, dukkha, and anatta.) At that point, one is a Sotāpanna Anugāmi and is on the Noble Path. He/she can get to "total release from all suffering" (Sammā Vimutti) via four stages of Sotāpanna, Sakadāgāmi, Anāgāmi, and Arahant.


## Ten types of wrong views (Micchā Ditṭh $\overline{\boldsymbol{u}})$

4. "Therein, bhikkhus, sammā ditṭhi (right view) comes first. And how does the right view come first? One understands the wrong views (micch $\bar{a} \operatorname{ditt} h \bar{\imath}$ ) as the wrong views and the right view as the correct view. That is one's right view.
"And what are the wrong views?
(i) No profit in giving (dāna.)
(ii) No corresponding benefits in making offerings on a large scale.
(iii) Respecting and offering to those with higher virtues has no merit.
(iv) Good and bad actions (kamma) do not lead to corresponding results (vipāka.)
(v) This world (ayam loko) does not exist.
(vi) Para loka (of gandhabba) does not exist.
(vii) Mother is not a special person.
(viii) Father is not a special person.
(ix) Living beings cannot be reborn spontaneously (sattā opapātikā.)
(x) No virtuous recluses in the world who have seen for themselves by direct knowledge and declare this world and the para loka exist.

- Those are the wrong views. These are stated the same way in over 30 suttā in the Tipiṭaka because of their importance. A partial list for such suttā: SN 24.5, AN 3.117 through AN 3.119, AN 10. 211, MN 42, MN 110, MN 41, MN 60, MN 76, DN 5, DN 34.


## Why Are Those Views Bad? - Laws of Kamma

5. Before proceeding with the sutta, we must ask, "why are those views bad, and why are they so critical?"

- As we have discussed in the previous two posts, the worldview of the Buddha is VERY different from that of an average human. An average human is unaware of the existence of 31 realms and the endless rebirth process within those 31 realms.
- The mechanism that sustains the rebirth process within the 31 realms is that $k a m m \bar{a}$ (specifically meritorious and immoral actions) have their corresponding vipāka. The first four wrong views are associated with not having a good understanding of kamma/kamma vipāka.
- Rebirths among the 31 realms are based on kamma vipāka (results of previous kamma.) We discussed that briefly in \#6 in the previous post, "The Suffering (Dukkha) in the First Noble Truth."

6. There is a rebirth process WITHIN the human existence (human bhava) where one is repeatedly reborn with a human body many times. Between those human rebirths, that life-stream is in the para loka as a gandhabba (i.e., just with a "mostly mental" body.) That is why there are so many rebirth stories, where especially children, talk about their previous human lives ( $j \bar{a} t i$. ) On the other hand, it is very difficult to get a human existence (bhava.) It is necessary to understand the difference between bhava and $j \bar{a} t i$.

- Most people reject the laws of kamma because they cannot "see" the consequences of some deeds (kamma) in this life. But all causes lead to results. But there must be the right conditions for the results to appear. A seed does not germinate until the right conditions arise. See "What Does "Paccaya"" Mean in Paticca Samuppāda?" That is why there is a "time delay" between kamma and kamma vipāka.
- Buddha Dhamma is amazingly self-consistent. It just takes an effort to see these "interconnections." If one becomes interested and makes an effort, there will be many "Aha!" moments. That is when one starts having "real faith" or "saddhā."


## Why Are Those Views Bad? - Rebirth Process Within 31 Realms

7. It is frustrating to be in the para loka as a gandhabba without a physical body. One cannot eat, smell, or touch (and have sex.) One is in the kāma loka BECAUSE one craves those sensory pleasures. On the spiritual side, it is impossible to concentrate and, thus, make progress on the path. That is why one should be grateful to the mother and father for providing an opportunity to be born with a physical body. The wrong views number five through eight arise because one is unaware of that process involving "this world that we experience" and the "para loka of the gandhabbā."

- For a crude, but good, visualization of the gandhabba and para loka see the post, "Ghost 1990 Movie - Good Depiction of Gandhabba Concept."
- The ninth wrong view arises because one is unaware of realms other than the human and animal realms. Many living beings (sattā) are reborn spontaneously (opapātik $\bar{a}$ ) in many realms. In such births unlike in the human and animal realms - one is not born a baby and grows to an adult; rather, the birth is in the "final form." Of course, many living beings do not have dense physical bodies like ours.
- Finally, it is possible to cultivate (Ariya or anāriya) jhāna and see one's previous lives. It is not easy to develop abhiññā powers to see previous other existences (bhava), such as previous existence in animal or Deva realms. However, it is relatively easy to see one's past human lives WITHIN the current human bhava. Many can do that even today, including some children (rebirth accounts.) Discarding such true statements as "mere speculation" is the tenth wrong view.


## Those With Micchā Diṭ̣thi Are Destined to be Reborn in Niraya

8. As clearly stated in the following sutta, those with micch $\bar{a}$ dittth $\bar{\imath}$ end up in niraya (the lowest of the ap $\bar{y} y \bar{a}$.) On the other hand, those who do not have any of the ten types of micch $\bar{a}$ dittth $\bar{\imath}$ (and thus have mundane samma ditṭhi) are likely to be reborn in the higher realms at or above the human realm (collectively labeled sagga.)

## The WebLink: suttacentral: Ditthi Sutta (AN 4.212) is short:

- "Catūhi, bhikkhave, dhammehi samannāgato yathābhataì nikkhitto evaì niraye. Katamehi catūhi? Kāyaduccaritena, vacīduccaritena, manoduccaritena, micchā ditṭhiyā-imehi kho, bhikkhave, catūhi dhammehi samannāgato yathābhataì nikkhitto evaì niraye.
- Catūhi, bhikkhave, dhammehi samannāgato yathābhataì nikkhitto evai் sagge. Katamehi catūhi? Kāyasucaritena, vacīsucaritena, manosucaritena, sammā diṭthiȳ̄̄-imehi kho, bhikkhave, catūhi dhammehi samannāgato yathābhataì nikkhitto evaì sagge"ti.


## Translated:

- "Bhikkhave, those who are proficient in four types of dhamm $\bar{a}$ (these are sometimes specifically called adhamm $\bar{a}$ or "bad dhamm $\bar{a}$ "), are bound to be born in the niraya. Those four types are bad conduct with body, speech, and mind, and having wrong views." Those are dasa akusala.
- "Bhikkhave, those proficient in four types of dhammā, are bound to be born in the good realms. Those four types are good conduct with body, speech, and mind, and having removed wrong views." They are dasa kusala.
- Of course, niraya (hell) is the lowest realm of the 31 realms. A good sutta to read about rebirths in bad realms due to dasa akusala and rebirths in good realms due to the avoidance of dasa akusala is "WebLink: suttacentral: Pathamanirayasagga Sutta (AN 10.211)." That link gives two English translations.


## Two Paths for Those With Micchā Ditthi

9. Towards the end of the Mahācattārīsaka Sutta, the Buddha states that there are two paths (and 20 factors) with correct views (vissati kusala pakkhā) and two paths (and 20 factors) with wrong views ( $\mathbf{v i s s a t i ~ a k u s a l a ~ p a k k h a ̄ ) . ~ T h e r e ~ a r e ~ f o r t y ~ f a c t o r s ~ i n ~ a l l , ~ a n d ~ h e n c e ~ t h e ~ n a m e ~ m a h a ̄ ~ c a t t a ̄ r i ̄ s a k a : ~ " I t i ~ k h o , ~}$ bhikkhave, vīsati kusala pakkhā, vīsati akusala pakkhā-mahā cattārīsako dhammapariyāyo pavattito appaṭivattiyo samañena vā brāhmañena vā devena vā mārena vā brahmuna vākenaci v $\bar{a}$ lokasmim."

Mahācattārīsaka Sutta (MN 117) does not go into details about the two paths with wrong views. However, several suttā in the Anguttara Nikāya (AN 4.204 through AN 4. 210) specifically discuss those two paths for those with wrong views.

- WebLink: suttacentral: Dasakamma Sutta (AN 4.204) states that one who engages in dasa akusala (that includes having wrong views) is an immoral person (asappuriso.)
- If that person also encourages or teaches others to engage in such activities, then he/she becomes a highly-immoral person (asappurisena asappurisataro.) Here, asappurisataro with "taro" at the end emphasizes the intense immorality. Note that a highly-immoral person has the same wrong views, but they are much more ingrained or established in mind.
- The opposites are valid for a moral person (sappuriso) and a highly-moral person (sappurisena sappurisataro.)
- Dasa akusala discussed at, "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)."

10. The WebLink: suttacentral: Pathamapāpadhamma Sutta (AN 4.207) states the same in another revealing way. "Katamo ca, bhikkhave, pāpo? Idha, bhikkhave, ekacco pānāatipātū hoti ... pe ... micchāditṭhiko hoti. Ayaì vuccati, bhikkhave, pāpo."

- That means a person who engages in dasa akusala (including killing, stealing,..wrong views) is a pāpo or immoral.

The next verse: "Katamo ca, bhikkhave, pāpena pāpataro? Idha, bhikkhave, ekacco attanā ca pānāātipāt̄̄ hoti, parañca pānātipāte samādapeti ... pe ... attanā ca micchādiṭthiko hoti, parañca micchādiṭthiyā samādapeti. Ayaì vuccati, bhikkhave, pāpena pāpataro."

- If that person encourages others to engage in such activities (or teaches wrong views), he/she becomes a highly-immoral person (pāpena pāpataro.)

Note that the two sutt $\bar{a}$ use different words to indicate an immoral person, asappuriso and pāpo. Both mean "an immoral person."

## Summary

11. Those with extreme wrong views (i.e., highly-immoral persons) can get to micch $\bar{a}$ vimutti (and become someone like Hitler or Pol Pot in Cambodia.) It is extremely difficult to change the mindset of such a person. However, it is possible to do that, as illustrated in the example of Angulimāla, who had killed almost a thousand people but attained Arahanthood, see "Account of Angulimāla - Many Insights to Buddha Dhamma."

- In the next post, we will discuss the two "good paths" with two corresponding "correct views" in detail. Here one first gets to the mundane Sammā Diṭthi by cultivating ten factors that are opposites of the ten factors in micchā ditṭhi.
- We will see that one with mundane Sammā Dittthi can get to Ariya sammā dittthi by learning the true teachings of the Buddha on the Four Noble Truths. Specifically, one needs to comprehend that the "suffering" in the First Noble Truth is the suffering associated with the rebirth process.
- When one starts comprehending the First Noble Truth by grasping the anicca, dukkha, anatta nature of this world, one becomes a Sotāpanna Anugāmi. That understanding becomes complete at Arahanthood and one attains Sammā Ñäna (by fully comprehending "yathābhūta ñāna") and Sammā Vimutti (release from all future suffering.)
- We will discuss that in the next post and complete the discussion on the Mahācattārīsaka Sutta regarding the four possible paths.


### 5.2.9.5 Sammā Diṭ̣hī - Only One Leads to the Noble Path . 4

March 14, 2020; revised August 20, 2022

## Introduction

There are two types of sammā ditthī or "right views." Only one belongs to the Noble Path and leads to Nibbāna.

1. We are continuing the series of posts on "Wider Worldview of the Buddha." In the previous post, we started a discussion on the WebLink: suttacentral: Mahācattārīsaka Sutta (MN 117) to clarify the four worldviews and four possible paths.

- There are "two good paths" and the Noble Eightfold Path is the only path to Nibbāna.
- The previous post, "Dangers of Ten Types of Wrong Views and Four Possible Paths," discussed the "two bad paths." In this post, we will discuss the "two good paths."


## Two Types of Sammā Ditṭhi

2. After discussing the two "bad paths" for those with the ten types of micch $\bar{a}$ dittth $\bar{\imath}$ in the Mahācattārīsaka Sutta, the Buddha asks: "What, bhikkhus, is the right view? The right view, I say, is twofold:

- There is the right view that is tainted with cravings (sāsavā or with $\bar{a} s a v \bar{a}$ ), meritorious and bringing good vipāka.
- That "good path" is available even without a Buddha. Ancient yogis were there before the Buddha (like $\bar{A} l ̣ a ̄ r a ~ K a ̄ l a ̄ m a ~ a n d ~ U d d a k a ~ R a ̄ m a p u t t a), ~ w h o ~ l i v e d ~ m o r a l l y ~ a n d ~ e v e n ~ c u l t i v a t e d ~ t h e ~ h i g h e s t ~ j h a ̄ n a . ~ T h e y ~$ were able to get "good rebirths." However, that is a temporary solution to the samiāric suffering since one can "fall back" from that "good path" and be born in the apa $\bar{a} \bar{a}$ in the future.
- Then there is the right view that is Noble (Ariya) and without cravings (anāsavā or without $\bar{a} s a v \bar{a})$, supramundane (lokuttarā), a factor of the Noble Path."

Sammā Diṭthi for the Noble Path Includes Comprehension of Tilakkhaṇa
3. The difference between those two paths is CRITICAL. We need to discuss that in detail.

- The first, mundane right view, is mostly followed by those who "live a moral life." That could be just following the five precepts, for example, as many people do. However, to attain Nibbāna, one needs to comprehend the "unfruitful, and dangerous nature" of this world (Tilakkhana) or the "real Nature," i.e., gain "yathābhūta ñāna."
- Upon Enlightenment, the Buddha discovered that living a moral life, by itself, CANNOT solve the problem of suffering in the rebirth process. Following a moral life COULD lead to a future "good rebirth." However, since we have also done both good and bad deeds in our past lives, such bad deeds can bring birth in a bad realm. Of course, we do not know what kind of good/bad deeds we have done in our past lives.
- To start on the Noble Path leading to Nibbāna, we need to understand that our cravings for sensory pleasures are ultimately the root cause of suffering. Those cravings ( $\bar{a} s a v a$ ) lead to taṇh $\bar{a}$. See "Tanhhā The Origin of Suffering."
- Then the '"taṇhā paccayā upādāna" step in Paṭicca Samuppāda leads to "upādāna paccayā bhavo, bhava paccayā jāti, jāti paccayā jarā, maraṇa, soka-parideva-dukkha-domanassupāyasā sambhavan'ti," i.e., the "whole mass of suffering."
- That is a brief summary. We will discuss that in detail in upcoming posts. Let us first discuss samma $\bar{a}$ ditṭhī for the mundane path.


## Mundane Sammā Ditthi

4. After saying that there are two right views (\#2 above,) the Buddha asks: "And what, bhikkhus, is the right view that is tainted with cravings ( $s \bar{a} s a v \bar{a}$ or with $\bar{a} s a v \bar{a}$ ), meritorious and bringing good vipāka? " and explains that is the view where one believes that,
(i) There is profit in giving (dāna.)
(ii) More profit in giving generously.
(iii) Respecting and making offerings to those with higher virtues is beneficial (bhikkhus, Noble Persons, yogis, etc.)
(iv) Good and bad actions (kamma) lead to corresponding results (vipāka.)
(v) This world (ayam̀ loko) does exist.
(vi) Para loka (of gandhabba) does exist.
(vii) Mother is a special person.
(viii) Father is a special person.
(ix) Living-beings can be reborn spontaneously (sattā opapātikā.)
(x) There are virtuous recluses (like Ālāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta) in the world who have seen for themselves by direct knowledge and declare this world and the para loka exist.
Those are the (mundane) right views that are tainted with cravings. They are meritorious and bring good vipāka.

- As you remember from the previous post, the above are the opposites of the ten types of wrong views (micch $\bar{a}$ dittth $\overline{\mathrm{l}}$.) Those who have those ten "good factors" can get "good rebirths," as discussed in \#2.


## Why Is Mundane Sammā Ditṭhi a Prerequisite for Ariya Sammā Diṭthi?

5. The main goal of a Buddhist is to STOP all future suffering in the rebirth process.

- How can one start on the Noble Path to stop rebirth, if one does not even believe in the rebirth process?
- But how do we know that there is a rebirth process with much suffering? How can we believe that there are 31 realms in this world instead of just two realms that we can see?

6. As discussed in \#2 above, those were known to the world even before the Buddha. There were yogis like Ālāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta. They had cultivated abhiñ̃n̄̄ powers and could see their past lives as well as could confirm the existence of higher Deva and Brahma realms.

- Therefore, it is possible to verify the above ten factors even without a Buddha in the world.
- Even without abhiñ $\bar{n} \bar{a}$ powers, one can logically conclude that those ten factors are indeed true. Accounts of past lives from children worldwide and Near-Death Experiences (NDE) of many heartpatients provide evidence. See "Evidence for Rebirth" and "Out-of-Body Experience (OBE) and Manomaya Kāya."


## Inviolable Axioms - Could Be Self-Evident for an Undefiled Mind

7. The core teaching of the Buddha is that our efforts in seeking happiness within the rebirth process are futile. The only way to reach a state where there is absolutely NO suffering is to disengage from the rebirth process.

- Seeking that goal REQUIRES the following "axioms" in scientific terminology.

1. Existence of the 31 realms.
2. The rebirth process.
3. The laws of kamma determine how rebirths take place.
4. Existence of gandhabba and para loka makes it possible for many human (and animal) rebirths within a single existence.

- An axiom in science is a "fundamental truth" that is "self-evident." However, the above axioms may not be "self-evident" until explained logically. After all, there were yogis like Ālāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta these days who could see past lives. Waharaka Thero had some such capabilities, but unfortunately, we have lost that resource.
- By the way, evidence for the gandhabba from the Tipitaka is discussed in "Gandhabba State Evidence from Tipitaka." Other evidence is discussed in "Evidence for Rebirth" and "Out-of-Body Experience (OBE) and Manomaya Kāya."


## Buddha Dhamma: Non-Perceivability and Self-Consistency

8. However, those axioms CAN become self-evident if one spends enough time contemplating the laws of kamma. They are logical and self-consistence. For example, see "Complexity of Life and the Way to Seek 'Good Rebirths'" and "What is Kamma? - Is Everything Determined by Kamma?"

- One cannot learn higher mathematics like calculus without learning basic arithmetic first, then algebra, and so on. Buddha Dhamma describes the laws of nature. Nature's laws are much more complex than advanced mathe matics or quantum mechanics.

9. There is an additional factor involved too. The ability to understand becomes easier when one starts "cleansing one's mind." That does not just mean following some precepts (even though they are an important part). See "The Importance of Purifying the Mind."

- One has to start on the mundane path, and live a simple life (away from both too much sensory pleasures and also hardships). One's mind will become less stressful and less agitated.
- As one lives a moral life and keeps learning (and seeing the self-consistencies) one's faith in the teachings will grow. See "Buddha Dhamma: Non-Perceivability and Self-Consistency."


## The "Previously Unheard" Teaching

10. Even though the "good path" followed by yogis like Āḷāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta led to the cultivation of abhiññ̄a powers and even "good rebirths," it did not lead to the end of suffering. That is because one would still be engaged in the rebirth process.

- All births, even in the highest Brahma realms, have finite lifetimes. At the end of those long lifetimes, previous bad kamma can bring rebirths in lower realms.
- Rebirths in the lowest four realms ( $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$ ) are unavoidable until one starts comprehending the true nature of this world described by the Three Characteristics of Nature or Tilakkhaṇa (anicca, dukkha, anatta.) That means any "good" existence in the 31 realms cannot be maintained. Future rebirths in the apāyā cannot be avoided until one comprehends Tilakkhaṇa.


## All Births (Jäti) End Up in Suffering

11. From Paṭicca Samuppāda: "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra; sañkhāra paccayā viññanna; viññāna paccayā nāmarūpa, nāmarūpa paccayā salāyatana, salāyatana paccayā phasso, phassa paccayā vedanā, vedanā paccayā taṇhā, taṇhā paccayā upādāna, upādāna paccayā bhavo, bhava paccayā jāti, jāti paccayā jarā, marana, soka-parideva-dukkha-domanassupāyasā sambhavan'ti"

- "The whole mass of suffering" is inevitable for each jātit (birth) because each birth ends in death. Any birth (even in good realms) MUST come to an end. That is the harshest suffering to face (in the sense of leaving behind everything.)
- A birth does not happen without bhava (existence.) Therefore it is critical to understand what bhava and $j \bar{a} t i$ are. That is why one needs to understand the mundane right views of (v) through (viii) in \#4 above, BEFORE trying to understand what is meant by Nibbāna (the stopping of ALL future suffering by stopping ALL future $j \bar{a} t i$.)
- One grasps a new bhava (existence) at the end of the current bhava, ONLY because one has cravings for "worldly pleasures" (whether sensual pleasures or jhānic pleasures). Those inevitably lead to tanhā, upädäna, bhava, $j \bar{a} t i$, and then "the whole mass of suffering" is inevitable.
- One CANNOT stop those cravings as long as one values those sensory/jhānic pleasures; in other words, until one gets rid of $a v i j j \bar{a}$ or the ignorance of the Four Noble Truths.
- Now we get to the verse that requires a good discussion to understand the Ariya Sammā Dittthi that comes at the forefront of the Ariya Atṭhangika Magga or the Noble Eight-fold Path.


## The Ariya Sammā Ditṭhi

12. Next verse from the Mahācattārīsaka Sutta (after the verse in \#4): "Katamā ca, bhikkhave, sammādiṭṭhi ariyā anāsavā lokuttarā maggañgā? Yā kho, bhikkhave, ariyacittassa anāsavacittassa ariyamaggasamañgino ariyamaggamं bhāvayato pañña pañ̃̃indriyain paññābalaì dhammavicayasambojjhañgo sammādiṭthi maggañgaí-ayaì vuccati, bhikkhave, sammādiṭthi ariyā anāsavā lokuttarā maggañgā."

- There are many factors summarized in that verse. But we can get started with the following.
"And what is the right view that is Noble, without cravings (anāsavā or without $\bar{a} s a v \bar{a}$ ), and is a factor of the Noble Path leading to Nibbāna? Note that in the sutta, the word lokuttarā means "loka" + "uttara" where loka is "this world" and uttara implies "better than." Thus, lokuttarā maggangā means "a factor of the Noble Path that overcomes this world, leading to Nibbāna."
- As we mentioned in the first two posts in this series on "Wider Worldview of the Buddha," Buddha's teachings were "previously unknown to the world."
- That "previously unknown part" is seeing the suffering hidden in what we perceive as "pleasures." Such pleasures - sensory or jhānic as pleasures - belong to this world. They are temporary. Furthermore, people tend to do immoral things in seeking such pleasures.


## The Suffering Hidden in Sensory Pleasures

13. Anusaya are our hidden cravings. They come to the surface triggered by mind-pleasing (or unpleasant) thought-objects (ārammaña.) See, "Paticca Samuppāda - A "Self" Exists Due to Avijijā."

- Then one attaches to that ārammaṇa via greed or anger depending on whether the ārammaṇa is mindpleasing or distasteful. That is tanhha. Whether one gets attached or not depends on one's gati. We have discussed this in detail in earlier posts in the "Worldview of the Buddha."
- The key to attaining Nibbāna (āsavakkhaya or the removal of $\bar{a} s a v a$ ) is to understand how to get rid of our gati to attach (tanhhā) to various ārammaṇa. As we will see, that originates from our ignorance of this world's true (anicca, dukkha, and anatta) nature. What we perceive to provide happiness leads to suffering.
- The best analogy is a fish who bites into a tasty bait, not realizing the dangers hidden in that bait (a tasty worm.) Imagine the suffering associated with a hook piercing one's mouth. Of course, that suffering ends up in an agonizing death due to lack of oxygen since the fish cannot breathe outside water.
- In the same way, we do not "see" the long-term consequences of our cravings for sensory/jhānic pleasures. That is the core idea embedded in Tilakkhana. We will discuss that in detail in the upcoming posts.


### 5.2.9.5 Fear of Nibbāna (Enlightenment)

## March 18, 2020

## Introduction

1. I have presented an outline of the Buddha Dhamma in the "Wider Worldview of the Buddha" subsection. As explained there, the key message of the Buddha is that future suffering can be stopped only by stopping the rebirth process, i.e., by attaining Nibbāna. Now I need to clarify a few things.

- The main issue that I want to address is the "fear of Nibbāna." That arises with the wrong view of "I exist." Then the implication is that by stopping the rebirth process "I will be extinct." It is also a wrong view to say that "I do not exist." It is true that "I exist now as a human." In the future, I may exist as Deva, Brahma, or an animal, based on the cumulative effect of my kamma (causes) up to now.
- If I attain the Arahanthood in this life, then after my death I will not exist anywhere in the 31 realms of this world. I would merge with Nibbāna.
- These days there are many unfruitful discussions about whether a "self" exists or not. As the Buddha pointed out, that is the wrong starting point to discuss life-cycle. A given lifestream evolves according to causes (kamma.) When the ability for past kamma to bring their vipāka is stopped (i.e., taṇhā or upādāna stopped,) then that process will stop and one merges with Nibbāna at the death of that last physical body.
- The Buddha clearly stated that Nibbāna exists. See, "Nibbāna "Exists", but Not in This World."
- I have discussed the Buddhist concept that while a "self with gati" exists until one attains Nibbāna, that is NOT a "permanent self" like a soul. See, for example, "Anattā (Mundane Interpretation) - No 'Unchanging Self." "An Apparent "Self" Is Involved in Kamma Generation," and "Paticca Samuppāda A "Self" Exists Due to Avijija." Also see, "Yamaka Sutta (SN 22.85) - Arahanthood Is Not Annihilation but End of Suffering."

2. We will re-visit that deeper concept in upcoming posts again, in a systematic way.

- First, I would like to explain in simple terms that there is no need to be fearful about "stopping the rebirth process."
- I did a Google search and found the following comments by two people in online discussion forums. Those are representative of the comments of many others and thus I would like to address those.


## First Myth - Fear of "Vanishing" or "Extinction" Equated to Nibbāna

3. The following are extractions from the comments of Person 1.

- 'I started taking the Buddhist path not long ago, less than three years ago. At that time, life felt too heavy and it felt like it was pushing me towards not wanting to play the game anymore. So Buddhism seemed like the way to go."
- 'I can't forget the first time I faced the idea of vanishing from this existence forever, the true death; never being able to come back once I 'saw it'. Nevertheless, I kept investigating."
- "Then I contemplated the idea of being trapped in this. Existence has no way out, anywhere you go there is still existence. In other words 'What if it has been like this for millions, billions of years, maybe even for eternity?"
- "But if enlightenment is the only escape, I am afraid of never being able to come back. I am afraid everything is just an illusion, that there aren't others, just images and I'm alone. Sometimes I fear there isn't even enlightenment to save me. My question is: Am I going crazy? Am I getting it all wrong?"


## There Are Those Who Want to "End the Existence"

4. First of all, think about the mindset of those who commit suicide. Why do those people want to leave this world? Most of them probably do not believe in rebirth. But they just "wanted out" because they could not bear whatever the suffering that they were experiencing.

- In fact, that is the mindset of living-beings in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$. They just want to "end it all." But no matter how much they "want out," that will not happen. That is a good example of the suffering expressed by the Buddha in the verse, "yampicchain na labhati tampi dukkham," or "not to get what one desires (icch $\bar{a}$ ) is suffering", in the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta (SN 56.11.)
- In the WebLink: suttacentral: Saccavibhañga Sutta (MN 141), Ven. Sariputta explains the meaning of that verse: "Katamañcāvuso, yampiccham na labhati tampi dukkhaì? Jātidhammānaì, āvuso, sattānaì evaì icchā uppajjati: 'aho vata mayaì na jātidhammā assāma; na ca vata no jāti $\bar{a} g a c c h e y y \bar{a} t i$. Na kho panetain icchāya pattabbaì."
- Translated: "In a living-being subject to (some) births the wish (desire) arises, 'Oh, may I not be subject to such a birth, and may that birth not come to me.' But such a desire will not be fulfilled (and thus one will be subjected to suffering.)"

5. Thus, it is only when faced with physical pain/mental stress that one wishes it would just go away. Many people become interested in Buddhism when they run into either physical problems (getting sick or starting various body ailments due to old age) or mental problems (day-to-day stresses or even depression.)

- They can, of course, get relief from those issues by living a simple life and abstaining from immoral deeds.
- But then they start reading about Nibbāna as "ending of one's existence" and then they freak out. That is what happened to Person 1 above.


## Life in "Good Realms" Is Short-Lived

6. We normally do not realize the kind of harsh suffering experienced by many living beings. Of course, we can see only the animal realm other than the human realm. Even then, we do not pay much attention to the suffering of animals. In fact, we are conditioned to "not see" or "not recognize" the suffering of many animals that is in full display.

- For example, people enjoy watching animal shows on TV where, for example, a tiger chases a deer, catches up with it and eats it alive.
- Those who enjoy fishing do not see the suffering of a fish that is subjected to excruciating pain, with its mouth pierced by the hook, and unable to breathe outside water. But unlike some animals, fish cannot show emotion, which is a part of their kamma vipāka.
- On the other hand, we can clearly see many animals showing their suffering by either yelling out or by their facial expressions.
- All those animals had been humans at some point in the rebirth process!

7. Suffering in the other three realms of the apāy $\bar{a}$ is much worse. Therefore, those are the births ( $j \bar{a} t i$ ) that we would not want for sure.

- The point is that as long as we are in the rebirth process, such births cannot be avoided. Such births are much more likely than human birth just based on the statistics we can verify.
- For example, there are less than eight billion people on Earth. But there are a million times more ants on Earth! There are a trillion TYPES OF lifeforms on Earth; see, "WebLink: sciencealert.com: The Largest Study of Life Forms Ever Has Estimated That Earth Is Home to 1 TRILLION Species." These are mind-boggling numbers! That is not counting the other three realms in the apayy that we cannot see.
- That is why the Buddha said that a human bhava (existence) is VERY rare. Any "pleasures" that we experience as a human is of VERY SHORT duration. The suffering that the Buddha taught was the suffering in the rebirth process where a given living-being spends much more time in the apa$y \bar{a}$.
- Now we turn to the issue of "fear of non-existence in this world."


## We Are "Effectively Not in Existence" During at Least a Third of a Day

8. Even though we may fear "extinction out of existence," we are not aware of "our existence" during sleep. We are not conscious while we sleep, especially during the deep sleep cycle. Most of the time, we go to sleep and until we wake up the next morning, we are completely unaware of our existence in the world.

- We don't think about that normally. But I became acutely aware of this fact when I was made unconscious for over 9 hours during my brain surgery. I remember losing consciousness after the injection of the drug. The next thing I was aware of was when I came out of the drug-induced unconsciousness state.
- While unconscious or in deep sleep, we are (effectively) "not in this world."
- When an Arahant dies, it will be like in such an "unconscious state (as far as this world is concerned)" forever. But he/she would have merged with Nibbāna. The Buddha clearly stated that Nibbāna exists. We just cannot explain it in terms of the concepts (rūpa, citta, cetasika) in this world. See, "Nibbāna "Exists", but Not in This World."
- There is no overlap between "this world of 31 realms" and Nibbāna (full Nibbāna or Parinibbāna.) They are mutually exclusive. One is either "in this world" or "in Parinibbāna." Either the Buddha or any of the Arahants who have passed away are not in this world anymore.
- Once an Arahant dies and merges with Nibbāna, there will be no more deaths. Attainment of Nibbāna is by removing ALL causes for the birth and death cycle (with complete removal of avijj $\bar{a}$.) That is why Nibbāna is also called "deathless."


## Comments of Person 2

9. The second comment that I chose was from Person 2. Some of the selected parts are below.

- "..I was meditating yesterday and had this weird "experience." It freaks me the hell out because it was like I was never there. I'm just feeling scared now after that experience. It felt extremely beautiful to me yesterday but right now I'm just freaking out for some reason. My mind is just racing with the thought "I don't want to die" and I'm just having an existential crisis."
- 'I'm wishing I never did any of this meditation or consciousness work in the first place because it's making me think that I can delude myself into thinking I'm alive but I've always been dead and have just been an empty void. I feel like I'm going insane. I'm just feeling a wave of negativity."
- 'I know that the way I'm phrasing it is silly but I'm just curious about people who are completely enlightened (if such a thing is $\mathbf{1 0 0 \%}$ possible). Are these people like talking corpses? All these words can come out their mouth and it looks like they're alive, but they're really dead?"


## Can One Lose Perception While Meditating?

10. The first part of Person 2's comment is to do with meditation. What he experienced was a "perceptionless meditative state" or an "asañña samādhi."

- Such a state is reached by focusing on getting rid of ALL thoughts that come to the mind. That is NOT Buddhist meditation. In Buddhist meditation, one stops ONLY those thoughts that are immoral. One would CULTIVATE good or moral thoughts.
- One who cultivates such an anāriya meditation may be reborn in the asañña realm. That realm has a very long lifetime and there are no thoughts arising. It is like being unconscious for a billion years! Of course, that life will also end and one would be back in another realm.


## Is An Arahant a Zombie?

11. Now, let us discuss the second highlighted comment from Person 2. An Arahant does not lose perception like in the case above in \#10. A living Arahant "engages with the external world" just like anyone else.

- The only difference is that a living Arahant WILL NOT generate greedy, angry, or unwise thoughts.
- But he/she will recognize people as his/her mother, friend, an attractive person/object. He/she will experience the sweetness of sugar or the bitterness of vinegar, etc. Until the death of the physical body, an Arahant will live like any other human.


## Nibbāna is Escape From Suffering - Two Types of Nibbāna

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- WebLink: suttacentral: Ādittapariyāya Sutta (SN 35.28) is one of the early discourses of the Buddha. In that sutta, the Buddha compared said that the world is burning. That means the mind of anyone who embraces the world as good and fruitful is always "burning" or "under stress." That stress goes away at the first stage of Nibbāna (saupādisesa Nibbāna) experienced by a living Arahant.
- However, a living Arahant has a physical body that arose due to past kamma. That body can experience bad kamma vipāka from the past. After the death of that physical body, an Arahant will not be reborn and that is the end of any and all suffering. That is anupādisesa Nibbāna or Parinibbāna (full Nibbāna.)

13. Finally, if anyone has other issues related to this topic, this is a good time to discuss them. This kind of discussion will help clarify issues that I may not have thought about, but others may have.

# 5.2.9.6 Worldview of the Buddha - Explanatory Material 

Ghost 1990 Movie - Good Depiction of Gandhabba Concept

Mental Body Versus the Physical Body<br>"Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars - Part 1<br>"Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars - Part 2

January 17, 2020; revised August 29, 2022 (added \#1; other minor revisions)

## Introduction

1. I have been trying to convey the concept of a gandhabba (mental body or manomaya kāya) for several years. But I don't think many readers grasp the concept well. One critical problem is that sometimes it is tough to explain a new concept with just words.

- When we see the word "kāya" (body), We immediately perceive a "solid body" like our physical body. But the "manomaya kāya" or the "gandhabba kaya" of a gandhabba has no "matter" as in solid objects.
- In Buddha Dhamma, "rūpa" includes energy and "tangible matter." Modern science has also adopted this after Einstein showed that matter and energy are related by his famous equation, $\mathrm{E}=\mathrm{mc}^{\wedge} 2$. Also, see "Photons Are Particles Not Waves." Radio waves are also photons.
- We can listen to a radio in the house because radio waves can go through walls. A gandhabba is like radio waves and can go through walls. That is how those with iddhi powers go through walls, as described in many suttas; see "Pātihāriya (Supernormal Abilities) of a Buddha - Part I."

2. The 1990 movie "Ghost" provides a good visualization of gandhabba. That movie is about the gandhabba of Sam Wheat, who dies tragically.

- A description of the movie and the plot is in the Wikipedia article "Ghost (1990 film)." However, one MUST watch the movie and read the following discussion to understand the gandhabba concept. A free version of the full movie is available online; make sure it is the 1990 version.


## The Background (Up to 23 Minutes)

3. From the above article: "Sam Wheat, a banker, and his girlfriend Molly Jensen, a potter, renovate and move into an apartment in Manhattan with the help of Sam's friend and co-worker Carl Bruner. One afternoon, Sam confides in Carl about his discovery of unusually high balances in obscure bank accounts. He decides to investigate the matter himself, declining Carl's offer of assistance. That night, Sam and Molly are attacked by a mugger who shoots and kills Sam in a scuffle before stealing his wallet. Sam sees Molly crying over his body and discovers he is now a ghost, invisible and unable to interact with the mortal world."

- The ghost, of course, is the gandhabba or the manomaya kāya of Sam. The movie clearly shows some of the features of the gandhabba that I have tried to explain with words. When Sam dies, his gandhabba comes out of the dead body. Initially, he does not even realize that he has died. By the way, if one dies such a sudden death, there is no time to feel the physical pain.
- So, Sam is confused when he sees his dead body and his girlfriend, Molly, crying. It takes him a little while to realize what happened. He sees his own bloodied body held up by Molly. He tries to touch the body, and his fingers "go through the dead body." We can disregard the next few moments showing the "white light" coming to "take him to heaven." This will be discussed in \#12 below.
- When a human dies suddenly by a gunshot, his "bhava" will likely not change. So, Sam probably has more time left in the human bhava, but he now has to stay in the "gandhabba state" until a matching mother's womb becomes available for his next human birth. See, "Bhava and Jāti - States of Existence and Births Therein."
- According to the movie script, Sam's mind is focused on Molly, and thus the "white light" goes back without him.


## Gandhabba Is Not a "Scary Misty Ghost"

4. Many of you may have imagined that a gandhabba is like a "scary misty ghost" as in popular cartoons. However, a gandhabba coming out of a body is a "complete imprint" of that human including the clothes he/she had been wearing.

- Thus, Sam's ghost or Sam's gandhabba looks just like Sam when he died, complete with whatever he was wearing. That is part of the "utuja kāya" or the "fine body" around the "mental body." That mental body by itself is just a few suddhatthaka.
- However, when that gandhabba is pulled into a womb, the utuja kāya is shed and only the "pure mental body" of a few suddhatthaka merge with the zygote in the womb. See, "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception" and "Cloning and Gandhabba."


## At the Hospital (Up to 26 minutes)

5. An ambulance takes Sam's body to the hospital, and he stays by the dead body trying to make sense of things. Of course, with that "mental body," he can go anywhere he wishes.

- While sitting by his dead body, another gandhabba (old guy) comes and talks to him. They also watch another patient dying and his "ghost" or gandhabba taken to heaven with the "white light." As the old guy says, most of the dead go to hell not heaven.
- Then an attendant comes and takes his dead body "right through him." That is what II try to say that a gandhabba has a "very subtle fine body." It is an "energy body" or a "force field."
- His gandhabba body" has only a trace of matter. Solid objects can go right through, and "he" can go through solid objects!


## Sam's Ghost (Gandhabba) Learning About the Gandhabba World (Para Loka) - (Up to 54 minutes)

6. Sam sees another "gandhabba woman" walking through a tombstone at his funeral. Later, at Molly's place, he goes "through a door" for the first time. Sam's killer comes to Molly's apartment, and Sam follows him back to the killer's apartment. On the subway train ride, Sam meets a violent "subway ghost" who has learned to move physical objects with mind power. Later on, Sam would learn from him how to focus on mental energy and move physical objects.

- That is possible per Buddha Dhamma. Even though most gandhabbā do not have such an ability, a few of them may also get such capability due to "puñña iddhi" or due to exceptional past kamma vipāka.

7. Anyway, Sam finds out that the name of his killer is Willie. In Willie's neighborhood, Sam also meets psychic Oda Mae, a charlatan pretending to communicate with the spirits of the dead. However, it turns out that Oda's mother had such capabilities, and after the meeting with "Sam's ghost," Oda can also hear his voice.

- That is also possible per Buddha Dhamma. Some humans are born with puñña iddhi to be able to hear and/or see gandhabbā. Such accounts (over long periods) may be responsible for the "cartoon versions" we come across in books and movies such as this.
- Sam persuades Oda Mae to help him. They still have a hard time convincing Molly. But Molly is convinced by the personal details Sam provides through Oda.

At this point, you may want to watch the movie. I will be revealing the storyline from this point. If you want to enjoy the film, it is a good idea to finish watching it and then read the rest of this post.

## Sam's Friend Carl - (Up to 72 minutes)

8. Molly decides to contact Carl, a friend and co-worker of Sam. She tells him that Sam's ghost discovered his killer was Willie. Carl promises to check on that.

- Molly goes to the police, and they don't believe the story either. The detective says there is no record of Willie, but Oda Mae has a history of deceiving people.
- Meanwhile, Carl goes to meet Willie and Sam follows him. Sam is shocked to find out that it was Carl who hired Willie. It turns out that Sam had a bank code in his wallet for an account that had four million dollars, and Carl wanted Willie to get Sam's wallet. But things did not go as planned, and Willie shot and killed Sam.
- Later on, Carl goes back to Molly and tries to seduce her. Sam gets into a rage and lunges at Carl. Of course, he could not make contact, but he was astonished to see that he could knock a picture off a table.


## Sam's Ghost Learns How to Make Bodily Contact - (Up to 78 minutes)

9. Sam remembers the "subway ghost" who can move physical objects with mind power. He returns to the subway and learns how to focus the mind's power to move physical objects.

- In Buddha Dhamma, that is possible via cultivating jhāna. As we discussed before, there are rare cases where a gandhabba would be able to make physical contact via puñña iddhi. However, this movie aspect is unlikely to happen in real life.
- This is why it is not fun to be a gandhabba. Some gandhabbā (ghosts in the movie) can see and hear humans. But they are frustrated that they cannot touch, eat food, or smell scents like humans do. There is a scene in the movie where the "subway ghost" says he would give anything to smoke a cigarette (@ 76 minutes.)
- (I have mentioned in previous posts that a gandhabba can "take in various types of scents" and become a bit denser. That is a different mechanism than inhaling through the nose (a gandhabba only has an imprint of a nose and not a real nose.)


## Mind Power - (Up to 78 minutes)

10. The "subway ghost" explains to Sam that he has no physical body even though he seems to be wearing clothes etc. He says, "you've got no body (meaning no physical body), son. It is all up here" and points to the head. (But of course, the seat of the mind is not in the head. It is close to where the physical heart normally is.)

- Subway ghost says, "If you want to move something, you've got to move it with your mind. You've got to focus all your anger, love, and hate, and push from all the way here, from the middle of your stomach. And let it explode like a reactor." (That turns out to be the right place!)
- That is a CRITICAL point. Even from our own experience, we know that when we try to do something hard, the "push" comes from the heart area, and not the head.
- The real power is in our thoughts (specifically javana citta.) That power can be highly focused on when one is in a jhāna. But when one is in jhāna samāpatti, one can focus the mind power and even

CREATE matter! See, "Mystical Phenomena in Buddhism?." [samāpatti :[f.] attainment; an enjoying stage of meditation.]

## Oda Mae Is Now a Genuine Psychic Reader - (Up to 80 minutes)

11. Oda Mae is no longer a fake. She can make contact with many "ghosts" or gandhabbas in the para loka. As you see, the para loka co-exists with our loka; it is just that we cannot see those in the para loka.

- However, she is now in trouble since Carl knows her identity. The story gets interesting now and there are no more "technical details" that need to be discussed here.
- If there are questions, we can discuss them at the discussion forum. This is a very complex subject, but I hope you get a general idea.


## Other Relevant Points - Births in Different Realms

12. A human gandhabba (ghost in the movie) comes out of a dead body ONLY IF that person has more kammic energy left for human bhava. That is the case in many instances, especially if one dies by a gunshot as in this case.

- However, if the kammic energy for human bhava runs out at the moment of death, then an entirely different event occurs. Let us consider specific cases of a human dying and grasping an animal, Deva, and Brahma bhava.
- If the dying human grasps an animal bhava (say a dog), then instead of a "human ghost" it is a "dog ghost" or a "dog gandhabba" that comes out of the dead body. That "dog gandhabba" will not stay in that vicinity. It will be attracted to somewhere there are dogs with matching gati. Then it will stay there until a suitable womb becomes available, and at that time it will be drawn into that womb.
- A very different thing happens if a dying human grasps a Deva bhava. In that case, no "ghost" or gandhabba will come out of the dead body. Instead, a full-blown Deva will appear in a matching Deva realm instantaneously. If a Brahma bhava is grasped, a Brahma will appear in the matching Brahma realm.
- What we discussed in that last bullet is a critical point. There is no "being" going from here to the Deva or Brahma realm (located far above the Earth.) The human dies here and Deva (or Brahma) is born there. Due to a past cause (kamma), a Deva or a Brahma is born at the appropriate location.


## Other Misconceptions in the Movie

13. The movie shows that "good people" like Sam get to go to heaven (though the white light) and "bad people" like Carl and Willie are taken to hell by "hell beings." But Buddha Dhamma has a different picture of rebirth.

- First, hell and heaven (Deva realms) are not the only two "destinations." One can be born among any of the 31 realms, including the animal realm we see.
- The second is that one's human bhava does not normally end at death. A human bhava can last thousands of years and unless one has used up all kammic energy for the human bhava, one could be reborn with a human body again. In that case, the "mental body" corresponding to the human bhava (i.e., human gandhabba) comes out of the dead body and has to wait until a matching womb becomes available.
- There is an exception to the rule in the last bullet. If one has done a ānantariya kamma (like killing a parent or cultivating a jhāna) then one's human bhava will end at the death of the physical body even if there is more kammic energy left. In the first case, one will be born in hell and in the second (jhāna) one will be born in a Brahma realm.
- There are a few other inconsistencies in the movie, but those are the major ones.


## Pāli Word for Ghost is "Bhūta"

14. Another interesting point is that the Pāli word for "ghost" is "bhūta."

- Bhūta in Pāli (and Sinhala, @ŋ) means an entity that one cannot grasp.
- For example, scientists are trying to figure out the fundamental "blocks" that all matter is made of. They initially thought an atom would be the smallest unit of matter. Then they discovered that an atom is made of electrons, protons, and neutrons. They kept probing deeper and now are down to levels where it is hard to distinguish between "matter" and "energy."
- The four great elements (cattāri mahābhūtāni) in Buddha Dhamma are pathavī, āpo, tejo, and vāyo. But they can NEVER be detected individually. They ALWAYS come in packets called "suddhatthaka." A suddhatṭhaka has those four great elements and four more elementary units. Even that unit cannot be "seen" and is said to be at the "bhūta stage."
- A gandhabba (ghost in the above discussion) has only three suddhatthaka (they are called dasaka because when vibrational and rotational "modes" are added to become "ten units each."
- To be visible to our eyes, billions and billions of such suddhattthaka need to be piled up. We can see that a gandhabba hardly has any "tangible matter." That is why it is called a "ghost" or a "bhūta."


## One Last Thing

15. At 109 minutes, Oda Mae "lets" Sam get into her physical body so that Molly will be able to "touch him" for the last time.

- That is possible according to Buddha Dhamma. A gandhabba can "get into" that physical body of a willing human.
- Even if the human is not willing but has a "weak mind," a rogue gandhabba can "get in." It is said that human is now "possessed." Such cases are still reported in Sri Lanka and the human is said to be "possessed by a demon." But it is usually a gandhabba with bad character and not a demon.
- By the way, I was very much moved by that last scene. This is part of the suffering we tend to be unaware of or even disregard. It is a good example of "piyehi vippayogo dukkho" OR "separation from what is loved is suffering." We will all face that at least at the moment of death. We will have no choice but to leave all that we love.

There are many more details like that. But the above discussion should provide the basic ideas involved with a gandhabba. As the Buddha admonished, we will never be able to uncover and sort out all such complexities. But it is good to be aware of the general ideas involved.

## Mental Body Versus the Physical Body

February 2, 2020; revised August 24, 2021

## Essential Facts for this post

1. The mental body is far more important than the physical body. Let me first summarize the relevant conclusions from the "Origin of Life" section for this post.

- The mind does not exist by itself. There must be at least a trace of matter for the mind to exist. That is a critical point in Buddha Dhamma that many people do not realize. The "seat of the mind" is called "hadaya vatthu." It is unbelievably small and is created by kammic energy when a living being grasps a new existence. In addition to hadaya vatthu, up to five "pasāda rūpa" are created by the kammic energy at that time.
- That package, hadaya vatthu together with the set of pasāda rūpa is the "smallest unit of existence." It is called the "manomaya kāya" because the energy for its creation comes from the kammic energy based on a strong past kamma. See, "Origin of Life - One Creates One's Own Future Lives."
- In the 20 Brahma realms (out of 31 realms in this world) that "manomaya kaya" is all they have. They do not need a physical body with "flesh and blood" because those Brahmā do not experience taste, smell, or touch.
- When a living being is born in the human realm, it is born with that "manomaya kāa"" which is given a special name of gandhabba. When a suitable womb with "matching gati" appears, that gandhabba is drawn into it and merges with the zygote there. That "living zygote" first grows into a baby (by taking in food from the mother.). After being born, that baby grows into an adult with a body weighing a hundred plus pounds (or tens of kg.) Details in \#4 below.
- Thus, it is clear that virtually all physical matter in the human body comes from food.


## The Critical "Body" Is Not "Physical Body" But "Mental Body" (Manomaya Kāya)

2. Therefore, in most of the realms below the Brahma realms, there is an "additional body," the "physical body."

- That physical body is required ONLY to provide sensory inputs on tastes, smells, and touches.
- In contrast to the physical body, the mental body has "something extra" that makes it ALIVE, as we will discuss below. It is quite clear that the "physical body" is secondary to the "mental body" (manomaya $k \bar{a} y a$ or the gandhabba.)
- In fact, the mental body can perform the other functions (seeing and hearing) BETTER if it is not trapped inside the physical body.
- The lady in the following video was born blind. She could not see only because there was something wrong with her PHYSICAL eyes, the optic nerve, or the visual cortex in the brain. Once the gandhabba (mental body) came out, she was able to see for the first time in her life:

WebLink: youtube: Near Death Experience - Blind woman 'sees' while out of body

- In the previous post, "Origin of Life - One Creates One's Own Future Lives," I added another relevant video a day after that post was published. You may want to watch that video too. Both these videos present powerful evidence of not only the existence of gandhabba but also why it is the "essence of a human." The physical body is just a shell.
- All mental activity occurs in the gandhabba or the mental body. However, we cannot taste, smell, or touch without that physical body.


## Relevance to Satipatṭhāna Bhāvanā - Paṭikūlamanasikāra Pabba

3. In the Mahā Satipatthāna Sutta (DN 22,) the Buddha allocated several sections under the Kāyānupassanā section to discuss the physical human body.

- The subsection on 1.4. Kāyānupassanā Pațikūlamanasikāra Pabba describes the 32 parts of the human body. That title is incorrectly translated as "Applying the Mind to Repulsiveness of the Body." That section shows that the physical body of a human is just a "collection of parts."
- The Buddha never emphasized "repulsiveness" of anything. (He only emphasized the "unfruitfulness" of getting attached to "mind-pleasing" things in this world.)
- If one starts contemplating that one's body is repulsive (as many people mistakenly do,) that only leads to patigha (friction) in mind. Such a mindset is not conducive to meditation.


## Relevance to Satipatṭhāna Bhāvanā - Dhātumanasikāra Pabba

4. The next subsection, 1.5. Kāyānupassanā Dhātumanasikāra Pabba, points out that the physical body only has four great elements (pathavī dhātu, āpo dhātu, tejo dhātu, vāyo dhātu.) Bodies of any other living beings are, as well as inert objects, also have the same four great elements. There is NOTHING in the PHYSICAL BODY of a human being that is different from an animal or an inert object.

- In the language of modern science, all those have the same atoms and molecules.
- There is nothing special about the composition of the human body. The basic unit of a living cell is the same for a human as an animal. See the video in \#9 of the post, "Origin of Life - There is No Traceable Origin." That post started the series of posts on "Origin of Life." We will be referring back to those posts often.
- If there is anything "special" in a human or animal body, that is the cell. We remember that a human physical body starts with just a single cell (zygote) and, of course, a gandhabba. See, "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception" and "Cloning and Gandhabba."
- By the way, plants have cells too. A tiny seed grows into a big tree because of cell division. However, only humans and animals have mental bodies, that set them apart from plants. Plants cannot think.


## Relevance to Satipaṭthāna Bhāvanā - Navasivathika Pabba

5. Then the section on 1.6. Kāyānupassanā Navasivathika Pabba is about contemplating on what happens to that physical body after one dies.

- Once the gandhabba or the manomaya kāya leaves a dead physical body, that physical body is no different from a log of wood.
- It is the manomaya kāya that keeps a physical body "live" and "warm." As soon as the gandhabba leaves for good, the physical body loses the "aliveness." Our dog died several years ago, and I was shocked when I touched its dead body. It was cold and rigid, just like a piece of wood. The body warmth may be there for a little while because it takes some time to lose the body heat.
- In the days of the Buddha, most dead bodies were taken deep into the forests and discarded. Then wild animals would come and eat those bodies. If animals do not eat such a body, it will start decaying and will start smelling bad. Then it will lose the flesh over time, and only the bones would be left. Even those bones will degrade and become dust in the long term.
- This Navasivathika Bhāvanā needs to be done in that fashion, to realize the unfruitfuiness of getting overly attached to the physical body. Of course, we need to keep it in good shape by eating healthy and exercising regularly. If the physical body becomes out-of-shape that will lead to illnesses and much discomfort. We need to live a comfortable (not luxurious) life to make progress on the Path.


## The Uniqueness of the Mental Body (Manomaya Kāya)

6. It helps a lot to realize that one's physical body cannot be taken as one's essence.

- Even the mental body does not have an essence since that also will be discarded when a new existence (bhava) is grasped.
- However, the mental body is ESSENTIAL to make progress on the Path. The mental body of human existence is "hard to get." Thus, we should utilize it now that we have that rare opportunity.

Why Is Mental Body Unique?
7. The mental body (gandhabba) is VERY DIFFERENT from the physical body. The mental body has a few of the smallest units of matter (suddhatthaka) TOGETHER with the essential elements of LIFE.

Those ESSENTIAL elements are the hadaya vatthu and a set of five pasāda rūpa. Those are the only LIVE things in a human (or an animal.)

- The hadaya vatthu is the "seat of the mind" and where thoughts (citta) arise.
- We experience the five physical, sensory inputs with the five pasāda rūpa.
- Those essential items (collectively called gandhabba) are created by kammic energy and sustain the human bhava.


## How the Mental Body Controls the Physical Body

8. A live physical body has a gandhabba (mental body) in it. In the post "Our Mental Body - Gandhabba," we discussed a good analogy of how the mental body controls the physical body (see \#8 in that post.)

- That gandhabba consists of a UNIQUE set of seven items called "dasaka" or "packages of tens." Those are listed in \#9 of the post "Gandhabba Sensing the World - With and Without a Physical Body." In many posts, I often refer to six entities: hadaya vatthu and five pasāda rūpa.
- Different types of dasaka are formed just by incorporating one mode of spin (bramana) and one mode of rotation (paribramana) to a suddhatthaka (smallest unit of matter.) That is how an inert suddhatthaka becomes ALIVE. When the kammic energy wears out, those motions stop, which is the end of that existence (bhava.)
- Details are in the two posts, "Our Mental Body - Gandhabba," and "Gandhabba Sensing the World With and Without a Physical Body." One can get a deeper understanding by reading those posts. It is good to have at least a general idea.


## Kammic Energy creates the Mental Body

9. In fact, as we have discussed, when ANY living being grasps ANY new existence, a corresponding mental body is created by the kammic energy. That mental body matches the particular kamma that was responsible for the new existence (bhava.)

- If that kamma was a papa kamma done with anger (say the killing of a human,) then the new bhava could be in a niraya (hell.) If that kamma was a puñ̃̃a kamma done with compassion (say taking care of an invalid or sick person,) then the new bhava could be in a Deva realm. See, "Kilesa - Relationship To Akusala, Kusala, And Puñ̃̃a Kamma."
- Both those two scenarios could be true of ANY person who is below the Sotāpanna Anugāmi stage.
- The point is that even if one did not kill a human in the CURRENT life, such crimes might have been done in a previous life. We have no idea what we have done in our previous lives. That is the danger in the rebirth process.


## Gandhabba (Mental Body) Is Unique to Human and Animal Realms

10. We started the series with five posts ("Origin of Life - There is No Traceable Origin" to "Cloning and Gandhabba" that laid the basic foundation of the Buddha's description of life. As summarized in that first post, Buddha taught that there is no "traceable beginning" to life. That means each of us has existed (among the 31 realms of this world) "forever."

- The next four posts specifically dealt with life in the human realm. It is a bit complex because human life involves a physical body (collection of material body parts) in addition to the mental body created by kammic energy. That same picture also holds for the animal realm.
- Living beings in all other realms have "one integrated body." For example, a Brahma only has a "body" very similar to the human mental body (gandhabba.) Such a "body" is "mostly mental" and the amount
of matter is million-times smaller than a mustard seed. Of course, it expands to the size of the human body while inside the human body (it is like an energy field.)
- A Deva has a bit more dense "material body" but is still invisible to us. Again, it has no gandhabba-type separate mental body.
- Beings in the lower realms may have denser bodies but again do not have separate mental bodies.
- We need to focus more on human life. Without the concept of gandhabba, we cannot explain the growth of a "human body" in the mother's womb (starting with an inert single cell .) That is why I published those four posts on gandhabba at the beginning of the series.


## Summary

11. The mental body is much more important than the physical body due to the following reasons.

- The "essence of a human" is the mental body that has the hadaya vatthu (seat of the mind) and the five pasāda rūpa (that "sense" visuals, sounds, tastes, smells, and touches.) Those entities are what constitute "the mind." The ONLY WAY those six entities created is via our kammic energy in our thoughts (specifically javana cittā.)
- The mental body (gandhabba) controls the physical body.
- A physical body lives only about a hundred years, while the mental body (gandhabba) may last hundreds of years.
- However, we also need a healthy physical body to live a healthy life. We especially need a healthy brain. The brain first processes all external sensory inputs.


### 5.2.9.6 "Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars - Part 1

February 8, 2020; added \#13 (pronunciation guide) on July 23, 2020; August 25, 2022; October 14, 2022

## Background

1. Just three months after the Buddha's Parinibbāna (passing away), the First Buddhist Council (Dhamma Sangāyanā) took place. The leading disciples of the Buddha realized the importance of organizing the teachings of the Buddha accumulated over 45 years. Organizing the material into "three baskets" (Tipiṭaka) was completed only at the Third Council held 200 years after the Parinibbāna of the Buddha.

- The material in the Tipitaka was transmitted mostly verbally from one generation to the next over roughly the first four hundred years. It was only at the Fourth Council that the Tipitaka was written down.
- The Tipitaka (or the Pāli Canon) was written down in Matale, Sri Lanka, at the turn of the first century, 2000 years ago. Pāli is a spoken language and does not have a script. The Tipiṭaka was written in the Sinhala script.
- See details in "Preservation of the Buddha Dhamma."


## Writing Pāli Words in English - Different Convention

2. There are two specific issues in writing Pāli words in any language. Note that this is not regarding translation to English.

- Pāli is a phonetic language, meaning words must provide original sounds. Many words have their meanings explicit in the way they sound. See "Why is it Necessary to Learn Key Pāli Words?"
- However, In "Standard English," the same letter combinations may yield different sounds. For example, "th" is pronounced differently in "them" than in "thief." Therefore, "Standard English" writing will lead to problems writing Pāli words.
- The second problem is that Pāli words written in "Standard English" become very long. I see many Sri Lankans writing "anicca" as "anichcha" (2ช3อ包in Sinhala) because that is how it is pronounced. I also used to write "gati" as "gathi" since that is how it is pronounced.
- However, we must adhere to the convention adopted by the Early Europeans (in the late 1800s) to avoid confusion.

3. When the early Europeans started writing the Pāli Tipitaka using the English alphabet (a Latin alphabet), they realized the necessity to represent the original sounds in an "unambiguous and efficient" way.

- We will call the convention they adopted "Tipitaka English."
- That "Tipiṭaka English" convention is DIFFERENT from "Standard English."
- Let us first address the "sound" issue.


## English "th" Sound Depends on the Word

4. We know that "th" represents a different sound in the word "them" than in "thief."

- A phoneme is the smallest contrastive segment in a language. In other words, they are the smallest building blocks that make the difference between two words. The term digraph describes a combination of two letters representing only a single phoneme.
- In words like them, father, and writhe, the digraph is th (voiced), and the phoneme is /th/. This is the " $\varepsilon$ " sound in Sinhala, as we will see below.
- On the other hand, in words like thief, Catholic, and both, the digraph is th (voiceless) and the phoneme is /th/. This is the " $\square$ " sound in Sinhala.
- Don't worry about the above technical terms. The point here is that one MUST be aware of the correct "Standard English" when pronouncing those English words.
- That was one reason to adopt a new "Tipitaka English" convention. Now, let us discuss the second reason.


## Pāli Words can become very long in "Standard English"

5. Now, let us see why the "Standard English" convention leads to long words written with the English (Latin) alphabet. Let us take a simple Pāli word, "citta." In the original Tipitaka, it was written as "33ơ? Sinhala.

The "ch" sound in English is seen, for example, in "china" and "chain." It takes two English letters to produce the "D" sound. In the same way, the "Ђ"" sound requires two letters, "th," in English as in "Theme" or "both."

- Therefore, in "Standard English," "(3)>>'బ") would be reproduced as "chiththa."
- As you can see, writing that word using "Standard English" would take eight letters instead of five in "citta."
- With more complex Pāli words, the corresponding "Standard English" reproduction would be cumbersome. That seems to be the second reason for using a different "Tipitaka English" convention; see below.


## Evolution of "Tipitaka English"

To address the above issues, a "Tipitaka English" convention was adopted in the 1800s, as discussed below. You will see it below if you have not grasped what I am trying to get to.
6. I came across an old book by James D'Alwis, published in $\mathbf{1 8 7 0}$ (Ref. 1), that describes the historical process of cataloging the Pāli literature found in Sri Lanka (called Ceylon at that time.) The book is available on Amazon.

- The seed for the project was a request by a government agent in 1868 to the "Chief Translator to Government" to assist with a project in India to collect and compile Sanskrit literature.
- In 1869, the Chief Translator to Government replied that nearly all Sanskrit manuscripts in Ceylon were "importations from India." He suggested that it would be worthwhile to initiate a similar effort to collect and compile the Pāli and Sinhalese manuscripts in Ceylon.
- That proposal was approved in early 1870. James D'Alwis, who had done some work on Pāli/Sinhalese literature and Buddhism, was selected to collect and compile such manuscripts mainly from Buddhist temples ("pansalas.)"
- Mr. D'Alwis was a civil servant of the British Government at that time. At that time, there was a concerted effort by the English civil servants to recover and preserve all ancient literature that they came across in Asian countries. See "Background on the Current Revival of Buddhism (Buddha Dhamma)."
- Dr. Malalasekera's account confirms the above background in Ref. 2, pp. xv-xvii.


## The Original Convention for "Tipiṭaka English"

7. The goal was to collect all Pāli manuscripts and write them with the English (Latin) alphabet. The early work by Mr. D'Alwis followed (as quoted from p. xxvii of the book) 'the system sanctioned by Government in the Minute, which is published in the Appendix."

- A full page in the Appendix has the complete alphabet of the Sinhala language (and the corresponding English script adopted.) Download here: WebLink: PureDhamma Picture: Complete Orthography $=$ Sinhala to English
- That page (on p. 234 of the book) has the Sinhala alphabet, together with the Latin letters adopted to represent those sounds (adopted on August 28, 1866.) That was the first version of the "Tipitaka English" convention. As we will see below, one more change was adopted based on a recommendation by D'Alwis.
- It may be difficult to read that page. The following is an enlarged section containing the consonants.

Consonants.

| Gutterals | ... | $\infty \mathrm{k}$ | จ kh | (6) g | *s ${ }^{\text {g }} \mathrm{gh}$ | Q in |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Palatals | ... | 2 ch | 8 chh | of | 20. jh | ®s |
| ISinguals | ... | 0 t | Q th | Q d | \# th | \% 0 n |
| Dentals |  | $\cdots \mathrm{t}$ | $\theta$ th | $¢_{9} 1$ | Q dh | 00 n |
| Labials |  | E11 | $\theta \mathrm{ph}$ | อ 1 | * bh | (e) 11 |
| Semi vowel | 1 | ce y | 6 r | Cl | e | - v |
| Sibilants | ... | es s | ce $\mathrm{s}^{\prime}$ | \% sh | (3) h |  |

Download here: Pāli Words - Sinhala to English Script - Consonants

## Consonants

| Gutterals | 20k | จkh | c) g | \% gh | ฉn่ |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Palatals | Och | \% chh | ¢ز | $20 . j \mathrm{~h}$ |  |
| Linguals | Ot | $\omega$ ¢ th | ฉ | చి ḍh | бn |


| Dentals | 3 t | oth | દ̨d | ■ dh | 3 n |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Labials | з $p$ | चิ-ph | هb | ७bh | Om |
| Semi vowels | $\omega \mathrm{y}$ | Or | ¢1 | e! | Ov |
| Sibilants | $\sim_{\text {us }}$ |  | ® sh | ठ h |  |

- Now, let us discuss some of the adopted conventions in "Tipiṭaka English."


## Only " $t$ " Represents the " $>$ " Sound

8. The letter " $\square$ " in Sinhala represents the sound "th" is in theme or north. But the "Tipitaka convention" is to use "t."

- Therefore, "theme" in "ordinary English" becomes "teme" in "Tipitaka English."
- The word "gati" is pronounced as "gathi," where the sound "th" as in theme. But the "Tipitaka English" convention is to write as "gati."
- The word "Tipitaka" also starts with the "ə"" sound. In "Standard English," it would be "Thipitaka." Anatta in "Standard English" would be "anaththa."
- Therefore, words become significantly shorter with the "Tipitaka English" convention. With more complex words with the "ch" and "th" sounds, the corresponding English words can become very long.


## Only "d" Represents the "ट̨" Sound

9. Another is the "e" sound, pronounced like "this." In "Tipitaka English," the letter "d" represents the "th" sound in "this" or "that."

- For example, the Pāli word "टृथ"" in "Tipiṭaka English" is "dasa." which needs to be pronounced like the "th" sound in "the" or "that."
- Of course, the word "dasa" appears in "dasa akusala" for "ten immoral deeds."
- More examples are sadda, hadaya and Deva.


## The "อ" Sound In the Above Table is With "ch"

10. It is interesting to see that the above Table (in \#7) has the "อ" sound represented with "ch" as in
"Standard English." Thus the decision to just use "c" to represent the "D" sound was made later.

- The text in D'Alwis's book represented that "mixed convention." On p. 136, for example, the name "Kacchchāna" appears. In modern texts, it is "Kaccāna."
- The word "vivicchati" ( $\mathfrak{( 1 ) త ో ర ి ~ i n ~ S i n h a l a ) ~ a p p e a r s ~ o n ~ p . ~} 73$ as "vivichchhati"" where "ch" represents the "D" sound and "chh" represented the "œ" sound. We can see why they decided to make that change too!
- By the time "The Dhammasangani" by Edward Müller came out in $\mathbf{1 8 8 5}$ (Ref. 3), they had adopted the current convention to use "c" to represent the "D" sound.


## Current Convention - Only "c" Represents the "ว" Sound

11. For example, the letter "อ" frequently appears in Pāli verses, and it has the "ch" sound (as in chai tea). In "ordinary English," the Pāli word anicca ( $2 \boldsymbol{2} \mathrm{z}$ 包) would be "anichcha." You can see why that would lead to very long words in English. I used to do that too, and I still see some Sri Lankans writing words that way.

- Therefore, in almost all cases, a single English letter "c" represents the "ch" sound in "Tipitaka English."
- Note that "chai tea" would be "cai tea" in "Tipitaka English"!


## "Tipiṭaka English" Conventions Hold Everywhere

12. The " $\square$ " sound is ALWAYS represented by " t ," and the following are some examples we use often.

- Atta, Anatta, gati, sota, tanhā, tejo, Tilakkhana, Tisarana, āyatana

The " $๕$ " sound is ALWAYS represented by "d" as in the following:

- Hadaya, sadda, dosa, Deva, desanā, diṭṭhi, dukkha, dugati, pasāda

Finally, the "อ" sound is ALWAYS represented by "c" as in the following:

- Anicca, citta, cakkhu, cuti, paccayā, sacca, rūpāvacara, cetasika, cetanā

The above words are pronounced in the audio below:
Pāli-words-Tipitaka-English-Post-1

## Pāli Alphabet with Illustrations \& subtitles

13. The following video could be very useful in learning the Pāli alphabet (in English.) Moreover, it provides excellent instructions on pronunciation.

WebLink: youtube: PALI 101 - Pāli for Beginners - Level 1 - Pāli Alphabet with Illustrations \& subtitles

## REFERENCES

1. James D'Alwis, "A Descriptive Catalogue of Sanskrit, Pāli, and Sinhalese Literary Works of Ceylon, Volume I" (1870)
2. G. P. Malalasekera, "Pāli Literature of Ceylon" (2010 edition; first edition 1928)
3. Edward Müller, "The Dhammasañgani" (1885)

A few more essential features of the "Tipitaka English" convention are discussed in the next post, "Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars - Part 2.

### 5.2.9.6 "Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars - Part 2

February 15, 2020; revised on July 23, 2020 added \#12 (pronunciation guide); August 25, 2022

## Introduction

1. In the previous post, we discussed the reasons for adopting a "Tipitaka English" convention to write Pāli words by European scholars in the 1800s. It is necessary to read that post first: "Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars - Part 1."

- As we discussed, those early European scholars realized the importance of the need to preserve the "Pāli sounds" as much as possible. Of course, the other requirement was to keep the corresponding English version short.
- In that post, we discussed the adoption of " $t$," " d ," and "c" to represent the " $\mathfrak{D}$," "民." and the "อ" sounds in Pāli.
- Here we will continue that discussion. The " $t$ " (with a "dot" underneath the " $t$ ") represents the " 0 " sound in Pāli.
- Then there are aspirated sounds "th", "dh", "ch", and "ṭh" respectively for the " t "" "d," " c ," and " t " sounds. Some of those "aspirated words" represent "emphasized versions" of the "unaspirated words." I will explain it below.


## We Need to Be Familiar With the "Tipitaka English" Convention

2. As I mentioned in the previous post, the above convention went into effect before 1900. Thus all Pāli documents compiled by the Pāli Text Society are consistent with this convention.

- The Pāli texts (with the English alphabet) available on the Sutta Central website are directly from the Pāli Text Society. Those texts are accurate. For example, here is the "WebLink: suttacentral: Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta (SN 56.11)" that was the first discourse delivered by the Buddha.
- It is an excellent idea to examine that sutta (and try pronunciations of those Pāli words) with the guidelines provided in my two posts on the "Tipiṭaka English" Convention.
- Many of my posts at the puredhamma.net website are not entirely consistent with the "Tipitaka English" Convention, but I will try to make them compatible gradually. I have been trying to "upgrade" several weekly posts in recent months.
- Of course, as I have repeatedly pointed out, many English translations of Pāli words at the Sutta Central site are not correct. Examples include anicca, anatta, Ānāpāna Bhāvanā, and viññāna. See, for example, "Misinterpretation of Anicca and Anatta by Early European Scholars."
- Now let us continue introducing the "Tipitaka English" convention.


## Only " C " Represents the "ठ" Sound

2. The "D" sound in Pāli is the "ta" sound in English, as in "Tom." The "O" sound in Pāli is ALWAYS represented by "t." Note the "dot" underneath the " t ."

- Some examples are Paṭicca, paṭigha, paṭiloma, paṭisandhi, paṭipadā.
- In the previous post, we saw that the " $\square$ " sound is ALWAYS represented by " t " (without the "dot" underneath the $t$.)
- The word Tipitaka is an excellent example of both sounds, the " $t$ " and the " $t$." I hope you can catch the difference in the audio in \#4 below.


## Aspirated Versions

3. Now, let us consider the "aspirated versions" of those four sounds we have discussed. We must remember that we are dealing with "Tipitaka English" and NOT "Standard English."

- The aspirated version accompanies a forceful expulsion of air. If you hold a thin piece of paper in front of the mouth, it should move when you make an "aspirated sound."
- The following video explains that for English words. But it is the same idea.


## WebLink: youtube: Aspirated sounds

## Putting Emphasis on " $\partial$ " Sound to Make the " $\omega$ " Sound

4. The " $t$ " ("ס") sound, when aspirated with "thh," becomes the " $\omega$ " sound. It is not that common to have the "th" by itself. An example is thapetvā, meaning "placement."

－Here are more examples of the＂t＂（＂0＂）AND＂ṭh＂（＂બ＂）sounds coming together：ditthi（ę己た్ for
 kammaṭ！$h \bar{n} n a$, satipat！̣hāna．
－In \＃2，we mentioned some example words with the＂$t$＂sound：Paticca，patigha，paṭiloma，paṭisandhi， paṭipadā．
 （ewsiffor living being；note that Bodhisatta is a living being who is striving to attain the Buddhahood．）
－Here is the pronunciation of the unaspirated paṭicca，paṭigha，paṭiloma，paṭisandhi，paṭipadā AND aspirated ṭhapetv $\bar{a}$ ．Both aspirated and unaspirated in aṭtha，diṭthi，sandiṭthika，at！thañgika， kammat！thāna，and satipat！̣thāna．Also，Tipitaka．
WebLink：mp3 file：Pali words Tipitaka English Post 2－1

## Putting Emphasis on＂$\quad$＂Sound to Make＂$\circlearrowleft$＂Sound

5．The sound＂th＂is the＂aspirated version＂of＂ t ＂as in Samatha（ $ఙ \circlearrowleft \bigcirc \vartheta$ in Sinhala）in Samatha Bhāvanā． The word ratha（ $6 \partial f o r ~ " v e h i c l e ") ~ i s ~ a n o t h e r . ~$
－Here are more words with both the＂$t$＂and the＂th＂sounds：tathāgata（ yathābhūta，hadaya vatthu．

6．There are a few words with both aspirated and unaspirated versions．For example，when the

－There are a few words like that where the meaning is emphasized with the aspirated version．We will discuss that with examples from the Tipitaka later on．Two more such words addressed in \＃8 below．
－Many other words do not have such an＂emphasized＂and＂non－emphasized＂versions．Here are some examples with ONLY the＂th＂sound：vithi，Itthi，Samatha，Thero，For example，there are no words as viti，Itti，Samata，or Tero．
－Here is the pronunciation of Samatha，ratha，tathāgata，natthi，atthi，yathābhūta，hadaya vatthu， vīthi，Itthi，Samatha，Thero．

WebLink：mp3 file：Pali words Tipitaka English Post 2－2

## Putting Emphasis on＂¿ृ＂Sound to Make the＂$ద$＂Sound

7．The sound＂dh＂is the＂aspirated version＂of＂d＂as in Dhamma（ద๑＂๑）．More examples of words with the ＂dh＂sound：Dhamma，adhamma，dhātu，gandha，gandhabba，middha，nirodha，saddhā，andha， sandhi，sādhu，patisandhi，samādhi．
－Both the unaspirated and the aspirated sounds are in words，Dhammapada（దఆ७ఆ̧̨ in Sinhala）and Buddha（（ذُ
－Here is the pronunciation of Dhamma，adhamma，dhātu，gandha，gandhabba，middha，nirodha， saddhā，andha，sandhi，sādhu，paṭisandhi，samādhi，Dhammapada，Buddha，passaddhi，iddhi， middha．
WebLink：mp3 file：Pali words Tipitaka English Post 2－3

## Putting Emphasis on＂อ＂Sound to Make the＂て్＂Sound

 unaspirated is in calana（Deb），meaning＂movement．＂

- Most Pāli words with the "ch" sound also have the "c" sound coming first. Some examples are, iccha, vicikicchā, appiccha (appa iccha), macchariya, micchā, micchācāra, micchā̄āc̄a, pariccheda, gacchati, uccheda.
- Two more critical Pāli words have the aspirated version emphasizing the meaning of the unaspirated version, just like in the case of atta/attha discussed above in \#6.
 emphasize the meanings of unaspirated words. We will discuss that in the next post.
- Here is the pronunciation of chanda, calana, iccha, vicikicch $\bar{a}$, appiccha, macchariya, micch $\bar{a}$, micchācāra, micchāvācā, pariccheda, gacchati, uccheda, icca, iccha, anicca, aniccha.

WebLink: mp3 file: Pali words Tipitaka English Post 2-4

## Connection to Key Concepts in Buddha Dhamma

9. Over the past year, I have realized that many misconceptions could be easily avoided by looking at a few Pāli words and their inherent meanings.

- For example, the Pāli word atta has two different meanings. Furthermore, the word attha emphasizes just one of those two meanings.
- Similarly, the meanings of the words icca and anicca become emphasized in iccha and aniccha.
- See "Icca, Nicca, Anicca - Important Connections."


## Many of Posts at Puredhamma.net May Not be Up To the "Tipiṭaka English" Convention

10. I gradually became aware of this issue over the past several months. During that time, I have progressively followed the above rules. I will try to stick to this convention in future posts and gradually revise old posts to be compatible. That will take some time.

- All Pāli literature on the Sutta Central website is compatible with the "Tipitaka English" convention.
- Once you select a sutta, you can access translations to several languages using the "hamburger icon" on the top left.
- Of course, all translations there have errors, especially with keywords like anicca, anatta, Ānāpāna Bhāvanā, and viññāṇa.


## Singular to Plural in Pāli

11. The following issue is somewhat unrelated, and many people could be aware of it. But I would mention it here since it is essential to know.

- Many Pāli nouns ending in "short $a(/ 2 /)$ " converted to plural by replacing that "short $a$ " with a "long $a$ " or $\bar{a}$.
- For example, Deva, Brahma, sutta, citta, apāya, gandhabba, jhāna are singular and the corresponding plural are Devā, Brahmā, suttā, cittā, apāyā, gandhabbā, jhānā.
- Finally, Pāli Glossary pages with pronunciation are available at "Tables and Summaries."


## Pāli Alphabet with Illustrations \& subtitles

12. The following video could be very useful in learning the Pāli alphabet (in English.) Moreover, it provides excellent instructions on pronunciation.

WebLink: youtube: PALI 101 - Pāli for Beginners - Level 1 - Pāli Alphabet with Illustrations \& subtitles

### 5.2.10 Origin of Life - One Creates One's Own Future Lives

January 25, 2020; revised January 26, 2020 (video inserted in \#15)

## Introduction - Origin of Life

1. In the first post in this series, I pointed out that there is no traceable "beginning" to the life of any existing living being. See, "Origin of Life - There is No Traceable Origin."

- However, any living being's FUTURE LIVES are created by that living being.
- It is critical to understand how one's mindset and thoughts (in particular abhisañkhāra) can lead to different types of rebirths. That is the basis of Buddha Dhamma and is explained in Paṭicca Samuppāda (PS.)
- In simple terms, "bad thoughts/mindset" lead to "bad births" and "good thoughts/mindset" lead to "good births." The problem is that most are "bad births" and those infrequent "good births" do not last long.
- The Buddha said, "One who sees Paṭicca Samuppāda sees the Dhamma. One who sees the Dhamma sees Paṭicca Samuppāda." See, "Paticca Samuppāda - "Pati+ichcha" + "Sama+uppāda"."

2. In the first several posts in "Origin of Life," we discussed the background material necessary to understand how a complex physical body of a human starts with a single cell, a zygote.

- However, the most important part of a human is not the physical body, but the mental body. It goes by various names in Buddha Dhamma, manomaya kāya and gandhabba being the most common. However, that mental body arises due to a pattisandhi viññāna and remains as a kamma bïja until coming to the mind of a living being at the beginning of a new existence (bhava) as a dhamm $\bar{a}$.
- Average humans focus only on keeping the physical body in good condition. It is much more beneficial to improve the "mental body." That way, one will be able to stop ALL FUTURE SUFFERING.


## Critical Role of Paṭicca Samuppāda

3. The seed (kamma bīja) for a future existence (bhava) is the patisandhi viññanna cultivated via "sañkhāra paccayā viññanna" in PS. I briefly discussed/explained that with nine recent posts on Paticca Samuppāda (PS.) The last of those posts, "Paticca Samuppāda - From Mind to Matter" came to that conclusion.

- In many previous posts, we have discussed that pațisandhi viñãāna, gandhabba, kamma bī̈ja, and dhammā are very similar terms. See, "Dhammā, Kamma, Sañkhāra, Mind - Critical Connections."
- When grasping a new human existence, that patisandhi viññāna becomes a human gandhabba with the complete blueprint of that human. See, "Dhammā, Kamma, Sañkhāra, Mind - Critical Connections."
- Then we discussed the 1990 movie "ghost" to provide visualization of a human gandhabba. A gandhabba has only a trace matter. An average human cannot see a gandhabba. However, it has the complete "blueprint" for a human. See, "Ghost 1990 Movie - Good Depiction of Gandhabba Concept."
- That gandhabba then gives rise to a fully-grown human as explained in the two posts, "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception" and "Cloning and Gandhabba."

4. There is a lot of information summarized above using different terms. In the following, I will try to organize that in a systematic way and will also describe the "bigger picture" within the 31 realms of existence.

## The General Process of Grasping an Existence (Bhava)

5. In broad terms, there are three main existences (bhava) but they branch out to thirty-one. Existence in the kāma bhava (i.e., 11 realms in kāma loka), rūpa bhava ( 16 realms in rūpāvacara Brahma loka), and arūpa bhava (4 realms in arūpāvacara Brahma loka.) The 11 realms in $k a \overline{m a}$ loka are the 4 realms in the apāya, one human, and six Deva realms.)

- Thus, there are 31 existences (bhava) in this world. Any living being belongs to one of those. Each such existence has a finite lifetime. Some are fixed and others are variable. Deva and Brahma realms have fixed lifetimes. Lower realms starting with the human realm have variable lifetimes. See, " 31 Realms of Existence."
- However, when a living being grasps a new existence in ANY realm, the duration of that existence WILL BE fixed. For the human and lower realms, that lifetime depends on the kammic energy that "feeds" that particular existence. For example, one human may have that human existence for 10,000 years and another may have only 900 years.


## Each Bhava Starts With a Mind-Made Body (Manomaya Kāya)

6. Any living being (other than an Arahant) will grasp (or latch onto) a new existence when the current existence runs out of its lifetime. At that moment, kammic energy for the new existence creates a "mindmade body" or a manomaya kāya.

- That transition from one existence (bhava) to another happens with an upapatti PS process. Specifically, that happens with the "upādāna paccayā bhava" step in that upapatti PS cycle.
- But it is a patisandhi viñ $\tilde{n} \bar{a} \underline{n a}$ " created via "sañkhāra paccayā viñnäna" step in PS that is responsible for that new existence (bhava.)
- In other words, the kammic energy embedded in that patisandhi viñ̃ān̄a is the energy that creates the manomaya kāya of the new existence (bhava.) Thus, manomaya kāya has only a tiny bit of energy that was created by the mind.
- That manomaya kāya does not die until the end of that bhava. Living beings in each and every realm will have a manomaya kāya.
- Details are at the nine posts on PS, "Paticca Samuppāda - Not 'Self' or 'No-Self."


## Brahma Realms Only Have Manomaya Kāya

7. A manomaya kāya has a hadaya vatthu (seat of the mind) and UP TO five pasāda rūpa (that enable experiencing the external world.) The hadaya vatthu is different for different realms and also has INDIVIDUAL characteristics. Thus even two humans will have different hadaya vatthu embedding their personal characteristics. The following is a brief summary of different realms.

- The four highest Brahma realms (arūpāvacara Brahma realms) have ONLY the hadaya vatthu. Those Brahmā can only think.
- Brahmā in the 16 rūpāvacara Brahma realms have hadaya vatthu and TWO pasāda rūpa: cakkhu and sota pasāda rūpa. They can see and hear with just those pasāda rūpa. They do not have physical bodies, and thus do not have eyes and ears like us. Their "seeing" does not require light and they "see' things far away. In the same way, they can hear sounds that are far away. But they need to "direct their attention" to a particular location to see or hear.
- All those Brahmā in the 20 Brahma realms have only manomaya kāya.


## Living Beings in Kāma Loka Realms Have Denser Bodies In Addition to Manomaya Käya

8. Things become complex when we get to the 11 realms in the kāma loka.

- Devā in the six Deva realms have manomaya kāya with hadaya vatthu and five pasāda rūpa. They also have "physical bodies" like ours but at a much finer level. Those "subtle bodies" are also created by kammic energy and thus Devā are born with their "fiull bodies." That means they do not grow or get old but just die at the end of their lifetimes. There is only one "jāti" within a Brahma or Deva bhava. We cannot see either Brahmā or Devā.
- Human "structure" is the same as that of the Devā but, of course, human physical bodies are much denser. Furthermore, human "structure" has many common features with the animal realm. The other three lower realms in the kāma loka are more complex and we will not discuss them here.
- Let us briefly discuss the features of the human and animal realm. I will address only the human realm, but most of those features are the same for the animal realm.


## There are Multiple Jāti Within a Human Bhava

9. A human also has a manomaya kāya with a hadaya vatthu and five pasāda rūpa. But a human can exist in TWO forms.

- ONE: Much of the time in the human bhava, it stays with JUST the manomaya kāya. That state is normally referred to as the gandhabba state. A gandhabba is like a Brahma in the following aspect. A gandhabba can see and hear without the aid of physical eyes and physical ears. Even though it has five pasāda rūpa, it cannot touch, taste, or smell since there is no dense physical body.
- TWO: A human will have a "dense physical body" only after that gandhabba (manomaya kāya) gets into a womb and creates a physical human body.
- It is good to contemplate how such a tiny amount of energy in a manomaya kāya can "build" a human body that can weigh over a hundred pounds (or many kilograms.)


## A Gandhabba for a Human Is Like a Seed for a Tree

10. A good point to start is to think about how a tiny seed grows into a huge oak tree.

- That seed has the blueprint for the whole tree. The seed germinates and pulls in food and water from the soil to grow into a large tree. The tree trunk, limbs, and leaves are all made from the food and water extracted from the soil.
- In the same way, the "seed" for a full-grown human is a zygote, which is a single cell. But a zygote by itself cannot grow into a human. A "human mental body" (or a gandhabba) needs to merge with the zygote to start the process. See, "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception" and "Cloning and Gandhabba."
- The mental body or the gandhabba has the blueprint for a full-grown human. Some features of the physical body come from the parents via the zygote.

11. We saw that the seed takes all the "building material" from the soil to grow to a tree. A "live zygote" grows first by taking food from the mother to become a baby. Once outside the womb, that baby starts eating food and becomes a grown human.

- This is why the physical body is secondary to the mental body (gandhabba.) All mental activities are with the gandhabba. Furthermore, a gandhabba is fully human. It just does not have a dense body to be able to touch, eat, or to smell odors. See, "Ghost 1990 Movie - Good Depiction of Gandhabba Concept."
- The physical body is just a shell. The gandhabba makes all the decisions. The physical body is needed for the gandhabba to experience touches, tastes, and odors. See, "Gandhabba Sensing the World With and Without a Physical Body."


## The Lifetime of a Gandhabba Is the Length of Human Bhava

12. Therefore, within a human bhava, there can be many "human births" ( $j a \bar{a} t i$.) See, "Bhava and Jāti States of Existence and Births Therein."

- When a physical body dies, the gandhabba comes out and waits for another womb. However, that gandhabba state in between two human lives is not an antarābhava because it is within the SAME human bhava. See, "Antarābhava and Gandhabba."
- A human $j \bar{a} t i$ lasts around a hundred years, but a human bhava may last thousands of years.
- Those different human births ( $j a \bar{a} t i$ ) within a human bhava will have similar characteristics. The physical appearance will change since those of parents influence via the zygote. But the successive lives usually have similar gati and also tend to have close geographic locations of birth.
- A good example is Dhammruwan, who is now a Sri Lankan, but was born in India at the time of Buddhaghosa 1500 years ago; see, "Boy Who Remembered Pāli Suttā for 1500 Years." More rebirth accounts at, "Evidence for Rebirth."


## How Does a Gandhabba (or a Brahma) See and Hear Without Eyes and Ears?

13. In the movie "ghost" we saw that a gandhabba can see not only other gandhabbā (which is the plural for gandhabba) but also humans and anything else in the world. See, "Ghost 1990 Movie - Good Depiction of Gandhabba Concept." How is that possible without having physical eyes and ears?

- Our understanding of nature is extremely limited. Before modern science made some technical breakthroughs within the past hundred years or so, we would not have believed that it would be possible to "see" an event happening thousands of miles away, in real-time. Yet, we do that with televisions now and don't think twice about it.
- These days we can record such visuals with micro-sensors that are so small that they are hard to see. Details at, "Gandhabba Sensing the World - With and Without a Physical Body."

14. When a human gandhabba is born (at a cuti-patisandhi moment of grasping a new bhava), the following amazingly miniature "sensors" are made by kammic energy.

- They are hadaya vatthu (seat of the mind) and five pasāda rūpa (cakkhu, sota, ghāna, jivhā, kāya.) Of course, the ghāna, jivhā, and kāya pasāda rūpa REQUIRE signals from a physical body (of odors, tastes, and touches) to function.
- The cakkhu and sota pasāda rūpa can detect visuals and sounds without the aid of eyes and ears. The cakkhu pasāda rūpa is the smallest entity that can "see." Sota pasāda rūpa is the smallest entity that can hear.
- Evidence for the existence of gandhabba (manomaya kāya) has accumulated over the recent years, as we discuss now.


## Seeing and Hearing With the "Mental Body" (Gandhabba)

15. People who had Near-Death Experiences (NDE) say they could see and hear even though their physical bodies (and the brains) were "clinically dead." They say they were watching doctors operating on their bodies from the ceiling. Their "mental bodies" (gandhabbā) had come out of the physical body. The book "Consciousness Beyond Life" by physician Pim van Lommel (2010) gives detailed accounts of case studies of NDE experienced by people undergoing heart operations. Here is a youtube video on the subject:

WebLink: youtube: Near Death Experiences \& Evidence of the Afterlife

- Some people can have Out-of-Body Experiences at will; see, "Manomaya Kāya and Out-of-Body Experience (OBE)." They can remove their gandhabba kāya from the physical body at will. Then they do not need eyes and ears to see and hear.
- Even though there are people who say they can teach others how to do that, I don't think that is possible. That ability is due to a puñña iddhi or due to past good kamma.

16. It is critical to realize that there phenomena that cannot be explained with our ordinary sensory experiences. Only a Buddha can discover these "hidden" facts about a wider world with 31 realms.

- However, the Buddha said that average humans are not capable of fully comprehending the characteristics of living beings in various realms. It is good to know the basic facts, but it does not serve any purpose to try to rationalize them with the limited sensory faculties we have.
- Yet any average human is capable of figuring out that these explanations are self-consistent and help clarify many of our experiences. That confidence will grow as one starts following the Path (i.e., not only living a moral life but also learn the true nature of this world.) The mind becomes purified and is able to 'see" at deeper levels.


## Why Do We Have Physical Bodies?

17. We need physical bodies to be able to touch (and for sex), taste foods, and to smell odors. But a physical body comes with a price. We have to endure all kinds of diseases including cancer, body aches, the decay of body parts, etc. Brahm $\bar{a}$ and $\operatorname{Dev} \bar{a}$ do not experience those, but of course, death is inevitable to all.

- Furthermore, it is a burden to "carry around" this heavy body. As I have mentioned before, even breathing requires an effort (but only asthma patients feel that.) It is such a relief to come out of the physical body, as described by those who have had NDE or OBE experiences.
- However, if one is forced to stay with the gandhabba body for a long time, one will start "missing" the ability to touch, taste, and smell. That is why all human gandhabbā desperately wish to be able to get into a womb to get a human birth.
- The point is that a gandhabba with an unimaginably small "body" can experience everything better, except the ability to touch, taste, and smell.


## Why Are There So Many Different Terms for Kammic Energy?

18. Even though viññāna, kamma bīja, dhammā, and gandhabba are related, those terms are used in different contexts. Here is one way to remember how these different terms appear in different situations.

- First, energy for future vipāka (including future rebirths) created via "(abhi)sañkhāra paccayā viññāna."
- Such tiny amounts of energies stay in the "nāma loka" (out there) as kamma bïja (kamma seeds.) See, "Our Two Worlds: Material and Immaterial."
- When the conditions are right, a strong kamma bīja can give rise to a new existence (bhava) when those kammic energies come back to the mind as dhamm $\bar{a}$.
- Such a new existence are grasped as paṭisandhi viññāṇa. That paṭisandhi viññāṇa gives rise to a manomaya kāya, which has a special name of gandhabba for human and animal realms.
- Manomaya kāya means "a body made by the mind." That is how we create our own future lives!
- If you do not fully understand the above, you can read the previous posts in this series, or ask questions. It may take a little while to fully comprehend all relationships.

19. We have now finished the first phase of Buddha Dhamma dealing with the origin of life. Life is not created by a Creator. It does not arise arbitrarily either. We discussed those two extreme views earlier in "Origin of Life" series.

- Those concepts discussed above could be new to many, and thus may take some time to understand or get used to. But I assure that there is complete self-consistency of what I have described and also
consistency with the Tipitaka. My suggestion is to print out this series of posts and to have them ready for quick reference. If there are any questions, please comment at the forum or send an email: la1@puredhamma.net.
- We will discuss several significant implications that can be reached with this "correct world view" of the Buddha in future posts.


### 5.3 Good Explanations - Key to Weeding Out Bad Versions of Dhamma

1. Today, we have many different religions, world views, cults, and even different versions of the Buddha Dhamma: Theravāda, Mahāyāna, Zen, Vajrayana (Tibetan), etc. Actually, Zen and Vajrayana both originated from Mahāyāna (see, "Historical Timeline of Edward Conze"); thus Theravāda and Mahāyāna are the two main categories. How could one decide which one to choose?
2. Here is a good example of an obvious inconsistency:

In Mahāyāna Buddhism, one is supposed to take a vow as to not to attain Enlightenment (Nibbāna) until ALL BEINGS are ready to attain Nibbāna. Whoever came up with this idea did not understand that there are an infinite number of beings.

- On this Earth alone, scientists estimate that there are 10 trillion of just ants (million ants for each human being!). It also displays a lack of understanding that most beings are incapable of attaining Nibbāna, until a human or deva birth is attained, which are rare events; see, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma."
- As the Buddha advised in the Kalama Sutta, everyone needs to examine the different options and choose the one that is without any contradictions.

3. In Buddha's time, there was of course no "science" that educated the masses about the physical world. Even though the Buddha referred to the innumerable world systems and innumerable beings in them, people just had to believe those only based on faith. Today we are fortunate to have a well-established scientific method to rule out "bad theories" and to focus on "good theories."

- This method cannot match the Buddha's method of deciding by EXPERIENCE that he advised in the Kalama Sutta as mentioned above, but it gives a filtering mechanism to weed out the stuff that is clearly not worth pursuing. Thus the scientific method can be used as "pre-screening" to get rid of obviously unsuitable paths or "theories."

4. What is the "scientific method"?

An acceptable "theory" must have,

- power (ability) to explain as many things that we experience in this world,
- consistency, i.e., not one explanation can be inconsistent with another within the same theory,
- the power to predict, i.e., point out things that are still unknown but could be verified in the future.

5. If one would want to read more about the scientific method, I can recommend two books: "The structure of scientific Revolutions" by Thomas Kuhn is a classic; "The Beginning of Infinity" by David Deutsch is a recent and more easy-to-read book which also discusses infinity which is a key concept in Dhamma.
6. Thus explanatory power, consistency, and the power of prediction are the three measures of the validity of a scientific theory. Buddha Dhamma is a theory about existence for someone who has not yet "seen" its validity.

- My goal with this website is to present the Dhamma as a scientific theory. I will try to point out the explanatory power of the Dhamma, that there are no inconsistencies in Dhamma, and that many things in the Dhamma that were so far ahead of the times and only now are being confirmed by science.
- In the following video Dr. Deutsch explains the start of the scientific revolution on a few hundred years ago.
WebLink: YOUTUBE David Deutsch: A new way to explain explanation
- As explained above, science proceeds via conjectures (theories) that are continually tested. There are no conjectures in Buddha Dhamma. The truths revealed in Dhamma are still being re-discovered by science. The vagaries of life can only be explained in terms of Buddha Dhamma; see, "Complexity of Life and the Way to Seek Good Rebirths."

7. Buddha Dhamma is not a religion in the normally accepted sense of the word "religion." The Buddha never said that he can take someone to "salvation" if someone believed in him. One attains Nibbāna by purifying ONE'S OWN mind. The Buddha just showed WHY one should strive for Nibbāna and HOW to purify one's mind by following the Noble Eightfold Path.

- Buddha Dhamma is a complete description of existence, or nature. A Buddha discovers the laws of nature appears by his own mental efforts. It is for us to decide whether that world view makes sense to us, and then to use the Path he showed to attain Nibbāna, the state of unconditioned, permanent happiness.
- One could start on the Path of the Buddha in a gradual manner, verifying for oneself the benefits at each step; see, "Living Dhamma."


### 5.3.1 Consciousness and the Brain

I think Professor John Searle is one of the great philosophers of today who have the right ideas about consciousness. If he comes to learn about pure Dhamma, he may be able to articulate his points even better. Here is one of his presentations:

## WebLink: YOUTUBE: Consciousness \& the Brain

### 5.3.2 Matter Creates Mind or Mind Creates Matter?

## Re-written August 29, 2022

1. The deep meaning of "Manopubbangama Dhamma, mano setta manomaya" is that the mind is the origin of everything. This is unfathomably a strange statement at first, but when one studies Abhidhamma, it becomes clear why this is true.

- Before I get into the details, it is important to know that some scientists are beginning to realize that the mind could be the precursor to matter. Even though they cannot yet make the right connection, they can see that the reality has to be that way. It will be interesting to see how much progress they can make, without approaching the problem other than from Buddha Dhamma.
- Let us listen to these "new ideas" from a special group of scientists. They are new ideas from their perspective, since they have not been exposed to Buddha Dhamma.

2. In the following video a group of scientists discusses why the time has come to change the paradigm:

## WebLink: YOUTUBE: Consciousness \& Quantum Physics

3. Here is a presentation by Dr. Robert Lanza, whose book "Biocentrism" basically says that life did not arise from matter (universe). Still, the universe arose from life (pretty much agreeing with the Buddha Dhamma):

WebLink: YOUTUBE: Robert Lanza on theory of Biocentrism
4. In addition, philosophers are joining the discussion as well: Thomas Nagel, "Mind \& Cosmos: Why the Materialist Neo-Darwinian Conception of Nature Is Almost Certainly False" (2012). The following is a lengthy review of this book.

WebLink: youtube: Analysis of Thomas Nagel's Mind and Cosmos - Alexander Fink

- Even though some scientists and philosophers are beginning to realize that the mind could be the precursor to matter, they have no idea HOW that happens.

5. However, the Buddha explained that the mind creates EVERYTHING in this world via Paticca Samuppāda.

- Up to now, we have only discussed how Paticca Samuppāda explains the rebirth process for living beings. See "Paticca Samuppāda."
- But Paticca Samuppāda can also explain the formation of planetary systems in the universe. In the future, I will start writing about that process.
- Also, see "Manōpubbangamā Dhammā.." and the references therein.


### 5.4 Consciousness - A Dhamma Perspective

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- What is Consciousness? <br> - Consciousness Dependence on Number of Dimensions <br> - Six Kinds of Consciousness in Our 3-D World <br> - Expanding "Consciousness" by Using Technology <br> - Expanding "Consciousness" by Purifying the Mind <br> - What is Mind? How do we Experience the Outside World?
}


### 5.4.1 Consciousness Dependence on Number of Dimensions

## Revised August 23, 2022

For an introduction to consciousness, see "What is Consciousness?."

1. When we look deeply into the issue of consciousness, we realize the unimaginable possible varieties of life. Let us start with the issue of dimensionality. Humans live in a four dimensional world; in other words, humans are aware of four dimensions -three dimensions of space plus time.

- Even though we used to think of time as being different from spatial dimensions, with his Theory of General Relativity, Einstein demonstrated that space and time are interrelated. He showed that the force of gravity could be explained as perturbations in the space-time fabric due to mass.
- Can living beings exist in higher dimensions that we are not aware of?

2. Of course, we cannot even begin to imagine more than four dimensions (or more than three spatial dimensions). However, it is easier to think of and visualize the lower number of dimensions.

- Imagine a two-dimensional creature living on your kitchen table. An ant will be the closest real example if we imagine that the ant cannot see above the table (a real two-dimensional creature would have only a length and width and no height). Now, if we put a hand on the table, the 2D creature could see part of the projection of the hand on the table. Now if we take the hand off the table, as far as the 2D creature is concerned, the "hand" disappears; it cannot "see" any part of the hand if it is off the table, and thus it has no "awareness" of that hand existing anywhere. It does not exist in its " 2 -D universe."
- For an amusing story of a 2D creature, see "Flatland: A Romance of Many Dimensions" by Edwin A. Abbott (2002). It was written in 1884 by Abbott, a mathematician.
- Here is a "fun video" from Dr. Quantum which illustrates the idea:

WebLink: YOUTUBE Dr. Quantum in Flatland
3. Therefore, the "awareness" of the 2D creature on the kitchen table surface is limited to its 2 D world. It is not aware of anything outside the surface of the table (if it is a " 2 D world," the surface can extend to infinity and as far as our 2D creature is concerned, it would not have "an end"). Furthermore, a 1-D world embedded in that 2 D world would be a line on that surface. A 1-D creature in that 1-D world will not see anything that lies outside the line. Thus, the 2-D creatures can go in and out of the 1-D world by crossing that line!

- Clearly, the consciousness of a 1-D creature is very limited, not necessarily by its mental capabilities, but by the dimensions of the "world" that it is in. A 2-D creature has an expanded consciousness compared to a 1-D creature. We in the 3-D world have even further expanded consciousness. (It must be kept in mind that one needs to incorporate the time dimension in all the above cases where only the space dimensionality was considered).

4. Therefore, if our world has more than three spatial dimensions, there may be other worlds we are unaware of since our consciousness is limited to the three spatial dimensions.

- Thus, there may be beings in different dimensions that we are not aware of. We may be able to see "projections" of them if there is some overlap in 1,2 , or 3 dimensions. If there is no overlap, then we will not be able to see them at all, i.e., we will not be "conscious" of their presence.
- For example, in the low dimensionality case we considered above, if a 2-D creature crosses over the " 1 D line world", the 1-D creature will see a "dot" when there is an overlap of the 2-D creature with the line. Yet, if the "1D world" lies above the tabletop, there is no overlap, and both creatures will not be conscious of the presence of each other's worlds.

5. It is possible the "see" living beings other than humans and animals by developing certain jhānic (abhiñña $\bar{a}$ ) powers. Even before the Buddha, many yogis could access other realms and interact with such beings. One does not have to attain Nibbāna to do that, and some Arahants have not developed such powers. The Buddha discouraged people from interacting with such beings, particularly those in the lower realms.

- "Our world" is much more complex than what is grasped by our senses, even though technology has enabled us to expand our consciousness; see "Expanding Consciousness using Technology." Yet, we can expand consciousness even more by purifying our minds; see, "Expanding Consciousness by Purifying the Mind." A purified mind can see the truth in the Buddha's wider world; see, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma."
- And our lives do not end with this one; see "Evidence for Rebirth."
- Those two facts constitute the basis of the true nature of existence and need to be thought about critically; one cannot comprehend the message of the Buddha until one at least has some idea about this "big picture."

Next, "Six Kinds of Consciousness in our 3-D World",

### 5.4.2 Six Kinds of Consciousness in Our 3-D World

## Revised August 23, 2022

Having looked into the issue of the "awareness" or consciousness issue related to dimensions, we now turn to our familiar 3-D space. Even here the possibilities are endless, as we see below.

1. We become aware of our surrounding "objects" (i.e., visual objects, sound, smell, taste, tangible objects) using the five "external senses" of eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body. We see visual objects with our eyes, sounds with our ears, smell with our nose, taste with the tongue, and touch or feel with our body.

- Correspondingly, the Buddha stated that there is eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness, noseconsciousness, tongue-consciousness, and body-consciousness. The cognitive processes that involve those "five physical doors" are called five-door processes.
- In addition to those five traditional physical senses, in Buddha Dhamma, there is the mind and the associated mind-consciousness since we are also conscious of mind-objects such as thoughts and visual images. The mind-consciousness is also involved in each of the five-physical-door processes.

2. Note that the Buddha did not mention the brain in the mind-consciousness, and he used the term "mental element" without mentioning the brain. This is because the mind belongs to the "manomaya kāya" and the brain belongs to the "physical body"; see, "Manomaya Kāya (Gandhabba) and the Physical Body."

- Also note that five "indriya" (eye, ear, etc.) are not the physical eye, physical ear, etc. The five indriya, are called internal rūpa or pasāda rūpa, are invisible and unknown to modern science. The physical eye is different from the cakkhu pasāda rūpa; but the physical eye is needed for seeing.
- When one develops the mind, it is possible to see without the physical eye and much more (like beings in other realms). Similarly, the mind is not the brain, but the brain is needed for a normal human for mind to work.

3. Therefore, our five physical senses limit our consciousness; we perceive the "world" as we sense it with our five physical senses of eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body.

- The "world" or "the universe" is much more complex than we perceive. This is one reason we think everything around us is permanent, and is why it is so hard for us to understand the true nature of "this world," i.e., anicca, dukkha, and anatta.
- With our "enhanced consciousness" from our scientific and technological advances, we have recently realized that even our universe is not permanent; it came into being some 14 billion years ago and will eventually re-collapse or disintegrate.
- Furthermore, as I mentioned elsewhere, we can still "see" only $4 \%-6 \% \%$ of the "stuff" in the universe. The other $96 \%$ or so is termed "dark energy" and "dark matter" by scientists because we do not know what that $96 \%$ consists of, see, "The Four Percent Universe" by Richard Panek (2011). Thus, even though we have vastly expanded our awareness, we are far from conscious of the "world as it is."

4. In Buddha Dhamma, the above discussion with six sense bases applies specifically to humans, but in general applies to many but not all animals as well as other beings in the "sense sphere" (kāmaloka).

- The Buddha categorized all the living beings subject to the rebirth process in the samsarra, and the categorization is according to consciousness. Beings in the other planes of existence have different consciousness than humans or animals.
- For example, beings in the Arupaloka ("form-less sphere") have only the mind consciousness since they do not have physical bodies. Before getting into that discussion, let us first discuss different aspects of consciousness that we see around us.

5. Even though the "beings" in the "sense-sphere" that includes humans and animals in general have five external sense-doors (eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body), there are many exceptions.

- For example, some animals do not have fully-developed five external senses. Others have different types of sense doors; a jellyfish has eyes but no brain for information processing, so its visual consciousness is still very limited. It can distinguish between dark and illuminated areas, and that is about all. On the other hand, a dog has visual consciousness comparable to humans, and it can catch a rabbit by chasing it.
- A bat does not have visual consciousness, so it cannot hunt during the daytime but has different consciousness using radar that enables it to hunt at night. So, it is clear that "consciousness" or "awareness" has many different "avenues" (for example, humans become aware of their surroundings by using sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch, and thoughts).
- Lower life forms may have fewer avenues of consciousness, and the degree of consciousness can vary too (a jellyfish has minimal visual consciousness). In a few cases, we may be less conscious than an animal. For example, a bat would be much more conscious about its dark surroundings than a human.

6. Even though most animals have the same five physical senses as humans, they are "aware" of only their immediate environment.

- But contemporary humans are aware of a huge Black hole at the center of our Milky Way universe, millions of light years away.
- Humans used to have much limited awareness even a few hundred years ago, before the advent of the telescope and the microscope. Since then, humans have slowly built up our awareness using technology; see "Expanding Consciousness by Using Technology."
- However, we must remember that a complete theory of consciousness (Buddha Dhamma) was described by the Buddha 2500 years ago. It had been hidden for nearly 2000 years, at least in its pure form.

7. Therefore, it is clear that "the awareness' or the "consciousness" can come in different flavors as well as different levels of intensity, even within the "sense sphere" (kāmaloka):

- The humans and devas in the kāmaloka have the highest levels of consciousness (especially mindconsciousness).
- In the "form-sphere" (rūpaloka), the consciousness level in general is higher, even though they have only visual, auditory, and mind-consciousness; their minds are much higher.
- The beings in the "form-less sphere" (arūpa loka) do not have physical bodies at all and have highly developed minds and thus have even higher levels of consciousness.
- Those three levels of consciousness are called lokiya (mundane).
- Beings in the three mundane levels have finite lifetimes, and a given "being" wanders through all these different planes in the unfathomably-long samisāra (rebirth process). Even a sentient being born in the arūpaloka may end up in the lowest level (apāya) in the kāmaloka, depending on the unspent kamma.

8. The higher levels of consciousness are supermundane or "beyond mundane" (lokuttara), and there are four levels of supermundane consciousness, with Nibbāna achieved by the Arahants being the highest.

- The first three levels of supermundane consciousness are Stream Enterer (Sotāpanna), Once-Returner (Sakadāgāmì), and Non-Returner (Anāgāmī).
- As one progresses on the Path, the consciousness starts to clear up, first by removing the five hindrances (panca nivarana) at the Sotāpanna stage.
- The Arahant stage purified consciousness. The undefiled mind becomes separated from any trace of matter (four great elements or cattāro mahā bhūta) at the death of the Arahant. Thus the Arahant is not reborn anywhere in the 31 realms, and his/her mind becomes free, Nibbāna.
- All the suffering we experience is due to trying to satisfy the physical body attached to the mind. When attachment to that body (which is subjected to decay and death) is severed, the worldly bonds are broken (Nibbāna), and the mind attains the complete "cooled down" (Nivana); see "How to Taste Nibbāna," and "Nibbāna - Is It Difficult to Understand?."

Next, "Expanding Consciousness by Using Technology",

### 5.4.3 Expanding "Consciousness" by Using Technology

1. Focusing on the human world, we can expand our "awareness" or consciousness in two ways so that we can be more "aware" of the "world" around us.

- One is using the scientific approach and by developing new techniques that enable us to "see" or "be aware" of things that are not directly accessible to our senses.
- For example, we have infrared sensors that allow us to see in the dark; we have constructed particle accelerators that allow us to "see" elementary particles; we can even "see" supernova explosions that happen millions of light years away using our sophisticated instruments. In the latter two cases, we do not actually see with our eyes, but we are aware of the existence of these events.

2. However, it must be noted that we can "see" only about $6 \%$ of the "stuff" that our universe is made of. Scientists don't know what the rest of the "stuff" is made of and have labelled it as "dark matter" and "dark energy."

- This means we are "not aware" of $94 \%$ of our own universe! For those interested, you can also do a Google search on dark energy and dark matter and learn more.

3. The scientific methods which have been developed over only the past few hundred years are still at a very early stage; even though science and technology has greatly expanded our "awareness" of the external world, according to Buddhism there is much more to be explored, i.e., our consciousness is still very limited.

- We have not been able to contact any life form outside the Earth, even though scientists now accept the existence of life outside the earth to be a certainty.
- Possible existence of life forms that exist in the "form-sphere" and the "form-less sphere" are not even contemplated at this time.


## Next, "Expanding Consciousness by Purifying the Mind",

Also see, "Quantum Mechanics and Dhamma."

### 5.4.4 Expanding "Consciousness" by Purifying the Mind

## Revised December 18, 2020; August 28, 2022

According to the Buddha, expanding consciousness means to "see things as they are" (yathābhūta ñāṇa.)

1. Twenty-five hundred years ago, the Buddha achieved the ultimate state of mind and became "all-knowing" (or "perfectly conscious"). He learned about the boundless universe, the endless cycle of rebirths, and the complex process of cause and effect (Paticca Samuppāda), which sustains everything in the universe.
2. By developing scientific instruments (starting with simple telescopes and microscopes, we have now developed very sophisticated instruments), we have expanded our "awareness."

- For example, within the past century, we have expanded our awareness of the vast space around us, and now we know not only that our universe is possibly infinite in extent, but there may be other parallel universes as well. Yet, what science has achieved so far is nowhere close to the level achieved by the Buddha.


## 3. As humans, we may get close to the ultimate knowledge using the scientific approach someday well into the future.

- But we can get there in a lifetime by developing our minds by following the path the Buddha laid out.
- For all their impressive "material achievements," today's science and technology are still at very early stages concerning mental phenomena.

4. According to Buddha Dhamma, one is said to achieve full and clear consciousness (anidassana viññāna), i.e., that person will be able to "see the whole world as it is" when he/she achieves Nibbāna. See, \#11 of "Pabhassara Citta, Radiant Mind, and Bhavañga."

- This does not mean that a person who achieves Nibbāna will be an expert in relativity or quantum mechanics. Relativity and quantum mechanics provide only partial explanations, and even then, just for material aspects of the world.
- When one achieves the ultimate knowledge (Nibbāna), relativity or quantum mechanics become irrelevant since they account for only some of the impermanent and transient behavior. The matter is secondary to the mind.

5. Furthermore, people with good meditative skills can expand their consciousness by accessing higher meditative states (jhāna), i.e., controlling and focusing the mind.

- Even before the Buddha, ancient Yogis could access such meditative states via concentration meditation (Samatha Bhāvanā). For example, when Prince Siddhartha became an ascetic on the way to the Buddhahood, he first followed two well-known yogis at that time, Āḷara Kālāma and Uddaka

Rāmaputta. They achieve very high states of jhāna (that belong in the $r \bar{u} p a l o k a$ and arūpa loka) via concentration meditation.

- However, it will be explained in the future that these jhānic achievements of such yogis can be traced back to Buddha Kassapa, who lived before Buddha Gotama.

6. Even today, people from other religions could experience such states when they get deeply absorbed in prayer or any deep mental concentration; this has nothing to do with a particular religion. However, like everything else, such states are transitory; none of these states is permanent other than Nibbāna.

- And Nibbāna is not possible to attain via concentration meditation alone. For that, the unique Buddhist system of insight meditation (vipassana Bhāvanā) is needed whereby anicca, dukkha, anatta, Paticca Samuppāda (Dependent Origination or "cause and effect") and the Four Noble Truths (that the existence in samisāra is dukha, attachment or craving as the origin of the dukha, Nibbāna is the cessation of $d u k h a$, and the Eightfold Path is the path to the cessation of $d u k h a$ ) are understood.

7. To recap, according to Buddha Dhamma, "beings" exist in different planes of existence with different levels of consciousness; different planes can exist in different dimensions and different physical locations (such as planetary systems in this or other universes, for example). Beings are categorized according to their level of consciousness, and the humans lie somewhere in the middle (but still at a unique place, as is discussed in "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma")
8. Being "aware" or having consciousness is only one aspect of a living being's mental composition; in Pāli, consciousness is viññāna. The other mental constituents that make up a living being are feeling (vedana $\bar{a}$, perception (sañ̃̃̄̄), and mental volitions (sañkhāra). Consciousness (citta) is nothing more than "being aware." The other three, called mental factors (cetasika), arise with citta.

- For example, when we "see" an object, that is pure visual consciousness. Based on the visual, we next recognize the object based on our familiarity with the object. This is perception (sañ̃̄ $\bar{a}$ ).
- Then the mind may start forming an "expectation" if that object is desirable. That is when "pure citta" evolves into viñ̃̃̄ạna, which is "defiled consciousness." See "Viññāna (Defiled Consciousness)."

9. The chief characteristic of perception is the cognition of an object by a previous acquaintance. It is a perception that enables one to recognize an object. According to Abhidhamma, "Its procedure is likened to the carpenter's recognition of certain kinds of wood by the mark he had made on each; to the treasurer's specifying certain articles of jewelry by the ticket on each...".

- It happens automatically since the mind compares the observed image with the stored images of people we know and quickly makes the "match." (I was happy to see that scientist Jeff Hawkins has described this very well in scientific terms in his book "On Intelligence"; this book is a worthwhile read to see how scientists are slowly making progress!). Of course, the more frequently the memory is refreshed of the image, the easier it is to recognize.
- Sometimes people, especially young children, can recognize people and material objects from their past lives.

10. Modern neuroscientists and philosophers are struggling with how even to define these "mental characteristics." They have coined the term "qualia" to represent the subjective aspect of sense experience.

- In his book "Second Nature: Brain Science and Human Knowledge" (2006), Gerald M. Edelman, a neuroscientist, states (p. 14): ".The property most often described as particularly mysterious is the phenomenological aspect of consciousness, the experience of qualia. Qualia are, for example, the greenness of green and the warmness of warmth. But several students, myself included, go beyond these simple qualities and consider the whole ensemble of conscious senses or experiences to be qualia. Many consider explaining qualia to be the acid test of a consciousness theory. How can we explain not only qualia but all the other features of consciousness? The answer I propose is to look into how the brain works, formulating a global brain theory that can be extended to explain consciousness..."
- In Buddha Dhamma, the qualia are the mental factors (cetasika), and they are built-in to a sentient being and are strictly individualistic. By definition, they cannot arise just from inert matter, but scientists are trying to derive them from matter.

11. An interesting read on various ideas of different philosophers' and scientists' reasoning on how to explain consciousness and associated mental aspects such as qualia is given in the book "Conversations on Consciousness" by Susan Blackmore (2006).
12. Let us consider, for example, the visual recognition of a person, say Joe Smith. With the recognition of Joe Smith, "feelings" arise together with a whole host of mental volitions, which are fifty-two in total. We immediately feel a certain way about Joe Smith based on our experience.

- For example, if hatred, one of the possible 52 mental volitions, arises when we see Joe Smith, we could be acquiring bad kamma and let our mind cultivate those feelings further.

13. It needs to be emphasized that pure consciousness does not entail the recognition of an object. It is only a sort of awareness- awareness of the presence of an object. When the eye comes in contact with a color, for instance, blue, visual consciousness arises, which is awareness of the presence of color. But it does not recognize that it is blue. There is no recognition at this stage. It is perception (sañ $\tilde{n} \bar{a}$ ) that recognizes that it is blue. The term "visual consciousness" is a philosophical expression denoting the same idea conveyed by the ordinary word "seeing." Seeing does not mean recognizing. The same is true for other forms of consciousness.

- Viññāna, which incorporates all mental factors, including sañ̃̃̄̄, vedanā, etc., has all these mental factors in addition to pure awareness.

14. Using a somewhat different nomenclature, a "being" in the sense sphere can also be represented by just five "heaps of things" or aggregates (khandha), i.e., pañcakkhandhā (pronounced as "pañchakkhandha," pañca meaning five and khandha means a "heap"): consciousness (viñ̃̃āna), feeling (vedanā), perception (sañña), volitions (sañkhāra), and form or materiality ( $r \bar{u} p a$ ); see, "The Five Aggregates (Pañcakkhandha)."

- These five components co-exist; they are born together at conception. It is not possible to separate nāma from $r \bar{u} p a$ or the four mental aggregates from each other. Therefore, nāma does not arise from rūpa as scientists believe today; nāma and rūpa arise together from the moment of conception in the mother's womb.
- Nāma and rūpa (associated with a human) arise together from conception in the mother's womb. Here, nāma is the "patisandhi viñ̃ñạa" (or gandhabba), and rūpa is the zygote made by the mother's egg and father's sperm; see "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception."

15. The Buddha told his disciples that what he taught them was just a minute fraction of his knowledge about "this world." What he taught was sufficient to achieve Nibbāna and cut short the samisāric journey filled with dukha (unsatisfactoriness and suffering). He did not want people to spend their precious time in this human life studying things like the origin of the universe or the origin of life which would serve no purpose in achieving Nibbāna. The following passages are from the Simsāpa Sutta:

- Once the Buddha was staying at Kosambi in the Simsāpa forest. Then, picking up a few Simsāpa leaves with his hand, he asked the monks, "What do you think, monks: Which are more numerous, the few Simsāpa leaves in my hand or those overhead in the Simsāpa forest?"
- "The leaves in the hand of the Blessed One are few, Lord. Those in the Simsāpa forest are much more numerous."
- "In the same way, monks, those things that I have known with direct knowledge but have not taught are far more numerous [than what I have taught]. And why haven't I taught them? Because they are not connected with the goal, do not relate to the rudiments of the holy life, and do not lead to
disenchantment, dispassion, cessation, calm, direct knowledge, self-awakening, to Unbinding. That is why I have not taught them."
- "And what have I taught? 'This is dukkha... This is the origination of dukkha... This is the cessation of $d u k k h a \ldots$ This is the path of practice leading to dukkha's cessation: This is what I have taught. And why have I taught these things? Because they are connected with the goal, relate to the basics of the holy life, lead to disenchantment, dispassion, cessation, calm, direct knowledge, self-awakening, and unbinding. This is why I have taught them."

16. But nowadays, one may be justified to spend a little time convincing oneself that Buddha Dhamma is compatible with contemporary "scientific knowledge" because that will enable one to build faith in Buddha Dhamma.

- However, when one probes deeper into Dhamma, one realizes that it is not a matter of science proving Dhamma to be correct. Rather, as described by Dhamma, science is at a very early stage of discovering the world's true nature.

17. Let me close with an example of the difference between technological progress in expanding consciousness and the mind's purification. The modern world was unaware of microscopic living beings' existence until the advent of the microscope by Leeuwenhoek in the late 17th century: WebLink: WIKI: Antonie van Leeuwenhoek.

- However, a person who has developed meditation and attained higher jhānā can "see" such microscopic beings. There is this story in the Tipitaka about a bhikkhu who had developed abhiññā powers but had not yet attained Arahanthood. One day he was about to drink a glass of water when he realized that there were numerous microscopic living beings in the water. He tried to filter them out in vain and got depressed. The Buddha saw this and told him that "it is not possible to live "in this world" without hurting other beings; the only thing we can do is to attain Nibbāna as soon as possible and get out of this world."
- Thus one can attain much more "knowledge" about this world by developing the mind. We can probe deeper into the microscopic world using the scientific knowledge achieved over hundreds of years, but we can "see" much more by purifying the mind in a lifetime.

Also see "Quantum Mechanics and Dhamma."

### 5.5 Consistencies with Science

- Second Law of Thermodynamics is Part of Anicca!

The following posts discuss cases where current theories of science are consistent with Buddha Dhamma.

- Quantum Entanglement - We Are All Connected
- Infinity - How Big Is It?
- Gödel's Incompleteness Theorem
- Truine Brain: How the Mind Rewires the Brain via Meditation/Habits
- How Habits are Formed and Broken - A Scientific View


### 5.5.1 Second Law of Thermodynamics is Part of Anicca!

## Revised January 12, 2020; re-written July 20, 2021

## Anicca - Inability to Maintain Things the Way We Like

1. As we saw in the post, "Anicca - True Meaning," anicca describes one of the three primary characteristics of "this world," namely, no matter how hard we try, "we cannot maintain things to our satisfaction in the long term."

- When things evolve in a way we don't like, we suffer. First, we suffer mentally. Then we have to work hard to try to change it to the way we like. It is a constant struggle.
- That is only the mundane meaning. The real suffering arises when we get rebirths that we don't like!
- But it is good to first contemplate the suffering that we experience due to our physical bodies (and people and things we like.)


## Physical World Naturally Evolve Towards Disorder

2. What does the Second Law of Thermodynamics say? It says, "things in a closed system go from order to disorder unless energy is put into the system to keep the order."

- Thus we can maintain a sort of stability (or "keep things the way we like them to be") by striving or working hard. This is part of "sañkhāra dukkha." See, "Introduction -2 - The Three Categories of Suffering."
- But as we get old, our ability to do that wanes, and ultimately we become too weak to do anything or die. It does not matter how much money we have accumulated. All sense pleasures lose their vigor as the body gets old, and money or will power cannot maintain them.

3. A successful business person could say, "look at all the wealth that I created. I have achieved what I wanted." It is a good accomplishment, but can he enjoy all that in the long term? How much effort does he make to keep them that way?

- Even all that money cannot maintain a simple thing like the taste of food when he gets really old, not to mention the fact that all that wealth will be left behind at death.
- However, when we are young, it SEEMS that we CAN maintain things to our satisfaction. That is why it is hard to explain anicca to a young person. A young boy will say, "look at the muscles I built over the past year by working out at the gym! I am invincible." A young woman will say, "I look much more beautiful now than I was a year ago."
- Yet, blossoming at around twenty or so years is just the beginning of a slippery slope. In the end all those strong muscles will fade, and the beautiful figure will sag and decay. That is the reality.
WebLink: YOUTUBE: Done Got Old


## Everyday Examples

4. We can see the effects of the Second Law of Thermodynamics at different levels. A nice hot cup of coffee will cool down with time, and we will have to re-heat to enjoy it again. An ice cream bowl will melt if not kept cold by putting it in the refrigerator, which uses energy to run.

- Mom will come and clean a child's room, only to find the next day that it is back to the chaotic state; she will need to go through all that work again to get it back to presentable condition.
- We build a house with a beautiful garden, only to find that we will have to do repairs to the home, and much work is needed to keep the weeds out of the garden and grass cut, etc.
- The Sun will power our planet for another few billion years, and then it will die. Long before the Sun dies, the Earth will get destroyed.
- Even our universe will "run down" in 15 billion or so more years.


## Anicca Is a Universal Characteristic

5. Thus, we can see that the concept of anicca is a universal characteristic of this world. Things can be maintained, EVEN WITH AN EFFORT, only up to a certain time, and NOT forever.

- The Second Law of Thermodynamics describes the impermanence or the "root cause" for anicca. Even though the scientists understand this impermanence, they do not necessarily PERCEIVE that in their minds with regards to themselves. That is the difference between "impermanence" and anicca.
- Just like a scientist who has contemplated on the Second Law of Thermodynamics, anyone who is trying to cultivate "anicca sañ$\tilde{n} \vec{a} "$ by contemplating on impermanence is nowhere close to Nibbāna; see, "Saññā - What It Really Means."
- Thus, like those young people mentioned above, we all have the wrong PERCEPTION that "we can maintain things to our satisfaction," i.e., we have the false perception of nicca, not the actual reality of anicca.

6. Even when our universe dies, many come into existence. This process has been going on for eternity, and so have we. We have been in the rebirth process forever.

- The problem is that most of those lives were not as good as this one; we have suffered unimaginably, and unless we get out of this predicament, such future suffering is not avoidable. That is the anicca nature; see, "Anicca - Inability to Keep What We Like."
- Of course, anicca has other related meanings too; see, "Anicca - True Meaning."


## Nibbāna is of Nicca Nature

7. The opposite of "anicca" is "nicca." Nicca nature means one will never be subjected to suffering. For a comprehensive discussion, see "Basic Framework of Buddha Dhamma."

- Therefore, the good news is that our minds can become free of this non-stop rebirth process by decoupling from this unstable material base. We are reborn in this "material world" because of our perception of "nicca," i.e., we believe that we CAN find some suitable place with permanent happiness in this world.
- Once we grasp the reality of "anicca," our minds will automatically start becoming free, and we will start feeling the nirāmisa sukha arising from this detachment from the material world; see, "Three Kinds of Happiness - What is Nirāmisa Sukha?."
- That is another way to look at reality and our choices.


### 5.5.2 Quantum Entanglement - We Are All Connected

## Revised January 21, 2016 (\#6); March 13, 2018; September 22, 2019; June 25, 2022

Quantum entanglement is the ability of two spatially separated "entangled particles" to be able to respond to each other instantaneously. This proven interconnectedness has Implications for the rebirth process.

1. When we get deep into Buddha Dhamma, we will see that the mind creates EVERYTHING in this world. That is why the Buddha said, "mano pubbangama dhamma.......", i.e., the mind is the precursor to everything. But let us proceed at a slow pace.

- By the way, dhamma is "what we bear" in this world ("darana deya" in Sinhala); this means absolutely everything in this world. And all dhamma are anatta, i.e., fruitless, or there is nothing substantial in any dhamma (it does not mean "no-self" or "anātma"); see, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta - Wrong Interpretations," and "Anicca - True Meanings."

2. Everything happens due to causes and conditions; see, "What is Kamma? - Is Everything Determined by Kamma?." Also, this world is not four-dimensional ( 3 space dimensions and time) as we experience, but is multi-dimensional; see, "What Happens in Other Dimensions." That is why we see only two realms (human and animal) out of the 31 realms of existence; see, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma." Just because we cannot experience directly or is not proven by science YET is not reason to discard them. But the current string theories do predict a ten or 11-dimensional world.

- What can we explain with Buddha Dhamma? Everything in this world. See "Vagaries of Life and the Way to seek "Good Rebirths"," for some examples.
- Also, see "Origin of Life." This series explains how the mind creates EVERYTHING in this world.

3. Furthermore, science has been confirming many things that ordinary people rejected as "impossible" over the past few hundred years; and that activity started increasing over the past hundred years since the advent of quantum mechanics and relativity; see, "Dhamma and Science - Introduction." That should give us more confidence in Buddha Dhamma. That is saddhā or faith-based evidence.
4. Here, we will discuss yet another recent finding in science that makes the process of rebirth more easily "explainable." Please note that I am not trying to verify Buddha Dhamma by science. It is the other way around. I am saying that science is far behind Buddha Dhamma. Science is now trying to catch up just the material aspects of how this world works and has not made any significant progress on how the mind works.

- In the essay "Evidence for Rebirth," we saw that a person who dies in one geographical location is reborn in another. The consciousness does NOT transmigrate as is believed in some other religions. However, some form of energy leaving one place must instantly appear at another.
- What about the speed of the light barrier for anything or any information to travel, based on Einstein's Special Theory of Relativity? It turns out that we are in a unique time in history. Buddha's teachings are beginning to be, even if not confirmed, at least elevated to the level of possibility by Western science. For millennia, numerous people had strong enough faith to believe Buddha's words and commit their entire lives to pursuing Nibbāna. (Actually, it is not blind faith. If one studied the Dhamma / Abhidhamma carefully, one can verify that it must be true).

5. In 1935, Einstein, Podolsky, and Rosen published a paper that showed that if quantum mechanics is correct, then a particle can somehow "know" what another particle, even if separated from it by a large distance, is doing. Einstein derisively called this "spooky action at a distance" and dismissed the prediction.

Even though his theories led to quantum mechanics, Einstein was firmly opposed to quantum mechanics throughout his lifetime.

- However, in 1964, physicist John Bell proposed an experiment to test this concept. Those are experiments on "violation of Bell's inequality." Several experiments carried out since 1997 proved that Einstein was wrong. The experimenters created "entangled particles," which shared a wave function. In 1997 Nicholas Gisin did the first experiment with entangled photons, in which they were sent seven miles apart via optical fibers. When they reached the ends of these fibers, the two photons were forced to make random choices between alternative, equally possible pathways.
- There was no way for the photons to communicate with each other. Thus, "classical" physics would predict that their independent choices would bear no relationship to each other. But when the paths of the two photons were adjusted correctly and the results compared, the independent decisions by the paired photons always matched. There was no real way for them to communicate with each other. The responses were instantaneous, even though the two events were separated by about 26 milliseconds at the speed of light.

6. Since then, that same experiment has been repeated with electrons and ions as well. This effect is called the "quantum entanglement," It leads directly to other related concepts such as "holographic universe" and "interconnectedness." The conclusion is that entangled particles can be interconnected even if they are situated across the universe!

- In late 2015, "nonlocality of nature" or the violation of Bell's inequality was confirmed in three "loopholefree" experiments; see the pdf, "WebLink: PDF File: Wiseman-Death by experiment for local realism-Nature-2015."
- And the first of those experiments is: "WebLink: Hensen-Loophole-free Bell Inequality-Nature-2015."
- Details at "Quantum Mechanics and Dhamma."

7. The following fun video by Dr. Quantum illustrates the basic idea of quantum entanglement:

## WebLink: YOUTUBE: Dr Quantum - Entanglement

8. Quantum entanglement could be intimately connected (and can be "explained" easier) with a universe that is multi-dimensional (like the proposed 11-dimensional string theory). If you have read the post on "Consciousness Dependence on Number of Dimensions," it will be easier to follow my simple (and crude) illustration:

- Think about a two-dimensional "world," say, the kitchen floor, and consider an ant on the floor as a "two-dimensional being,"; which means we assume that the ant can see only those things that make direct contact with the floor. If a chair is there, the ant can see only four "impenetrable circles" where the chair's legs touch the floor. For the ant, those four "circles" are not connected. They lie far apart from each other. However, if we lift that chair, all four "circles" will be removed simultaneously. That means that, for the ant, this means that the four "circles" were "entangled" or connected to each other. Of course, we can see that they were connected via the rest of the chair in the third dimension, above the floor.
- Similarly, things that appear to us as "far apart" (say New York and Houston) may be connected via a dimension that we cannot see. A person dying in New York may be born instantaneously in Houston because those two "places" may have a direct path via a hidden dimension.
- Those "entangled particles" in \#5 above may travel far apart from each other. But they could be connected via a hidden dimension. Just like the ant in the above example is not aware of the rest of the chair, we are not aware of such hidden dimensions.

9. However, quantum mechanics is not restricted to working on "intellectual" problems such as above. Those are what the man-on-the-street calls "abstract stuff." Most of the "things" that we have grown accustomed to happen to be byproducts of quantum mechanics. Those vary from computers and cell phones to lasers and nuclear bombs.

- So, these new observations do indeed make more plausible the concept of a connection across the universe. But there is no point in wasting valuable time trying to find answers to questions such as the end of the universe or the beginning of life. That is what the Buddha advised.
- We are fortunate to be born in the human world, which is an infrequent event. See, "Rebirth Connection to Suffering in the First Noble Truth.") Thus, one should diligently work towards achieving liberation (Nibbāna). In realms below the human world, life is too painful, and life in heavenly worlds is too blissful for one to focus on working toward Nibbāna.


## Is the Universe Multi-Dimensional? - Another Emerging Possibility

It was Einstein's dream to work out such a Grand Unified Theory, but he was unable to do so. Many scientists are trying to accomplish this goal, and the newest theories are called string theories. No Grand Unified Theory exists yet, but the closest is a version of the M-theory's string theory. M-theory says that the universe is 11 -dimensional universe, even though we can see only four dimensions (including time). So, could there be life existing in other dimensions that we cannot observe? That is another possibility. I briefly discuss this possibility under the heading, "What Happens in Other Dimensions?." [Consciousness Dependence on Number of Dimensions]

## Consciousness and Quantum Mechanics

March 13, 2018: I have started a new section, "Quantum Mechanics and Dhamma," where a new interpretation of quantum mechanics is presented. I explain why quantum theory cannot explain consciousness.
Next, "What is Mind? - How do we Experience the Outside World?", .......

### 5.5.3 Infinity - How Big Is It?

## Revised June 3, 2018; January 19, 2020; August 9, 2021; September 23, 2022

Infinity is a concept that is hard to comprehend. The rebirth process (or samisāra) does not have a traceable beginning, i.e., it extends back to infinity. Mathematicians have concluded that there are many levels of infinity!

## Introduction

1. What is the largest number you can think of? Well, add one, and you have a larger number! There are some large numbers that we are aware of. With record budget deficits of the developed nations in trillions of dollars (and the total nominal value of all the derivatives traded around the world approaching a thousand trillion dollars, or a quadrillion dollars), trillion and quadrillions are indeed large numbers.

- Even though a trillion rolls off the tongue, not very different from a billion, a trillion is much bigger than a billion. Spending a billion dollars a day will take a thousand days to spend a trillion dollars.


## How to Represent Large Numbers?

2. The number of molecules in a cubic centimeter of gas is $2.7 \times 10^{18}$ or $2.7 \times 10^{\wedge} 18$ (this is a simple way to express big numbers; instead of 10000 , we write $10^{4}$ or $10^{\wedge} 4$ ). Since electrons are even smaller, you would think there would be a humongous number of electrons in the observable universe; the estimated number is around $10^{87}$. That is, of course, a huge number, but it is not infinity by any means.

- That should give you an idea of the power of an exponent. Each time the exponent increases by one, the number becomes ten times bigger. So, even though $10^{87}$ may not look that big compared to $10^{18}$, it is a
humongous increase. Another large number should be the distance from the Earth to the edge of the observable universe, estimated to be about 46 billion light-years or around $10^{23}$ miles. Even though such large numbers are hard to be contemplated in our minds, they are all finite.


## What Is a Googol?

3. There are some famous large numbers. A Googol is $10^{100}$, which is unimaginably vast compared to even the number of electrons in the universe $\left(10^{87}\right)$. As an aside, the internet company Google was to be named Googol, but someone made a mistake, and Google was the name given. A Googolplex is a whopper; it is $10^{\text {Googol }}$ or $10^{\left(10^{\wedge} 100\right)}$. There are many such "famous large numbers."

- Yet, you can add one to any of these large numbers and always get a bigger number. Therefore, no number, however large, is still finite.
WebLink: YOUTUBE: Googol and Googolplex by Carl Sagan


## Infinity - Beyond Any Conceivable Number

4. So, the mathematicians coined the term "infinity" to denote an indefinitely high number; The word comes from the Latin "infinitas" or "unboundedness." Since infinity is uncountable, it has some strange characteristics: whatever you add to (or multiply by) an infinity (even if it is another infinity), you still end up with infinity.

- The famous German mathematician David Hilbert illustrated the "abnormal" properties associated with infinity using the idea of an "infinity hotel," which has an infinite number of rooms. The "infinity hotel" always has a vacancy: the management can always ask the person occupying the Nth room to move to the $(\mathrm{N}+1)^{\text {th }}$ room, $(\mathrm{N}+1)^{\text {th }}$ room to move to the $(\mathrm{N}+2)^{\text {th }}$ room, and so on, and thus give the $\mathrm{N}^{\text {th }}$ room to the new guest. Even if an infinite number of new guests arrive, the hotel can accommodate all of them!


## Infinity Is Real

5. That is not to say that infinity is a useless or bogus concept. The arguments described above are valid. Mathematicians cannot do many integrations without infinity. Physicists deal with infinity all the time (but they try to end up with finite physical values).

- The concept of infinity is real (and weird). For example, a line of any finite length has infinite points, whether it is an inch or thousand miles. The invention of calculus by Newton and Leibniz helped handle some problems arising from such situations.


## Space and Time - Infinite!

6. In the physical sense, infinity is a rather vague concept meaning "larger than anything that could in principle be encompassed by experience." For example, space is infinite, and as far as our sophisticated instruments allow us to "see," there is no end.

- Our universe is possibly spatially infinite since scientists can "see" only to a finite extent. So, space is unlimited.
- What about the time? If our universe started at the Big Bang, that inflationary theory says multiple, parallel universes exist.
- According to the "cyclic theory" model, an alternate theory, the same universe comes to a "Big Crunch," which leads to another Big Bang, and the whole process keeps repeating. So, there is no beginning to time either; time is infinite.
- By the way, both those theories are not correct, according to Buddha Dhamma. Individual star systems ("Cakkā$v a \bar{a} l a "$ or "Cakk $\bar{a} v a \bar{a} a ") ~ u n d e r g o ~ t h e ~ b i r t h-d e s t r u c t i o n ~ c y c l i c ~ p r o c e s s . ~$
- I will write more in the future, but see the discussion: "WebLink: Multiverse: Different Physical Laws and Different Dhamma?." The lifetime of a Cakkāvāta (like our Solar system) is called a Mahā Kappa (great eon) in Buddha Dhamma.


## Sainsāra (Rebirth Process) Goes Back Infinite Time!

7. The Buddha used a great eon as the measurement unit to help his followers visualize the enormous length of saimsāra. A great eon (mahā kalpa [in Sinhala] or mahā kappa) is said by the Buddha to be longer than the time it would take a man to wear away a mountain of solid granite one yojana (about 7 miles) around and one yojana high, by stroking it once every hundred years with a silk cloth.

- These days scientists use the word "eon" to denote the duration of a universe (from the "big bang" either to a "big crunch" or just fading away). But a Maha Kappa means the lifetime of our Solar system. Our universe has "no beginning." I believe that in the future, science will conclude that the "Big Bang Theory" is not correct (which says that our universe came into existence from nowhere in a "Big Bang.")See the discussion: "WebLink: Multiverse: Different Physical Laws and Different Dhamma?."


## Another Analogy of the Buddha

8. One day, the Bhikkhus asked the Buddha how many "great eons" had already passed and gone by. The Buddha told them, "Suppose, Bhikkhus, there were four disciples here, each with a lifespan of hundred years, and each day they were each to recollect a hundred thousand great eons. There would still be great eons not yet recollected by them when those four disciples pass away at the end of a hundred years. Because, Bhikkhus, this samisarra is without discoverable beginning."

- A fascinating book about such hard-to-grasp ideas (in science) involving infinity is "The Beginning of Infinity: Explanations That Transform the World" by David Deutsch.
- Infinity is a mind-boggling concept. For example, one question that comes up frequently is the following. We have had infinite time to attain Nibbāna. So, why have all living beings not attained Nibbāna yet?
- I have discussed that in "The Infinity Problem in Buddhism."


## Summary

9. Each of us (including all living beings today) has "lived" for an infinite time. There is no traceable beginning to life, per Buddha. See "Origin of Life - There is No Traceable Origin."

- During much of that time, each of us suffered much more than any brief stretches of pleasure. That is because births in "good realms" (like human, Deva, and Brahma realms) are rare. See "Rebirth Connection to Suffering in the First Noble Truth."
- Most of our past births had been in the four lower realms (including the animal realm), where suffering dominates.
- That is why the Buddha admonished us to strive to attain Nibbāna to avoid such harsh suffering in future rebirths.

Detailed discussion in the subsection, "Origin of Life."

### 5.5.4 <br> Gödel's Incompleteness Theorem

## Revised March 6, 2021; \#2 added March 24, 2021

## Introduction

1. Mathematician Kurt Gödel, in his Incompleteness Theorem, proved that it is impossible to find complete "truth" or "complete explanations" of a system from WITHIN a system.

- No theory that any scientist discovers is, thus, cannot be proven to be the "ultimate truth." This is another way of saying that one cannot comprehend the complete picture of the system IF one is within the system. Then only parts of the system can be studied.


## A Simple Description of Gödel's Incompleteness Theorem

2. The following video provides a simple explanation without going into details.

- At 8 minutes, he says, 'What is outside 'this world' is not 'matter', not energy, not space, and outside of time." It may be possible to get a "complete and self-consistent picture only from the "outside" That is Nibbāna.
- The Buddha, once attaining Nibbāna, was able to "look from the outside and "see things as they are."
- No one else, looking from within can EVER figure out the ultimate truth about this world.
- The second video below is interesting. He assigns "outside of the universe" to God. Other than that, his conclusion is perfect.


## Wrong Conclusion

WebLink: youtube: Kurt Gödel's Incompleteness Theorem and the Origin of the Universe (part 2)

- The key question regarding a "God" or "Creator" is: Is He (God) inside the system or outside? If He is inside, then He is also subjected to Gödel's theorem. If He is outside, how can He affect things from the outside? "Inside" and "outside" are mutually exclusive!


## Nibbāna Is Outside This World

3. The Buddha transcended "this world" by developing his mind; see "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma" for a description of the 31 realms of existence.

- This is again something that a human being cannot prove. One accepts, as I have, of the truth of that by examining the evidence: that the Buddha was able to explain so much about "this world" 2500 years ago. By "this world," it means not only the Earth or even this universe but also total existence.
- Of course, the Buddha lived in this world until the death of the physical body. However, his mind had transcended this world. Attaining Nibbāna is reached at the Buddhahood or the Arahanthood. That Nibbāna would be complete at Parinibbāna at the death of the physical body.

4. The only way to disprove what I stated above is to find inconsistencies within the Buddha Dhamma (this is the same method used by the scientists in assessing scientific theories). I have not found any. See, "Buddha Dhamma: Non-Perceivability and Self-Consistency."

- If you find anything inconsistent about the Buddha Dhamma, that is because there have been numerous "alterations" over the past 2500 years. But if you find any inconsistencies at this site, please let me know. If there are any, that is due to my possible carelessness or ignorance, and I would fix them.
- In fact, this is the only way to get rid of any inconsistent "bits and pieces." Just like if you have a piece of a puzzle at the wrong place that will only hinder the progress of solving the puzzle, having wrong information somewhere will only slow down our progress in "figuring out the pure version of the Buddha Dhamma."
- However, I do believe that the "big pieces of the puzzle" are in correct places here.


## I Hope Scientists Would Become Interested in Buddha Dhamma

5. Kurt Gödel would have really enjoyed Buddha Dhamma. It would have been tremendous if he was alive to go through the material here and point out any inconsistencies. Many of the scientists that I admire, including Einstein, Feynman, Gödel, Heisenberg, de Broglie, Sagan, and many more, would have easily grasped the message of the Buddha. Unfortunately, they never came across the pure Dhamma; David Bohm came close.

- I hope the current generation of scientists and philosophers will get an opportunity to examine the pure Dhamma.

6. I do not want wrong impressions to come out of this post. I love science and physics in particular. Before discovering the pure Dhamma, physics was my passion, and I still try to keep up with new findings.

- Yet, I have realized that discovering how inert matter behaves is a minute fraction of the whole existence's knowledge. We cannot even discover everything about "matter" until we start finding out more about the "mind." The Buddha said, "mano pubbañgamā dhammā..." or "the mind precedes everything in this world....".

7. Let me give some examples. Albert Einstein introduced his Special Theory of Relativity in 1905 and his General Theory of Relativity in 1915. The first showed that Newton's Three Laws of Motion were only approximately correct, breaking down when velocities approached that of light. The second showed that Newton's Law of Gravitation was also only approximately correct, breaking down when gravitation became very strong.

- We could not see anything wrong with Newton's laws of motion until we developed technologies that transcended our 'level of consciousness"; see, "Expanding 'Consciousness' by Using Technology." They worked well within our "probing sensitivities." Even today, scientists do not use relativity equations to map out rocket trajectories to the Moon; Newton's equations are good enough to that.
- In the same way, everything that science discovers expands our horizons but never will provide the "ultimate answers." We can find "everything about this world" just by purifying our minds; see, "Expanding 'Consciousness' by Purifying the Mind."
- The above statements may not mean much right now. However, I ask you to be patient and go through the material at the website, and gradually you may realize what I am trying to say.


## Testable Predictions

8. A "good theory" is all about "testable predictions." As I stated on the home page, I try to present material on Buddha Dhamma as a "theory on how nature works." As I pointed out in many essays, many of the "predictions" or "statements" about this world's nature have proven to be correct by science over the years, especially during the past few hundred years.

- I can make another prediction just for the records. Darwin's theory of evolution will be proven to be only partly correct and only for limited spans of time. The theory of evolution is correct only over the recent past of this planet, where we can trace past events using radiocarbon dating techniques. The oldest dates that can be reliably measured by radiocarbon dating go back to around 50,000 years ago. Even if we put the limit at a million years, that is only a tiny fraction of over four billion years lifespan of the planet.
- What is correctly stated in the theory of evolution is that species arise when conditions become suitable for them to arise AND for them to survive.


## Some Aspects of Buddha Dhamma Not Amenable to Mundane Interpretations

9. However, it is dangerous to talk about concepts that are not amenable to our minds. That will lead only to "loss of faith." It would be impossible to explain to someone who time-traveled to the present time from several hundred years ago how a light bulb can light up just by flipping a switch. There is no way for that person to "grasp" the concept of an electric current; he/she would believe it to be a "magic trick."

- The Buddha never revealed any details of nature that were not discernible to at least his top disciples at that time. Let me give an example from the Tipitaka. One time Ven. Moggallana, who was only second to the Buddha in abhiñ̃̃̄̄ (supernormal) powers, saw many beings in the peta realm near the Giijakuta mountain. Beings in the peta realm have invisible bodies that only those with abhiññ̄ $\bar{a}$ powers can see.
- So, none of the Arahants who had abhiññā powers could see those petas, and they told Ven. Moggallana, "how come we cannot see them?." Ven. Moggallana told them to ask the Buddha. The Buddha told those Arahants that he had actually seen them previously. When the bhikkhus asked why the Buddha did not mention it to them, he told them that, "If I tell you something that you cannot verify by yourselves, that will only lead to doubts. That is why I did not mention it. But now that Moggallana has seen them, there is at least one person there to confirm it."
- See, "Buddhahood Associated Controversies" and "Buddha Dhamma - A Scientific Approach."

10. Even today, there are people with abhiñ̃̃ $\bar{a}$ powers that can see some of these beings in other realms. My teacher Thero says he can see them, and I have no reason to doubt them. Developing abhiñña powers requires being able to get to the fourth jhāna AND then working to develop those powers. So, it is not an easy task. If I ever get to that stage, I will mention that here.

- Developing abhiññā powers or evenjhānā is not necessary to attain Nibbāna. One can even attain the Arahanthood without developing any jhāna ahead of time.
- It is important to experience the "cooling down" of Nibbāna even without getting to the Sotāpanna stage. That itself provides an incentive to continue with the practice; see, "How to Taste Nibbāna."


## References

For those who would like to read more on this subject, the following references could be useful. However, I do not encourage anyone to "go off track." I included this section to point out that all existing scientific theories are incomplete because they all were generated within the system. The Buddha was able to transcend "this world" and thus was able to provide a complete world view.
"Gödel's Proof," by Ernst Nagel and James R. Newman (2001).
"Gödel - A Life of Logic", by John L. Casti and Werner DePauli (2000).
"Incompleteness: The Proof and Paradox of Kurt Gödel," Rebecca Goldstein (2005).
"There's Something About Gödel," Francesco Berto (2009).
"Gödel, Escher, Bach - An Eternal Golden Braid", by Douglas R. Hofstadter (1979).
Next, "Consciousness - A Dhamma Perspective",

### 5.5.5 Truine Brain: How the Mind Rewires the Brain via Meditation/Habits

Revised December 20, 2016; September 21, 2020; October 21, 2022
The triune brain model of the brain is no longer widely discussed. However, it provides a simple way to look at three primary brain functions, as we will see below.

## Triune Brain - Three Major Components of the Brain

1. Triune means "consisting of three." The human brain, the most advanced of all animals, shows how different animals have "different levels" of consciousness.

- The brain has three distinctive regions (see the figure below): (1) brain stem (labeled "reptilian" in the figure), (2) limbic system, (3) cerebral cortex or just cortex (labeled "neo-cortex" in the figure).
- Details in Ref. 1. We will summarize very basic features of the "three parts" of the brain.



## Reptilian Brain (Brain Stem and the Cerebellum)

2. The brain stem (reptilian brain may be a misnomer, since reptiles have limbic systems) is the most primitive and all developed animals have it. It governs automatic physiological functions such as the heart rate, respiration, digestion, etc.

- And that is all the lowest-ranked animals can do (automatically). They are almost like fully-automated robots.


## The Limbic System

3. Animals with somewhat higher intelligence have a limbic system in addition to the brain stem. But still no triune brain.

- It coordinates sensory reception, memory, and unconscious emotional reactions. These animals with limbic systems - like snakes and lizards - react spontaneously to external influences.
- Humans tend to do that too. In case of a threat, the limbic system instantaneously and automatically makes the "fight or flight" decision. We could say that automatic mano sañkhāra arise via the limbic system. See, "Sañkhāra - What It Really Means."
- It is pretty clear from the definition of an Arahant that even this instantaneous response can be entirely tamed by cultivating wisdom (pañ̃ $\bar{a}$, ) i.e., by following the eightfold path. An Arahant's mind would not attach to any ārammana.


## The Cerebral Cortex (Neocortex)

4. The cerebral cortex (learning brain; neo-cortex in the figure) is the most advanced part of the brain; can make "rational decisions" by contemplation but it is time delayed. Therefore, it is called the "thinking brain."

- The cortex is responsible for language capability, logic, reasoning, learning and critical thinking, the good stuff. All primates have it, but of course, humans have the largest.
- In other words, we generate vacī and kāya sañkhāra with the help of the neocortex.
- In contrast, even higher animals like apes and elephants have limited capabilities. However, they are not "robots," as clearly illustrated by this elephant:
- By controlling our vacī and kāya sañkhāra, we can change our gati. This is the "modern scientific rationale" behind the basis of Buddha Dhamma. See, for example, "9. Key to Ānapānasati - How to Change Habits and Character (Gati)."

5. All our sensory inputs are processed in the neocortex before they are sent to the hadaya vatthu or the "seat of the mind" in the gandhabba close to our physical heart.

- Since it takes time for our brains to analyze the "incoming data," typically there is about a 100th of a second delay between incoming sense inputs and our mind generating thoughts about that sensory input.
- The brain can handle only one sensory input at a time. This means it can handle only about 100 sense inputs in a second. So, even though our minds generate an initial response quickly, the follow-up "thoughts" are delayed due to this "processing delay" in the brain.
- This process is discussed in detail in "Citta and Cetasika - How Viññāna (Consciousness) Arises."
- That pre-processing is minimal even in "higher animals" with small cortexes, like dogs and apes. This is why humans are unique. We have a large cortex that slows the response time and also helps us "analyze the situation" rationally.


## Ways to Improve Brain Functionality

6. Neural pathways in the brain are strengthened by:

- Repeated application (meditation included). Repeated activity forms both good and bad habits as we discussed in several posts, and is the key to molding the character (gati); see, "The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Āsavā)," and other related posts.
- Good foods and regular exercise increase the production of Dopamine and other "good" chemicals.
- Exercise and meditate! It will keep you healthy and alert; see ""Spark' by John Ratey" for information on the value of a good exercise program.


## Brain Plasticity

7. Until about the late 1980s, there was wide belief that one had just to live with the brain that one was born with. But since then, the ability of the brain to change (neuroplasticity of the brain) has been demonstrated, and studies on the effects of meditation on the brain have become an active research field.

- Of course, 2500 years ago, the Buddha said that the mind is the precursor to everything. The mind does not arise from the brain. It controls all body parts, including the brain. See, "Brain and the Gandhabba."
- The key is that insight meditation should DRASTICALLY change neural wiring. However, there have not been any brain scans of someone who has cultivated the "correct versions" of Satipatthāna and Ānāpānasati meditation.
- Other posts at the site describe this "re-wiring" of the cortex that leads to change in our gati. See, for example, " 9 . Key to Ānāpānasati - How to Change Habits and Character (Gati)."


## Effects of Meditation on the Brain

8. As shown in the references below, there is compelling scientific evidence that even mundane versions of meditation improve both the cortex AND the limbic system.

- Those studies show that basic Samatha meditation helps, but Mettā Bhāvanā (compassion meditation) is particularly effective.
- It must be noted that Tibetan Samatha (breath meditation) or Mettā Bhāvanā (mundane version) are anāriya versions. For the Ariya versions, see, "6. Ānāpānasati Bhävanä (Introduction)" and " 5 . Ariya

Mettā Bhāvanā (Loving Kindness Meditation)." I am sure that a brain scan of Ariya (Noble person) will yield more revealing results.

- For example, meditation also affects breathing patterns (thus, the brain stem). Therefore, meditation affects overall brain function. An Arahant can stop breathing for up to 7 days in Nirodha Samāpatti. It will be extremely interesting to see a brain scan of an Arahant.


## The malleability of the Neocortex and the Limbic System

9. The following case illustrates the complex role played by the brain. A developed left brain (of the neocortex) indicates compassion for others and enhanced happiness for oneself, and a relatively larger right side indicates an aggressive character.

- Here is the link to a video showing the results of brain scans of an advanced meditator who had done loving-kindness meditation for an extended time compared to 150 non-meditators.


## WebLink: YOUTUBE: Matthieu Ricard: The habits of happiness

The discussion on the brain scan data is from about 17:00 to about 18:20 minutes if you don't want to watch the full video.

- We must also remember that Tibetan loving-kindness meditation is an anāriya version of the Mett $\bar{a}$ Bhāvanā. See "5. Ariya Metta Bhāvana (Loving Kindness Meditation)."


## Humans Have Control Over Their Lives

10. Furthermore, we are not programmed by our genes, environment, or even our past kamma. However, all of those can affect our destiny. The most powerful is our mind. In other words, citta niyama dominates kamma niyama.

- The saying goes, "you can do anything you put your mind to." This is the factual basis of free will.

11. Even though scientists are making some progress regarding the mind, the brain is not the mind, just as the physical eye is not the cakkhu pasāda rūpa; see "Manomaya Kaya (Gandhabba) and the Physical Body," and other related posts. Yet it is essential to keep the physical eye (and other physical sense faculties) and the brain in good condition for the whole body and the mind to work properly.

- Finally, the triune brain model is no longer widely discussed. However, it provides a simple way to look at three primary functions of the brain.

Next, "How Habits are Formed and Broken - A Scientific View",

## References

1. Wikipedia article on Triune Brain. More details in "The Triune Brain" by P. D. MacLean (1990).
2. "The emotional life of your brain" by Richard Davidson (2012).
3. "You are the Placebo - Making Your Mind Matter," by Joe Dispenza (2014).

You can open the following documents by clicking on them:
4. WebLink: Effects of meditation on Amygdala-G. Desbordes et al., - 2012
5. WebLink: Psychological effects of meditation-P. Sedlmeir et al., -2012
6. WebLink: How does mindful meditation work-B. K. Holzel et al., - 2011

## 7. WebLink: Alterations in Brain..by Mindful Meditation-R. J. Davidson et al., - 2003

## How Habits are Formed and Broken - A Scientific View

Revised November 26, 2018; re-written October 11, 2022; re-written October 21, 2022
Understanding how gati (habits/character) can be changed is the key to cultivating Ānāpānasati/Satipatṭhāna meditations.

## Breaking Habits With Ānāpānasati - Simple Explanation

1. The verse "..sō satō vā assa sati, satō vā passa sati. Dīghaì vā assasanto 'dīghamं assasāmī'ti pajānāti, dīghaì vā passasanto 'dīghaì passasāmī'ti pajānāti; rassaim vā assasanto 'rassam̀ assasāmītti pajānāti, ......" appears repeatedly in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Ānāpānasati Sutta, (MN 118)" and "WebLink: suttacentral: Satipatthāna Sutta (MN 10)."

- A simple explanation is: There are certain "bad habits" (that lead to sustaining the rebirth process) we must remove. That is done via "taking in the factors of the Noble Path" and "expelling the opposing factors in micch $\bar{a}$ paths."
- See also "7. What is Ānāpāna?" and "Ānāpānasati Not About Breath - Icchānañgala Sutta."


## Dīghaim and Rassaím - Strong and Weak Gati

2. These are specifically gati to attach to various worldly ārammana and generate kamma bija that can perpetuate the rebirth process among the 31 realms.

- Some gati are firmly entrenched in our minds due to Samsaric habits cultivated over long times (dīghaim.) They are more challenging to get rid of. Then there are others cultivated over shorter times (rassami) that are relatively easy to eliminate.
- As we have discussed, getting rid of all such gati is the key to attaining Nibbāna.
- Once getting to the Sotapanna stage, one can cultivate Ānāpānasati/Satipatṭhāna Bhāvanā to make dīghaì to rassaì transition and eventually get rid of all such gati.


## Key Steps Recommended by the Buddha

3. The Buddha said to follow the following procedure to break a bad habit and instill a good habit:
i. understand the reasons why a particular habit is detrimental,
ii. stop engaging in activities that enhance the habit,
iii. deviate the mind from such harmful activities by focusing on opposing beneficial activities,
iv. contemplate the "release" or "cooling down" that has already resulted by following the above procedure, strengthen the resolve to stay on course, and keep doing (i) through (iii).

With time, the bad habit(s) will disappear, and the good habit(s) will take hold. There comes a time when one will automatically follow this procedure; it becomes a "way of life."
4. The reasoning behind this is based on the key factors that we discussed in the previous posts; see "The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Āsavā)" and "Habits, Goals, and Character (Gati or Gathi) ":

- We do many things automatically (i.e., without being mindful or without deliberate thinking); these are done via the habits we formed during this life or even from previous lives.
- There are both good and bad habits. We want to keep and cultivate good habits and discard bad habits.
- Changing (cultivating) habits first requires some "external adjustments" like one's physical environment, friends, etc., and, more importantly, the four steps listed above.

5. As I pointed out in the posts on the manōmaya kaya (gandhabba) and physical body, our physical body is "prepared" by the kamma seed that was the cause for this life to arise. But the manomaya kaya is constantly making "adjustments" to the physical body based on the current status of the mind.

- Many kamma vipāka are "built-in" even at conception; some may be avoidable by taking care of the body (exercise, food, etc.), and the mind (contemplation, meditation, etc.), but some strong vipāka may not be avoidable. We will never know when cancer, an accident, or even a natural calamity can drastically change our lives; this is anicca, "the inability to maintain our lives the way we would like to."
- Another factor we need to remember is that our "sampāaric habits" are built-in. We keep changing/adding such habits as we grow up, influenced by our family, friends, and society. Thus one's "character" (gati; pronounced "gathi" as on "both") is in constant flux, either by choice or influenced by the environment.


## Critical Role of Vacī Saíkhāra in Formation/Elimination of Gati

6. Our thoughts, speech, and actions are based on our gati (habits/character.) Whether we automatically attach to an ārammaṇa depends on our gati. If we like that ārammaṇa, "joyful feelings (samphassa-j $\bar{a}$ vedanā") arise, and we attach to it ("samphassa-j̄̄-vedanā paccayā taṇhā."

- Once the mind attaches to an ārammaṇa, it starts thinking about it unconsciously (manō sañkhāra arise.) That is immediately followed by conscious thoughts (vaci sañkhāra) where we start planning, and then we may speak (more vaci sañkhāra) and even act (with kāya sañkhāra) to enjoy that ārammaṇa. That will lead to strengthening that gati.
- But if we stop such vaci sañkhāra at early stages (by being mindful of our thoughts), then that gati to attach to such an ārammaṇa will reduce with time and will go away at some point.
- On the other hand, if we willingly cultivate vaci and kāya sañkhāra to "enjoy that ārammaṇa," that will strengthen the gati.

7. Those last two bullets highlight the basis of $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p a \overline{n a s a t i / S a t i p a t t ̣ h a ̄ n a ~ B h a ̄ v a n a \bar{a}}$. The following chart illustrates that.


- Download/print the chart: "Role of Upādāna in Ānāpānasati."
- It is essential to realize that Pațicca Samuppāda and kamma generation starts with an ārammaṇa. See "Difference Between Tanhā and Upādāna" and "Icchā (Cravings) Lead to Upādāna and to Eventual Suffering."


## Sabbakāya Patisamivedī - Becoming "Sensitized"

8. As we progress on "being mindful," we will be able to "catch" immoral thoughts, speech, and action progressively earlier.

- For example, first, one will realize a wrong action after it happened. Then one will realize it while it happens and will stop it. That is the stopping at the strongest "kāya abhisañkhāra" stage.
- At the next level, one will realize an inappropriate speech after the fact, while speaking, and before words start coming out.
- As progress is made, one will "feel" immoral thoughts (vaci abhisañkhāra) starting to build. With more practice, one will become aware of such abhisañkhāra arising early. Eventually, even bad mano sañkhāra will stop arising once the gati (and related anusaya) is removed.
- That is what is meant by the verse, '"sabba kāya paṭisamived̄̄ assasissāmī'ti sikkhati, 'sabba kāya paṭisamived̄̄ passasissāmī'ti sikkhati" in Ānāpānasati/Satipaṭthāna. Paṭisamived̄̄ means "becoming acutely aware/sensitive" of one's mistakes; here, "sabba kāya" means twelve types of kāya: cakkhu kāya, rupa kāya, ...mano kāya, dhamma kāya. That is "being mindful."
- See "Kāyānupassanā - The Section on Habits (Sampajānapabba)."


## Repercussions of Immoral Gati

9. As long as we have gati (habits/character) to attach to various ārammana, we will engage in immoral thoughts, speech, and deeds. That will perpetuate the rebirth process.

- The danger is especially getting rebirths in an apāya. We can see suffering in the animal realm, even if we cannot "see" other realms.
- Understanding that will also lead to the following realization:
(i.) No "soul/ātman" travels the rebirth process (removal of sakkāya diṭthi.)
(ii.) One creates the causes for future rebirths.
(iii.) As long as one craves worldly things, another existence (bhava) will be grasped at the cutipatisandhi moment.
(iv.) Until we get rid of "apāyagāmi gati," rebirth in an apāya is not only possible but inevitable.


## Recent Scientific Studies on Habits

10. Beginning in the early 1990s, scientific investigations in several fields (effects of meditation on the brain, behavioral studies on animals and humans, neurology, etc.) have come to similar conclusions.

- We will discuss these in detail in the future, but I just want to highlight the main similarities. Furthermore, discussing how the mechanism occurs in the brain provides an alternative way to visualize these changes.
- We are indeed fortunate to live at a time when we have evidence from science to provide additional evidence.
- See "Triune Brain: How the Mind Rewires the Brain via Meditation/Habits."

11. In science, the key is in the neurons in the brain and how we can train our neocortex to fire the right sets of neurons more frequently. The "frontal lobes" of the neocortex are the command center for brain activities.

- The frontal lobes can be visualized as the boss. If it is a lazy boss, it will just assign duties to the limbic system to carry out things "as usual."
- But if the boss is energetic and always looking for ways to "improve things," they will start investigating new approaches. And once better approaches are found, it will get them "hard-wired," and they will essentially become the "new limbic system."
- This is the key to "developing a new you" by discarding bad habits and developing good habits. Essentially you need to get the frontal lobes to be an active, energetic boss for the brain.

12. Dr. Jeffrey Schwartz is a psychiatrist specializing in treating Obsessive Compulsive Disorders (OCD) and has pioneered using "habit makeovers" to treat OCD. He has written several books, but I highly recommend the two books, "The Mind and the Brain" and "You are not Your Brains."

He has developed a "Four Step" method to change one's habits that give rise to OCD:

1. Identify the problem area.
2. Recognize the need to change.
3. Deviate from automatically "going along" with old ways and re-direct attention to "new paths."
4. Re-assess the situation, and keep working on accelerating the process.
5. He has kept records of his patients' brain scans, which clearly show the improvements in the brain with time, and of course, most patients can get rid of their compulsive behavior.

- The key is to slow down the "firing of neurons" associated with a bad habit and to increase the firing of neurons associated with an opposing good habit.
- There is a rule called Hebb's rule that says, 'neurons that fire together, wire together'. The more one keeps doing a particular activity, a set of neurons start to fire together. That neural connection gets stronger by the day. It is just like strengthening one's arm by "doing more liftings" with it.
- In the same way, when one decreases the use of a particular activity, the set of neurons allocated for that activity gets weaker, fewer neurons participate, and eventually, it loses being a habitual act.

14. Here is a figure from Dr. Schwartz's book, "The Mind and the Brain" (p. 362), that illustrates the "rewiring" of a new network in the brain and the concomitant weakening of a network for an undesirable habit (click to open it):

## WebLink: PDF download: Habit Formation Figure

This figure explains how a patient with an obsessive disorder to wash his hand constantly got rid of that habit by WILLFULLY stepping outside to the garden when he got the urge to wash his hands. As he kept doing it, the wiring to "wash hands" weakened. Instead, wiring for "stepping outside" got more assertive, and eventually, he lost the compulsive urge to wash his hands too often.
15. The same principle has been used to eliminate other annoying habits and severe disorders. We can use the same procedure to stay away from immoral habits and cultivate moral habits; this is the basis of "ānapāna," see "9. Key to Ānāpānasati - How to Change Character and Habits (Gati)."

### 5.6 Inconsistencies with Science

## Revised March 4, 2018; December 16, 2020

Previous title "Abhidhamma via Science", renamed to "Inconsistencies with Science" on March 4, 2018. Reinstate on February 16, 2021 after revision at "Abhidhamma via Science".

1. We all are impressed by the scientific advances made during the past 100 years or so making our lives easier and more productive. I am actually a cheerleader for scientific and technological advances.

- Physics had been my passion since high school days, and that changed when I started learning Buddha Dhamma several years ago.
- I still love and work on topics of interest in physics (and science in general). Fortunately, I am finding that those two interests are not mutually exclusive, and there is significant overlap. In fact, this section is the result of my two overlapping interests.

2. The following posts discuss cases where current theories of science are not consistent with Buddha Dhamma. I believe that science will recognize the primary nature of the mind in the future, and will discard the current notion that the mind (consciousness) arises out of inert matter.

- Neuroscience says there is no Free Will? - That is a Misinterpretation!
- The Double Slit Experiment - Correlation between Mind and Matter?
- Vision (Cakkhu Viññāna) is Not Just Seeing
- Mystical Phenomena in Buddhism?
- Buddhism and Evolution - Aggañña Sutta (DN 27)

Many other issues relating to life discussed in the section: "Origin of Life"
3. Despite the advances in science and technology, there is much about the human mind that science does not understand, and has not even begun to understand. Western science is based on the five physical senses, leaving out the most important one, the mind.

- At the present time, in 2016, scientists have the wrong view that consciousness originates in the brain.
- All scientific theories relating to the mind are based on this wrong hypothesis. However, Buddha Dhamma says not only that the mind is a sense of its own, but it is the most powerful of all six senses.

Here is a post from the Abhidhamma section that has a deeper analysis of the brain-mind connection:
Brain - Interface between Mind and Body
5.6.1 Neuroscience says there is no Free Will? - That is a Misinterpretation!

Revised April 22, 2016; revised November 15, 2019; September 6, 2020 (update at the end of the post)

## Libet's Experiment

1. In 1983, Benjamin Libet conducted an experiment apparently showing that our brain makes decisions before we become aware of it. When a person moves a finger, the brain activity appears to start before the person actually makes that decision.

- There have been numerous follow-up experiments since then. All those experiments seemed to confirm this observation, even though the time delays vary.
- Scientists and philosophers are quite puzzled and some are very worried that we are just zombies run by a program in our brain.

2. Here is a video clip that illustrates the basic experiment:

## WebLink: VIMEO: Neuroscience and Free Will

Here is a recent youtube video on the same subject:

## WebLink: Youtube: Do humans truly have Free Will?

## Does Libet's Experiment Prove There is No Free-Will?

3. Since Libet published his results, scientists and philosophers have been debating whether these experiments show that man has no free will:

## WebLink: WIKI: Neuroscience of free will

- Also, see the recent post, "Mind Is Not in the Brain" and follow-up posts at "Buddha Dhamma - A Scientific Approach"


## Refined Follow-Up Experiments

4. The second recent experiment is a bit more refined. Let us summarize that experiment:

- The person randomly decides (no pre-planning) to press a button at some time. Let us take this time to be TM ( M for the mind) making the decision.
- He presses the button at TF, which is recorded electronically ( F for using the finger to press the button).
- At the same time that he decides to press the button, he is watching the clock and makes a mental note of the "time" and after hitting the button, records that time too: TE (E for using the eye to see the time on the clock. It is important to note that TE is the time that the MIND says it saw the clock).
- Finally, his brain activity is recorded by the sensors attached to his head. Let us take the recorded start of brain activity to be TB.

Here is a summary from the researchers (you can click on the figure to expand and then hit the back button on the browser to get back):


So, the researchers conclude that since brain activity started at TB before, either (i) him pressing the button (at time TF), or (ii) him recording the "clock" at the time TE when he made the decision, the brain activity started before he made the decision.

- The problem is that they ASSUME that the time, TE, that one gets off the clock is the same as the time, TM, that the mind makes the decision to press the button.


## Explanation From Buddha Dhamma

5. In Buddha Dhamma, the mind is the precursor to every action that we do with the body. The mind's decisions are implemented by the brain. The brain is just a very sophisticated computer.

- Buddha's explanation of the mind is very thorough. The basic ideas at "Moral Living and Fundamentals" and "Essential Abhidhamma - The Basics."
- More detailed analyses on how the mind and the brain work together at "Buddha Dhamma - A Scientific Approach," "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma" and "Mental Body - Gandhabba,"
- Deeper aspects discussed in the "Abhidhamma" section.
- Some of the basic aspects are discussed below.


## Brain Is The "Control Center"

6. The brain is the control center for the mechanical body to carry out both these tasks ASSIGNED BY THE MIND. The brain gets the finger to push the button and the physical eye to look at the watch.

- Now the mind is in the manomaya $k \bar{a} y a$ and is lined up with the heart of the physical body. The mind and the brain are connected by a signal system that is analogous to how television or radio signals are transmitted (very fast, possibly electromagnetic). The brain communicates with the five senses via the nervous system, and those communications are slower.
- Thus the brain gets the message from the mind to "press the button" and to "watch the clock." Thus TB is ALWAYS later than TM.
- Modern science has shown that, "It normally takes $0.4-0.6$ seconds for the nervous system to activate available muscle motor units to contract,......." (see, at the very end of the article: WebLink: WIKI: Motor control). The finger movement involves muscles in the arm, and the eye movement involves muscles in the head and the eye).
- Both actions of "watch the clock" and "press the button" are initiated by the brain (with the help of the central nervous system) per mind's instructions. The eye function circuitry can be logically thought to be a bit faster than the mechanical finger moving. Thus "watching clock" gets done first with the eye, and a little time later the finger has pushed the button. So, here is the time sequence per Buddha Dhamma (you can click on the figure to expand and then hit the back button on the browser to get back):


6. The mind initiates all movements of the body. Here, it is the mind that starts off the brain activity, i.e., TB is later than TM. The brain activity starts AFTER the mind decides to take action because the brain needs to
get the signal from the mind. The seat of the mind (hadaya vatthu) lies close to the physical heart, far away from the brain.

- Now the brain needs to carry out those two functions of pressing the button and look at the clock. The vision circuitry is faster. The mechanical movement of the fingers is slower (it involves moving muscles), and thus pushing the button happens a bit later.


## Back to Libet's Experiment

7. Now, let us go back to the first experiment. The only difference here is that the person is not recording the time. He just presses the left or right button. So, there are just two events recorded now instead of three events. All we have to do is to remove TE from the above two graphs.

- It is simpler: His mind decides to push the button. The mind directs the brain to push either the left or right finger, and it takes some time for the brain to mobilize the muscles to move the finger. The time sequence is the same as in the same figure. The mind decides (TM), the brain starts working on it (TB), and the sensors attached to his head record that brain activity (wiggly line). Finally, the finger pushes the button (TF).
- As in the other experiment, the mistake is to assume that finger pushing happens SIMULTANEOUS with the mind's decision. But the mind only gets the brain (the computer) to initiate the complex sequence of events to work the muscles in the arm and hand to move the finger, and that is the lag time.


## An Analogy

8. The body is like a mechanical instrument, say, a sophisticated tank that is used to fire at the distant object. The operator is like the mind. He aims the gun barrel using sophisticated computer-controlled circuitry and then fires the gun. He can drive the tank where ever he wants. But things do not, and cannot, happen simultaneously with the operator's decision. The gun needs to be moved into position before it is fired.

- The mind is controlling the body just like that. The finger (and the eye) in the above case(s) are just two instruments helping with the two tasks of pressing the button (and reading the clock), and the brain is the "control center" that oversees both those activities on the command of the mind.
- The connection between the body and the mind is explained in the post, "Brain - Interface between Mind and Body" and other posts on the gandhabba.


## Thoughts Arise in Hadaya Vatthu, Not In The Brain

9. The "seat of the mind" (hadaya vatthu) is in the manomaya kāya (also called gandhabba). Thoughts arise there, not in the brain. The brain is a very sophisticated computer and controls the physical body per instructions given by the mind. At death, the manomaya kaya with the mind leaves the body and both the body and the brain become lifeless. See, "Ghost in the Machine - Synonym for the Manomaya Kāya?," "Manomaya Kāya (Gandhabba) and the Physical Body," and "Manomaya Kāya and Out-of-Body (OBE) Experience."

- Therefore, we are not robots controlled by a program running in our brain. The brain is just a sophisticated mechanical instrument that helps the mind with coordinating the tasks (like the computer in the tank in the above example that is helping the tank operator). But there are certain functions like breathing that the brain carries out without input from the mind. We will discuss those in an upcoming post soon.
- Any person has the POTENTIAL to do things in a scale that is unimaginable to us. We just do not realize the power of our minds; see, "Power of the Human Mind - Introduction," and the follow-up posts.

September 6, 2020 update:

There have been a few recent experiments that reduce the delay between TE and TF in \#4 above. The following is the most recent paper on the subject: "WebLink: sciencedirect.com: Sanford-Libet's Intention Reports are Invalid-2020"

- To quote from the abstract of the above paper: "..We argue that Libet's intention reports are invalid and explore the phenomenology of intention in the Libet's experiment."


## The Double Slit Experiment - Correlation between Mind and Matter?

## Revised March 13, 2018; November 15, 2019

## Introduction

1. The failure of the materialistic approach to explaining consciousness is becoming ever more apparent; see Ref. 1 and Ref. 2 below.

- The materialistic approach, of course, is to explain mental phenomena to arise in the brain that is composed of inert matter.

2. A number of scientists/philosophers are hoping that quantum mechanics can come to the rescue (Ref. 3, and Ref. 4).

- They say that even though the deterministic Newtonian mechanics is unable to explain consciousness, quantum mechanics can (because quantum mechanics does not have such an apparent deterministic nature.)


## Quantum Mechanics to the Rescue?

3. Quantum mechanics $(\mathrm{QM})$ is different from other branches of physics where one can get an intuitive idea of what is taking place.

- What we are currently doing with QM can be called a "black box" approach. When we apply the correct equations, we get the right results. Einstein did not like this at all. Yet, to his frustration, all his predictions of the inadequacy of QM did not materialize AND the predictions of QM have been correct to amazing accuracy.

4. Those experiments, the results of which can only be explained by QM, appear to be non-deterministic in nature.

- This has compelled some scientists to investigate whether there is a connection between QM and the mind, which IS non-deterministic. Two experiments, in particular, have been at the forefront of these discussions. The "double-slit experiment" and the "Schrödinger's cat experiment."

5. My intent in this essay is to challenge the two prominent assumptions on this postulated relationship between QM and the mind:
i. Even if QM and the mind are non-deterministic in their own rights, there is no special reason to believe that there is an apparent connection between them.
ii. There is nothing really "non-deterministic" about QM, other than the indeterminacy depicted by the Heisenberg uncertainty principle. That is just on the accuracy of a given measurement.

## Quantum Mechanics Is Not Intrinsically Psychophysical

6. Let us look into (i) first. Henry Stapp is a leading physicist who argues that quantum theory will ultimately provide an explanation for consciousness. In his book, "Mindful Universe" he says (p.2), "... quantum theory itself is intrinsically psychophysical as designed by its founders, and as used in actual scientific practice, it is
ultimately a theory about the structure of our experience that is erected upon a radical mathematical generalization of the laws of classical physics."

- My basic point is that quantum theory is NOT psychophysical; there is no way to accommodate "subjectivity" in QM. Where is the "mind connection" in the theory of QM?
- There are others who work on theories that try to explain consciousness as arising from quantum effects in the brain; see, for example, "Conversations on Consciousness", by Susan Blackmore (2006). No one has clarified how these theories make the connection between "psyche" and "physical" in "psychophysical."


## The "Observer Effect" in QM

7. Let us review one experiment that has become the main demonstration for the "observer effect" in QM, the "double-slit experiment." Here is a short video by Dr Quantum to illustrate the "paradox" of the double slit experiment:

## WebLink: YOUTUBE: Dr Quantum Double Slit Experiment

8. The two main points of this experiment are:
a. the particles behave like waves when both slits are open, and
b. this "wave nature" goes away when the path of the particle is "observed" or monitored.

## Bohmian theory of Quantum Mechanics

9. There is a version of QM called the Bohmian theory or the Pilot Wave theory that was developed by the late David Bohm. It does use Schrodinger's equation which is used to track the propagation of a "pilot wave." That theory is explicitly non-local, i.e., quantum entanglement is built-in.

- With this theory, each solution of the wave equation describes a DETERMINISTIC path for the particle, and the statistical average agrees with the experiments and the results of the standard QM calculations.
- The actual trajectories have been harder to measure not because of a "mind effect," but because observation can disturb the particle trajectory itself. Recent experiments have been conducted to "weakly" measure a system without appreciably disturbing the trajectories. Those experimental results are consistent with the predictions of Bohmian theory (Ref. 5).

Thus the role played by Bohmian mechanics in these "QM experiments" is just like the role statistical mechanics played in thermodynamics.

- Here is a very short video showing INDIVIDUAL trajectories for a double-slit experiment calculated using the Bohmian theory. There is nothing "mysterious." Each particle has a definite trajectory. There is no "observer effect."


## WebLink: YOUTUBE: Bohmian Trajectories in the Double-Slit Experiment

- When it is attempted to observe the path of an individual particle, the coherence of the system or the pilot wave is disturbed and the interference pattern goes away. Thus there is no "observer effect," in the sense of bringing "subjectivity" in.


## "Schrödinger's Cat" Thought Experiment

10. Another famous experiment that has been the subject of much discussion is the "Schrödinger's cat" thought experiment. This experiment suggested by Schrödinger back in 1935, involves a cat in a closed chamber.

- A radioactive sample in the chamber, if undergoes decay within a given period of time, triggers the release of a hammer that breaks a vial of a toxic gas that kills the cat. If a conscious observation is required to collapse the wave function, then the fate of the cat is not known until the box is opened. Unfortunately, both the consciousness-based and consciousness-free interpretations of quantum measurement are indistinguishable to the observer outside the box.
- In 2006, an actual experiment was conducted to simulate this experiment. It was reported that "... measurement alone, rather than conscious observation of measurement, is sufficient"; see Ref. 6.


## No Real "Observer Effect"

11. Thus there is no real "observer effect" in the double-slit experiments or in the Schrödinger cat experiment.

- In the double-slit experiment, what an "observer" does is to disturb the coherence of the system, if the disturbance is strong. It does not matter whether the "observer" is human or a mechanical device (in most cases it is non-human); one ALWAYS gets the same result. This is in contrast to real subjective situations. For example, in the stock market, complex subjective decisions are made by millions of people.
- So, where does the "objectivity" or "intention" - in the sense of the mind affecting the experimental result - come from? "Intent to monitor" is not really a significant subjective decision; just a simple "yes" or "no."

12. Therefore, it is clear that there was no evidence for "subjectivity" in those experiments even before Bohmian mechanics or the Schrödinger's cat experiment. Those two pieces of evidence really make that point undeniable. There is no evidence of the mind affecting the outcomes of those experiments.

## The Mind Creates Matter, Not the Other Way Around

13. The Buddha stated that the mind is at the forefront; "Manopubbangamā Dhammā.." A deeper Abhidhamma analysis is available at "The Origin of Matter - Suddhatthaka."

- Even though mind affects matter and even CREATES matter, science has not advanced enough yet to confirm that.

14. There has to be a paradigm change in science to explain consciousness. Any theory based on matter and attempt to treat mental phenomena as a byproduct will not succeed. The mind is the more fundamental entity and takes precedence over matter.

- Some philosophers are beginning to sense this reality. Even though he does not appear to know anything about Buddha Dhamma, philosopher Thomas Nagel says the following. "The great advances in the physical and biological sciences were made possible by excluding the mind from the physical world... ..But at some point it will be necessary to make a new start on a more comprehensive understanding that includes the mind." (Ref. 1, p.8). Then on p. 15, "...The possibility opens up of a persuasive conception of the natural order very different from materialism - one that makes mind central, rather than a side effect of physical law."


## Consciousness and Quantum Mechanics

March 13, 2018: I have started a new section "Quantum Mechanics and Dhamma," where a new interpretation of quantum mechanics is presented, and it is discussed why a connection between quantum theory and consciousness will not be possible.

## References

1. Thomas Nagel, "Mind and Cosmos" (2012).
2. Colin McGinn, "WebLink: PDF File: All machine and no ghost- McGinn-2012", New Statesman p. 40, February 20, 2012. (click on the link to open the pdf file)
3. Henry P. Stapp, "Mindful Universe" (2011).
4. B. Rosenblum and F. Kuttner, "Quantum Enigma - Physics Encounters Consciousness", (2006); there are many other recent books.
5. S. Kocsis et al., "WebLink: Observing the Average Trajectories of Single Photons in a Two-Slit Interferometer," Science, vol. 332, 1170 (2011). (click on the link to open)
6. R. H. S. Carpenter and A. J. Anderson, "WebLink: The Death of Schrodinger's Cat and of Consciousness-based Quantum Wavefunction Collapse," Annales de la Fondation Louis de Broglie, vol. 31, 45 (2006). (click on the link to open)

### 5.6.3 Vision (Cakkhu Viñ̃n̄āṇa) is Not Just Seeing

July 15, 2016; revised October 19, 2020

## Introduction

1. In 1988, Dee Fletcher almost died due to carbon monoxide poisoning. Her husband found her unconscious just in time to save her life. However, when she recovered, she had lost "sight" in the normal sense of the word.

- She could not see and recognize someone standing right in front or read a book.

2. But soon she realized that she had some peculiar abilities. She could grab a pencil from the hand of a person who held it in front of her, even though she could not actually "see" the pencil or the person.

- Her vision is good enough for picking something up, but not good enough for seeing it!


## Dee Fletcher's Case Provided Many Clues on Vision

Since then researchers have done numerous experiments on her, which have led to some astonishing findings of how vision works.

- For example, they tested her with a mailbox with a narrow slit for inserting letters. Even though she could not see the mailbox - let alone the slit or the envelope - she could insert the letter in the slot without any effort. Even when they tilted the slit, she did not have a problem at all! It was as if a phantom inside her was doing that task for her.

3. Another ability of Dee was to be able to walk around the house without bumping into furniture or walls. Since that ability could be due to her familiarity with the house, they took her to an unfamiliar trail and she did not have any problem walking there without tripping over rocks or bumping into trees.

- This disorder is known as visual agnosia.
- It turns out that there are two relatively independent visual systems in the brain: One for conscious perception (visual cortex), which was severely damaged in Dee. The other was for unconscious control of action (superior colliculus), which is largely preserved.


## Two Ways of Visual Processing

4. The following figure shows the optical nerve splitting and connecting to those two areas in the brain.


You can download the figure here.
5. The presence of two streams of visual processing in the brain had been known only since 1982. Even though the role of the visual cortex in the brain (in producing a "picture in the mind") had been known before that, the role of a second processing area in the brain (superior colliculus) that helps with figuring out the "depth of vision" or how far a given object was proposed in 1982 by Leslie Ungerleider and Mort Mishkin.

- Of course, their model helped explain the symptoms experienced by Dee Fletcher. She had parts of her visual cortex damaged by the carbon monoxide poisoning, while her superior colliculus was left mostly intact. Her eyes were sending the signals to the visual cortex, but the damaged visual cortex could not process that signal.
- By the way, you do not need to know the details of the visual cortex, superior colliculus, or any other technical term to get the idea that I plan to convey. I do not know details about them either.


## How Vision Happens - Still a Mystery for Science

6. Of course, scientists are only aware that those two areas in the brain contribute to those two functions. They do not know exactly how the visual cortex gleans information about what the object is (i.e., its visual characteristics.) Also, it is not known how the superior colliculus figures out the dimensions of the object and how far it is at (in order to correctly grab an item both types of information are needed).

- We need to realize that there is "no light" going to the visual cortex and there is no screen at the back of the head that displays the object in question. The optical nerve only transmits a chemical (and electrical) signal. The visual cortex somehow generates a "picture" for our minds to see.
- Even more mysterious is how the superior colliculus figures out the depth of vision just from that chemical signal coming through the optical nerve.
- We will come back to these issues in upcoming posts, but first, let us continue with our discussion on what the scientists know at this time and how they found them.


## Further Details of Dee Fletcher's Case

7. There are many research papers that describe experiments involving Dee Fletcher, and the two principal researchers have written a book on this research: "Sight Unseen - An Exploration of Conscious and Unconscious Vision" by M. A. Goodale and A. D. Milner (2004).

- The above book is a bit expensive. Chapter 4 of V. S. Ramachandran's popular book, "Phantoms in the Brain" (1998) provides a less technical description. That book also describes some other interesting findings of the brain. I hope to discuss a couple of those observations (particularly his and others' work on "phantom limbs") in future posts.
- There is also a Wikipedia article on the WebLink: WIKI: Two-streams hypothesis on vision.

8. The book by Goodale and Milner also describes a visual problem that is the opposite of that of Ms. Fletcher. This syndrome is called the "optic ataxia," and those who have it can "see" and recognize objects very well, but they have difficulty in actions involving objects.

- Those who suffer from optic ataxia, for example, can see the mail box and the slit described in \#2 above. However, they have much difficulty in putting a letter through the slit.
- It turns out that these people have their superior colliculus damaged, but the visual cortex works fine.


## How Does the Mind Figure out the Distances to Objects Around Us?

9. Have you thought about how we can move around without bumping into each other and other objects like trees on the ground and cars on the road? The presence of the two processing streams can BEGIN TO explain how the brain figures out not only "what is in front of us (a human, tree, or a car)" but also "how far is it at and how big it is."

- As mentioned above, part of the signal going through the optical nerve to the visual cortex deals with the first task, and the other part going to the superior colliculus deals with the "haw far and how big" issue.

10. Even though scientists have figured out that those two areas in the brain (visual cortex and the superior colliculus) somehow extract the two kinds of information, they have absolutely no idea how those areas extract that information from the chemical signal that comes through the optical nerve.

- Scientists do know that the lens in an eye projects an image of the object to the back of the eye (retina); see the figure above. It is pretty much the same as an image you can see with a lens:


This is pretty much how a camera captures an image:


## How Can a Chemical Signal Provide the Perception of Sight (and Light)?

11. Of course, the film in an old camera undergoes some chemical changes when the image falls on it. Then that film is chemically processed to reveal the picture.

- In the same way, when the image of an object falls on the retina of an eye, the cells on the retina generate a chemical (and electrical) signal. The optical nerve transmits this signal to the visual cortex and the superior colliculus in the brain. There is no "picture" transmitted to the brain.
- So, how does the visual cortex generates a visual of the object starting with the chemical signal that comes from the eye?
- Even more puzzling is how the superior colliculus figures out the distance to the object (and the dimensions of the object), solely based on that same signal.

12. Even within the visual cortex itself, there are 30 different areas specialized to carry out different tasks. They all help provide a "comprehensive picture" of the object.

- For example, the area called V4 deals with the color of the object, but does not care about the direction of motion.
- On the other hand, area MT (also called V5) responds to targets in the visual field based on their direction of motion, but does not care about the color of the object. Specialized sub-areas in the visual cortex carry out multiple tasks.


## The brain is Not a Computer - It Can Change

13. Brain is indeed a very sophisticated machine! However, as we will find out in upcoming posts, it is not a typical machine like a computer. It can change on its own!

- While a computer cannot get rid of parts that go bad, the brain can indeed replace or repair bad parts and even make new parts in some cases (however, when a whole section is damaged, like in the case of the visual cortex or superior colliculus such a rejuvenation is not possible). This is what is puzzling the neuroscientists right now. They have confirmed that these things happen (I will discuss examples in future posts), but have no idea HOW the brain does that.
- The key to this puzzle is the following. Our "mental body" or the gandhabba controls the physical body. The gandhabba has three components: kammaja kāya, cittaja kāya, and the utuja kāya. It is actually the cittaja kāya that plays the dominant role in CHANGING brain functions. In other words, it is OUR THOUGHTS that can change the brain!
- Ultimately, one attains Nibbāna by gradually transforming one's own brain. In other words, getting rid of greed, hate, and ignorance can change one's brain! However, even a Buddha can only show the way, and one has to make the effort.
- The four types of bodies that we have and the gandhabba are discussed in the section "Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya)." The key functions of the cittaja kāya are also discussed in the post, "Udayavaya Nāna - Importance of the Cittaja Kāya."


## Buddha Dhamma and Science - a Symbiotic Relationship

14. We live in a truly opportune time to comprehend the value of Buddha Dhamma. Modern science provides clues that can be used with Buddha Dhamma to clarify many issues and vice versa. See, "Buddha Dhamma - A Scientific Approach" and "Quantum Mechanics and Dhamma."

- In this series of posts, I hope to suggest some such avenues for scientists to explore, based on Buddha Dhamma, which can also explain many of these "new findings."
- As I have mentioned many times, attaining Nibbāna does not require such details. However, for most people, future confirmation of such "predictions" hopefully will help build confidence in Buddha Dhamma, and to appreciate its value.
- Of course, the real value of Buddha Dhamma is not in exposing such mundane things, but showing the path to liberation from suffering (Nibbāna). But it is good to have faith in Buddha Dhamma, so that one can feel confident that one is not wasting one's precious time in learning Buddha Dhamma.


## VI Elephants in the Room

## February 28, 2022

The goal is to highlight the obvious contradictions in current English (and other languages) translations of key concepts in Buddha Dhamma.

- I call these "elephants in the room" because these obvious contradictions have gone unnoticed for all these years. It is a puzzling phenomenon because it is not necessary to have knowledge of Pāli to see some of these contradictions. Even a child should be able to see some of these contradictions!
- Note that there are several posts within each section and some of them branch out to even more posts.

First Elephant: "Elephant in the Room 1 - Direct Translation of the Tipitaka"
Second Elephant: "Elephant in the Room 2 - Jhāna and Kasina"
Third Elephant: "Elephant in the Room 3 - Ānāpānasati"

### 6.1 Word-for-Word Translation of the Tipitaka

## February 28, 2022

Elephant in the Room 1 - Direct Translation of the Tipitaka
Niddesa (Brief Description) of Paticca Samuppāda
Paticca Samuppāda During a Lifetime
Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda - Bhava and Jāti Within a Lifetime
Change of Mindset Due to an Ārammana
Khandhā in Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda
Seeing Is a Series of "Snapshots"
Aggregate of Forms - Collection of "Mental Impressions" of Forms
Rūpakkhandha in Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda
Five Aggregates - Experiences of Each Sentient Being
Pañcupādānakkhandha - Attachment to One's Experiences
Noble Truth of Suffering- Pañcupādānakkhandhā Dukkhā
Sakkāya Ditthi and Pañcupādānakkhandhā
Bhava and Jāti Within a Lifetime - Example
Often Mistranslated Pāli Keywords
Rāga and Jhāna - Two Commonly Misunderstood Words
Elephant in the Room 2 - Jhāna and Kasina
Samādhi, Jhāna, and Sammā Samādhi
Jhāna, Jhāya, and Jhāyi - Different Meanings
Elephant in the Room 3 - Ānāpānasati

## Ānāpānasati Overview

Assāsa Passāsa - What Do They Mean?
Ānāpānasati Not About Breath - Icchānañgala Sutta
Mahārāhulovāda Sutta and Ānāpānasati

### 6.1.1 Elephant in the Room 1 - Direct Translation of the Tipitaka

February 28, 2022; revised March 1, 2022 (\#2); October 16, 2022 (new \#2, among other revisions)
Direct (word-for-word) translation of Tipiṭaka suttas is a significant problem. Many people are confused by contradictions that inevitably arise due to this practice.

## "Elephant in the Room"

1. To quote Wikipedia: "The expression "the elephant in the room" (or "the elephant in the living room") is a metaphorical idiom in English for an important or enormous topic, question, or controversial issue that is obvious or that everyone knows about, but no one mentions or wants to discuss because it makes at least some of them uncomfortable and is personally, socially, or politically embarrassing, controversial, inflammatory, or dangerous." See, "WebLink: en.wikipedia.org: Elephant in the room."

- Even though the Pāli Tipitaka remains intact, Buddha's teachings are NOT correctly communicated these days. After many years of writing an English website on Buddha Dhamma and participating in discussion forums, the root cause has slowly dawned on me. The main problem is the word-for-word translation of the suttas.

2. I have pointed out this problem in several posts during the past few months. See, for example, "Distortion of Pāli Keywords in Paticca Samuppāda."

- Even after providing clear evidence, many people ignore this "elephant in the room." I then realized that many people do not have the basic understanding necessary to see the problem! They simply don't see the elephant. Thus the need for this series of posts.
- Tipitaka was not translated word-for-word to any language until the 1800s. That practice started with European scholars in the 1800s trying their best to understand the vast amount of Pāli and Sanskrit texts found in India, Sri Lanka, and many other Asian countries.

3. For example, a direct translation of the Tipitaka to the Sinhala language took place only in 2005. The Tipiṭaka had remained in the Pāli language (written with Sinhala script) since first written down in 29 BCE (2000 years ago). [WebLink: ocbs.org: The Historical Authenticity of Early Buddhist Literature - A Critical Evaluation by Alexander Wynne - Page 37.]

- During that time, bhikkhus clarified key concepts with long discourses or written commentaries. Many suttas in the Tipitaka are in a highly-condensed form (uddesa version) suitable for oral transmission (Ref. 1.) That was necessary because the Tipiṭaka was transmitted orally in the first 500 years after the passing away of the Buddha.
- Deep concepts in those suttas were explained to the general public in their native languages by bhikkhus. Furthermore, three commentaries were composed in Pāli during the time of the Buddha. Per the Sinhala version of those three commentaries, one was the work of Ven. Sāriputta and the other two attributed to Ven. Mahākaccāna (or Mahākaccāyana.)
- About 200 years after the passing away of the Buddha (i.e., about 2300 years ago), Ven. Mahinda in Sri Lanka started writing commentaries in the Sinhala language (Sinhala Atthakathā.)
- When writing on leaves became more widespread (but still tedious) around 2000 years ago, an assembly of Arahants wrote down the Pāli Tipitaka and the three original commentaries. That constitutes about 60 volumes of the Tipitaka that we have today.


## Mahāyāna Influence on Theravāda

4. Within 500 years of the passing away of the Buddha, the Indian Mahāyānists started not only refining but incorporating concepts that were alien to Theravāda Buddha Dhamma.

Those who started this revision process tried to make things "simpler" and "innovative" by replacing anicca and anatta. So, they defined those in their terms (anitya and anātma) and then got into a slippery slope in explaining those terms by inventing more concepts. It snowballed, and in the words of Edward Conze, who translated many Mahāyāna texts to English (Ref. 2):

- "......About 100 BCE (roughly 400 years after the Buddha's Parinibbāna), many Buddhists in India felt that the existing statements of the doctrine had become stale and useless. They were convinced that Dhamma required new reformulations to meet the needs of new ages, new populations, and new social circumstances. So they set out to produce new literature, which ultimately became known as Mahāyāna Buddhism. The creation of this literature was one of the most significant outbursts of creative energy known to human history and"sustained for about four to five centuries. Repetition alone, they believed, cannot sustain a living religion. They believed that unless counterbalanced by constant innovation, it will become fossilized and lose its life-giving qualities."


## Poor Status of Buddhism in the 1800s

5. To complete the historical background relevant to this discussion, let me quickly summarize the sad status of Buddhism in the 1800s.

- The invasions by the Portuguese, Dutch, and finally the British spanned over four centuries starting in 1498; see "WebLink: en.wikipedia.org: Portugues' presence in Asia." That led to a drastic decline of Buddha Dhamma (Buddhism) in all Asian countries (Sri Lanka, India, Burma, Thailand, etc.)
- Buddhism was non-existent in India by the 1800s. However, Mahāyāna Buddhism arose in India just 500 years after the Buddha and flourished for several centuries. Those heydays of Mahāyāna Buddhism corrupted Theravāda Buddhism in Sri Lanka and other Asian countries. See Ref. 2.
- The following video is in the Sinhala language. It provides an account of the restoration of Ruwanvalisāya, one of the largest stupās in Sri Lanka. That project took many years and was completed with assistance from the British Governor in Sri Lanka at that time. You can see the status of Buddhist temples and stupās in the 1800s before their restoration:
 20 2ep jo od Naranvita Sumanasara Thero
- A picture of Ruwanvalisāya in the early1800s is at @1:10 minutes. By 1869, a small residence for bhikkhus had been built (@1:30 mins.) Even by 1921, complete restoration had not taken place. Also, see the Wikipedia article, "WebLink: en.wikipedia.org: Ruwanwelisaya."


## Revival of Buddhism Starting in the 1800s

6. In the 1800 s Buddhism underwent a period of revival due to the efforts of some British civil servants.

- They found many key Buddhist sites like Lumbini and even the Asoka pillars in India in ruins. They also found many Sanskrit texts in India and Pāli texts in Sri Lanka, Burma, etc.
- Those civil servants coordinated to collect the vast historical documents found in the Asian countries. Those included not only Tipiṭaka documents but Mahāyāna and Vedic documents as well. Scholars in European countries tried to sort them out and figure out those new concepts.
- However, even Theravāda bhikkhus had already mistaken mistranslated anicca and anatta to be the same as Sanskrit anitya and anātma by that time. That was due to the influence of the Mahāyāna Buddhism just 500 years after the Buddha; see \#4 above and in Ref. 3.


## The Book "In Search of the Buddha" by Charles Allen

7. To get an idea of how those European pioneers struggled to interpret the inscriptions on Ashoka pillars and the vast collection of Pāli and Sanskrit texts, I highly recommend the book, "In Search of the Buddha" by Charles Allen (2003). His family had been in India for generations serving in the British government, and he was born in India.

- The book has a lot of information and pictures of many historical sites in India before their restoration. For example, a photo of The Mahābodhi Temple taken in 1799 is on p. 147.
- It is truly fascinating to read about the efforts of those who dedicated their lives to the effort of uncovering Buddha Dhamma. Even though not shown in that book, historical sites in Sri Lanka and other Buddhist countries were also dilapidated, as shown in the video of \#3. Charles Allen's book focuses on India.
- Those civil servants/European scholars were primarily responsible for the current revival of Buddhism. However, they unintentionally solidified some critical damages previously done to Theravāda concepts (especially misinterpretation of anicca and anatta).


## Imagine the Task of Deciphering Three Novel Religious Concepts Written in Two Foreign Languages!

8. There were Sanskrit documents in India. No Pāli documents on Theravāda or Sanskrit documents on Mahāyāna were found in India.

- Mostly, Pāli texts on Theravāda were found in Sri Lanka. Sanskrit texts on Mahāyāna, as well as Pāli texts on Theravāda were found in other Asian countries. See, "WebLink: en.wikipedia.org: Sanskrit Buddhist Literature."
- The enormity of the task faced by those European scholars becomes apparent when one realizes that three sets of different concepts were involved in Theravāda, Mahāyāna, and Vedic texts.
- Many academics in European universities then started translating the Tipitaka into English, German, and French. They needed to learn the concepts of Buddhism (as well as Pāli and Sanskrit languages) from "local experts," but at that time, there were no bhikkhus with in-depth knowledge of Buddha Dhamma.
- That is when the practice of translating the Tipitaka word-for-word to another language started.


## Academic Credentials Not Enough to Teach Buddha Dhamma

9. Those European scholars did their best to interpret the vast collection of historical documents. Those efforts are well-documented in Charles Allen's book. Professor Rhys Davids was among those scholars, and most current interpretations are based on his work.

- Following the original translations by Rhys Davids, Eugene Burnouf, and others, contemporary Sinhala scholars like Malalasekara (a doctoral student of Rhys Davids) "learned" Buddhism from the Europeans and thus started using wrong interpretations.
- Other Sinhala scholars like Kalupahana and Jayathilake also learned "Buddhism" at universities in the United Kingdom (received Doctoral degrees in Buddhism) and wrote books in English and Sinhala.
- Of course, scholars in other Buddhist countries did the same in their languages, and the incorrect interpretations spread worldwide.

10. I hope I have provided enough information to contemplate why the opinions of "scholars" are likely to be wrong due to reasons beyond their control. Again, I admire and appreciate what Rhys Davids, Burnouf, Muller, and others did in those days, and it was not their intention to distort Buddha Dhamma. It is not the fault of current scholars either.

- To emphasize, one needs to learn Buddha Dhamma from a true disciple of the Buddha who has attained at least the Sotāpanna stage.
- Academic credentials mean NOTHING as far as teaching Buddha Dhamma is concerned. With all due respect to those European scholars, they DID NOT understand the key message of the Buddha. That message is that the rebirth process is filled with suffering, and the goal of a true Buddhist is to stop the rebirth process and attain Nibbāna. See, "Basic Framework of Buddha Dhamma."


## Summary and Future Posts

11. The description above provides the necessary historical background.

- The main point I will focus on in the upcoming posts is the following: Confusion caused by the word-for-word translation of the Tipiṭaka. I will address that in detail in the next post.
- Of course, those European scholars who started that practice had no idea it was the wrong approach.
- Within the past 20 years, the correct interpretations of the Tipitaka started circulating. Explanations by Waharaka Thero became increasingly widespread, first in Sri Lanka and then in other countries by Sri Lankans who resided in those countries.

12. How was Waharaka Thero able to make those correct interpretations?

- Waharaka Thero was a jāti Sotāpanna, as he had declared. Once one attains the Sotāpanna stage, one will not lose that deeper understanding through future lives.
- However, Waharaka Thero was more than just a jāti Sotāpanna. A Sotāpanna may not be able to explain concepts to others, even if they understand them. That is a unique ability of only those with "Paṭisambhidā Ñāna."

13. How can we trust those interpretations to be correct?

- Just as in modern science, the ultimate test is self-consistency. The Tipitaka, compiled AND written down by Arahants, is fully self-consistent. Therefore, any interpretation must be selfconsistent within the Tipitaka as well.
- I will first show that most current interpretations are blatantly self-contradictory. Even a child can see those contradictions. I will first provide many instances of such contradictions.
- Then I will also show that the interpretations of Waharaka Thero are entirely self-consistent.
- I welcome comments at the discussion forum.


## References

1. Details on uddesa, niddesa, and paṭiniddesa at "Sutta Interpretation - Uddēsa, Niddēsa, Patiniddēsa."
2. Edward Conze, "WebLink: PDF Download: A Short History of Buddhism" $(1980,1993)$
3. "Misinterpretation of Anicca and Anatta by Early European Scholars." I will expand that analysis later in this series.

### 6.11.11 Niddesa (Brief Description) of Paṭicca Samuppāda

March 7, 2022
Niddesa version (Brief Description) of Paticca Samuppāda provides a bit more clarity than the uddesa (utterance) version. We discuss the niddesa version in this post.

## Three "Elephants in the Room"

1. During the emergence of Mahāyāna (with Sanskrit literature) around 2000 years ago had distorted meanings of keywords like anicca and anatta. Misinterpretation of Ānäpānasati as "breath meditation" by Buddhaghosa got incorporated into Theravāda Buddhism about 1500 years ago.

- Buddha Dhamma (Buddhism) came out of yet another recent dark period of 300-400 years thanks to the efforts of some British civil servants and European scholars starting in the 1800s. However, they (unintentionally) made those earlier distortions permanent using the newly discovered printing press. Furthermore, they started the practice of translating the Pāli Tipiṭaka word-for-word to English.
- The adoption of wrong interpretations of keywords like anicca and anatta due to the influence of Mahāyāna would be ONE issue to tackle. Misinterpretation of Ānāpānasati as "breath meditation" is the SECOND. I have discussed those two issues in the past but will address them again in this series of posts.
- Before that, I need to address the more urgent THIRD issue that resulted from translating the Tipitaka word-by-word. Most of these contradictions can be seen even by a child without any knowledge of Pāli. That is what I will call the FIRST "Elephant in the Room." It is impossible to translate the Tipitaka word-for-word and convey the embedded deep concepts.


## The First "Elephant in the Room"

2. The following verse (in the uddesa form) is from the "WebLink: suttacentral: Dutivabodhi Sutta (Ud 1.2)". The Päli version of the corresponding verses are in Ref. 1:
"In the second part of the night, he reflected on dependent origination in reverse order:

When this doesn't exist, that is not; due to the cessation of this, that ceases. That is: When ignorance ceases, choices cease. When choices cease, consciousness ceases. When consciousness ceases, name and form cease. When name and form cease, the six sense fields cease. When the six sense fields cease, contact ceases. When contact ceases, feeling ceases. When feeling ceases, craving ceases. When craving ceases, grasping ceases. When grasping ceases, continued existence ceases. When continued existence ceases, rebirth ceases. When rebirth ceases, old age and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress cease. That is how this entire mass of suffering ceases."

- The second translation at Sutta Central is almost the same: "WebLink: suttacentral: The Second Discourse about the Awakening Tree."
- Such translations have existed for many years without anyone asking questions about their apparent incorrectness.


## Insane Discussions in Discussion Forums

3. There is a recent ongoing discussion at Dhamma Wheel: "WebLink: dhammawheel.com: Do Arhats experience contact with their sixfold sense media? What about vedanā?" It is a clear example of the confusion caused by such translations. The participants are understandably confused by translations like in the sutta in \#2 above.

- The translation in \#2 plainly says that when ignorance (avijjā) is not there, choices (sañkhāra), consciousness (viñ̃āña), and the rest of the entities cease to exist.
- We all agree that the Buddha and Arahants do not have even a trace of avijjā (ignorance about the Four Noble Truths) left.
- Then, according to the translations in \#2 above, they would not generate any more sañkhāra and would not have consciousness (viñ $\tilde{n} \bar{a} n a$ ). That means they would essentially not be living! That is what confused those people in that discussion forum in the above link.
- On the contrary, we know that the Buddha lived for 45 years after Enlightenment. He experienced all six sensory faculties, used them optimally, and had the best mind. He could recall any event in the past as far as he desired. But he also felt all types of vedana , including bodily dukkha vedanā (he had back problems and once was injured by Devadatta).

4. So, where is the problem? Is that sutta wrong?

- The sutta is perfectly fine. Such problems arise when translators start translating Pāli suttas word-for-word without paying attention (or not understanding) to the basic concepts in Buddha Dhamma.
- The critical point here is that many suttas are in the highly-condensed uddesa version. There are THREE levels of explanations as discussed in "Sutta Interpretation - Uddesa, Niddesa, Patiniddesa."
- The niddesa form provides a slightly expanded version. Then the patiniddesa form provides details with examples. If someone tries to translate the uddesa version to English word-for-word, that leads to severe problems as we saw in \#2 and \#3 above.
- Many keywords have different usages depending on the context. For example, viñãāṇa cannot be translated as "consciousness" for all cases because there are many types of viññanna (for instance, vipāka viññāna and kamma viññāna are two VERY different types.) One needs to know which kind of viññāna a given sutta discusses.


## How Can One Learn Paticca Samuppāda by Reading These Translations?

5. There are "WebLink: suttacentral: 32 results for avijijā AND nirodhā AND sañkhāranirodho," meaning there are at least 32 suttas with the INCORRECT verse of Ref. 1. Many of the suttas in this list are
from the Sainyutta Nikāya 12, discussing Paticcca Samuppāda. I don't see how anyone can learn Paticca Samuppāda by reading those English translations!

- In all those instances, the standard verse in Pațiloma (Backward) Paṭicca Samuppāda, "avijjā nirodhā sañkhāranirodho, sañkhāra nirodhā viññāna nirodho," is translated to English as "When ignorance ceases, choices cease. When choices cease, consciousness ceases..."
- Did the Buddha lose consciousness upon attaining the Buddhahood? Does an Arahant lose consciousness when reaching the Arahanthood? On the contrary, we know that the Buddha lived for 45 years after the Enlightenment, and many Arahants lived for long times after Arahanthood teaching Dhamma to others.
- The problem is worse because it does not matter who the translator is. All English translations I have seen have the exact direct, word-for-word translation.


## The problem of Word-for-Word Translations Is Much Deeper

6. Of course, the problem is much more severe. Even the Anuloma (Forward) Paṭicca Samuppāda is incomprehensible with such word-by-word translations.

- The sutta in Ref. 2 (and all the suttas of the list in \#5) states: "avijjā paccayā sañkhārā, sañkhāra paccayā viññānam..." which they translate as "Ignorance is a condition for choices. Choices are a condition for consciousness.."
- There are MANY types of sañkhāra. Some arise due to avijja, but Arahants who have no avijjā generate other types of sañkhāra.


## What Are "Choices" and "Volitional Formations"?

7. Another problem is translating sañkhāra as "choices" and "volitional formations." No one has explained what those words mean. Here is an instance where that question came up and a "non-answer" was given: "WebLink: discourse.suttacentral.net: Explaining sannkhāra= "choices." Here is another discussion that ended without a resolution: "WebLink: dhammawheel.com: The way I analyzed Sañkhāra."

- Mano sañkhāra (defined as vedanā and sañ̃̄̄̄) arises with any sensory event. Thus any vipāka viññāna would have mano sañkhāra.
- However, sañkhāra in "avijjā paccayā sañkhārā" are abhisañkhāra. We accumulate kamma based on our thoughts, speech, and actions based on abhisañkhāra. That is the niddesa explanation. Thus, kamma viññạ̄a arise due to abhisañkhāra.
- I have explained the above in detail in the pattiniddesa version in many posts previously, but we will discuss them again here in upcoming posts.
- Only kamma viññāna cease to arise for an Arahant. They do experience vipāka viñ̃̃āña.

8. Stated in another way, anyone (even without a basic understanding of Buddha Dhamma) can do word-for-word translations. It is just a matter of keeping a dictionary by the side and translating word-by-word. But that leads to utter confusion, as we saw above.

- Many standard dictionaries are those compiled by early European scholars like Rhys Davids. They had no understanding of Buddha's profound teachings. They learned Pāli (and Sanskrit) from the locals and then translated the Tipitaka word-for-word!
- Think about that. That is equivalent to saying that anyone who understands French and English can translate a textbook on medicine from French to English! Would that make sense?


## Niddesa Version of Explanation

9. The steps in the Patiloma Paticca Samuppāda (in the sutta of \#2 above) are in the "utterance (uddesa)" form. That is to recite the 11 steps. Those steps need explanations in either the niddesa (brief descriptions) or the patiniddesa (detailed explanations.)

- We can begin to see some clarity in the niddesa version below, which is the next level of explanation. This version uses more specific types of sañkhāra, viññāna, etc.

10. In the niddesa version, the steps would be: ".. when avijjā ceases abhisañkhāra cease, when abhisañkhāra cease kamma viññāna cease, when kamma viññāna cease nāmarūpa cease, when nāmarūpa cease salāyatana cease, when salāyatana cease samphassa cease, when samphassa cease samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedan $\bar{a}$ cease, when samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedan $\bar{a}$ cease $\tanh \bar{a}$ cease, when $\operatorname{tanhh} \bar{a}$ cease upādāna cease, when upādāna cease bhava cease, when bhava cease jāti cease, when jāti cease jarāmaranain sokaparidevadukkhadomanassupāy $\bar{a} s \bar{a}$ cease." That is the end of the whole mass of suffering.

- We are beginning to see some clarity on the question discussed at the Dhamma Wheel forum in \#3 above.
- All those terms in orange WILL cease to exist for an Arahant. But the Arahant WILL experience vipāka viññ̄āna (ordinary consciousness via the six senses) and normal feelings (vedanā) that arise with such consciousness, for example.
- Of course, $j \bar{a} t i$ refers to future births in the Uppatti Pațicca Samuppāda. All births (including the one that Arahant was born to) will undergo old age, decay, suffering, and eventual death. Thus even an Arahant will be subjected to them until the death of the physical body. But no more births and no more suffering after that!

11. Note that I have not translated key Pāli words to English in \#10 above. In many cases, there are no equivalent English words!

- It is only kamma viññanna that would stop arising for a Buddha or an Arahant. Ordinary consciousness (vipāka viññāna) would be there until their death (Parinibbāna.)
- Of course, the reader needs to know what is meant by kamma viñ̃̃āna and vipāka viññāna. See, "Abhisañkhāra Lead to Kamma Viññāna."


## Why Don't Others See the "Elephant in the Room"?

12. How is it that such apparent contradictions have gone unnoticed for so long? We may never fully understand that. But I think it is due to several factors.

- Many people who turn to Buddhism may accept certain concepts without bothering to even look for inconsistencies. Some may think Buddhism has some "mystical features" that they are not supposed to question.
- Another is people's high respect towards bhikkhus/scholars who have written "books" on Buddhism. While honoring bhikkhus is undoubtedly an exemplary aspect, the Buddha taught not to believe even his own words without asking questions to clarify any doubtful concept.
- But the main reason most English-speaking people do not "see the elephant" is the following. Most simply don't understand that words like sañkhāra and viññāna cannot be just translated word-by-word as "formations" and "consciousness." They do not even have a basic idea of Paticca Samuppāda. I will be spending most time clarifying these basic concepts in this series. But we all need first to agree that there is a problem!
- Recent comments in discussion forums have led me to conclude the above. No matter how obvious the error that I point out, they say, "Oh, I just believe so and so." They will not even acknowledge that there is a problem. I say something like, "Person X says 2 plus 3 is 6 - Is that not a contradiction?" They ignore that and start commenting about an entirely different issue.


## Concept of Paṭicca Samuppāda in Simple Terms

13. It will be quite beneficial to understand the basic framework of Pațicca Samuppāda.

- In the next post, I will explain that using simple examples. As the Buddha instructed, one needs to grasp the concepts. Memorization of words/verses is of no benefit.


## References

1. Relevant verse from "WebLink: suttacentral: Dutivabodhi Sutta (Ud 1.2)":
"Atha kho bhagavā tassa sattāhassa accayena tamhā samādhimhā vutṭhahitvā rattiyā majjhimam yāmaì paṭiccasamuppādaí paṭilomaì sādhukai் manasākāsi:

Iti imasmimं asati idamं na hoti, imassa nirodhā idamं nirujjhati, yadidamं-avijjā nirodhā sañkhāranirodho, sañkhāra nirodhā viññāna nirodho, viñnāṇa nirodhā nāmarūpa nirodho, nāmarūpa nirodhā salāyatana nirodho, salāyatana nirodhā phassa nirodho, phassa nirodhā vedanā nirodho, vedanā nirodhā taṇhā nirodho, tanhā nirodhā upādāna nirodho, upādāna nirodhā bhava nirodho, bhava nirodhā jāti nirodho, jāti nirodhā jarāmaraṇaì sokaparidevadukkhadomanassupāyāsā nirujjhanti. Evametassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa nirodho hotī"ti.
2. Relevant verse from "WebLink: suttacentral: Pathamabodhi Sutta (Ud 1.1)":
"Atha kho bhagavā tassa sattāhassa accayena tamhā samādhimhā vuṭthahitvā rattiyā paṭhamaì yāmaì paṭiccasamuppādaiं anulomaì sādhukaiं manasākāsi:

Iti imasmim sati idamं hoti, imassuppādā idaì uppajjati, yadidaí-avijjā paccayā sañkhārā, sañkhāra paccayā viññānaì, viññanna paccayā nāmarūpaì, nāmarūpa paccayā saḷāyatanaì, saḷāyatana paccay $\bar{a}$ phasso, phassa paccay $\bar{a}$ vedanā, vedanā paccayā taṇhā, taṇhā paccay $\bar{a}$ upādānamं, upādāna paccayā bhavo, bhava paccayā jāti, jāti paccayā jarāmaraṇam sokaparidevadukkhadomanassupāyāsā sambhavanti. Evametassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa samudayo hotī"ti."

### 6.1.1.2 Pațicca Samuppāda During a Lifetime

March 21, 2022
Idappaccayātā Paticca Samuppāda - Bhava and Jāti Within a Lifetime
Change of Mindset Due to an Ārammana
Khandhā in Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda
Seeing Is a Series of "Snapshots"
Aggregate of Forms - Collection of "Mental Impressions" of Forms
Rūpakkhandha in Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda
Five Aggregates - Experiences of Each Sentient Being
Pañcupādānakkhandha - Attachment to One's Experiences
Noble Truth of Suffering- Pañcupādānakkhandhā Dukkhā
Sakkāya Ditthi and Pañcupādānakkhandhā
Bhava and Jãti Within a Lifetime - Example
6.11.2 Idappaccayatā Paṭicca Samuppāda - Bhava and Jāti Within a Lifetime

March 14, 2022

Idappaccayatā Pațicca Samuppāda explains the accumulation of kammic energies within the current life. One is "born" in various temporary "existences" numerous times during a lifetime. Understanding that helps clarify how future rebirths arise.

## Introduction

1. As I have explained in recent posts, keywords in the Tipitaka require detailed explanations. Many suttas (particularly those with deep insights) need detailed explanations. The practice of translating such suttas word-for-word to English has led to dangerous results, as I have explained in recent posts in "Word-forWord Translation of the Tipitaka."

- In the "WebLink: suttacentral: Mahānidāna Sutta (DN 15)," the Buddha advised Ven. Ānanda to learn how life evolves moment-to-moment based on the causes and conditions AT a given moment.
- That may not be clear from the English translation in the above link. That again goes back to the problem of translating word-for-word without understanding the basic concepts.

2. Translation of the verse, "Atthi idappaccayā viñ̃n̄ạnan'ti iti puțthena satā, ānanda, atthītissa vacanīyam" in the above link is: "When asked, 'Is there a specific condition for consciousness?' you should answer, 'There is.'

- "Specific condition" is the English phrase used in that translation for "idappaccayā."
- However, "idappaccaya"" comes from "ida" + "paccaya" meaning "based on the conditions at that time."
- Thus, the correct translation should be: "When asked, 'Is there a viññaña arising due to conditions at that time?' you should answer, 'There is.'


## Idappaccayat $\bar{a}$ - At a Given Moment

3. Idappaccayatā Pațicca Samuppāda (IPS) is another essential teaching that remained hidden for hundreds of years. The word "Idappaccayatā" comes from "ida" for "here," and the closest English word for "paccay $\bar{a}$ " is "condition." Thus Idappaccayatā implies "based on this condition at this moment."

- Therefore, Idappaccayatā Pațicca Samuppāda describes how "paṭi icca" leads to "sama uppāda" moment by moment based on the conditions present at that moment; see, "Paticca Samuppāda "Pati+ichcha" + "Sama+uppāda."
- The additional "p" in "idappacayat $\bar{a}$ " comes from the combination of "ida" and "paccayā." This is similar to "dammacakka" and "pavattana" combined to yield "dhammacakkappavattana" in the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta.
- The following verse in "WebLink: suttacentral: Avijiā Sutta (AN 10.61)" provides more insight.
"The first point of ignorance, bhikkhus, cannot be seen. Ignorance can arise at any time when the conditions are right." (Pāli verse: "Purimā, bhikkhave, koṭi na paññ̄āati avijjāya: 'ito pubbe avijjā nāhosi, atha pacchā samabhavī̀ti. Evañcetaì, bhikkhave, vuccati, atha ca pana pañāāyati: 'idappaccayā avijjā̄ti.')
- In the same way, EACH TERM in Idappaccayatā Pațicca Samuppāda arises at any given moment.

4. The standard Uppatti (or Upapatti) Pațicca Samuppāda discusses how avijjā leads to future existences (bhava) and births ( $j \bar{a} t i$ ). That is the only Paticca Samuppāda that most people are aware of these days. But that version shows the cumulative effects of numerous Idappaccayat $\bar{a}$ Paṭicca Samuppāda cycles!

- As the Buddha explained to Ven. Ānanda in the Mahānidāna Sutta in \#1 above, it is beneficial to understand the operation of Paticca Samuppāda DURING a lifetime, moment-to-moment.
- Before that, we first need to realize that there are TWO main categories of viññāna, and only one comes to play in Pațicca Samuppāda.


## Numerous Types of Viññāṇa Arise in a Day!

5. We have numerous types of viññāna arising in a day! They are mainly of TWO main categories: vipāka viññāna and kamma viñãāṇa.
6. Each sensory input (seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, touching, recalling) is a vipāka viñnāạa. They are cakkhu, sota, ghāna, jivhā, kāya, and mano viññāna. We don't pay much attention to many of such vipāka viññāṇa.
7. But we "attach" to some of vipāka viññāna we start generating kamma viññanna, which can be of two types: vacī and kāya viññāna. Even though mano viññāna also falls in this category, only vac $\bar{\imath}$ and kāya viññāna lead to a significant generation of kammic energies.

- Only kamma viññāna generating kammic energies are involved in the "sañkhāra paccayā viññāna" step in any type of Paṭicca Samuppāda. See, "Viññāna - Two Critical Meanings."


## Viññāna in Paṭicca Samuppāda Are Kamma Viññāṇa

6. All initial steps in Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda working in real-time (moment-to-moment) provide the basis for the working of other types of Paticca Samuppāda.

- Accumulation of kamma bhava (kammic energy for future existences) happens over numerous such Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda cycles taking place over a lifetime and even over many lifetimes. Then birth in such an existence (uppatti bhava) can occur in the future.
- A given person has a specific set of gati (pronounced "gathi") over a given time, and their thoughts/speech/actions lead to the accumulation of kammic energies (bhava) related to those gati.
- For example, person X with violent gati tends to think, speak, and act violently, engaging in harsh speech and violent actions. X will regularly generate kammic energies through such thoughts, speech, and actions. Such kammic energies lead to appropriate bhava, such as that of a vicious animal like a tiger, leading to rebirth ( $j \bar{a} t i)$ as such an animal in the future. That is the basic principle of Uppatti Paticca Samuppāda. That Uppatti Paṭicca Samuppāda is the standard Paṭicca Samuppāda in most textbooks today.
- Uppatti Paṭicca Samuppāda is a result of numerous Idappaccayatā Paṭicca Samuppāda.

7. Therefore, it is critical is to realize the importance of understanding the working of Paticca Samuppāda during a lifetime, i.e., Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda.

- We also need to see that X will NOT always think, speak, act that way. There will be times when X is interacting with his family. During such times he will think loving thoughts and speak and act with caring thoughts. Those involve "good" mano, vacī, and kāya sañkhāra.
- It is easy to see how X will change from a "bad person" (in \#6 above) to a "good person" when the conditions change.
- If X sees one of his enemies on the road, he will get into a "bad state of mind." He will start Idappaccayatā Pațicca Samuppāda cycles first with generating evil thoughts (mano and vacī abhisañkhāra) and thus "bad kammic energies."
- But when X goes home, he will see his family and start generating opposite types of mano, vacī, and kāya sañkhāra. They may even engage in "good activities" like participating in a volunteer project or providing meals to the hungry. During such activities, "good" Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda cycles will operate.


## Triggering of Idappaccayatā Paṭicca Samuppāda

8. The starting of an Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda cycle ALWAYS starts with sensory input (ārammana). The example given in \#7 above began with X seeing his enemy, say Y.

- Let us take another example, where X gets into a similar Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda (IPS) cycle triggered by an ārammaṇa coming through the ears.
- Suppose X is at home and is having a pleasant conversation with his wife. During the conversation, the wife mentions Y. Just hearing Y's name could trigger X to recall some bad memories of Y . Thus, X may start telling his wife about his interactions with Y .
- Just hearing Y's name made X's mind go through numerous IPS cycles within a short time. Let us look into that.

9. Hearing of Y's name was a sota viññāna. X heard Y's name because his wife was talking about something, and she may have mentioned Y's name, saying that "I saw Y while ..."

- That was enough for X's mind to have a flashback at prior experiences with Y. Now, if strong feelings about Y emerge, X may start describing to his wife how bad a person Y is.
- While having that conversation with his wife, X will recall his experiences with Y and start getting agitated. If his wife encourages that, he will get "worked up." The two of them may even begin discussing how to hurt Y. If that happens, both will go through many IPS cycles accumulating more kammic energies!
- Even though they are not doing any physical harm to Y, just the generation of vacī abhisañkhāra will generate kammic energy! See, "Correct Meaning of Vacī Sañkhāra."


## Abhisañkhāra Versus Sañkhāra

10. Sañkhāra that arise via "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" are abhisañkhāra; see the previous post, "Niddesa (Brief Description) of Paticca Samuppāda."

- Abhisañkhāra are sañkhāra with lobha, dosa, moha (avijjā).
- For example, an Arahant speaks with vacī sañkhāra. Such vacī sañkhāra DO NOT have cetanā with lobha, dosa, moha.
- Cetanā WITH lobha, dosa, moha are sañcetanā ("san" + "cetana"). Thus, abhisañkhāra have sañcetana ("san" + "cetanā") or "defiled intention." An Arahant would not generate $a b h i s a n ̃ k h a ̄ r a$ via sañcetanā; they only generate cetanā.

11. Now let us go back to our discussion in \#9. While X and his wife engage in IPS, they automatically go through all the steps in Paticca Samuppāda. As we see, while they discuss how to hurt Y, abhisañkhāra arise via avijjā! They do not realize that such abhisañkhāra will lead to future suffering.

- As they make plans, a future expectation of "hurting Y " is established, and that is the "kamma viñ $\tilde{n} a n a$ na" arising via "sañkhāra paccayā viññāna" or more precisely "abhisañkhāra paccayā kamma viññăna" in the niddesa version.
- Their plan to hurt Y may involve telling some lies about Y to the friends of Y. They may talk about specific friends of Y , and "mental images of friends of Y " come to the minds of the two of them. In IPS, those are the "nāmarūpa" in "viññāña paccayā nāmarūpa." In an extreme case, they may plan to hurt Y physically, and any weapons used will be discussed with images of such weapons going through their minds. Those are also types of "nāmarūpa" in IPS. Note that "nāmarūpa" in Uppatti Paṭicca Samuppāda (UPS) has a different meaning; see, "Viññān̄a Paccayā Nāmarūpa."
- Later on, when they implement their plan, they will also use other sensory faculties. For example, if they go and purchase a weapon, that involves all six faculties. That is "nāmarūpa paccayā salāyatana."


## Bhava in This Life and for Future Lives

12. Since they will be using the sensory faculties with an angry mindset, all sensory contacts become "samphassa" ("san" + "phassa") or defiled contacts with dosa (anger/hate.) Then they lead to "samphassa-jā-vedanä" or angry feelings based on hate. See, "Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways."

- That, in turn, leads to "getting attached" to that effort even more. That attachment (via anger) is also $\boldsymbol{t a n h} \boldsymbol{a}$. See, "Tanhā - How We Attach Via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance."
- Once attached to an ārammaṇa, a mind stays on it, keeping it close. That is the "taṇhā paccayā upādäna" step. In the above example, X and his wife will now focus on ways to hurt Y . Their minds will go through numerous cycles of the above steps generating more kammic energy. That is the "upādāna paccayā bhava" step.

13. That kammic energy will produce two effects.
14. Part of it will fuel an "angry bhava" in this life. Both of them have created "angry bhava" and are now "born in an "angry state." Thus, "bhava paccayā $j \bar{a} t i$ " has already taken place. That is $j \bar{a} t i$ in IPS.
15. The rest of the kammic energy created will be preserved in viññāna dhātu as "fuel for future bhava." Such kammic energies can bring future births in matching existences. That is $j \bar{a} t i$ in UPS.

- Both types of " $j \bar{a} t i$ " will lead to more suffering. That is the last step in PS in both IPS and UPS cycles.

That is a brief description of Idappaccayatā Paṭicca Samuppāda. It may be a good idea to go back and read the previous post "Niddesa (Brief Description) of Paticca Samuppāda." That will help solidify the understanding.

## Better Not to Translate the Pāli Terms

14. Paticca Samuppāda is not an exotic process. While it can go to great depths, the basic principles are simple. However, one needs to truly understand the meanings of the 11 terms: avijj $\bar{a}$, sañkhāra, viññāna, nāmarūpa, saḷāyatana, phassa, vedanā, taṇhā, upādāna, bhava, and jāti.

- It is a big mistake to try to translate those terms word-for-word. There can be variations in the meaning of a word based on the situation.
- The Sinhala language DOES NOT even have its own words for those 11 terms. The same words
 Sinhala language. That has been a blessing because it leads to less confusion even among those who may not fully understand the concepts.
- That is why I have tried to use the original Pāli words as much as possible in my posts. In discussing Paṭicca Samuppāda, it is almost impossible to use English words to convey the actual concepts. That is why I try to use the Pāli words wherever possible.


### 6.1.1.2 Change of Mindset Due to an Ārammana

March 21, 2022
Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda starts with an ārammaṇa or a sensory input.

## Numerous Changes of Mindset in a Day

1. Think about how many times our "mood" or "mindset" changes in a day.

- Consider person X eating a meal and experiencing a good mindset; he enjoyed the food. That mindset arose due to an ärammaṇa, which was the taste of the food.
- Suppose halfway through the meal, X saw a long hair on the plate. For some people like X, that new arammana of "seeing the hair on the plate" is enough to ruin the meal and get into an angry mindset. Suppose X was eating at a restaurant, and he called the waiter and angrily complained.
- The waiter apologized and promised to bring X a fresh meal. Soon as X heard that, he again became happy. X finished his meal and came out of the restaurant with a happy and content mindset.
- While walking, X saw one of his worst enemies, Y. The sight of Y brought in a new "strong arammana"" changed X's mood again. He started thinking about the problems that person had caused and he got angrier by the minute.

2. As you see, our mindset and related thoughts change many times during the day. The examples that we discussed above can be explained via Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda, which we discussed in the previous post: "Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda - Bhava and Jāti Within a Lifetime."

- Each of the mindsets discussed above resulted from a new ārammaña coming through one of the six senses.
- In chronological order, those mindsets were triggered by tasting food (jivhā viñnān̄a), seeing the hair (cakkhu viñ̃̄āna), waiter saying that he will get a fresh serving (sota viññāna), and seeing Y (cakkhu viñ̃̄āna).
- All those triggers were vipāka viññāna or different types of "consciousness." They happened to be that way. The meal could have been not tasty; if you didn't see the hair, that would have avoided you getting into an angry mindset, etc.


## Pāli Word for "Mindset" Is "Bhavańga"

3. The word "bhavañga" comes from "bhava" + "aṅga" where "bhava" means "existence" and "añga" means "part of." Thus, "bhavanga" means "part of existence at that time," which is the "mindset at that time." [añga : [nt.] 1. a constituent part; 2. a limb; 3. quality.]

- There is also a "natural bhavanga" that we are born with. If the mind is not focused on a "strong arammana" the mind falls back to that "natural bhavañga." Thus, we can say that our mind is in the "natural bhavañga" state while we sleep.
- However, once we wake up and start getting bombarded with all kinds of ārammaña coming through the six senses, our "mindset" or "temporary bhavanga" can change many times a day, as we saw above.
- I will be using "mindset" and 'temporary bhavañga" interchangeably so that you will get used to the meaning.
- Now you can start seeing the difference between Upapatti PS and Idappaccayatā PS. In the former, "bhava" refers to "human existence," while in the latter, "a temporary bhava" is the mindset (or existence) lasting a relatively short time.


## Only "Strong Arammaṇa" Can Bring in a "Temporary Bhavañga"

4. During a day, we get bombarded with an uncountable number of ārammaṇa, i.e., sensory inputs comping through the six senses. Yet, we don't pay attention to most of them, i.e., they are "weak ärammana" not strong enough to "grab our attention." In such cases, there is no change in the "bhavañga" or "mindset."

- So, what kind of ārammaṇa "grabs our attention" and changes the "bhavañga" state?
- That would be one we "really like," "really dislike," or "something unusual or something we cannot understand." In the latter case, we could get into a "confused state of mind." A "strong a rammana" is usually associated with "lobha," "dosa," and "moha."
- Let us examine the examples in \#1 to clarify.

5. Taste of food was a "strong ārammana" that changed the mindset from the "natural bhavañga" state to a good "temporary bhavañga" state. Here, the àrammaṇa was associated with lobha (attachment via liking.)

- Then another "strong ārammana" of "seeing the hair" flipped the mindset to an angry "temporary bhavañga" state. That ārammaṇa was associated with dosa (attachment via dislike.)
- Hearing the waiter promising to bring a new meal was new "strong ārammaña" made a good "temporary bhavañga" again. That ārammaṇa was associated with lobha (attachment via liking.)
- Seeing Y on the road was enough for X to get into a bad state of mind (with dosa) again.

6. To summarize: Our minds usually are in the "natural bhavañga" state that comes with human existence. It can change to a different "temporary bhavañga" by a 'strong ārammana." Depending on how strong that $\bar{a} r a m m a n ̣ a ~ i s, ~ t h e ~ " t e m p o r a r y ~ b h a v a n ̃ g a " ~ c a n ~ s t a y ~ f o r ~ m i n u t e s ~ t o ~ h o u r s ~ t o ~ m a n y ~ d a y s . ~$

- In the examples discussed above, "temporary bhavañga" states lasted only for short limes, less than an hour. In the Abhidhamma language, such ārammaña are categorized as "mahantārammaṇa" ("mahanta + ārammaṇa" or "strong ārammaṇa.")
- However, a very strong ārammana can keep that "temporary bhavañga" state for many days. For example, upon hearing the death of a parent, one may get into a "sad mindset" that can last even weeks. They are "very strong ārammaṇa" or "atimahantārammaṇa" ("ati + mahanta + ārammaṇa".)


## How Does an Ārammaṇa Change the Mindset (Bhavañga)?

7. It is CRITICALLY important to understand how the mindset (temporary bhavañga) changes due to an ārammaṇa.

- As we discussed, a new ārammaṇa comes via a new sensory input coming through the six senses. Thus, it is one of the following: cakkhu, sota, ghāna, jivhā, kāya, or mano viñ̃n̄ạna. They are ALL vipāka viññāna. They provide sensory input. We see, hear, taste, smell, touch, or recall a memory. That, by itself, cannot change our mindset.
- For example, an Arahant will also see attractive things or taste a delicious meal. But no matter how delicious that meal is, it will NOT change the mindset of an Arahant.
- But the person in our example in \#1 above got "attached" to the tasty meal. That is normal for an average human, and so are the other "mood swings" that the person went through in \#1. But it is essential to understand how each of those swings in the mindset took place.

8. Delicious taste from the meal was a vipāka viññanna, specifically a jivhā viññanna. The pleasant taste experienced was a natural vipāka vedanā associated with that vipāka viññāna. If an Arahant had eaten the same meal, he would have experienced its delicious taste. But what happens immediately after taking the first few bites would be very different for X and the Arahant.

- X got attached to the taste of the meal. In the Dhamma language, he started generating vaci abhisañkhāra that naturally would arise for an average human. He started thinking about how delicious the meal is AND how he might come back to the restaurant to have the same meal. Those thoughts were lobha-based (i.e., greedy) vacī abhisañkhāra. They were a strong version of sañkhāra, i.e., abhisañkhāra. Thus, they arose via "avijjā paccayā abhisañkhāra" in Idappaccayatā Paṭicca Samuppāda.
- That immediately led to the second effect of "deciding to come back to the restaurant in the future to have the same meal." That expectation is a kamma viññanna. That kamma viññāna or the "expectation" was the result of abhisañkhāra, i.e., "(abhi)sañkhāra paccayā viññāṇa."

9. Those abhisañkhāra and kamma viññāna arose in powerful javana citta that ran through X's mind while he was enjoying the meal. His mindset (temporary bhavañga) also changed to a "happy state."

- So, here is the time sequence: (i) experience of a delicious taste (vipāka viññāna), (ii) arising of "happy but greedy thoughts" or vacī abhisañkhāra in javana citta, (iii) arising of a future expectation of having the same meal (creation of a kamma viññāna), and (iv) registration of that experience as a 'temporary bhavañga" state.
- Note: Javana cittā are a special type of citta that makes a kamma viñnāạa more than just "consciousness." A kamma viññāna has an expectation/desire. Abhisañkhāra (with strong feelings) arise in javana citta and make javana citta become kamma viññāna.
- As we know, vipāka viñnāṇa are of six types: cakkhu, sota, ghāna, jivhā,kāya, and mano viññāna.
- On the other hand, kamma viññāna are ALWAYS mano viññāna. We create kamma viññạ̄a with javana citta. Such kamma viññāṇa arises via "(abhi)sañkhāra paccayā viññāṇa" in any type of Paṭicca Samuppāda.


## No Change in Mindset (and No Javana Citta) in an Arahant

10. Now, let us see what would happen to an Arahant if he had the same meal.

- The Arahant would have tasted the meal to be delicious too. Thus, the vipāka viññāna (jivhā viññāna) was the same.
- But since an Arahant would not generate any lobha, dosa, moha thoughts, vacī abhisañkhāra that arose in X will not occur in the Arahant. Thus, such powerful javana citta would not have arisen in the Arahant.
- Thus, the Arahant will not generate any future expectation to taste it again, i.e., no kamma viñ $\tilde{n} a \bar{n} a$.
- Furthermore, the Arahant would not generate a "happy mindset" "temporary bhavanga" state. An Arahant will always have a neutral mindset.

11. Thus, abhisañkhāra in javana citta, establishing a new expectation (kamma viññāna), and change in the bhavañga (mindset) will occur ONLY IF one attaches to a strong ārammaṇa.

- Those are the drastic differences between X and an Arahant due to eating the same meal.
- In the next post, we will discuss why such javana citta with lobha, dosa, moha would not arise in an Arahant.
- It is critical to realize that an Arahant does not need to control the arising of such defiled thoughts. It happens automatically. The root causes for arising of such thoughts had been removed from the mind of an Arahant.


### 6.1.1.2 Khandhā in Idappaccayatā Paṭicca Samuppāda

## March 28, 2022

We never experience a single unit of cognition, but only khandhas or the cumulative effect of millions/billions of such units. That is why instead of r $\bar{p} p a$, vedanā, saññ̄, sañkhāra, viñ̃n̄̄ṇa some suttas refer to "heaps of them" called khandhas, i.e., rūpakkhandha, vedanākkhandha, saññākkhandha, sañkhārakkhandha, and viññānakkhandha.

## Five Aggregates in Different Contexts

1. As we know the five aggregates (pañcakkhandhā) are rūpakkhandha, vedanākkhandha, saññäkkhandha, sañkhārakkhandha, and viññānakkhandha. As is the case with many Pāli words, we need to understand the meaning of a "khandha" or a "collection/aggregate" in the context of where it is used.

- As we discussed, Idappaccayatā Paticcca Samuppāda explains how our actions at the PRESENT moment can impact our future.
- The Buddha described our "mental aspects" with four entities: vedanā, saññā, sañkhāra, and viññāṇa. Those mental entities arise when internal r $\bar{u} p \bar{a}$ make contact with external ru $\bar{u} \bar{a}$. Thus, $r \bar{u} p a$ is the fifth category in the five aggregates of $r \bar{u} p a$, vedanā, saññ̄ $\bar{a}$, sañkhāra, and viññāna.
- But why do we talk about the "aggregates" (or "khandha") of those entities?
- The reason is that we NEVER experience a single such entity even at a given moment. Thus, we only EXPERIENCE the effect of numerous such entities (khandha) even in Idappaccayatā Pațicca Samuppāda.


## We Experience Not a Citta but Viññ̄ạakkhandha

2. There is no English word for "citta." A "thought" may have billions of cittā. Furthermore, each citta evolves into viñ̃̃äna and we experience the effect of billions of them called viññānakkhandha. Let us discuss that in detail.

- We NEVER experience a "pure citta." Instead, we only experience the cumulative effect of billions of viññāna that arise within a fraction of a second. That is why many suttas refer to "collections of viññāna" or "viññānakkhandha."
- The same is true for vedanā, saññ̄a, and sañkhāra. We never experience single units of them, but only "aggregates" of them, i.e., vedanākkhandha, saññākkhandha, and sañkhārakkhandha.
- Even though a sensory event may be initiated by a rasa rūpa (taste) we may be smelling it at the same time (gandha rūpa). The appearance of food (vanṇa rūpa) will affect our thinking too. Furthermore, the next bite may taste a bit different, even though it is also a rasa rūpa. Thus, we always experience multiple rūpa (rūpakkhandha) within a short time.
- It is critical to understand the concepts in this post. It will become invaluable when we start discussing the concepts of "sakkāya ditthi" and "anatta."

3. When a new sensory input (ārammaña) makes contact (phassa) with the mind, that triggers a series of citta or a "citta vīthi." Billions of such citta vīthi can run through the mind in a split second! Note that citta pronounced "chiththa"; see Ref. 1 below on "writing in Tipitaka English" and pronunciation.

- Citta, viññāna, and viññānakkhandha are DIFFERENT STAGES of the same entity. It may be hard to believe but it is true.
- As we have discussed it is NOT correct to translate viññāna as "consciousness" in general. As we saw, viññāna are mainly of two types (vipāka viññāna and kamma viññāna) OR six types (cakkhu, sota, ghāna, jivhā, kāya, and mano viñ̃āạna.)
- All six types in the second category fall in the vipāka viñãāṇa category. Kamma viñ̃ãaña are ALWAYS mano viññāṇa. Thus, mano viññāna can be either vipāka viññạ̣̄a or kamma viññāṇa. Explanation of what happens in a citta vithi will help clarify that.
- However, clarification of how a citta evolves is the first step. That will take the mystery out of these related words. So let us do that first.


## A Citta Evolves into Viñ̃̄āṇa and Viññāṇakkhandha Within Fraction of a Second!

4. A citta is the elementary unit of cognition in Buddha Dhamma. There are THREE critical things to remember about citta:
(i) A single citta NEVER arises by itself. It arises in a series of citta or citta vīthi.
(ii) A citta arises and perishes in an unimaginable small time. The Buddha said there can be billions of citta vīthi arising within the "blink of an eye." See Ref. 2.
(iii) During that unimaginably small time interval, a javana citta evolves through nine stages of evolution (Ref. 3): citta, mano, mānasaì, hadayaì, pandaraì, mano manāyatanam், mana indriyaì (or manindriyaì), viñ̃̃̄̄̄na, viññānakkhandha. While you may not be familiar with many of those intermediate stages, you have probably come across those highlighted in orange.

- By the time the viññannakkhandha is reached, the mind has incorporated ALL relevant information for that ārammana from past experiences as well as one's expectations for the future. We never perceive ANY of the intermediate states, but only the viññānakkhandhastage. That is why most suttas only refer to viññānakkhandha.
- Only a Buddha can "see" such fast processes. We are aware only of the CUMULATIVE EFFECT of billions of citta vithi that go through within a second, i.e., we are aware ONLY of viññānakkhandha.


## Influence of Bhavañga (Mental State) Preceding an Arammaṇa on a Citta Vīthi

5. In the previous post, we discussed how our mindset can change (to a temporary bhavañga state) due to an ārammaṇa. See, "Change of Mindset Due to an Ārammana."

- That "change in the mindset" happens with a special type of citta called javana citta; see \#9 of that post.
- Then that citta vīthi will alter the mindset (bhavañga) and that new mindset (new bhavañga) will affect the next citta vithi.
- Thus, one may end up with a drastically different mindset within a fraction of a second. That is why we can even see an angry person getting angrier very quickly. Once this process is understood, we will get a good idea of how to control anger. The same is true for kāma rāga too.
- It may appear that I keep jumping from one subject to another. But all these pieces are very much inter-related. It may take a few more posts to "see the whole picture."


## A Citta Arises with Seven Cetasika (Mental Factors) and Add More As It Evolves

6. A citta ALWAYS arises with a number of cetasika (mental factors) that define the "quality" of the citta. In the first citta stage, there are only 7 cetasika that arise with the citta: phassa, vedan $\bar{a}, \operatorname{san} \tilde{n} \bar{a}$, cetan $\bar{a}$, manasikāra, ekaggatā, and jivitindriya. It is a "pure citta" or a "pabhassara citta." See Ref. 4.

- As the citta evolves through the next stages, the mind KEEPS ADDING more cetasika and the citta becomes increasingly contaminated. By the viñ̃ñ̄na stage, it is fully contaminated; see Ref. 3. That "contamination" happens within an unbelievably small time. We CANNOT consciously control that. It happens according to our gati (character/habits).
- That contamination takes place via incorporating more cetasika (greed, anger, etc) and those "added cetasika" are collectively called "sañkhāra." For example, apuñña abhisañkhāra involves cetasika like lobha and dosa, while puñña abhisañkhāra adds cetasika like alobha and adosa.
- Now, let us see what is meant by viñnäñakkhandha in different contexts.


## We Experience the Cumulative Effect of Numerous Units of Viñnāāna

7. As we saw in \#4 above, millions of citta (or citta vith ) can arise within a fraction of a second! A citta vīthi starts with a vipāka viñ̃n̄ạna and ends up with kamma viññāna (in javana citta).

- Furthermore, the mind can analyze different anrammaṇa coming through any of the six senses within a fraction of a second. Thus, during a fraction of a second, the mind experiences a "heap/collection" of different types of vipāka viññanna (cakkhu viñ̃āạa through mano viññāna.) It will also experience kamma viṇ̣̃̃̄̄̄a (mano viññāna) in javana citta that arise in citta vithi.
- A "khandha" ("mestę" in Sinhala) means "a collection/aggregate" or a "heap."
- Thus, we ALWAYS experience viññānakkhandha or a "heap" of many types of viññạna. We never experience a single cakkhu viññāna or a mano viññāna, for example.
- The same is true for other aggregates of rūpakkhandha, vedanākkhandha, saññākkhandha, and sañkhārakkhandha.


## Other Khandhas - Vedanākkhandha, Saññākkhandha, Saṅkhārakkhandha

8. Now we can see that ALL FOUR mental aggregates (vedanākkhandha, saññäkkhandha, sañkhārakkhandha, and viññānakkhandha) arise when an ärammaṇa comes to the mind. As we saw in \#2 above, any $\bar{a} r a m m a n ̃ a ~ w i l l ~ a l s o ~ i n i t i a t e ~ c o n t a c t s ~ w i t h ~ m u l t i p l e ~ r u ̄ p a ~ a n d ~ w e ~ e x p e r i e n c e ~ t h e ~ c u m u l a t i v e ~$ effect of rūpakkhandha.

- In \#6 above, we saw that vedanā, saññ̄a, and cetanā arise with the first stage of a citta. As the citta evolves through those 9 stages to become a viññānakkhandha, vedanā and sañña also evolve to become vedanākkhandha and saññākkhandha!
- For example, when we watch a movie, we will recognize many types of sights and sounds, i.e., different sañña (due to different types of $r \bar{u} p a$ ), within short times; we may also experience different types of vedanā.
- Thus, it is important to realize that we NEVER experience a citta but are aware of one type of viñ $\tilde{n} \bar{a} n a$.
- An ārammaṇa brings in a vipāka viññāna and based on that we either initiate a new kamma viñ̃āṇa or strengthen an existing kamma viññāṇa.

9. Also note that mano sañkhāra are defined as "vedanā and saññā", and thus, mano sañkhāra are also part of even a pure citta.

- As a citta evolves into viññanna, it incorporates other types of cetasika. That gives rise to vacī and kāya sañkhāra. Thus, different types of vacī and kāya sañkhāra are incorporated by the time a citta evolves into the viñ̃̄āna stage. (Don't worry if you don't understand that part yet.)
- We can clearly see the unbelievable rapidity (and complexity) of the evolution of a citta to viññānakkhandha and, at the same time, also giving rise to vedanākkhandha, saññākkhandha, and sañkhārakkhandha.


## Summary

10. We discussed the formation/arising of the five aggregates (pañcakkhandh $\bar{a}$ ) in Idappaccayat $\bar{a}$ Pațicca Samuppāda, i.e., within a relatively short time.

- At a given moment, we only experience things that took place over a fraction of a second. That is a LONG TIME in terms of the lifetime of a citta!
- Thus, we experience only the cumulative effect of billions of citta. By that time all those cittas would have evolved into different types of viṇ̃̃̄̄̄a, and thus we experience an aggregate/collection of viññāna or viññānakkhandha.
- Not only that, but we also experience the cumulative effect of a variety of $r \bar{u} p a$, vedana $\bar{a}$, sañn $\bar{a}$, and sañkhāra (as rūpakkhandha, vedanākkhandha, saññäkkhandha, and sañkhārakkhandha.)
- As the citta evolves the cetanā cetasika incorporates one's gati (character/habits) RELEVANT TO that specific ārammana. Thus, the evolution of the five aggregates will depend on the person. That happens automatically, without us even being aware of it. We will discuss that in the next post.

11. The above analysis may appear complex at first, but it will immensely help in clarifying many 'knotty issues" that I see discussed over many years at discussion forums. It is a good idea to periodically review the posts in this new section "Paticca Samuppāda During a Lifetime."

- Please read them repeatedly and even print this post and keep it for future reference. If there are questions/comments, please use the discussion forum.


## References

1. It is highly beneficial to learn how to pronounce Pāli words. When the European scholars started writing the Pāli Tipitaka with the English alphabet, they came up with a unique system that I call the "Tipiṭaka English" Convention. It has helped keep the 'word length" short.

- For example, even though written as "gati," its pronunciation is "gathi." Similarly, "icca" is for "ichcha." If written as pronounced, "dhammacakkappavattana" would be "dhammachakkappavaththana."
- See ""Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars - Part 1" and "Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars - Part 2" for details.
- A pronunciation guide at "Pāli Glossary - (A-K)" and "Pāli Glossary - (L-Z)."
- Don't be discouraged. Start getting used to the method of learning the meanings/pronunciations gradually. Learn the common keywords first.

2. Buddha said it is hard to find any phenomena in this world that change faster than the mind: "WebLink: suttacentral: Añguttara Nikāya (1.48)."

The short sutta says: "Nāhaì, bhikkhave, aññaì ekadhammampi samanupassāmi yaím evaì lahuparivattaì yathayidamं cittam். Yāvañcidaì, bhikkhave, upamāpi na sukarā yāva lahuparivattaí cittan"ti."

Translated: "I consider, bhikkhus, that there is no phenomenon that comes and goes so quickly as citta. It is not easy to find an analogy (a simile) to show how quickly citta changes."

## 3. "Citta, Mano, Viññāna - Nine Stages of a Thought."

4. A "pure citta" or a "pabhassara citta" recognizes an ārammaṇa as sight, sound, etc. but does not recognize it. See "Pabhassara Citta, Radiant Mind, and Bhavanga." One is only aware that one is living. That is the experience of an Arahant in "Arahant-phala Samapatti."

### 6.1.1.2 Seeing Is a Series of "Snapshots"

## April 4, 2022; revised April 6, 2022 (\#9)

Even though we perceive seeing to be continuous, it results from a series of discrete sensory events or "snapshots." That is the real meaning of the verse, "dittthe dittthamattaim bhavissati." The other sensory experiences work the same way.

## Mind and Cittā

1. A mind is not active all the time. For example, when in deep sleep we are not even aware that we are alive. The mind becomes active when an ārammaña comes in via one of the six sense faculties. An
$\bar{a} r a m m a n ̣ a ~ t r i g g e r s ~ c i t t t \bar{a}$ (plural of citta) to arise - and the mind to become active. That is why some consider the mind synonymous with citt $\bar{a}$, but that is not correct.

- It takes numerous citta vīthi for us to be aware of that ārammaṇa AND identify what that ārammana is. For example, when we hear a glass falling and breaking, it only takes a split second for the mind to register that sound and for us to become aware of it. But numerous citta vithi run during that split second.
- A citta can take only one ārammaṇa at a time. In fact, all cittā in a citta vīthi take the same $\bar{a} r a m m a n ̣ a$. We CANNOT see and hear at the same time. When a new ārammaṇa comes in, a new citta vithi focused on that starts. But since the mind is so fast, it appears to us that we are seeing and hearing at the same time.
- Thus the mind can take in many a arammana within a second BECAUSE it is so fast! That means the mind can jump from one ārammaṇa to another and back in a split second.

2. Buddha said it is hard to find any phenomena in this world that change faster than the mind: "WebLink: suttacentral: Anguttara Nikāya 5. Panihitaacchavagga (AN 1.48)".

- The short sutta says: "Nāhain, bhikkhave, añnam ekadhammampi samanupassāmi yain evain lahuparivattaì yathayidaì cittaì. Yāvañcidaì, bhikkhave, upamāpi na sukarā yāva lahuparivattaì cittan"ti."
- Translated: "I consider, bhikkhus, that there is no phenomenon that comes and goes so quickly as citta. It is not easy to find an analogy (a simile) to show how quickly citta changes."
- Also see the previous post, "Khandhā in Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda."


## $\bar{A} r a m m a n ̣ a ̄ ~ C o m e ~ i n ~ v i a ~ t h e ~ S i x ~ S e n s e ~ F a c u l t i e s ~$

3. To "experience an arammana," the mind (more precisely, the seat of the mind or hadaya vatthu) must make contact with an external rūpa. The phassa cetasika in a citta makes that "contact."

- There are five types of external rūpa above the suddhatṭhaka stage (vanṇa, sadda, gandha, rasa, and photthabba rūpa.) When one such rūpa contacts the corresponding pasāda rūpa (cakkhu, sota, ghāna, jivhā, or kāya pasāda), that leads to contact (phassa) with the hadaya vatthu simultaneously.
- Then there are $r \bar{u} p \bar{a}$ below the suddhatthaka level (i.e., dhamm $\bar{a}$ ), which directly make contact (phassa) with hadaya vatthu.
- Those six types of ārammaṇa lead to cakkhu, sota, ghāna, jivhā, kāya, and mano viñ̃āṇa. They are all vipāka viññāna.


## We Can Experience Many Ārammaṇa in a Short Time

4. Our experiences are the cumulative effect of billions of "momentary experiences" coming to the mind via cittā (more precisely citta vīthi) arising each second. It will be much easier to proceed once one understands that.

- In the previous two posts, we discussed that the mind is "at rest" in a bhavañga state when not focused on an ārammana, i.e., when not exposed to sensory input. That is the case when we are sleeping. Even while we are awake, the mind could be in a bhavañga state if there is no active ārammana. That happens, for example, when we feel drowsy.
- Furthermore, since the flow of citta vithi is so fast, the mind could be in a bhavañga state between citta vīthi for a short time.
- When a robust sensory input comes in, the mind comes off that bhavanga state and starts focusing on that $\bar{a} r a m m a n a$ with citta wīthi. However, the mind can switch back and forth among several ārammaṇa within a short time. Let us take an example to illustrate that.

5. Suppose you are having a meal with a friend. Let us see how many ārammana run through your mind within a few minutes.

- Your friend is talking, and you are listening. That is an ārammana coming through sotadvāra or the ears. You see the meal in front of you, and that ārammaña comes through cakkhudvāra (eyes). You take a bite and taste the food (jivhādvāra or tongue). You also see your friend (another cakkhudvāra $\bar{a} r a m m a n ̃ a)$. If someone drops a glass at a nearby table, you will hear it breaking (sotadvāra.)
- As you can see, the mind can switch very fast among all such ārammaṇa coming in rapidly!


## The Amazing Mind

6. It is even more impressive that the mind can recognize ALL those ārammaña without the slightest pause. That may sound trivial at first but think about it carefully.

- Suppose your friend (X) is talking about a mutual friend, Y. As X talks, you can relate to everything about Y . The mind can recall your past experiences with Y and relate to your friend's account.
- While that is happening, you can see and identify all types of foods on your plate. You are chewing food and experiencing its taste.
- You are looking at the friend, too, and can relate to his words and hand motions.
- When you hear the glass breaking at a nearby table, you know what happened without even seeing someone dropping the glass.
- How does the mind do ALL THAT in a split second? It is a real problem for scientists who believe that the mind IS the brain, as we discuss below.


## Even Processing a Single Ārammaṇa Is a Complex Process

7. It gets even more complex. Even recognizing a single ārammana involves many things taking place rapidly.

- Let us think about recognizing the food on the plate. When the waiter brought in the food, you looked at the plate and immediately identified the food; let's say that it is a pizza.
- You may say that is trivial. But suppose your friend came from a remote village in a distant country and had never seen or tasted a pizza. He would not know what it was.
- You knew that it was a pizza because you had seen and tasted pizza many times. But how did the mind recall such past experiences and recognize the pizza in such a short time? Not only that, but you know how it will taste before you take a bite.


## The "Binding Problem" in Neuroscience

8. Think about all the sensory experiences mind was able to process within a couple of minutes in \#5 and \#6.

- Modern science is grappling with the issue involving just one such sensory experience right now. Neuroscientists are trying to figure out how the brain identifies a given object, say, a car coming towards you on the road. When you see a vehicle, you recognize its color, shape, and rough distance from you to the vehicle. If you are crossing the road, you may run to avoid the car hitting you if you think it is coming too fast.
- Neuroscientists are trying to figure out how the brain gets all that done in a split second. That is the "binding problem" in neuroscience. It is a sub-category in the general problem of mind tackling several sensory inputs (like in \#5 and \#6 above), blending all that into a smooth sensory experience. See the Wikipedia article, "WebLink: en.wikipedia.org: Multisensory integration."
- They will never figure that out. It is the hadaya vatthu (seat of the mind in Buddha Dhamma) that recalls past events VERY FAST. However, the brain DOES play a crucial role in processing
incoming sensory data. Then it passes that information to hadaya vatthu. I have discussed that in a bit technical post: "Brain - Interface between Mind and Body."


## Relation to Perception of " $I$ " or "Me"

9. This fantastic ability of the mind (more correctly hadaya vatthu) to process and identify multiple sensory inputs in a split second leads to the perception of a "person" experiencing all those sensory inputs.

- But the Buddha explained that all sensory experiences result from an EXTREMELY FAST automatic progression of discrete events that runs through a mind ONE AT A TIME; see below.
- Thus, there is no "person" experiencing ALL SIX sensory inputs at the same time. It is just a process taking place ONE sensory input at a time!


## Seeing Is a Series of "Snapshots"

10. To get the basic idea, let us focus on a series of events involving just vision.

- A video camera captures many static pictures (snapshots) of a scene when making a movie. Then those snapshots are projected to a screen at a specific rate. If the playback speed is too slow, we can see individual pictures, but above a particular "projection rate," it looks like actual motion. Here is a video that illustrates this well:

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WebLink: youtube: Animation basics: The optical illusion of motion - TED-Ed
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- A movie projector projects static pictures to the screen at a rate of about 30 frames a second, and we see the movie as a continuous progression of events.
- More details in "Vision Is a Series of "Snapshots" - Movie Analogy."

11. In the same way, our minds do not experience the continuous motion of objects. The mind receives only discrete snapshots of the object (at certain time intervals) from the brain. Therefore, in reality, we see only a "movie" put together by the mind based on a number of "snapshots" per second. That is why the Buddha called viññaṇa a "magician."

- That is what the Buddha explained to Bāhiya in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Bāhiva Sutta (Ud 1.10)" with the verse, "diṭthe dittthamattaì bhavissati, sute sutamattaì bhavissati,.."
- That verse is incorrectly translated as; "In the seen will be merely the seen; in the heard will be merely the heard.."
- However, it explains exactly what we discussed above. Seeing is just like taking a series of snapshots. What we PERCEIVE as a person walking is really a series of such snapshots "made into a movie" by the mind. The same holds for hearing, tasting, etc.
- We will discuss that in detail in upcoming posts. Understanding that will help get rid of sakkāya diṭthi.


## Summary

12. First thing is to understand that it is WRONG to translate citta as either a "thought" or "mind." A "thought-moment" may be better. A mind appears fast because numerous cittā run through the mind very fast.

- A citta is the smallest unit of cognition. There could be billions of cittā arising in a mind in a second. Only a Buddha can "see" or "experience" a citta! We only experience the cumulative effect of millions of cittā that run through the mind in a split second.
- As we have discussed, a citta evolves to the viññāna stage. We experience the effect of "bundles" or "aggregates" of such viññāna. That is the reason for using "viññānakkhandha" instead of viññāna in many instances in Buddha Dhamma.

13. The "movie analogy" in \#9 above explains the basic idea of how the mind sees the external world "seemingly without any gaps" even though only a series of 'snapshots" come into the mind.

- The following post will discuss how the mind tackles several DIFFERENT sensory inputs (sights, sound, taste, etc.) that we discussed in \#5 and \#6 above.
- All posts in this subsection at, "Paticca Samuppāda During a Lifetime."


### 6.11.2 Aggregate of Forms - Collection of "Mental Impressions" of Forms

April 10, 2022
The aggregate of forms (rūpakkhandha) is not a collection of forms or rūpa. It includes mental impressions of $r \bar{u} p a$ that one has experienced. Here we discuss how that accumulation of "mental impressions of $r \bar{u} p a$ " takes place.

## Rūpa and Rūpakkhandha

1. $\boldsymbol{R} \bar{u} p \bar{a}$ (normally translated as "forms") are those in the external world: visuals of people, tress, etc., sounds, tastes, odors, and other objects that we touch. Rup $\bar{a}$ (plural of $r \bar{u} p a$ ) are made of the four great elements: pathavi, āpo, tejo, vāyo.

- On the other hand, rūpakkhandha (normally translated as the "aggregate of forms") consists of a person's MENTAL IMPRESSIONS of such rūpa. In a day, we see, hear, taste, smell and touch many things and ALL those impressions are added to a person's rūpakkhandha each second.
- These days, only a handful of people have understood that. It is very important to understand what rūpakkhandha is.
- I have set the background with two previous posts referred to below. You may want to read them as needed.


## Rūpakkhandha Grows With Each Ārammaṇa

2. The concept of rupakkhandha (form aggregate) is easily explained with an example. It starts with an arrammana coming to the mind via one of the six senses.

- As we discussed in recent posts, the mind can stay on ONLY ONE ārammaṇa at any given time. However, the mind can jump back and forth among all six senses very fast.
- How quickly the mind can jump among different senses is limited ONLY by how fast the brain can process information coming through the five physical senses (eyes, ears, tongue, nose, and body).
- In the posts, "Seeing Is a Series of 'Snapshots"" and "Vision Is a Series of "Snapshots" - Movie Analogy" we discussed some examples. Let us discuss that further to clarify what happens in terms of a series of "snapshots" the mind receives RANDOMLY from the six senses. The following is the example in \#5 of the post "Seeing Is a Series of 'Snapshots'." We can further simplify by focusing on just three ārammaṇa.


## Example of Accumulation of Rūpakkhandha

3. Suppose you are having a meal with a friend. Let us see how many citta vìthi run through your mind within a few minutes due to different ārammaña.

- Your friend is talking, and you are listening. That is an ārammaña coming through sotadvāra or the ears. You see him too, and that ārammaṇa comes through cakkhudvāra (eyes). You take a bite and taste the food (jivhādvāra or tongue).
- You can experience all of those without any pause. It FEELS as if you are experiencing all three simultaneously. But that is only an illusion arising from the fact that the mind is THE FASTEST entity in this world. We discussed that in those two posts.
- As you can see, the mind can switch very fast among all discrete data sets from all ārammaña coming in rapidly!


## It takes Four Citta Vīthi to Process One "Data Set" from One Ārammana

4. As we have discussed, the mind receives ONLY ONE snapshot (let us call it a "data set") at one moment through sotadvāra, cakkhudvāra, or jivhādvāra, in the above example. The brain may process those sensory signals ("data sets") in parallel. But when they come to the mind, the mind processes only one "data set" at a time. But since the mind is unimaginably fast, it appears that the mind processes them simultaneously.

- In our example of \#3 above, let us say the mind (more correctly the seat of the mind or hadaya vatthu) processes them in the following sequence: sotadvāra, cakkhudvāra, jivhādvāra. Each one involves a citta vīthi (with 17 cittā.)
- We also need to keep in mind that each of them is fully absorbed by the mind with three more manodvāra citta vith $h i$. I mentioned that in \#1 of the post, "Vision Is a Series of "Snapshots" - Movie Analogy."
- Therefore, citta vīthi go through the mind in the following order: 1 sotadvāra/3 manodvāra, 1 cakkhudvāra/3 manodvāra, 1 jivhādvāra/3 manodvāra.
- As the brain keeps sending more "data sets," such citta vīthi keep flowing through the mind.


## Hundreds of "Data Sets" Processed by the Mind in a Second

5. To keep it simple, let us assume that no other ārammaña comes to mind for several minutes. Furthermore, let us assume that subsequent citta vithi flow through the mind in the same order. Thus, we have 1 sotadvāra/3 manodvāra, 1 cakkhudvāra/3 manodvāra, 1 jivhādvāra/3 manodvāra, 1 sotadvāra/3 manodvāra, 1 cakkhudvāra/3 manodvāra, 1 jivhādvāra/3 manodvāra, ...

- The series in bold is the second series of citta vīthi. In the second post mentioned above (see \#11), we estimated that the brain can process about 100 data packets on vision per second. Each of those will trigger 1 cakkhudvāra/3 manodvāra citta vīthi.
- Therefore, in a second roughly $\mathbf{3 0 0}$ of the following set will go through the mind: 1 sotadvāra/3 manodvāra, 1 cakkhudvāra/3 manodvāra, 1 jïvhādvāra/3 manodvāra.


## Mind Can Sort Out "Data Sets" from Different Senses

6. In other words, the mind will get a "sound bite" of your friend's words (possibly one word) followed by a "snapshot" of your friend. That is immediately followed by a bit of taste of the food. It is critical to think through exactly what takes place.

- The point is that the mind can handle ONLY ONE sensory input at a time. The brain keeps sending 100 packets of "data" (per second) on each of the three senses involved in our example: sound, taste, and vision. The mind is much faster than the brain and it processes all of them without any problem.
- But the intriguing thing is that the mind DOES NOT receive "data" continuously from one sense. Rather it gets bits of data on sound, vision, and taste. Then that sequence is repeated. Thus here is the sequence of "bits of data" that comes to the mind: sound/vision/taste, sound/vision/taste, sound/vision/taste, ...

7. But the mind has the amazing ability to sort out and connect data from each sense faculty separately.

- Thus, in the above example, the mind will have formed THREE separate chains of data: sound, sound, sound, $\ldots$ vision, vision, vision,... taste, taste, taste, ...
- In other words, the mind is capable of putting the "bits of data" on sound coming at different times together as one series and thus understanding the meaning of your friend's words. For example, it may hear the friend say "my dad", "came to", "see me", and "yesterday." But they did not come in one after the other. Adjacent sets of words were separated by bits of data on vision and taste. But the mind was able to put it all together as "my dad came to see me yesterday."

8. In the same way, it may get the taste of a bit of meat in one packet, and a bit of cheese in another, with data on vision and sound coming in between. But the mind combines all that to give YOU the taste of the pizza.

- Same for vision. The mind combined many "snapshots" of your friend in several seconds and see him taking and eating. That part of the vision is exactly the same as projecting static pictures in a movie that we discussed in those two previous posts.
- All sensory data for the three senses got added to the rūpakkhandha in the above example.


## What Is in the Aggregate of Forms (Rūpakkhandha)?

9. The five types of aggregates (khandhas) are explained in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Khandha Sutta (SN 22. 48)." There, the rūpakkhandha (form aggregate) is, "Yaim kiñci, bhikkhave, rūpaìm atītānāgatapaccuppannaì ajjhattaì vā bahiddhā vā oḷārikaì vā sukhumaì vā hinaì va panītaì $v \bar{a}$ yaì dūre santike $v \bar{a}$, ayaì vuccati rūpakkhandho."

Translated: "Any kind of rūpa-past, future, or present; internal or external; coarse or fine; inferior or superior, far or near: all of them belong to the aggregate of form or $r \bar{u} p a k k h a n d h a$."

- The key point here has not been explained in current English translations. All rūpā that belong to $r \bar{u} p a k k h a n d h a$ are the "mental impressions" of external r $\bar{u} p \bar{a}$. In other words, they are NOT made of pathavi, āpo, tejo, vāyo, or suddhāṭthaka.
- But, of course, those "mental impressions" arose DUE TO external rūpa made of pathavi, āpo, tejo, vāyo, or suddhātṭhaka.

10. One easy way to see that is to see that the Buddha included all past rūpa in rūpakkhandha. That means any $r \bar{u} p a$ that one saw, heard, tasted, smelled, touched, or thought about is included. Since our past goes back to infinite time, a VAST MAJORITY of rūpa in the rūpakkhandha are such past rūpa.

- For example, suppose YOU saw a tree yesterday. The "mental impression" of that tree is in YOUR rüpakkhandha. You can recall how it looked if you took a good look at it. Even if that tree was cut down just after you looked at it, that mental impression is still there. It is in YOUR rūpakkhandha.
- However, since I did not see that tree, MY rüpakkhandha does not have an impression of that tree.
- Each person has their own rūpakkhandha.


## Present (Paccuppanna) Rūpa Are Just a Fraction!

11. As we discussed, the present (paccuppanna) moment lasts only a split second. If we say the word "kaya" by the time "ya" sound comes, the "ka" sound has gone to the past.

- Thus each rūpa experienced in a fraction of a second immediately goes becomes a "past rūpa." The "present moment" is gone in a flash!
- Future (anāgata) rūpa are mental impressions of $r \bar{u} p a$ that one hopes to experience in the future.
- The other types of rūpa are sub-categories of the past, present, and future rūpa. Internal (ajjhatta) rūpa are those that are part of oneself: all body parts, including the ones inside the body.

External (bahiddha) rūpa are, of course, anything outside of one's body. Coarse (olārika) rūpa are what we call "solid matter," and fine/subtle (sukhuma) rūpa are "energy" (heat, sound, dhammā, etc.)

- As we can see, rūpakkhandha grows immensely even in a day. But we attach to only a tiny fraction of it. That fraction is rūpupādānakkhandha (commonly translated as "aggregate of form connected with grasping."


## What is in the Rūpupādānakkhandha ("Aggregate of Forms Grasped")?

## 12. $\boldsymbol{R} \bar{u} p u p \bar{a} d \bar{a} n a k k h a n d h a(r u \bar{p} a+u p \bar{a} d \bar{a} n a+k h a n d h a)$ is the collection of forms that "one is attached to" or "one has grasped"; The Buddha stated that in the same Khandha Sutta that defined rūpakkhandha

 in \#9 above; see Ref. 1.- As we have seen rūpakkhandha includes ALL rūpa that we have ever experienced. That is huge! infinite!
- We don't even remember most of our past rūpa. We are attached to only a tiny fraction of rūpa in our rūpakkhandha. Those are mostly from this life. However, attachment to those has been influenced by $r u \bar{p} a$ experienced in past lives.

13. For example, person $X$ may have "fallen in love" with an attractive person that he saw yesterday. It is possible that out of all persons/things X saw yesterday, only that visual rūpa got "added" to his rūpupādānakkhandha.

- X may have heard many sounds yesterday. Out of those, he may NOT have added any "sound $r \bar{u} p a$ " to his rūpupādānakkhandha even though many "sound rūpa" would have been added to his rūpakkhandha.
- Just think about such examples to clarify the difference between rūpakkhandha and rūpupādānakkhandha.
- Remember that rūpa are six types: They include Rūpa rūpa (or vaṇna rūpa) that one sees. Similarly, sadda rūpa, gandha rūpa, rasa rūpa, phoṭthabba rūpa, and dhamma rūpa (dhammā) are sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and memories.


## Reference

1. In the "WebLink: suttacentral: Khandha Sutta (SN 22. 48)" rūpupādānakkhandha is, "Yaï kiñci, bhikkhave, rūpaiं atītānāgatapaccuppannai் ...pe... yaí dūre santike vā sāsavain upādāniyain, ayaì vuccati rūpupādānakkhandho."

Translated: "Any kind of form-past, future, or present; internal or external; coarse or fine; inferior or superior; far or near, which leads to $\bar{a} s a v a$ (craving) and upādāna (the mind cannot let go of) is called the rūpupādānakkhandha ("aggregate of form connected with grasping.")

### 6.1.1.2 Rūpakkhandha in Idappaccayatā Paṭicca Samuppāda

April 16, 2022
Only a tiny fraction of rūpakkhandha plays a direct role in what happens at a given moment, i.e., in Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda.

## Summary of Rūpakkhandha (Form Aggregate)

1. If you have not read the previous three posts on the form aggregate (rūpakkhandha), it is a good idea to read them first at "Paticca Samuppāda During a Lifetime," starting with "Khandhā in Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda." It is critically important to understand the basic ideas.

- As discussed in those three posts, the form aggregate is MOSTLY our mental impressions of forms (rūpa) that we experienced in the past, including all previous lives.
- Of course, we can recall only a fraction of past $r \bar{u} p a$ that we experienced. However, the cultivation of $j h a ̄ n a$ allows one to remember even previous lives. The Buddha could recall anything from his past lives as far as he wanted.
- Recent findings confirm that moment-by-moment records of ALL rūpa experienced remain intact. Some people can recall past events in astonishing detail.


## Memory Recall - Recent Findings

2. That AMAZING ability first came to light with Jill Price, who contacted a team of scientists in the early 2000s about her ability to recall anything from 1974 onwards. Here is a video of her with Diane Sawyer on an ABC News program in 2008:

## WebLink: youtube: The woman that never forgets - Jill Price First Interview!

- I discussed that video in detail in the post "Where Are Memories "Stored"? - Connection to Pañcakkhandha."
- Discussions with a few more people with that ability are in "Autobiographical Memory - Preserved in Nāma Loka."
- Therefore, it is important to realize that — in the strict sense - rūpakkhandha includes any rūpa that one has ever experienced.
- This fact is a foundation of Buddha Dhamma. It is a fact that RECORDS of ALL past experiences are preserved as "nāmagotta" in viñ̃̃̄̄ṇa dhātu. Thanks to the accounts of Jill Price and others that fact is now undeniable.


## Memories (Nāmagotta) Preserved in Viññāṇa Dhātu

3. The "past component of pañcakkhandha" is preserved as "nāmagotta" in the viñ̃̃āṇa dhātu. Jill Price and a few other people can recall memories in such detail only because those memories (nāmagotta) have been in the viñ̃̃̄ana dhātu. See "Where Are Memories Stored? - Viñ̃̃̄̄na Dhātu."

- In the same way, some children can recall memories from their recent past lives. See "Evidence for Rebirth." Some yogis can remember many past lives. A Buddha can recall any past life as he wishes. For example, Buddha Gotama described the lives of several previous Buddhas (spanning many billions of years) in detail in several suttas. See, for example, "WebLink: suttacentral: Mahāpadāna Sutta (DN 14)."
- Therefore, it is absolutely necessary to include "all past rūpa" in the rūpakkhandha in a general sense.
- However, when one is trying to avoid generating "bad sañkhāra" at the present moment, we DO NOT need to focus on the whole $r \bar{u} p a k k h a n d h a$. We just need to pay attention to the rūpa that we are experiencing at that time. Such ru$p \bar{a}$ belong to "a much smaller "collection of $r \bar{u} p \bar{a}$ " or rūpakkhandha." Let us discuss that now.


## Rūpakkhandha at the Present Moment Is the Most Important

4. Only those rūpakkhandha that arise close to the current moment play a direct role in Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda, i.e., play a role in "what happens at the present moment."

- Even though the "past rūpakkhandha" going back to the "beginningless rebirth process" makes up the bulk of the rupakkhandha of a person, most of us cannot even recall most of the "past rūpakkhandha" from yesterday.
- That is why the Buddha advised Ven. Ānanda to first understand the Idappaccayatā Paṭicca Samuppāda. We discussed that at the beginning of this series a few posts ago. See "Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda - Bhava and Jāti Within a Lifetime."
- But that does not imply that those memory records have no value at all. They do influence our present actions through our samisāric habits.

5. The Idappaccayatā Paṭicca Samuppāda explains the accumulation of kammic energies at the present moment. It is based on rūpakkhandha that arises at the present moment. Of course, they arise and go to the past momentarily. So, rūpa or rūpakkhandha involved in Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda are MOSTLY those that one is experiencing at the present time and moving to the past as soon as they arise.

- That "present time" could vary from minutes to hours depending on how long one's mind is focused on an ārammaṇa.
- Note that rūpakkhandha is only one of five aggregates (khandhās) associated with an experience.
- Before we start discussing the other four aggregates, it is a good idea to understand the usage of the term "rūpakkhandha" in this context.


## Why Do We Call Rūpa Experienced at a given Moment "Rūpakkhandha"?

6. Even over a short time of a few seconds, a mind DOES NOT capture the full impression of a "rūpa" in one instant. Rather, such a sight, sound, etc., are captured with MANY "snapshots." Read \#6 through \#8 in the post, "Aggregate of Forms - Collection of 'Mental Impressions' of Forms." It could a good idea to review that first. These concepts are new to most people.

- That is the basis of Buddha saying there is no "person" seeing, hearing, etc. It is just a series of events that happens via Idappaccayatā Paṭicca Samuppāda. But we need to discuss that in more detail.
- First, let us review some facts about " $\bar{u} p \bar{a}$." It is unfortunate that sometimes people use "r $\bar{u} \bar{a} \vec{a}$ " just for "visual objects." But those are "rūpa rūp $\bar{a} "$ or "vaṇna rūp $\bar{a}$." Here, vaṇ̣a ("varna" in Sanskrit) means "color."
- We see "vanṇa rūpa" with eyes, "sadda rūpa" with ears, "rasa rūpa" with tongue, "gandha rūpa" with the nose, and "photṭhabba rūpa" with touches. We also recall memories with "dhamm $\vec{a}$ " or "dhamma ru$p a$ " with the mind. Of course, it is the mind that experiences the other five $r \bar{u} p \bar{a}$ that come through the eyes, ears, tongue, nose, and body.
- Those six types of $r \bar{u} p \bar{a}$ make contact with the mind very rapidly and in "packets." For example, we don't see or hear continuously. Only one sense faculty makes contact with the mind at one moment, and that contact is of short duration, about one-hundredth of a second!

7. We discussed in the last post how the mind is able to sort out those different sensory inputs and make a coherent picture of our world. See "Aggregate of Forms - Collection of 'Mental Impressions' of Forms." Let us discuss one more simple example to illustrate this point. It is critical to get this basic idea.

Suppose you are eating an apple and you are alone. Your mind is totally focused on the apple. Still, many inputs come in providing you with information on touch, taste, sight, smell, and even sounds.

- You are holding the apple and that sensation comes through kāyadvāra or touch. The taste of apple comes through jivhādvāra or tongue, and you hear the chewing sound (sotadvāra or the ears.) Of course, you see the apple too via cakkhudvāra (eyes). You may also smell the apple coming via ghānadvāra (nose.)
- Of course, the mind put together all those sensory inputs as "enjoying the apple." Therefore, the manodvāra is involved too. The other five sensory inputs come to the MIND via those "doors" (dvāra)
- You can experience all of those without any pause. It is an all-inclusive cohesive experience. It FEELS as if you are experiencing all those sensations simultaneously. But that is only an illusion arising from the fact that the mind is THE FASTEST entity in this world. We discussed that in the previous three posts too.


## Where Does the "Experience" Take Place?

8. Think about what happens within those few minutes while you are eating the apple. You see the apple in your hand and feel its texture. You can taste the apple and also smell its aroma. You also hear the chewing sound. Those are the five sensory experiences through the five physical senses.

- While you are doing all that, the brain is processing all that data to a form that can be "understood" by the mind. The brain DOES NOT understand anything; it is just like a computer. This is a critical point that needs to be understood.
- There are separate regions in the brain that process data from those five senses. The brain processes such data into a form that can be understood by the mind. This is a fully kammic process that scientists will never be able to figure out.
- It is worthwhile to think about what must happen, for example, to 'see' that apple.


## How do we "see" an apple?

9. Scientists have traced the electrical/chemical signals from the back of the eye (retina) to the visual cortex in the brain. But they have no idea what the visual cortex is doing or how it transforms those electrical/chemical signals into "light" and the "form resembling an apple."

- That is the "hard problem of consciousness" in simple terms. Google "hard problem of consciousness" and you can read about the struggles of scientists and philosophers trying to make a breakthrough.
- That problem arises only because they are trying to explain consciousness to "arise from matter" specifically in the brain.
- The Buddha explained that it is the other way around. It is the mind that gives rise to matter. That is a deep issue I have discussed briefly in "The Origin of Matter - Suddhatthaka." However, it is not prudent to go that deep UNTIL understanding the Idappaccayatā Pațicca Samuppāda.
- By the way, some scientists and philosophers are beginning to realize that it would be impossible to explain consciousness to ARISE in the brain. The brain only has a secondary role; see, "How Do We See? - Role of the Gandhabba" and "Will Quantum Mechanics Be Able to Explain Consciousness?"

10. The point is that after light falls on the back of the eye, light DOES NOT play any role in vision. Then how do we see an image of that apple? How do we see light? It is totally dark inside the skull!

- The same is true for the other senses. Scientists have found that sounds create vibrations in the air and deep inside our ears there are sensors that detect those vibrations. How can the brain "hear" those sounds? It cannot. The brain itself was formed by kammic energy. Its role is to transform those "vibration signals" into a form that can be understood by the mind (more precisely the "seat of the mind" or "hadaya vatthu".)
- It is a good idea to read the post "How Do We See? - Role of the Gandhabba." There is no need to get into details discussed in that post. Don't forget to read Ref. 4 per \#6 in the post. It is the gandhabba (with the hadaya vatthu) that sees, hears, tastes, smells, feels, and thinks! Yet that gandhabba lasts only for the duration of human existence. After that, it could transform into an animal gandhabba, Deva, or even a "hell-being". There is no real essence even in that human gandhabba. It is a temporary existence!


## "Eating an Apple" Experience Involves Many Types of Rūpakkhandha

11. It is utterly useless to read the "word-by-word" translations of suttas. The Buddha explained things that we experience in real life. Even though the world is complex, we can simplify things by looking at the details of sensory experience. It may appear complex at first, but once the basic idea sinks in, it will become much easier.

- Let us summarize our discussion on the experience of eating an apple.
- We experience different types of rūpa within those few minutes. They are vaṇna rūpa, sadda rūpa, gandha rūpa, rasa rūpa, and photṭhabba rūpa. In plain English sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch.
- Even the sight of the apple is not captured in one instant. The sight of the apple comes in "brief snapshots" each one lasting only a billionth of a second. Remember that even though the brain may take one-thousandth of a second to process a "data packet on the vision" the mind (more precisely hadaya $v a t t h u$ ) processes that in a billionth of a second.
- Thus, "seeing of the apple" is due to a collection of many such "snapshots." That is a "rūpakkhandha" on VISION over a short time.


## Rūpakkhandha Includes All Types of $\boldsymbol{R} \bar{u} p a$

12. However, we also hear the chewing of the apple, the taste, its smell, and also feel the texture of the apple in the hand. Thus, five types of rūpakkhandha go through the mind in that short time.

- In other words, the rellevant rūpakkhandha is the aggregate of all those rūpakkhandha formed by the five senses.
- The mind is able to put all of those together and provide a seamless experience of a "person eating an apple" by looking at the overall rūpakkhandha accumulated over several minutes.
- But in reality, it is just a collection of many DISCRETE events taking place at a very fast rate. This is why it is important to understand the basic concept explained in the video in the post "Vision Is a Series of "Snapshots" - Movie Analogy."
- Here is another analogy. In the old days, people made metal chains by connecting many small metal loops by hand. All one does is connect two loops at a time. You see a "chain" only after you connect many such loops and look at the result of that activity.


## Next Post

13. Experiencing a sensory input involves not only the rūpakkhandha but also associated "mental aspects". In the next post, we will discuss that.

- As we will see, the other four khandhās (vēdanākkhandha, saññākkhandha, sañkhārakkhandha, and viññānakkhandha) work the same as the rūpakkhandha. That is why we discussed rūpakkhandha in detail.


### 6.1.1.2 Five Aggregates - Experiences of Each Sentient Being

April 24, 2022; revised April 25, 2022; August 2, 2022
Five aggregates (pañcakkhandh $\bar{a}$ ) are the accumulation of one's experiences and expectations for the future. Not only a human but any sentient being has its pañcakkhandhā.

1. We discussed how one's rūpakkhandha grows with each sensory experience in several previous posts,

- A sensory experience occurs when an external rūpa comes into contact with an internal $r \bar{u} p a$, i.e., when an ārammaṇa (vaṇna rūpa, sadda rūpa, gandha rūpa, rasa rūpa, phoț̣habba rūpa, or a dhamma rūpa) comes to the mind either via the "five physical doors" or directly (dhamma rūpa).
- Thus during the waking hours, one's rupakkhandha (form aggregate) grows and is added to the existing rūpakkhandha (collection of rūpa that one has ever experienced.)
- We need to discuss how all five aggregates (pañcakkhandha) grow simultaneously.


## Each Sensory Contact Also Gives Rise to the Four Mental Aggregates

2. The easiest way to look at that is as follows. One of the six types of vipāka viññāna (cakkhu, sota, ghāna, jivhā, kāya, mano viññāna) arises with each such sensory experience.

- That vipāka viññāna includes vedanā, saññā, and thus mano sañkhāra AUTOMATICALLY. Note that mano sañkhāra is "vedanā and sañ̃̄ā" (see Ref. 1). At this initial stage, there will be no vacī or kāya sañkhāra.
- Therefore, all five aggregates grow with EACH sensory experience.

3. We take the next step and see how the aggregates of feelings, perceptions, "mental formations," and "consciousness" arise. As we have discussed, it is better to use the Pāli terms of vedanākkhandha, saññākkhandha, sañkhārakkhandha, and viññāṇakkhandha instead of those English terms.

- As I have explained, only one type of viñ̃̄āṇa can be called "consciousness," and that is vipāka viññāna.
- However, viññānakkhandha includes all kinds of viññ̄ạna. See "Distortion of Pāli Keywords in Paticca Samuppāda."


## Example - Visual Sensory Contact

4. A cakkhu viññāna gets added to viññānakkhandha simultaneously with the addition of a "mental impression of a rūpa" to rūpakkhandha.

- Simultaneously, that cakkhu viññāna not only with an impression of the rūpa but is accompanied by vedanā, sañ̃̄̄̄, and sañkhāra as well, and additions to rūpakkhandha, vedanākkhandha, sañ̃̄̄̄kkhandha, and sañkhārakkhandha take place simultaneously.
- Think carefully about that. With each sensory input (ārammaṇa), ALL FIVE AGGREGATES grow.


## All Five Khandhās Arise Together

5. We based our discussion in the previous two posts on rūpakkhandha on the "WebLink: suttacentral: Khandha Sutta (SN 22. 48)."

- The same sutta describes the other four khandhās in the same way as the $r \bar{u} p a k k h a n d h a$, as we can expect.
- Thus, for example, vedanākkhandha is: "Any kind of vedan̄-past, future, or present; internal or external; coarse or fine; inferior or superior; far or near: all of them belong to the aggregate of form or vedanākkhandha."
- After that, the Buddha concludes, "Ime vuccanti, bhikkhave, pañcakkhandhä" or "Bhikkhus, Those are the five aggregates."

6. Therefore, as soon as an ārammana goes through the mind, a record of the associated rūpa, vedana , sañ̃ $\bar{a}$, sañkhāra, and viñ̃n̄ạa is added to the five aggregates (pañcakkhandha.)

- Thus, when we recall a past event, we remember the $r \bar{u} p a$ and the mental aspects associated with that event, i.e., the pañcakkhandha related to that event. The "past component" of the pañcakkhandha also goes by "nāmagotta."
- The "past component of pañcakkhandha" is preserved as "nāmagotta" in the viñ̃̃āṇa dhātu.
- For example, when you recall a tasty meal last week, you identify the type of food and the taste. You had "good feelings" about the meal, which is vedana $\overline{\text {. }}$


## Memories (Nāmagotta) Preserved in Viññāṇa Dhātu

7. Even though most of us cannot, few people can recall past events from this life in astonishing DETAIL.

- Jill Price and a few other people can recall memories in such detail only because those memories (nāmagotta) have been in the viñ̃̃āna dhātu. See "Where Are Memories Stored? - Viññāna Dhātu."
- With advances in science and access to experiences by people worldwide, evidence keeps accumulating for Buddha Dhamma. Another related study is on Near-Death-Experiences (NDE) conducted by heart surgeons. See "Near-Death Experiences (NDE): Brain Is Not the Mind."
- In the same way, some children can recall memories from their recent past lives. See "Evidence for Rebirth." Some yogis can remember many past lives. A Buddha can recall any past life as he wishes. For example, Buddha Gotama described the lives of several previous Buddhas in detail in several suttas. See, for example, "WebLink: suttacentral: Mahāpadāna Sutta (DN 14)."
- None of those accounts can be explained by the proposal saying "consciousness and memories" arise in the brain. A brain has NO DIRECT CONNECTION to past lives.

8. In \#7 above, I stated, "A brain has NO CONNECTION to the past lives." The brain can't contain such memories intrinsically, i.e., those memories obviously cannot be "stored in the brain." However, the brain DOES play a role in memory recall; see "Brain - Interface between Mind and Body."

- The mana indriya in the brain can extract memories from the viññāna dhātu. If a specific brain region is damaged, the brain will lose the ability to recall such memories. Just as sights come in through the physical eyes, memories come through the "mana indriya" in the brain.
- I have discussed that in "Patient H.M. - Different Roles of Brain in Memory" and a few other related posts. From the account of patient H.M., we can deduce that "mana indriya" could be related to THE hippocampus in the brain. He lost the ability to recall memories after the removal of the hippocampus.


## Each Sentient Being Generates Pañcakkhandha

9. Any sentient being (living in the 31 realms) continually adds to its pañcakkhandha via each sensory experience. Even the smallest living creature generates pañcakkhandha.

- Of course, most animals do not have brains. They have different mechanisms for memory recall. They can recall mostly just their life experiences in their current life. For example, they know where they found food in the past, which areas to avoid because of dangers, etc.
- Our large brains (in particular the neocortex of the brain) make humans unique. The neocortex "slows down" the arising of citta vithi. It takes time to process sensory data as we discussed in "Seeing Is a Series of 'Snapshots'." That gives us time to make decisions and not just "go with the flow." That makes humans unique to have "free will."
- Even though some other mammals also have the neocortex, those are smaller. They all take action impulsively. Even some of us who have not cultivated mindfulness tend to act impulsively "without thinking through (about consequences of such actions)."


## We Attach to Pañcakkhandha, Not Just to Rūpakkhandha

10. As discussed above, when we recall past events, we remember the corresponding rūpa and the associated mental aspects. Then we attach to such rūpa that provided either joyful or hateful experiences.

- In other words, our recollections (and attachments) involve all five aggregates (pañcakkhandha) associated with that event, not only the form aggregate (rūpakkhandha.)
- Attachment to rūpa cannot be dissociated from those mental aspects arising from the sensory contacts due to external rūpa.
- That is why "pañca upādāna khandhä" give rise to dukkha, not just the "rūpa upādāna khandha."
- In the previous posts, we noted that rūpupādānakkhandha (rūpa upādāna khandha) is only a tiny fraction of rūpakkhandha. Thus, it is also clear that pañcupādānakkhandha (pañca upādāna khandha) is only a small fraction of pañcakkhandha!
- Attachment to pañcakkhandha (i.e., pañcupādānakkhandha) is the root cause of future suffering.
- We have previously discussed that in other posts; see, for example, "Loka Sutta - Origin and Cessation of the World." However, we will briefly discuss that here.


## We Attach at the Present Moment!

11. We create kammic energies to power up future rebirths at the present moment, when we attach to an $\bar{a} r a m m a n ̣ a$. We attach via greed, anger, and ignorance. Ignorance of the Noble Truths prevents one from thinking about the CONSEQUENCES of one's actions/speech/thoughts at a given moment.

- That is what the Buddha explained to Ven. Ānanda in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Mahānidāna Sutta (DN 15)."
- That is the Idappaccayatā Pațicca Samuppāda that we have been discussing in the current series of posts: "Paticca Samuppāda During a Lifetime."
- In this post series, we are connecting to the pañcakkhandha (five aggregates), which has been mistranslated or at least not adequately explained in most English texts.


## Analysis of Deep Suttas Requires This Understanding

12. We incorrectly think that we see a "full figure of a person with one glance" or "a whole statement made by such person," etc.

- However, those are just "collections" or "khandhas" of very brief "snapshots" put together by the mind (viññanna.) It is only a "magic show," as the Buddha explained.
- That is what the Buddha explained to Bāhiya in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Bāhiya Sutta (Ud 1.10)" with the verse, "ditṭhe ditthamattam bhavissati, sute sutamattam bhavissati,.." Seeing is just like taking a series of snapshots. What we PERCEIVE as a person walking is a series of such snapshots "made into a movie" by the mind. The same holds for hearing, tasting, etc. That is why it is critically important to understand the current series of posts: "Paticca Samuppāda During a Lifetime." Don't forget to watch the youtube movie in the post "Seeing Is a Series of 'Snapshots'" and understand the basic idea.
- There are a series of Bhaddekaratta Sutta (MN 131 through MN 134) based on the same basic but deep concept. See, for example, the first one, "WebLink: suttacentral: Bhaddekaratta Suttas (MN 131)." The English translation there is completely off. It has nothing to do with "One Fine Night," which is the title of the English translation!


## Reference

1. In the WebLink: suttacentral: Cūlavedalla Sutta (MN 44) on the types of sañkhāra generated: "Assāsapassāsā kho, $\bar{a} v u s o ~ v i s a ̄ k h a, ~ k a ̄ y i k \bar{a} ~ e t e ~ d h a m m a ̄ ~ k a ̄ y a p p a t ̦ i b a d d h a ̄, ~ t a s m a ̄ ~ a s s a ̄ s a p a s s a ̄ s a ̄ ~$ kāyasañkhāro. Pubbe kho, āvuso visākha, vitakketvā vicāretvā pacchā vācaṃ bhindati, tasmā vitakkavicārā vacīsañkhāro. Saññ̄ā ca vedanā ca cetasikā ete dhammā cittappaṭibaddhā, tasmā saññā ca vedanā ca cittasañkhāro"ti.

- [The three sañkhārā listed in the Vibhanga 6 on Pațicca Samuppāda Vibhañga of Abhidhamma Piṭaka are, $\boldsymbol{k} \bar{a} y a s a \dot{n} k h a ̄ r o, ~ v a c \bar{c} s a \dot{n} k h a ̄ r o, ~ a n d ~ c i t t a s a n ̃ k h a ̄ r o]$.
- Assāsa passāsā (breathing in and out) is associated with the body (movements). Thus, assāsa passāsa is kāya sañkhāra.
- Vitakka/vicāra arise before speech "breaks out." Therefore, vitakka/vicāra are vacī sañkhāra.
- Saññā and vedanā are associated with any citta. Thus, saññ̄a and vedanā are citta (mano) sañkhāra.


## Pañcupādānakkhandha - Attachment to One's Experiences

May 1, 2022
Even though pañcakkhandha includes many categories - including one's all past experiences - we only attach to pañcakkhandha arising at the present moment, i.e., pañcupādānakkhandha.

## We Attach to Pañcakkhandha That Arise at the Present Moment

1. Attachment to pañcakkhandha DOES NOT mean attachment to ALL OF accumulated pañcakkhandha.

- It just means attachment to the five aggregates that arise AT THAT MOMENT. That is a CRITICAL point to understand.
- We discussed that at the start of this series in "Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda - Bhava and Jāti Within a Lifetime."
"Idappaccay $\bar{a} "$ comes from "ida" + "paccay $\bar{a}$," meaning "based on the conditions at that time."
- Let us discuss that carefully and systematically since it is a CRITICAL issue. Many people say, "attachment to khandhas" with the idea of "attachment to ALL khandhas that define me."
- We attach to "khandhas" that arise at the PRESENT MOMENT. There must be a "trigger" to be attached. Suppose you see, hear, taste, smell, touch, or think about something that you like/dislike/unsure. You may attach (tanhhā) or "get stuck with it" via greed/anger/uncertainty.
- Take a minute to contemplate that.


## Arising of Pañcakkhandha Triggered by an Ārammaṇa

2. The trigger to "get attached to something" is an arrammana. Let us think about what "triggers" an alcoholic (or even a casual drinker) to "have a drink."

- A common trigger is if someone offers a drink. Even a casual drinker may accept the offer.
- For an alcoholic, the idea to "have a drink" may come to mind as a kamma vipāka. They would have built up an "expectation" (kamma viñ̃ñana) to "have a drink at a certain time."
- Regardless of how the idea of "having a drink" comes to the mind, that is accompanied by a "visual of a drink" (added to rūpakkhandha), and the relevant mental aspects (vedanā, sañ̃̄̄a, sañkhāra, viññāna) associated with previous experiences of "having a drink" come to the mind. The latter "mental parts" are added to the vedanākkhandha, saññākkhandha, sañkhārakkhandha, and viññānakkhandha. That is how the pañcakkhandha is added with an ārammaṇa, as we discussed in recent posts in detail.


## How Do Pañcakkhandha Become Pañcupādānakkhandha?

3. Now, an alcoholic will become "joyful" and he will proceed to either accept the offer or make a drink for himself, depending on the two situations above. In other words, now pañcakkhandha has AUTOMATICALLY become pañcupādānakkhandha!

- But if the person doe not like to drink alcohol, such a "joyful mindset" will not take place in him EVEN IF a drink is offered.
- Thus, for such an individual pañcakkhandha would arise when someone offered a drink. But those will be based on his past experiences and his gati. Because he does not have gati to crave "alcoholic drinks" it WILL NOT become pañcupādānakkhandha!
- That is the difference between pañcakkhandha and pañcupādānakkhandha!
- Just reading these words will not be enough to make progress. One must think through these concepts.


## Samphassa-jā-Vedanā Arise Due to Gati

4. To put it another way, the alcoholic will automatically generate pañcupādānakkhandha which will have "samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedan $\bar{a} "$ in his vedanākkhandha.

- On the other hand, the other person (who does not like alcohol) WILL NOT have "samphassa-j $\bar{a}$ vedana $\vec{a}$ " in his vedanākkhandha.
- It is critical to understand what is meant by "samphassa-jā-vedanā." See, "WebLink: PureDhammaSearch: Search Results for: samphassa vedanā."

5. It is mainly the vedanā (that arises with pañcakkhandha) leading to the attachment. If it is sukha vedanā, one attaches with greed, and a dukkha vedanā leads to attachment with anger. A neutral vedanā could also lead to attachment via ignorance (one does not understand the proper response to an ārammaṇa.) [See "WebLink: suttacentral: Anicca Sutta SN 36.9" which says that vedanā is anicca, sañkhatā, paticcasamuppannā, khayadhammā, vayadhamm $\bar{a}$, virāgadhamm $\bar{a}$, nirodhadhammā .]

- Following are examples. Eating tasty food gets one attached to it; they will try to figure out how to taste it again. Seeing an enemy succeeding in life, some people will try to get involved and put obstacles in their way. Seeing shadowy figures at night may cause anxiety.
- Let us analyze the example in the post, "Aggregate of Forms - Collection of 'Mental Impressions' of Forms," to get more clarity.


## Example With Many Ārammaṇa

6. Sometimes many ārammaṇa run through our minds within minutes. In such cases, only one may lead to pañcupādānakkhandha even though all of them contribute to pañcakkhandha.

- We started in that post (in \#3) with the following example. Suppose you are having a meal with a friend. We analyzed how many citta vithi run through your mind within a few minutes due to different $\bar{a} r a m m a n a$. To keep the discussion simple, let us bypass the citta vith $h$ analysis.
- Your friend is talking, and you are listening. That is an ārammaṇa coming through sotadvāra or the ears. You see him too, and that ārammaṇa comes through cakkhudvāra (eyes). You taste the food (with jivhādvāra or tongue).
- The point relevant to the present discussion is that you not only see your friend's face, but you have certain "mental aspects" associated with that rūpa DEPENDING ON both him and what he is talking about. We cannot break those mental aspects into two separate parts, say one for just seeing his face and another for what he is talking about.

7. For example, suppose he started by saying that he had not seen you for several days and how glad he was to see you. The feelings that arise in you would be loving/sympathetic. Then he switched the subject to talk about a common enemy of the two of you, and the mental aspects that arise at that moment are more likely to be those of anger toward that other person.

- Thus within a few minutes, your mental aggregates will change.
- Now you are eating your food at the same time. If the food tastes good, there will be "good feelings" about the food.
- In a situation like that, what type of mental aspects become DOMINANT will depend on the RELATIVE STRENGTHS of the three ārammaṇa in that example.


## We Attach Only to Certain Parts of Pañcakkhandha Arising at the Present Moment

8. If you become agitated about the "common enemy" that the friend is talking about, that will primarily affect your mindset. You may even forget that you are eating. You may even stop eating and start talking about a bad incident with that person.

- Therefore, three types of mental aspects may arise within minutes. All those are part of pañcakkhandha that occur within those few minutes.
- However, you focused on that "common enemy" in this particular case. That became "pañcupādānakkhandha" at that time. Your mind did not "attach" to your friend or your meal. It got "trapped/stuck" on only one ārammaṇa, that about the common enemy.
- That is a straightforward example of how pañcakkhandha arises and how a part of that pañcakkhandha can turn into pañcupādānakkhandha.


## Attaching to Part of Pañcakkhandha Based on Gati

9. When an ārammaṇa comes to mind, that leads to accumulating the five aggregates (pañcakkhandha.)

- Even though pañcakkhandha includes ALL of one's experiences in the past, we attach ONLY to pañcakkhandha that arise at that moment.
- However, whether one attaches to pañcakkhandha arising is influenced by one's past experiences (a past component of pañcakkhandha) via one's gati.
- If you did not have gati to become upset about the person your friend was talking about, the situation would have been different. You may try to calm down the friend instead of encouraging him to criticize that person.


## Gati Form Over Long Times Due to One's Cumulative Experiences

10. It is necessary to get a good idea about the role of one's gati. The Pāli word "gati" (pronounced "gathi") can loosely one's character, which also defines one's habits.

- You may want to read "The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Āsava)" and the posts referred to there.
- "Good gati" lead to rebirths in the "good realms," and "bad gati" lead to rebirths in the "bad realms." When one comprehends the Four Noble Truths/Paticca Samuppāda/Tilakkhaña, one realizes that the goal is not JUST to develop "good gati" but to eventually "see" the fruitlessness of such efforts. An Arahant has removed all gati.
- However, one MUST remove the "bad gati" first. Then with wisdom, one will see how to remove all gati GRADUALLY. See " 9. Key to Ānāpānasati - How to Change Habits and Character (Gati)."


## One Attaches Automatically According to One's Gati

11. Whether one gets attached to a given ārammana (sight, sound, taste, smell, touch, thought) depends on TWO things. One is the ārammaña itself, and the second is that person's "gati" (character/habits.)

- Each person has a unique set of àrammaṇa that lead to attachment. No two people will attach to the same types of ārammaṇa.
- Furthermore, as one's gati change, that set will also change. Also, the ārammana itself can change too. For example, X may dislike Y because of a particular characteristic of Y , but if Y gives up that, X may start liking Y.
- Thus, what matters is one's gati at the present moment when one is experiencing a certain $\bar{a} r a m m a n a$. That is the critical principle in Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda.


## Kamma Viññạna Form When We Attach

12. Upon getting attached to an ārammaṇa, we make expectations. Those are kamma viññāna.

- Suppose a friend tells you that he tasted a nice meal at a particular restaurant. You are impressed by his description, and you decide to taste that meal. That expectation of enjoying that meal is a $\boldsymbol{j} \boldsymbol{i} \boldsymbol{v h} \overline{\boldsymbol{a}}$ viññāna.
- The conversation you had with the friend is a part of pañcakkhandha. You may have talked about other things, and they are all part of pañcakkhandha. But only part of that pañcakkhandha became a pañcupādānakkhandha and generated a kamma viññāna, a future expectation to do something. It usually is an expectation based on greed, anger, or ignorance.
- That expectation generated a kammic energy that is in that jivhā viñ $\tilde{a} \bar{n} \boldsymbol{n}$. It is in the kamma bhava (in viñ̃̄̄̄ṇa dhātu) and can "come back to your mind" and remind you that you need to act on it. So, even a few days later, you will suddenly remember that conversation with the friend and may get the urge to taste that meal. You may call the restaurant and make a reservation.


## Summary

13. I have tried to connect different concepts that we discussed in this new series on Idappaccayat $\bar{a}$ Pațicca Samuppāda with other concepts like kamma viñ̃āạa and gati that we have discussed many times before.

- Buddha Dhamma is fully self-consistent. The more you learn, the more faith you will have. But it requires an effort to review those concepts and make necessary connections or see the relationships among them.


### 6.1.1.2 Noble Truth of Suffering- Pañcupādānakkhandhā Dukkhā

May 7, 2022
The verse "sañkhittena pañcupādānakkhandhā dukkhā" in the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta (SN 56.11) says that attachment to pañcakkhandha (i.e., pañcupādānakkhandhā) is the root cause of suffering.

## Noble Truth of Suffering

1. The Noble Truth of suffering explains the ROOT CAUSE of suffering.

- It is expressed succinctly in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta (SN 56.11)" as "sañkhittena pañcupādānakkhandh $\bar{a}$ dukkh $\vec{a} "$ OR "In brief, the cause of suffering is attachment to one's sensory experiences."
- In the previous post, we discussed why pañcupādānakkhandhā MEANS "attachment to sensory experiences." See "Pañcupādānakkhandha - Attachment to One's Experiences."
- That post culminated in a series of posts in the subsection "Paticca Samuppāda During a Lifetime." If you are unable to see why pañcupādānakkhandhā means "attachment to sensory experiences," please review all the posts in that subsection.
- That is the First Noble Truth. Thus, it is critical to understand it.


## What You Do at the Present Moment Is What Counts

2. If you attach to an ārammaṇa at the present moment, TWO THINGS can happen.
i. You "pull that ārammaṇa in." The Pāli word for that is "upādāna." I have often explained that "upādāna" means to "keep something close in mind." That is how one "grasps" a new existence at the end of the current existence. That is the mechanism of grasping a new existence in Uppatti (or Upapatti) Paticca Samuppāda.
ii. When you grasp that "state of mind," you start "living in that mindset." Thus, you start thinking, speaking, and acting based on that ārammaṇa. That leads to kamma formation during life, i.e., via Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda.

- In other words, attachment to an ārammaṇa can play essential roles in Uppatti Pațicca Samuppāda (i above) and Idappaccayatā Pațicca Samuppāda (ii above.)
- I discussed that in detail in: "Change of Mindset Due to an Ārammana." Some people may not have understood that post at that time. It is a good idea to review that post in any case. Let me briefly summarize the two cases. You may want to read that post for details.


## Change of Mindset Due to an Arammana

3. A mind usually is in the "natural bhavanga state" that it received at the beginning of its current existence (bhava.)

- However, when a strong a rammana comes to mind, the mind switches over to a state compatible with that ārammaṇa. Depending on the strength of the ārammaṇa, that "temporary bhavanga state" could be there for a short time or many days.
- Getting into a "temporary bhavanga state" is the same as getting into a "temporary bhava."
- For example, if you eat a tasty meal, you may have that "satisfied mindset" for a couple of hours. If you had a nice meal at a restaurant and talked to someone later that day, you may recommend the meal to that person.
- However, some ārammaṇa can lead to a "changed mindset" for longer and also lead to bad consequences. If an alcoholic who has been "sober" for several weeks is induced to take a drink, he/she could go back to the "alcoholic mindset" that may linger for a long time. If a husband catches his wife in bed with another man, that may get him to the mindset of a killer. He could be "born" in that mindset and may carry out the killing. By the time he comes back to his senses (i.e., to the "natural bhavañga state") the damage is done!


## Born in a "Temporary Existence" via an Arammaṇa

4. Let us think about the "sad state of mind" that arises upon hearing about the death of a parent or a loved one. One could be in that "sad existence" for many weeks. That "sad mindset" will affect one's thoughts, speech, and actions during that time. One will not feel like going to a party or to a movie.

- In the terminology of Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda, we can understand how one got "temporarily born" in a "sad state of mind" upon hearing that sad news. Those are "temporary bhava and temporary $\mathbf{j a} t i{ }^{\prime}$ " in Idappaccayatā Paṭicca Samuppāda.
- I have explained that in detail in an earlier post in this series: "Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda Bhava and Jāti Within a Lifetime."
- These concepts are very much interrelated. If you can "latch on" somewhere, you can pursue that and fully understand Idappaccayatā Pațicca Samuppāda.
- If something is not clear, we can discuss it at the "WebLink: PureDhamma: Forums." Don't hesitate to ask questions. The Buddha advised Ven. Ananda to learn how life evolves moment-to-moment based on the causes and conditions AT any given moment. See, "WebLink: suttacentral: Mahānidāna Sutta (DN 15)."


## Key Points of Idappaccayatā Paṭicca Samuppāda

5. An Idappaccayatā Pațicca Samuppāda always starts with an ārammaṇa (sight, sound, taste, smell, touch, memory recall) that comes to the mind as a vipāka viññ̄ạna. I have discussed this in different sections of the website and only will give some of the links below. I discussed it extensively in the "Origin of Life" series, starting with the post, "Chachakka Sutta - Six Types of Vipāka Viññāna."

- In the example above, it is the hearing of the death of a parent is a sota viññaña that comes in via the sotadvāra ("ear door.") The Idappaccayatā Pațicca Samuppāda process starts with "salāyatana paccayā phasso" where "salāyatana" is the "sota āyatana." That can lead to contact or "phassa," which is "samphassa" or "contact with one's defilements."
- That leads to the next several steps "samphassa paccayā samphassa-jā-vedanā", "samphassa-j $\bar{a}$ vedanā paccayā taṇhā," "taṇhā paccayā upādāna," "upādāna paccayā bhava," "bhava paccayā $j \bar{a} t i . "$
- See "Difference between Phassa and Samphassa."

6. Thus, upon hearing the sad news, one will "temporarily get into a sad bhava" and be "born in that sad existence for a while." That is a "temporary birth" lasting as long as "temporary bhavañga" lasts. It could last for many weeks, depending on the person.

- In this case, the ārammaṇa of the "sad news" may not lead to kamma accumulation.
- But there are cases where one will be temporarily born in a "greedy state" or an "angry state." That can contribute to (i) generating kammic energy that can lead to rebirths in "bad realms" and (ii) "grasping a new bhava at the "cuti-paṭisandhi" moment in Uppatti Paṭicca Samuppāda. Let us discuss an example.


## Implications for Uppatti Paṭicca Samuppāda (Grasping a New Bhava)

7. This is essentially the same as what happens in Idappaccayatā Paṭicca Samuppāda described above, i.e., you "grasp that ārammana" and "get into that mindset or the temporary bhavañga state."

- But if that happens in the last citta vīthi for the current existence, then that "temporary bhava" BECOMES the next existence (bhava.)
 existence matching that "angry state mind." Of course, the actual realm in the apāy $\bar{a} s$ will be determined by "how angry one becomes." If the angry mindset can kill a human, that may lead to grasping an existence in the niraya (similar to hell in Christianity.) If it is less, the next existence could be that of a vicious animal like a tiger.

8. Let us summarize the two PS cases of the result of grasping an ārammana:

- Uppatti Paṭicca Samuppāda: That ārammaṇa is a special ārammaṇa brought in by kammic energy. It comes in with the last citta vīthi arises based on the strongest kamma that one has done up to that point. It could be from the current life or a previous life.
- Idappaccayatā Paṭicca Samuppāda: These ārammaṇa arise due to daily sensory experiences. If one gets attached to one, that could lead to the accumulation of new kamma (kammic energies.)


## Cetanā Sutta (SN 12.38) - Role of an Ārammaṇa

9. If we attach to an arrammaṇa, that is when "all the troubles start." The sequences of events are as follows:
 many citta vīthi, each one bringing in just a fraction of that sight, sound, etc.

- That gives rise to the four mental khandhas (aggregates) of vedanākkhandha, saññākkhandha, sañkhārakkhandha, and viññānakkhandha.
- Thus, all five aggregates (pañcakkhandha) arise with an ārammaṇa. If the mind attaches to that particular pañcakkhandha, each khandha becomes a upādānakkhandha. In particular, viññānakkhandha becomes viñ̃ān̄upādānaakkhandha, and the viñ̃̃āna there is a kamma viññāna (it has an expectation.)
- Thus, pañcakkhandha becomes pañcupādānakkhandha.
- That leads to either further accumulation of kamma (via a temporary existence) or grasping a new existence.

10. The "WebLink: suttacentral: Cetanā Sutta (SN 12.38)" summarizes what we discussed above. Of course, that English translation does not explain anything and can be misleading.
"Bhikkhus, if you pursue an ārammaṇa by thinking how good it is, and make plans accordingly, then a kamma viññāna (future expectation) is established. ("Yañca, bhikkhave, ceteti yañca pakappeti yañca anuseti, ārammanametaì hoti viññāṇassa thitiyā.)

When you keep your mind on that ārammaña, that viñ̃ān̄a becomes established. (Ārammane sati patițthā viññānassa hoti.)

When viñ̃āna (expectation) is established and grows, there is rebirth into a new state of existence in the future. (Tasmimं patiṭthite viññāne virūḷe āyatim punabbhavābhinibbatti hoti.)

When there is rebirth into a new state of existence in the future, future rebirth, old age, and death come to be,
 jarāmaraṇam sokaparidevadukkhadomanassupāyāsā sambhavanti.)

That is how this entire mass of suffering originates. (Evametassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa samudayo hoti.)

- That summary includes both the Idappaccayatā and Uppatti Paṭicca Samuppāda.
- These suttas REQUIRE detailed explanations. Word-by-word translations are useless and can be misleading. Incorrect translation of words can magnify problems!
- In particular, just translating viñnāạna there as "consciousness" is a grave error. But those translators do not understand that viñ $\tilde{n} \tilde{a} \boldsymbol{u} \boldsymbol{a}$ can have different meanings depending on the context. Here it is a "kamma viñ̃nāna."


## Summary

9. It is critically important to understand the concept of ārammaṇa and the TWO main consequences of an ārammaṇa.

- Arammana is simply a sensory input that grabs your attention. It can come through one of the five physical senses (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body touch) or the sixth one, the mind (memory recall.)
- If you attach to the arammana that comes in with the last citta vīthi in the current existence, and if your mind willingly grasps the corresponding mindset, you will be born in a new existence corresponding to that mindset. Note that it is NOT a conscious decision. You are capturing a new existence automatically according to your gati at that moment. That happens in Uppatti Paticca Samuppāda.
- If attachment to an ārammaṇa happens during daily life and gets one into a "temporary existence," one will start accumulating kamma accordingly. Idappaccayatā Paṭicca Samuppāda describes this process.
- The Buddha defined "sakkāya" to be pañcupādānakkhandhā. "Sakkāya Ditṭhi is the wrong view that sakkāya or pañcupādānakkhandhā leads to sukha (happiness). When one understands Paticca Samuppāda and realizes that pañcupādānakkhandhā leads to suffering, one would get rid of Sakkāya Diṭthi and becomes a Sotāpanna.
- We will discuss that in the next post.

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Sakkāya diṭthi is the wrong view that there is an "unchanging personality" or some "permanent essence."

## Sakkāya = Pañcupādānakkhandhā

1. Several suttas explicitly state that the word "Sakkāya" means "pañcupādānakkhandha:" SN 38.15, SN 38.16, SN 22.105, SN 22.112, MN 14, MN 106, AN 4.33, and AN 6.61.

- In the "WebLink: suttacentral: Sakk $\bar{a} v a p a n ̃ h \bar{a}$ Sutta (SN 38.15)" Ven. Sariputta explains: "Reverend, the Buddha said that "Sakkāya" means "the five grasping aggregates (pañca upādānakkhandhā)" rūpupādānakkhandha, vedanupādānakkhandha, sañnupādānakkhandha, sañkhārupādānakkhandha, viññānupādānakkhandha."
- The other suttas listed give the same explanation.
- Let us briefly summarize the key steps in the initiation of "pañcupādānakkhandha." That will help us understand the connection between sakkāya and sakkāya diṭthi. As we know, one becomes a Sotāpanna by getting rid of Sakkāya ditṭhi. Thus, it is critical to understand this process.


## Arammaṇa Recognized with a "Collection of Rūpa" (Rūpakkhandha)

2. Pañcakkhandha arises when an ārammaṇa comes to mind. Quite simply, pañcakkhandha (five aggregates) are the rupa and the four mental components (vedanā, sañ̃̄̄a, sañkhāra, viññāna) that arise due to that rūpa.

But why are they called "aggregates"? It is because the " $r \bar{u} p a$ " itself is seen, heard, tasted, smelled, felt, or comprehended as a result of many "automatic" steps, i.e., they DO NOT come to the mind "as a whole in one step." Thus, the following are CRITICAL points:
i. The mind understands the ru$p a$ only after receiving many "snapshots" of the $r \bar{u} p a$. Comprehension sets in with not just one "snapshot" but due to an aggregate of many such "snapshots." In Pāli, it is a "rūpa matta" where "matta" means "a trace." (By the way, that is the "matta" in "diṭthe ditṭha mattaim bhavissati" in the Bāhiya Sutta; see, \#12 of "Five Aggregates - Experiences of Each Sentient Being.")
ii. For example, only a faint image of the tree comes in first when one looks at a tree. That image gets sharper and clear in several steps. But that happens too fast for us of those steps.
iii. It is an automatic process that takes place without us being consciously aware of it. Only the vastly purified mind of a Buddha can see that extremely fast process.
iv. The point is that a "person" is not consciously involved in that fast process. It takes place automatically.
3. I tried to explain that process in the previous posts in this series: "Paticca Samuppāda During a Lifetime." In particular, see "Aggregate of Forms - Collection of "Mental Impressions" of Forms." See \#7 there.

- As I discussed there, it is necessary to hear the whole sentence "My Dad came to see me yesterday" to understand its meaning. However, the mind may receive it in several pieces of "my dad," "came to," "see me," and "yesterday." Those words could be separated by bits of other data coming through other senses, as discussed there. But the mind is able to collect and put together a data stream from each sensory input.
- We consciously become aware of that " $r \bar{u} p a$ " (whether it is a visual, sound, taste, taste, touch, or a memory recall) only after that fast and automatic process occurs. That takes only a split second.
- But there is another critical process that also happens automatically and fast.


## Pañcakkhandhā May Become Pañcupādānakkhandhā Instantly

4. By that time we become aware of the rūpa (or ārammana) the mind may have already attached to that ārammana based on our gati.

- Thus, if one sees a figure that is compatible with one's gati, the initial "attraction" has already taken place, and one is already taking a "second look" by the time one becomes aware of it.
- The whole idea behind "mindfulness" is to catch any "bad attraction/ārammana" as early as possible and to stop it. But we DO need to engage in "good arrammana" that lead to moral thoughts/speech/actions.

5. In other words, what we discussed above is the initial sensory event (seeing someone, for example),
 upādāna" step in Pațicca Samuppāda.

- We have experienced a sensory event (ārammaña) and have already attached to it. That means "pañcakkhandha" has automatically turned into a "pañca upādānakkhandha."


## Sakkāya = Pañca Upādāna Khandha

5. But that will happen ONLY IF we (or our mind) perceive such an ārammaña to be beneficial to us. For example, one could be easily attracted to the opposite sex if one has "kāma gati." Any man would be able to an attractive woman, i.e., pañcakkhandha, for that sight will arise in any man. However, attraction to that woman will not happen for an Anāgāmi/Arahant, i.e., they will not generate pañcupādānakkhandha.

- The word "Sakkāya" comes from "sath" + " $k \bar{a} y a$," where "sath" means "good/beneficial" and " $k \bar{a} y a$ " is a "collection." Since "khandha" also means a "collection," we can see that "Sakkāya" means "beneficial collections/aggregates."
- That is why "Sakkāya" means the same as "pañca upādāna khandha" (pañcupādānakkhandha), as stated in those suttas in \#1 above.
- One would have "upādāna" only for those things that one deems to be beneficial.


## We Can Stop the "Upādāna Paccayā Bhava" Step

6. In the above we discussed the fact that the mind can AUTOMATICALLY attach to an arammana without us being aware of it.

- As we know, that ārammaṇa comes through an āyatana via the "salāyatana paccayā phassa" step in Patticca Samuppāda. Then the next two steps of "phassa paccayā vedanā" and "vedanā paccay $\bar{a}$ taṇhä also happen automatically.
- It is only at the step "tanhhā paccayā upādāna" that we become aware of that "attachment." That is when we start accumulating new kamma via "upādāna paccayā bhava" step by acting with avijjā: "avijjā paccayā saǹkhāra."
- That "upādāna paccayā bhava" step creates a "temporary bhava" (greedy bhava, angry bhava, etc) and that is when we start doing new kamma (via abhisañkhāra.) See "Change of Mindset Due to an Arrammana." In fact, it would be a good idea to review the previous posts in this series: "Paticca Samuppāda During a Lifetime."
- It is at this step, we can deliberately and willfully stop new kamma (abhisañkhāra) accumulation. That is a critical point discussed in detail in "Difference Between Tanhā and Upādāna."
- Now, let us get back to the issue of sakkāya ditṭhi.


## The View of Sakkāya Is "Sakkāya Diț̣hi"

7. As long as one has the wrong view that attachment to "worldly sensory inputs" can be beneficial, one has "sakkāya diṭthi." In other words, sakkāya dittthi is the view that pañcupādānakkhandhā lead to sukha.

Removal of Sakkāya diṭthi at the Sotāpanna stage leads to the removal of "diṭthi vipallāsa."

- However, as I have explained over and over, getting rid of that wrong view WILL NOT remove "saññā vipallāsa" and "citta vipallāsa." Thus, a Sotāpanna may still engage in pleasurable activities, including sex. However, a Sotāpanna WILL NOT be tempted to do apāyagāmi deeds in pursuit of sensory pleasure.
- See details in "Vipallāsa (Ditthi, Saññā, Citta) Affect Sañkhāra."

8. Understanding the concepts of the five khandhas (pañcakkhandha) - and how they can become pañcupādānakkhandha - will help get rid of Sakkāya dittthi.

- The concept of khandhas shows that at least the initial attachment DOES NOT involve a person. As I have tried to explain in the posts in this section, experiencing sensory input is an automatic process.
- Furthermore, even the first stage of "attachment to a sensory event" (and to give rise to pañcupādānakkhandha) happens automatically, based on one's gati.


## Sakkāya Diṭ̣hi = View that "There is an Unchanging Person" Experiencing the World

9. That means 'there is no unchanging person." As one's gati change, one will respond differently to sensory inputs. As one makes progress on the Noble Path, one's gati to be attracted to various ārammaṇa will decrease, and there will be no "gati" left at the Arahant stage. Future births are according to dominant gati. An Arahant with no gati left will not be reborn in this suffering-filled world of 31 realms.

- That is a key concept in Buddha Dhamma. There is no "permanent soul" as in Abrahamic religions. There is no "a $\overline{t m a}$ " as in Hinduism.
- Note that even after the removal of Sakkāya ditṭhi, the perception of a "me" or "I" will still be there. That goes away only at the Arahant stage with the removal of "manna" (or "asmi māna.") While Sakkāya dittthi is a samyojana removed at the Sotāpanna stage, "māna" is a higher samimojana removed at the Arahant stage.
- The concepts of "atta/anatta" in Buddha Dhamma are NOT directly related to the concepts of "ātma/anātma" in Sanskrit. There is so much confusion these days because many people incorrectly assume that anatta is the same as anātma.


## Another way to Explain

10. Pañcakkhandha (five "aggregates") are the aggregates of rūpa, vedanā, sañ̃̄̄̄, sañkhāra, and viññāṇa that one experiences. We don't EVER experience a rūpa "in one instant."

- For example, we don't see a tree with one citta. For us to be AWARE of that tree, many cittā (many citta vīthi) must go through the mind. The impression of a "tree" emerges gradually, with many citt $\bar{a}$ contributing a "partial image" of that tree. To recognize the tree, many such "partial images" must accumulate. That is a khandha or an aggregate. But since it happens VERY FAST, we feel like we see a tree "in one shot." See "Seeing Is a Series of 'Snapshots""
- Our mental "aggregates" also accumulate over many citta vīthi. That is why they are also "aggregates." The point here is that the idea of a "person" seeing a tree (and generating mental aspects based on it) is not what actually happens.
- Rather it is the result of an automatic process with many steps taking place in the seat of the mind (hadaya vatthu.) But it happens according to one's gati. We can control that automatic process only indirectly via changing gati.

11. Let us briefly review what happens when an arammaṇa that gives rise to attachment via greed/anger/ignorance comes in via one of the six senses:
i. The $\bar{a} r a m m a n ̣ a ~ c o m e s ~ i n . ~ T h a t ~ g i v e s ~ r i s e ~ t o ~ r u \bar{u} a k k h a n d h a ~(a ~ m e n t a l ~ i m p r i n t ~ o f ~ t h e ~ r \bar{u} p a$ ), and the other four mental aggregates, i.e., an ārammaṇa, give rise to pañcakkhandha.
ii. If the mind attaches to that ārammaṇa (i.e., to the pañcakkhandha), it keeps that ārammaña "close to ti and starts acting on it." That means pañcakkhandha turned into pañcupādānakkhandha.
iii. "Starts acting on that ārammaṇa" means generating mano, vacī, and kāya sañkhāra. Subsequent speech and actions arise based on vacī and kāya sañkhāra. They are abhisañkhāra If greed/anger/ignorance come into play! It is critical to note that in Paṭicca Samuppāda, sañkhāra in "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" are abhisañkhāra.

## Why Would a Mind Attach to an Arammaṇa?

12. Now, why would a mind attach to that ärammaña? That happens due to one of three possible reasons:
i. That ārammana (sight, sound, taste, smell, touch, or memory) is perceived to be beneficial/pleasurable. That gives rise to attachment with greed/liking (lobha).
ii. It is perceived to be blocking one's pleasure, which gives rise to anger/hate (dosa.)
iii. The mind cannot understand whether that arrammana can be beneficial or not. It is confused about how to respond due to ignorance (avijjā.)

- We pursue such an ārammaṇa because we value the six types of rūpa in this world (sights, sounds, tastes, smells, touches, and memories of them.)
- However, if we act with lobha, dosa, and moha (avijjā) in that pursuit, we will generate abhisañkhāra with avijj $\bar{a}$. That will inevitably lead to suffering in the future. Pațicca Samuppāda guarantees that.
- That suffering may not materialize in this life and may result in future life. That is why it is hard for most people to understand the laws of kamma, especially if they don't believe in rebirth.

13. In \#12 above, I didn't ask, "Why Would a Person Attach to an Arammana?"

- That is because the initial attachment is spontaneous. You don't do it consciously. It automatically happens ACCORDING to your gati. Since one's gati can change, a "person with a fixed identity" does not exist.
- That is a critical point to understand and is the key to getting rid of Sakkāya diṭthi.
- There will be no instant attachment if someone does not have gati to be attracted to an ārammaṇa.
- One will start thinking about an ārammaña ONLY IF that initial attachment occurs. But that happens only after the AUTOMATIC attachment to that ārammana!

14. It is important to understand that there is no "unchanging personality" or a "permanent essence" within each of us. While we are humans in this life, one could be born a Deva, Brahma, an animal, or even worse. Sakkāya ditṭhi goes away with that realization.

- That is the key step toward the Sotāpanna stage.
6.1.1.2 Bhava and Jāti Within a Lifetime - Example

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$B h a v a$ and $j \bar{a} t i$ within a lifetime discussed with an example of how a thief is born.

## Paṭicca Samuppāda During a Lifetime

1. As the Buddha advised Ven. Ānanda, in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Mahānidāna Sutta (DN 15)," it is necessary to understand how one can be "born" in very different "births" during a lifetime. The Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda explains that process.

- The same principle operates in the Uppatti Paticca Samuppāda, which explains future births in various realms.
- We are at the last post in this subsection on the "Paticca Samuppāda During a Lifetime." After reading this post, you can review the previous posts to "fill in" any gaps. Please don't hesitate to ask questions at the discussion forum.
- With the help of the material we discussed, let us discuss a couple of examples of "births within a lifetime."


## An Easy Way to Understand Paṭicca Samuppāda

2. There are many ways to analyze and understand Pațicca Samuppāda. In the current section, I have discussed it a bit deeper. That analysis will help get rid of sakkāya dittthi.

- But we can get the basic ideas behind Paṭicca Samuppāda by looking at the easy-to-understand relationships between causes and effects.
- The critical point is that we tend to engage in "mind-pleasing activities" without thinking about their consequences. Let us take an example.


## No One Is Born a Thief - Birth Within a Lifetime

3. Let us consider a hypothetical situation. A man (say, person X ) is in prison for stealing.

- X was NOT born a thief by birth. At birth, he was like any other human baby.
- If we ask X to explain how he became a thief, the explanation could be something like the following.
'I now understand what happened to me. I was born into a good family, but I started associating with bad friends at school. Their influence led me to participate in immoral activities for fun. We started drinking, and then we got into drugs. When we ran out of money, we started stealing.

Both my parents worked, and it was too late by the time they found out and started advising me. But then it was too late. I enjoyed the time with my friends, and we got deeper into drugs and stealing to pay for the drugs. Eventually, I got fed up with my parents' " interference " and moved out of their house. I quit school and joined a gang. We resorted to selling drugs and stealing to make a living. Eventually, several of us were caught in a robbery and sent to prison.

I would not be a thief if I did not come under the influence of those bad friends. I could have been "saved" if my parents had intervened earlier."

## Connection to Idappaccayatā Pațicca Samuppāda

4. That is indeed a sad story. But it is also apparent that the person has now realized the basic principles of Idappaccayatā Pațicca Samuppāda.

- When X started enjoying the "bad activities" with his friends, he never thought about the dire consequences of such actions. They were "fiun activities." He was probably too young to realize that such "fun activities" would have harmful consequences.
- His parents were too busy to notice him "going down the wrong path;" if they realized what was happening to X early enough, they could have advised him about the bad consequences of drinking, taking drugs, and stealing.
- He was "born a thief" because his mindset changed to that of a thief, i.e., he engaged in activities matching the mindset of a thief. That led to cultivating "thief bhava" from his early school days.
- We can figure out the Pāli terms in Pațicca Samuppāda that contributed to X becoming a thief.


## Understand the Pāli Terms - Not Memorize

5. X went down the wrong path because he started liking the activities of his evil friends and was constantly thinking about such activities. That is the critical "upādāna" step, where such activities become priorities. He would instead engage in such activities than spend time at home or playing with other kids.

- He got attached to such activities (tanhhā) because he enjoyed such activities. Drinking and using drugs provided "good sensations" (vedanā.) X got attached to such vedanā: "vedanā paccayā taṇhā." But that vedanā was a "mind-made vedanā."
- Those are "mend-made vedanä" or "samphassa-jī-vedanā."


## Phassa and Samphassa

6. Now, we have traced back to the critical step. How did X start liking alcohol?

- We can understand the difference between "phassa" and "samphassa." A natural sensory contact is "phassa." That is the contact between the sensory input and the corresponding sensory faculty. In our example, contact (phassa) is alcohol touching the tongue.
- For most people, that vedana (taste of alcohol) is not good. It is a bitter taste, especially for strong alcohol. So, our teenager was probably not attracted to that taste, and he may have even refused to drink at first. But he probably drank under the "peer pressure" and got drunk. With more drinking, one gets used to the taste and likes the feeling of "being drunk." Furthermore, the drunken mindset in a party atmosphere gets teenagers into the "party mood."

8. With time, X's mind generates not the natural "vedana" but the mind-made "samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedan $\bar{a}$."

- Thus, the "phassa paccay $\bar{a}$ vedan $\vec{a}$ " step in PS is only a brief version. The expanded version is "samphassa paccayā samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedanā."
- Thus, it was the "jivhāyatana" (jivhā āyatana) that mainly contributed to the "salāyatana paccayā samphassa" step leading to "samphassa paccayā samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedanā." In other words, the taste of alcohol generated a "mind-made vedana" of happiness, especially in a party atmosphere.


## Once on the Wrong Path, It Is Hard to Change

9. Thus, now it became a habit (gati) for X to get drunk and have a good time with his friends. Then one day, someone brought drugs to a party, and they all get hooked on drugs.

- Over time, X cultivated a "kamma viññāna" or an "expectation" to enjoy alcohol, drugs and partying with friends. That kamma viññāna slowly got established as X started enjoying those activities more. His mind was constantly on the lookout for opportunities to get together with friends and have a good time. That is the critical "upādāna" step.
- That means it became easier to get to that mindset with an ārammana. All X needed was a prompting by a friend. Even the sight of a familiar drug dealer may prompt him to buy some drugs and enjoy them by himself.
- Any bad habit (gati), when cultivated, leads to more bad habits . When X and his friends didn't have money to buy alcoholdrugs, they resorted to stealing. That is how X was "born a thief."


## Most People Realize the Problem Only After Damage Is Done

10. It was only after getting caught stealing and sent to prison that X realized what happened to him.

- Even though he was not born a thief when his mother gave birth to him, X is now known as a thief. Everyone knows him as a thief.
- Of course, he had no desire to become a thief. His goal was to "enjoy life" with his friends. But that way of enjoying life involved an immoral way of thinking, immoral speech, and immoral deeds.
- He unknowingly got pațicca ("pati"" "icca" or "willingly attached") to things that would inevitably lead to samuppāda ("sama" + "uppāda" or "corresponding births"), i.e., to be "born a thief."
- In other words, his mind generated apuñña abhisañkhāra due to his ignorance (avijjā) of their consequences.
- Those apuñña abhisañkhāra arise as to mano, vacī, and kāya abhisañkhāra. They are immoral thinking, speech, and actions.


## Need to Look at the Root Causes (Lobha, Dosa, Moha)

11. Note that X just focused on the immediate gratification of such activities. He never realized (and thus never thought about) the possible harmfil consequences of such actions.

- Stealing was the secondary effect of $X$ stating to drink, use drugs, and generally have a good time with his friends. The initial attraction was for the vedana experienced with drugs and alcohol. Drinking alcohol led to craving that taste and the accompanying "feel good" mindset.
- X got attached or patticca ("pati" + "icca" or "willingly attached") to things that gave imme diate sensory pleasure. We could say that he was "born" in a "joyful state" at that time.
- However, in a deeper sense he got attached to immoral causes with much more drastic and dangerous "births" in the future. Those deeper causes would inevitably lead to samuppāda ("sama" + "uppāda" or "corresponding births"), i.e., to be "born a thief" later in life.
- But it does not end there. Part of that kammic energy can even bring future rebirths, depending on the severity of kamma done with that mindset. For example, if X killed someone during a robbery, that would definitely lead to a "bad rebirth." That comes under Uppatti Paticcca Samuppāda.


## Review of the Steps

12. Let us review the steps that led to X becoming a Thief.

- It all started with X starting his associating with bad friends. Under their influence, he started drinking due to his ignorance about bad future outcomes. That is "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" or, more precisely, "avijjā paccayā abhisañkhāra."
- With frequent cultivation of abhisañkhāra, he developed a desire/future expectation (kamma viññāna) to enjoy drinking/partying. That is "(abhi) sañkhāra paccayā (kamma)viññāna."
- His mind was constantly visualizing scenes of such get-together, alcohol, his favorite friends, etc. Those are the "nāmarūpa" that arise in his mind with that kamma viñ̃āṇa: "(kamma)viññāna paccayā nāmarūpa."
- When such nāmarūpa arose in his mind, he will start using his sensory faculties. For example, he may call a friend to meet for a drink or organize a party. He may look for a drug dealer to get more drugs, etc. That is "nāmarūpa paccayā salāyatana."
- When such encounters took place, he would be fully engaged in drinking, taking drugs, etc., and would enjoy such experiences (samphassa-j $\bar{a}-\mathrm{vedana}$. .) That involves "salāyatana paccayā samphassa" and "samphassa paccayā samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedanā."
- The more he does those things, the more he will attach to such activities: "samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedan $\bar{a}$ paccayā taṇhā." That will make the "upādāna" stronger: "taṇhā paccayā upādāna."
- With such a strong attachment to those activities, he would do it again and again with "avijjā paccayā abhisañkhāra," and the whole cycle repeated repeatedly.

13. If he didn't have money for such activities, he would steal. It probably started by stealing from his parents. As X got into drugs, he and his friends had to start stealing more. Thus they cultivated the gati of thieves, and got into "thief bhava" and "thief $j \bar{a} t i$."

- That "samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedan $\vec{a}$ " can arise even without taking a sip of alcohol but seeing an alcohol bottle or even mentioning an upcoming party.
- Even if one has not studied the formal Patticca Samuppāda, one can understand the above steps.
- However, it is imperative to understand the meanings of those Pāli words, so that we can understand them in other contexts.


### 6.11.3 Often Mistranslated Pāli Keywords

May 28, 2022

## Rāga and Jhāna - Two Commonly Misunderstood Words

### 6.1.1.3 . 1 <br> Rāga and Jhāna - Two Commonly Misunderstood Words

May 28, 2022; revised August 27, 2022
We will discuss two key Pāli words, rāga and jhāna, that are also interrelated. People cultivate anāriya $j h a ̄ n a$ due to rūpa rāga and arūpa rāga.

## The Elephant in the Room - Wrong Translations

1. Many people are prevented from learning the correct teachings of the Buddha because of two key issues.
i. It has become standard to translate the Tipitaka suttas word-by-word. Many suttas (especially on deep concepts) REQUIRE lengthy explanations.
ii. Some Pāli keywords DO NOT have equivalent English words. It is WRONG to translate anicca and anatta as impermanence and "no-self."

- I discussed this issue in" "Elephant in the Room 1 - Direct Translation of the Tipitaka" and "Distortion of Pāli Keywords in Paticca Samuppāda."

2. Anicca and anatta are two words that require lengthy explanations. I have explained them in several posts. I will try to organize them in upcoming posts.

- I will first explain the correct meanings of some simpler keywords.


## Rāga - Not "Lust" or "Attachment"

3. The correct "pada nirutti" (etymology) of "rāga" comes from " $r \vec{a} "+$ "agga," where "r $\vec{a} "$ means to "travel (in the saimsāric journey)" and "agga" is to "give priority." Thus, "rāga" means "giving priority to engage in samsāric journey or rebirth process." That happens because of the tendency to value different aspects of this world.

There are three types of rāga: kāma rāga, rūpa rāga, and arūpa rāga.
i. Kāma rāga prioritizes sensual pleasures in the higher seven realms of kāma loka: the human realm and the six Deva realms. As long as one craves such pleasures, one will be born among the 11 realms of the kāma loka; rebirths in the lowest four realms are possible if one engages in immoral deeds while seeking sensual pleasures. See, "Lobha, Rāga and Kāmacchanda, Kāmarāga."
ii. Those who cultivate the rūp $\bar{a} v a c a r a ~ j h a \bar{n} \bar{a}$ prioritize jhānic pleasures over sensual pleasures; they have rūpa rāga. One has to either SUPPRESS or ELIMINATE kāma rāga to get to such rūpāvacara jhānā. Such jhānā led to rebirths in the 16 rūpāvacara Brahma realms. Those Brahmas are born without the sense faculties for taste, smell, and touch because those senses are needed only for sensual pleasures.
iii. Those who have cultivated the ar $\bar{u} p \bar{a} v a c a r a ~ j h a ̄ n a \bar{s}$ have arūpa rāga. That means one would be satisfied with just having the mind faculty (even less burden than rūpāvacara jhānā.) Those who cultivate arupāvacara jhānā will be reborn in the four highest Brahma realms.

- To attain Nibbāna (at Arahanthood), one must remove all three types of the rāga.
- However, any of the three types of rāga CAN NOT be removed with willpower. It happens automatically via comprehension of the Four Noble Truths. See "Is It Necessary for a Buddhist to Eliminate Sensual Desires?"


## Removal of Kāma Rāga, Rūpa Rāga, and Arūpa Rāga

4. The critical point here is that even if one gets to the highest arupāvacara jhānās, one can return to the kāma loka in the future and be reborn in an apāya.

- Until one gets to at least the Sotāpanna Anugāmi stage, rebirth in any realm is possible in the future because one can be born in the highest realms without overcoming the three samyojana that can lead to rebirth in the apāyās. But a Sotāpanna Anugāmi, Sotāpanna, or a Sakadāgāmi will be reborn in the kāma loka because they have kāma rāga.
- With the removal of $k \bar{a} m a \operatorname{ra} g a$ (at the Anāgāmi stage), rebirths in the 11 realms of $k \bar{a} m a$ loka will stop.
- Rūpa rāga and arūpa rāga are two samyojana that will be removed only at the Arahant stage. See "Dasa Samyojana - Bonds in Rebirth Process."

5. Now, we can easily see why the Buddha said, "rāgakkhayo Nibbānan" OR "Nibbāna is the ending of all types of rāga." Full Nibbāna requires the removal of all three types of rāga.

- When one would not prioritize any realm in kāma loka, rūpa loka, and arūpa loka, the mind will become free, and one will attain Arahanthood. Upon the death of the physical body, there will be no rebirth among the 31 realms in this world.
- Of course, when that happens, dosa and moha would have been eliminated when that happens. Thus, the verse: "rāgakkhayo dosakkhayo mohakkhayo-idaim vuccati nibbānan"ti. See, for example, "WebLink: suttacentral: Sāmandaka Sutta (SN 39.1)."


## Jhāna - Result of Puñ̃na Kamma

6. Cultivating $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$ is a particular type of puñña kamma, just like giving (dāna.) Cultivating jhāna $\bar{a}$ is a puñña abhisañkhāra (puññābhisañkhāra.)
"WebLink: suttacentral: Paticcasamuppāda Vibhañga" explains the step "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" as, "Tattha katame avijjā paccayā sañkhārā? Puññābhisañkhāro, apuññābhisañkhāro, āneñjābhisañkhāro."

Translated: 'What is meant by 'avijjā paccayā sañkhārā?' It means puññābhisañkhāra, apuññābhisañkhāra, āneñjābhisañkhāra arising due to avijjā."

- Now, let us discuss what types of rebirths arise due to those three types of abhisañkhāra. The same section of the "WebLink: suttacentral: Paticcasamuppāda Vibhañga" describe those as well.


## Three Types of Abhisañkhāra Lead to Rebirths Among the 31 Realms

7. "Tattha katamo apuññābhisañkhāro? Akusalā cetanā kāmāvacarā-ayaim vuccati "apuññābhisañkhāro".

Translated: "Akusala cetanā leading to rebirths in the kāma loka is apuñnābhisañkhāra." These are the rebirths in the apāyās (lowest four realms.)
"Tattha katamo puñnābhisañkhāro? Kusalā cetanā kāmāvacarā rūpāvacarā dānamayā sīlamayā bhāvanāmayā-ayaì vuccati "puññābhisañkhāro".

Translated: "Kusala cetanā leading to rebirths in the kāma loka and rūpa loka are puñ̃äbhisañkhāra." Those rebirths in the kāma loka are the human realm and the six Deva realms are due to (dānamayā sīlamayā) kusala kamma. Rebirths in the rūpa loka (16 rūpāvacara Brahma realms) require (bhāvanāmayā) kusala kamma, i.e., rūpāvacara jhāna.
"Tattha katamo āneñjābhisañkhāro? Kusalā cetanā arūpāvacarā-ayaí vuccati "āneñjābhisañkhāro"."

Translated: "Kusala cetanā leading to rebirths in the arūpa loka are āneñjābhisañkhāra." Those kusala kamma are the cultivation of ar $\bar{u} p a \operatorname{jh} \bar{n} \bar{a}$ leading to rebirths in the four ar $\bar{u} p \bar{v} v a c a r a$ Brahma realms.

- Note: Strictly speaking, there are only four $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$ described in the Tipitaka. The "higher $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a} "$ "as they are known today are NOT really $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$. They are all described in eight suttas starting with "WebLink: suttacentral: Pathamajhānapañhā Sutta (SN 40.1)" through "WebLink: suttacentral: Nevasaññānāsañn̄̄̄yatanapañhā Sutta (SN 40.8)." Note that the higher four are NOT called jhānā. However, since they have very long names, it is easier to refer to them as $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$.

8. Let us summarize the above for clarity. We know that Akusala-mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda starts with "avijj $\bar{a}$ paccayā sañkhāra" and lead to $j \bar{a} t i$ (rebirths) and eventually "the whole mass of suffering."

- Note that "kusalā cetanā kāmāvacarā" are "kusala kamma leading to rebirths in the kāma loka." Similarly, "kusalā cetana rūpāvacarā" are "kusala kamma leading to rebirths in the rūpa loka," and "kusalā cetanā arūpāvacarā" are "kusala kamma leading to rebirths in the arūpa loka." All three of them are also called "puñña kamma."
- That is why engaging in puñna kamma (including cultivating $j h a \bar{a} n \bar{a})$ is NOT ENOUGH to be released from the rebirth process and future suffering. Even though the above three types of puñña kamma lead to rebirth in the "good realms," those existences have finite lifetimes. Rebirth in an ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$ after that is possible UNTIL comprehending the Four Noble Truths/ Pațicca Samuppāda/Tilakkhaṇa.
- That is discussed in detail in "Rebirths Take Place According to Abhisañkhāra," "Kilesa - Relationship to Akusala, Kusala, and Puñña Kamma," and "Puñña Kamma - Dāna, Sila, Bhāvanā." It is good to review those posts to solidify the relevant concepts.

9. The "WebLink: suttacentral: Parivimainsana Sutta (SN 12.51)" summarizes those conclusions in the following verse: "Avijjāgato yamं, bhikkhave, purisapuggalo puñnañee sañkhāraì abhisañkharoti, puññ̄̄pagaì hoti viññānà̇. Apuññañce sañkhārain abhisañkharoti, apuññūpagamं hoti


Translated: "If one cultivates puñ̃̃a abhisañkhāra without comprehension of Noble Truths, that will lead to rebirths in the good realms. Cultivating apuñña abhisañkhāra will lead to rebirths in the bad


- Of course, puñña abhisañkhāra includes the cultivation of rūpāvacara jhānā. Thus, puñña abhisañkhāra lead to rebirths in the human realms, 6 Deva realms, and the 16 rūpāvacara Brahma realms.
- It is interesting to note that "āneñja" means "no more rebirths" and thus "permanent." Ancient yogis (including Alara Kalama and Uddakarama Putta) thought these realms had infinite lifetimes and equated the births there to the "ultimate release". Of course, the Buddha discovered that those also have finite lifetimes, even though extremely long, lasting eons (billions of years). Thus, "äneñjābhi (āneñja abhi san khāra) saṅkhāra" are also generated with avijjā.
- Note that the word-by-word English translation in the above link does not clarify these things.


## Puñña Abhisañkhāra Must be Cultivated

10. The Buddha taught ONLY to abstain from lobha, dosa, and moha since those will lead to rebirths in the apāyās.

- As we know, rebirths in this world are caused by acting with lobha, dosa, moha, AND the mundane versions of alobha, adosa, and amoha (which lead to good rebirths.)
- With the comprehension of lokuttara versions of alobha, adosa, and amoha, such puñna abhisañkhāra will become kusala-mūla sañkhāra (leading to Nibbāna.)
- For details, see "Kilesa - Relationship to Akusala, Kusala, and Puñña Kamma,"


## Possible Drawbacks of Cultivating Jhāna

11. The $j h \bar{a} n i c$ experience is the same whether it is an anāriya jhāna (reached by suppressing kāma rāga) or an Ariya jhānā (reached by eliminating kāma rāga.)

- All living beings (including those in the apāyās) have attained the highest anāriya jhānās in their previous lives. Thus, such anāriya jhānās do not provide relief from samsāric suffering. Note that at the end of a mahā kappa (with the destruction of Earth), all living beings end up in the A$b h a s s a r a ~ B r a h m a ~ r e a l m ~$ and remain there until the formation of a "new Earth." See \#8-\#11 in the post "Buddhism and Evolution Aggañ̃̃a Sutta (DN 27)."
- The Buddha instructed HOUSEHOLDERS to cultivate puñ̃a abhisañkhāra with dāna and silla. He instructed BHIKKHUS to cultivate puñ̃a abhisañkhāra with dāna, sīla, and Ariya jhānāa. (Of course, EVERYONE needs to comprehend the Four Nobel Truths.)
- That is because householders CANNOT cultivate Ariya jhānā since that would REQUIRE abstaining from any sexual activity. If a householder is serious about attaining Ariya jhānā, they MUST give up cravings for all sense-pleasing activities, including sexual activity.


## Only the Bhikkhus Instructed on the Cultivation of Jhāna

12. Read any sutta on the cultivation of jhāna, and you will see that the Buddha delivered those suttas to bhikkhus. I have not seen an instance where the Buddha instructed a householder to cultivate $j h a ̄ n \bar{a}$.

- The standard verse in the suttas on the cultivation of $j h a \bar{n} \bar{a}$ is the following: "Idha, bhikkhave, bhikkhu vivicceva kāmehi vivicca akusalehi dhammehi savitakkaì savicāraì vivekajaì pūtisukhamं paṭhamaì jhānaì upasampajja viharati.." the translation of which is, "Here, a bhikkhu, abstaining from sensual pleasures, abstaining from akusala kamma, enters and remains in the first $j h a \bar{n} \bar{a} . "$
- The following link provides a list of Tipitaka references on jhānās: "WebLink: suttacentral: 531 results for viviccev a kämehi." Anyone can go through the suttas in that list and see whether my statements above are correct or not. Please let me know if you find a sutta delivered to a "householder" in the above list. Keep in mind that a few householders abstained from "householder activities" and had attained jhānā. They were Anāgāmis, like Citta Gahapati.


## Jhānā Not Necessary to Attain Magga Phala

13. A householder can choose to deliberately refrain from sexual activities and cultivate Ariya jhān̄̄̄. Such a householder is an "WebLink: wikipedia.org: Anagārika." Most householders who attained the Arahant stage (like King Suddodana and Minister Santati) got there without cultivating jhānā. Some bhikkhus attained the Arahant stage without cultivating jhānā (Paññāvimutti Arahants.) Those who took the "jhānic path" became Cetovimutti Arahants.

- Householders can cultivate anāriya jhānā while being a householder by suppressing kāma $r \bar{a} g a$. There is nothing wrong with that if one can realize that it is not an Ariya jhān $\bar{a}$. The problem arises when they think they have Ariya jhānā. Also, some become enamored with "jhānic pleasures" and lose focus on attaining Nibbāna.
- Another misconception is that it is impossible to get to the Sotāpanna stage without cultivating jhānā. That can easily be disproven. We know that a Sotāpanna can be reborn in the human or Deva realms. However, anyone with even the first anāriya jhānā will be reborn in a Brahma realm at death. Since attaining any jhānā is an ānantariya puñña kamma, such a person will be separated from the human bhava at the death of the physical body, even if there is kammic energy left in the human bhava. Thus, if a Sotāpanna has even an anāriya jhāna, they cannot be reborn in kāma loka. That contradicts the idea that a Sotāpanna must have a jhāna.
- The fact that only samādhi is needed to attain magga phala is also clear with the Abhidhamma analysis of relevant citta vīthi; see at the end of the post "Citta Vithi - Processing of Sense Inputs."
- It is critically important to understand these key concepts. Please feel free to comment/ask questions in the discussion forum.


### 6.1.2 Elephant in the Room 2 - Jhāna and Kasiṇa

June 16, 2022
Samādhi, Jhāna, and Sammā Samādhi
Jhāna, Jhāya, and Jhāyi- Different Meanings

### 6.1.2.1 Samādhi, Jhāna, and Sammā Samādhi

June 16, 2022
Sammā Samādhi is possible only for a Noble Person (Ariya at or above the Sotapanna Anugāmi stage) with the comprehension of the Four Noble Truths. In comparison, various types of samādhi and jhāna are accessible to all humans.

## Elephants in the Room - Change of Format

1. On February 28, 2022, I started a new series of posts on "Elephants in the Room." The goal is to highlight the apparent contradictions in current English (and other) translations of critical concepts in Buddha Dhamma.

- I call these "elephants in the room" because these apparent contradictions have gone unnoticed all these years.
- It is a puzzling phenomenon because it is not necessary to know Pāli to see some of these contradictions. Even a child should be able to see some of these contradictions once pointed out!

2. The main issue is that most translators do not seem to fully understand the underlying fundamental concepts in Buddha Dhamma. That itself has roots in incorrect/incomplete translations of some Pāli keywords. In a simple example, "viññāna" is universally translated as "consciousness," but that gives rise to many contradictions; see, "First Elephant: "Elephant in the Room 1 - Direct Translation of the Tipitaka."

- I am starting on the Second Elephant, "Elephant in the Room 2 - Jhāna and Kasina," today.
- The Third Elephant is "Elephant in the Room 3 - Ānāpānasati." I wrote two posts on a series of posts on $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p a \overline{n a s a t i, ~ b u t ~ t h a t ~ n e e d s ~ t o ~ b e ~ o n ~ h o l d . ~ D i s c u s s i n g ~ t h e ~ b a c k g r o u n d ~ o n ~ j h a ̄ n a / k a s i n a ~ m e d i t a t i o n s ~}$ first is a good idea.
- Because of many prevalent misconceptions about jhāna/kasina, it is good to take a "deep dive" into the Tipiṭaka for a comprehensive analysis. Please make necessary comments in the discussion forum at "WebLink: PureDhammal: Posts on "Elephants in the Room""


## Billions of Samādhi - Can be Good or Bad

3. Samādhi ("sama" +" adhi" where "sama" means "equilibrium" and "adhi" means "dominance") means keeping the mind focused on a single arammana or a nimitta. When attention is tightly focused on something, the mind gets to "samādhi." However, there can be billions of samādhi: some are neutral, some are good, and others are bad.

- For example, if one is fully absorbed in an exciting book, one may not hear external disturbances. That is a neutral Samādhi. A suicide bomber assembling a bomb is also entirely concentrated on it because if he makes a mistake, that will blow him up. That is an example of evil or immoral Samādhi.
- Someone listening to a discourse or meditating can be in a good Samādhi. They may be fully absorbed in it too.
- Therefore, there can be billions of types of Samādhi with the mind focused on a specific ārammaṇa.


## Jhānā are Special Types of Samādhi

4. There are only four types of jhāna. But they can be either anariya jhāna or Ariya jhāna. We will discuss the distinction in upcoming posts.

- Jhānā are particular types of "good samādhi." They correspond to the mental states experienced in rupāvacara Brahma realms.
- One may realize such jhānic states via cultivating a particular type of puññābhisañkhāra (puñña abhisañkhāra.) Here one's mind becomes focused enough to be detached from "kāma sañkappa" or sensual stray thoughts. Then one's mind transcends the "kāma loka" and grasps the mindset of a particular rupāvacara Brahma realm. There are only four jhānic states. However, in a "normal jhānic state," the mind is not fully focused. Only in a "jhāna samāpatti" is a mind fully absorbed in a jhānic state.
- Today, many English texts incorrectly label the "higher rupāvacara samāpatti" as the fifth through the eighth jhāna. In the Tipiṭaka, they are labeled as ākāsānañcāyatana, viññānañcāyatana, $\bar{a} k i n ̃ c a n ̃ \tilde{n} \bar{a} y a t a n a$, and nevasañ̃̄ānāsaññāyatana samāpatti. When mind transceds the fourth jhāna samāpatti, it goes to ākāsānañcāyatana samāpatti straight away; there is no ākāsānañcāyatana $j h a ̈ n a$. The same holds for the other three arupāvacara states. (I have used that incorrect terminology too, but I will try to make necessary revisions.)
- One can attain anāriya jhānā and samāpatti by cultivating two types of abhisañkhāra with avijjjā. Let us briefly address that.


## Anāriya Jhāna/Samāpatti Reached via "Avijjā Paccayā Saṅkhāra"

5. There are mainly three types of abhisañkhāra that come into play in the "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" step in Paticca Samuppāda. Those three types of abhisañkhāra lead to rebirths among the 31 realms as follows:

- The worst type, apuññābhisañkhāra (apuñña abhisañkhāra,) leads to rebirths in the four lowest realms. Immoral deeds take place with apuññābhisañkhāra.
- The next higher level of puñ̃̃ābhisañkhāra (puñ̃na abhisañkhāra) leads to rebirths in the higher seven realms in kāma loka and the 16 realms in the rūpa loka. Those lead to rebirths in the human realm, and the six Deva realms in kāma loka involve moral deeds. Cultivation of rūpāvacara jhāna takes place via a particular type of puññābhisañkhāra.
- The third type of āneñjābhisañkhāra (āneñja abhisañkhāra) leads to rebirths in the highest four realms of this world belonging to the arūpa loka. Today, many textbooks label those as "higher jhānā," but they are samāpatti; see \#4 above. Cultivation of āneñjäbhisañkhāra leads to arūpāvacara samāpatti.
- In brief, engaging in apuñ̃n̄abhisañkhāra lead to rebirths with direct suffering. Engaging in puññābhisañkhāra or āneñjābhisañkhāra lead to rebirth in higher realms with less suffering but when such lives end one is back to "square one," i.e., to rebirths in lower realms. That is the endless "Samsāric journey." I recommend reading "Rebirths Take Place According to Abhisañkhāra" for details/insights.

6. Therefore, samādhi, jhāna and samāpatti can be attained by humans even when Buddha Dhamma is not present in the world.

- Our Bodhisatta, who became Buddha Gotama, learned to cultivate anāriya jhānā and samāpatti from two yogis, Ālārakālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta. He quickly realized the unfruitfulness of such anāriya jhānā and samāpatti and left to strive alone.


## Sammā Samādhi Is Necessary to Attain Magga Phala

7. Sammā Samādhi is a unique Samādhi. One can get into Sammā Samādhi only after beginning to comprehend the Four Noble Truths/Paṭicca Samuppāda/Tilakkhaṇa starting at the Sotāpanna Anugāmi stage of Nibbāna. That is when one realizes the futility and danger of remaining in the endless "Samsäric journey." When that "broad worldview" sinks in the mind, one becomes a Sotāpanna Anugāmi. It is like comprehending one plus one is two. No one will be able to persuade otherwise after that.

- Therefore, Sammā Samādhi REQUIRES an understanding of the Four Noble Truths/Paticca Samuppāda/Tilakkhaña.
- It is not necessary to have jhāna or samāpatti to "see that worldview" and to get to Sammā Samādhi/magga phala.
- One can get to Sammā Samādhi/magga phala ONLY by frrst getting to Sammā Ditṭhi (correct worldview) and then cultivating the Eightfold Noble Path to systematically disengage from the "sufferingfilled world."
- As we know, the first step in the eightfold path is to get to Sammā Ditt $h i$. Just with that "correct worldview" the possibility of future rebirths in the apāy $\bar{a}$ will cease.


## Arahants With and Without Jhāna

8. A Noble Person on the Noble Path may or may not attain various jhāna or samāpatti. That is why there is a wide range of Arahants.

- Those who attain Ariya jhāna early cultivate them methodically to nirodha samāpatti to become Arahants; they are Cetovimutta Arahants.
- But there are Paññāvimutta Arahants who had not cultivated jhāna but attained the Arahanthood in relatively short times. However, they also get to the fourth jhāna briefly at the moment of Arahant magga phala, but they need to practice $j h \bar{a} n a$ to get into $j h \bar{a} n a$ at will.
- Then there were Arahants like Ven. Cūlapanthaka and Minister Santati who were both Cetovimutta and Pannavimutta (i.e., Ubhatovimutta) Arahants. They attained all jhānās, samāpatti, and many kinds of iddhi (supernormal powers) at the moment of attaining Arahanthood within a very short time. They had not cultivated any jhāna-for example, Ven. Cūlapanthaka could not even memorize a single $g \bar{a} t h \bar{a}$ after trying hard for months. He had almost completed pāramit $\bar{a}$ in previous lives, but a strong kamma vipāka was blocking his progress. With Buddha's help, he was able to attain the Arahanthood in a day and simultaneously attained iddhi powers as well: "WebLink: suttacentral: Cūlapanthaka (Thag 10.4). "


## It Is Foolish to Strive for Anāriya Jhānā and Samāpatti

9. The point here is that one needs to focus on attaining magga phala by first getting to Sammā Ditṭhi, which automatically leads to the first stage of Sammā Samādhi. That REQUIRES learning the correct version of Buddha Dhamma from a Buddha or a true disciple of the Buddha, i.e., a Noble Person (Ariya.)

- If one has attained jhānalsamāpatti/iddhi in recent lives, those people may attain anāriya jhāna at any point, many of them even before getting to the Sotāpanna Anugāmi stage. Others will be able to cultivate Ariya jhāna/samāpatti once reaching the Anāgāmi stage when it becomes possible to remove kāma rāga permanently (not just suppress).
- However, there is no point in making an effort to attain anāriya jhānā/samāpatti/iddhi. Upon death, all those "attainments" will be gone, and Saṃsāric suffering will still be there if one has not attained any magga phala!
- We have attained the highest samāpatti many times over in the rebirth process that has no discernible beginning.
- That is why one must entirely focus on attaining the Sotāpanna Anugāmi stage. That attainment happens only once, yet enough to overcome unimaginable suffering in the four lowest realms (apāyās) PERMANENTLY.
- We will discuss the etymology of Sammā Samādhi, jhāna, and kasina in the upcoming posts.


### 6.1.2.2 <br> Jhāna, Jhāya, and Jhāyi - Different Meanings

June 23, 2022; Revised \#9 later in the same day; revised October 17, 2022
Jhāna, jhāya, and jhāyi are interrelated and can have different meanings depending on the context. In particular, it can refer to "contemplation/meditation in general" or "specific meditative states transcending the sensual realm," ie., "jhānic states."

## Jhāya - To Contemplate or Meditate

1. In the process of explaining the difference between Ariya (Buddhist) and anāriya (non-Buddhist) meditations, the Buddha gave an analogy in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Sandha Sutta (AN 11.9)." You can read the English translation in the above link. But let me briefly describe the analogy. (Note that in the topic of the Pāli version, "Sandha" is erroneously replaced by "Saddha.")

- In the days of the Buddha, specially trained horses were a major division of an army. Such horses are "thoroughbreds" ("assājānīyo.") There, "ass $\bar{a} "$ are horses, and "ajānīyo" means "thoroughbreds/special breed." They don't think much about the food and spend time training and thinking about it. At the beginning of the sutta, the Buddha tells Sandha, "Ājānīyajhāyitaì kho, sandha, jhāya" or "Sandha, meditate like a thoroughbred."
- In contrast, an inferior horse ("assakhaluñko") spends the whole day thinking about food: "Assakhaluñko hi, saddha, doniyā baddho' yavasaì yavasan'ti jhāyati" or "An inferior horse, tied up by the feeding trough, thinks all the time about eating: 'Fodder, fodder!" ("yava" means fodder or dried hay.)
- This sutta reveals one ordinary meaning of the word "jhāya" with the meaning of "to contemplate" because a horse can do that too.

2. So, the Buddha admonishes bhikkhu Sandha that he should meditate like a "thoroughbred horse" and not like an inferior horse.

- Thus, the word jhāyi referred to meditation (not merely thinking random thoughts) in the same sutta. That is the most common usage in the suttas.
- Then the Buddha points out that an anāriya yogi meditates by taking a worldly object (earth, water, fire, air, etc.) AND also with hidden defilements in mind. In contrast, Ariyas (Noble Persons) "don't meditate dependent on the earth, water, fire, and air. They don't meditate dependent on the dimension of infinite space, infinite consciousness, nothingness, or neither perception nor non-perception. They don't meditate dependent on this world or the other world. They don't meditate dependent on what is seen, heard, thought, known, attained, sought, or explored by the mind." to quote from the English translation in the above link.
- We will discuss that below.
- Note that $j h \bar{a} y a$ means "to meditate," jhāyi means "meditator," and $j h a ̄ n a$ refers to a specific meditative state. Samādhi is the general result of meditation, but as we will see, there are "immoral" or "micchā samādhi," but those never lead to jhāna. Both Ariya- and anāriya- meditations lead to jhāna, but they have different qualities. It is possible to reach Nibbāna with or without going through jhānic states.


## Types of Meditators ( $\mathbf{j} h \bar{a} \overline{\boldsymbol{l}} \overrightarrow{\boldsymbol{u}}$ )

3. "WebLink: suttacentral: Adhitthānahāravibhañga (Ne 17)" in the Tipitaka Commentary "Nettipararana" explains the types of meditators: "Jhāy $\overline{\bar{"}} \mathrm{t} i$ ekattatā. Tattha katamo jhāy $\overline{\mathbf{l}}$ ? Atthi sekkho jhāyī, atthi asekkho jhāyī, nevasekkhanāsekkho jhāȳ̄, ājāniyo jhāyī, assakhaluñko jhāyī, diṭ̣thuttaro jhāyī, taṇhuttaro jhāȳ̄, paññuttaro jhāyī. Ayaì vemattatā."

Translated: "Jhāyr" means to "meditate." What are the different types? Those who meditate can be Noble Persons in training (sekkho,) Noble Persons who completed training (Arahants or asekkho), and others (average humans or neither sekkho nor asekkho). Then some meditate like a "thoroughbred horse" (ājāniyo) and others like an "inferior horse" (assakhaluñko). We can also categorize based on the goal: to cleanse views (ditṭhuttaro,) dispel attachments (taṇhuttaro,) and cultivate pañ̃̄̄̄ (paññuttaro.) Those are the various types.

- The next paragraph describes various types of samādhi attained by those meditators (jhāy $\overline{\mathbf{l}}$ ): "Samādhī"ti ekattatā. Tattha katamo samādhi? Saraṇo samādhi, araṇo samādhi, savero samādhi, avero samādhi, sabyāpajjo samādhi, abyāpajjo samādhi, sappītiko samādhi, nippītiko samādhi, sāmiso samādhi, nirāmiso samādhi, sasañkhāro samādhi, asañkhāro samādhi, ekaìsabhāvito samādhi, ubhayamisabhāvito samādhi, ubhayato bhāvitabhāvano samādhi, savitakkasavicāro samādhi, avitakkavicāramatto samādhi, avitakkaavicāro samādhi, hānabhāgiyo samādhi, ṭhitibhāgiyo samādhi, visesabhāgiyo samādhi, nibbedhabhāgiyo samādhi, lokiyo samādhi, lokuttaro samādhi, micchāsamādhi, sammāsamādhi. Ayamं vemattatā."
- It will take the whole post to explain those. But I have highlighted the ones that we will be discussing. Lokiya samādhi is reached via any meditation unrelated to lokuttara samādhi (on the Noble Path.) Micchā samādhi is reached via immoral reflections, for example, by a master thief planning a robbery. Sammā samādhi can be two types, with the lokuttara category leading to Nibbāna. Note that jhāna is not explicitly cited here, but it is a particular type of samādhi that can be lokiya (anāriya) or lokuttara (Ariya.)


## Ariya and Anāriya Meditations

4. In two related suttas to the sutta in \#1 above, "WebLink: suttacentral: Saññā Sutta (AN 11.7)" and "WebLink: suttacentral: Manasikāra Sutta (AN 11.8)," the Buddha explained the difference between Ariya and anāriya meditations more clearly.

- In the first sutta, Ven. Ānanda asks the following question. See Ref. 1 for the Pāli quote that I will translate (I have modified the English translation from the link; you can compare the two translations). Let us start with the first part of the quote in Ref. 1.
"Would it be possible, Bhante, for a bhikkhu to get to samādhi (samādhipatiläbho) WITHOUT taking in the pathavisaññā of pathavi (neva pathaviyain pathavisaññ̄̄ assa)? (Note that "assa" here means 'to take in.")
- Here, Ven. Ānanda refers to using a kasina object made of clay (pathavi.) When a yogi focuses on a clay ball, his mind stops jumping to stray thoughts of greed, anger, or ignorance. That can lead to a calm mind, and depending on the person, it can even lead to anāriya jhāna.
- Then Ven. Ānanda asks the same question about using other types of kasiṇa objects: "na āpasmim $\bar{a} p o s a n ̃ n ̃ ̄ \bar{i}$ assa, na tejasmim tejosaññ̄ assa, na vāyasmim vāyosaññ̄ assa." Yogis typically use a bowl of water and fire to latch onto $\overline{\boldsymbol{a}}$ po sañña and tejo sañña .
- That last one on "taking in the vāyo sañ̃$\tilde{\boldsymbol{a}}$ refers to the breath meditation. So, it should be clear that $\bar{A} n a \overline{p a ̄ n a s a t i ~ i s ~ N O T ~ b r e a t h ~ m e d i a t i o n . ~ A l s o, ~ s e e ~ " S a n ̃ n ̃ a ̄ ~-~ W h a t ~ I t ~ R e a l l y ~ M e a n s . " ~}$

5. One could reach the fourth anāriya jhāna with those techniques. Once there, an anāriya yogi can get to the first $r \bar{u} p \bar{a}$ vacara samāpatti by focusing on the "infinite space." After getting there, he can move to the
next samāpatti by concentrating on the "infinite viññaña." In this way, he can proceed to the nevasañn̄ānāsaññāyatana samāpatti. Throughout that process, the yogi will focus on a lokiya object (belonging to this world); thus, all those are lokiya samādhi.

- Finally, Ven. Ānanda asks if a samādhi is possible WITHOUT focusing on anything in this world (that we perceive as humans: idhalokasañ $\tilde{n} \boldsymbol{a}$ ) or even in paraloka (as a gandhabba or beings in other realms.)
- Therefore, the question raised by Ven. Ānanda is, "Is it possible to get into a samādhi WITHOUT going through such a process?


## The focus of Ariya - Meditations

6. The Buddha says (Ref. 2) that there is such a meditation without taking in a sañ $\tilde{\boldsymbol{a}}$ of a "lokiya entity." But that is possible only for a Noble Person (Ariya) who has "seen Nibbāna," i.e., who has gotten to Sammā Samādhi. They can focus on that Nibbāna that they have SEEN (at their level or stage.) Of course, only an Arahant can contemplate the "ultimate release" that they reached.

- That is: " 'etamin santam etam pan̄̄̄tain, yadidam sabbasañkhārasamatho sabbūpadhipatininissaggo tanhākkhayo virāgo nirodho nibbānan'ti" OR "This is peaceful; this is excellent-that is, the stopping of all sankhāra, the letting go of all bonds to the rebirth process, the ending of craving, stopping of rebirth, cessation of the world, nibbāna." I have highlighted the deviations from the English translation in the link.
- That is the verse an Ariya recites/contemplates to reach samādhi. Some of those at or above the Anāgāmi stage may get to Ariya jhān̄̄̄ that way. Those below the Anāgāmi stage may get to anāriya $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$ that way. There is nothing wrong with that. It is good to cultivate even an anāriya jhān $\bar{a}$ AFTER attaining the SotāpannalAnugāmi.
- It is just that even the first Ariya jhānā is possible only after the Anāgāmi stage; see, "Possible Outcomes of Meditation - Samādhi, Jhāna, Magga Phala."
- The second sutta in \#4, "WebLink: suttacentral: Manasikāra Sutta (AN 11.8)," has the same explanation. It focuses on manasikāra instead of saññā.
- Arahants also cultivate samādhi, as mentioned in \#3 above. In particular, pañ̃̃̄̄vimutti Arahants may do that to reach Ariya jhānā so that they can have a "blissful experience in the present life." Let us look at another sutta to discuss that.


## Four Uses of Ariya Samādhi - Samādhibhāvanā Sutta

7. The "WebLink: suttacentral: Samādhibhāvanā Sutta (AN 4.41)" explains that samādhi bhāvanā is of four types:

- (i) for a blissful experience in the present life (dittthadhammasukhavihārāya or ditthadhamma sukha vihārāya, where "diṭthadhamma" means "in this life,")
(ii) for gaining knowledge and vision (ñānadassanappatiliābhāya),
(iii) for gaining mindfulness and awareness to cultivate Satipaṭthāna/Ānāpānasati (satisampajaññāya), and,
(iv) to attain Arahanthood via the ending of defilements (āsavānaì khayāya).
- Note that the usage of samādhi bhāvanā is in that order. However, occasionally, some get to the Arahant stage within a short time, like Ven. Culapanthaka or Minister Santati. In such a case, (i) comes last since they go through (ii), (iii), and (iv) quickly.
- Also, note that (i) above may or may not involve jhāna. It can be samādhi without jhāna.
- In (ii) through (iv,) one must engage in Vipassanā Bhāvanā to cultivate insight once getting to Samatha. See \#9 below.


## Critical to Understanding Nibbāna

8. We need to start by looking at the FUNDAMENTAL idea of Nibbāna.

- Even though relatively little suffering manifests in realms higher than the human realm, a "living being" spending most of the Saimsāric journey in the lowest four realms (apāyās) filled with suffering. Thus, the Buddha taught that this world of 31 realms is filled with suffering.
- "Full Nibbāna" (Parinibbāna or the "complete release from suffering") is attained at the death of an Arahant. That Arahant will not be reborn in any of the 31 realms.
- I must keep repeating those basics because many people have not grasped those ideas. I want to emphasize the foundation.


## Cultivating Vipassana

9. Thus, any meditation where the focus of the mind is a "worldly object" (a clay ball, a bowl of water, breath, etc.) It CAN NOT be a Buddhist meditation.

- Instead of contemplating worldly things, one MUST reflect on their unfruitful nature. That is vipassana $\bar{a}$ meditation (as explained in the WebLink: suttacentral: Ānāpānasati Sutta (MN 118) and even more detail in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Satipatthāna Sutta (MN 10)". We will discuss those.
- Suppose someone with magga phala likes to cultivate jhāna (with Samatha meditation.) In that case, they should contemplate the Nibbāna that they have experienced (at that level) as we discussed above: " 'etaì santaì etaì pan̄ītaì yadidaì sabbasañkhārasamatho sabbūpadhipaṭinissaggo tanhäkkhayo virāgo nirodho nibbānan'ti."
- While anāriya yogis get to Samatha (and anāriya jhāna) with the traditional kasiña and breath meditation (detailed in Visuddhimagga), Ariyas (Nobel Persons) attain Ariya jhāna with the above verse.
- Those who have not reached the Sotāpanna stage can get to Samatha samādhi by living a moral life and listening/reading about Dhamma concepts. That will calm the mind enough to cultivate vipassanā (insight meditation) on the Four Noble Truths/Paṭicca Samuppāda/Tilakkhaṇa. There is no need to do kasina/breath meditations. See, "Sila, Samādhi, Paññā to Paññ̄a, Sila, Samādhi."


## "Jhāyi" Can Mean "To Burn"

10. Finally, there is another meaning of jhāyi. We can see that from the following verse in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Saminojana Sutta (SN 12.53): "Seyyathāpi, bhikkhave, telañca paṭicca vaṭtiñca paṭicca telappadīpo jhāyeyya."
That means: "Just like an oil lamp depended on oil and a wick to burn."

- That oil lamp will burn only if there is enough oil. When the oil runs out, the wick will burn quickly and extinguish.
- In the same way, when taṇhā ceases (tanhhā nirujjhati) there is no more fuel for the Samināric journey: "Taṇhānirodhā upādānanirodho" leads to bhava and jāti nirodha in the Paṭiloma Paṭicca Samuppāda. That is the end of rebirth and Nibbāna!


## References

1. 'Siyā nu kho, bhante, bhikkhuno tathārūpo samādhipaṭilābho yathā neva pathaviyaì pathavisaññ̄̄ assa, na āpasmim àposaññ̄ assa, na tejasmim tejosaññ̄ assa, na vāyasmim vāyosaññ̄ assa, na ākāsānañcāyatane ākāsānañcāyatanasaññ̄ assa, na viññānañcāyatane viññānañcāyatanasaññ̄̄ assa, na ākiñcañ̃̄̄ayatane ākiñcañ̃̄āyatanasaññ̄ assa, na nevasañn̄ānāsaññāyatane nevasaññānāsaññāyatanasaññ̄ assa, na idhaloke idhalokasaññ̄ assa, na
 anuvicaritaì manasā, tatrāpi na saññ̄̄ assa; saññī ca pana assā"ti?"
2. "Siyā, ānanda, bhikkhuno tathārūpo samādhipaṭilābho yathā neva pathaviyaì pathavisaññ̄̃ assa, na āpasmimं āposaññ̄ assa, ..

After completing that verse, the Buddha explains what a Noble Person focuses the mind on in the next verse: "Idhānanda, bhikkhu evamsaññī hoti: 'etamं santamं etain paṇītam, yadidam sabbasañkhārasamatho sabbūpadhipaṭinissaggo tanhākkhayo virāgo nirodho nibbānan'ti. ["It is peaceful, it is serene, the expelling of all sañkhāra, breaking of bonds, removing greed and hate; Nibbāna.'"]

### 6.1.3 Elephant in the Room 3 - Ānāpānasati

June 2, 2022
Ānāpānasati- Overview
Assāsa Passāsa - What Do They Mean?
Ānāpānasati Not About Breath - Icchānañgala Sutta
Mahārāhulovāda Sutta and Ānāpānasati

### 6.1.3.1 Ānāpānasati - Overview

June 2, 2022; revised June 5, 2020 (\#11 added); August 15, 2022; October 26, 2022
Evidence from the Tipitaka shows that $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p a \overline{n a s a t i ~ B h a ̄ v a n a ̄ ~ i s ~ n o t ~ b r e a t h ~ m e d i a t i o n . ~ T h e ~ f o r m e r ~ c a n ~ l e a d ~}$ to Nibbāna, while the latter cannot.

## Introduction

1. In the series on "Elephants in the Room," I discuss many blatant misinterpretations of the Tipitaka under three categories: "Word-for-Word Translation of the Tipiṭaka," "Ānāpānasati Bhāvanā," and "Tilakkhaṇa."

- I call these "Elephants in the Room" for the following reason. I have tried to point out many contradictions in current English translations of the Tipitaka. Those who have diligently followed this website are aware of these issues.
- However, I encountered strong opposition when I pointed out these issues at a well-known discussion forum. Anicca as impermanence and $\bar{A} n a \bar{p} \bar{n} a s a t i ~ B h a ̄ v a n a ̄ ~ a s ~ b r e a t h-m e d i t a t i o n ~ s e e m ~ t o ~ b e ~ i n g r a i n e d ~$ into the minds of many people. It is difficult for them to "remove the dark glasses" and "see the truth."

2. Some say, "I don't know enough Pāli to determine who has the correct interpretations, you or those wellestablished teachers." However, knowledge of Pāli is not necessary to see many contradictions.

- For example, see "Distortion of Pāli Keywords in Paticca Samuppāda." Even a child should be able to see such apparent contradictions!
- I understand that getting rid of firmly-embedded wrong views is not easy, especially when the current "Theravāda establishment" is behind such interpretations. I will do what I can to the best of my ability. (Of course, I learned these interpretations from the late Waharaka Thero.)
- It is a relief to see that some people have understood, as we can see from the comments in our discussion forum.


## First Elephant in the Room - Word-for-Word Translation of the Tipiṭaka

3. I have already posted under the "Word-for-Word Translation of the Tipitaka" category and will post more later.

- In this first post on "Ānāpānasati Bhāvanā," I will lay out a map for future posts. I have divided this subsection into several categories, as indicated below.
 I will be discussing the main verses of this sutta in future posts. Before that, I need to provide some background as laid out below. Note that in Pāli, the two words $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p \bar{a} n a$ and sati combine as "Ānāpānassati." Thus, you may see both Ānāpānasati and Ānāpānassati.
- I will be using the English translation in the above link for comparison. I chose this particular translation because it has the English and Pāli verses side-by-side [for ebook it is line-by-line], so it is easy for anyone to compare with my translation of a specific verse. Of course, most current English translations are very similar; for example, "WebLink: accesstoinsight.org: Ānāpānasati Sutta: Mindfulness of Breathing (MN 118.)."


## Second Elephant in the Room - $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p \bar{a} n a s a t i ~ B h a ̄ v a n a ̄ \bar{a}$ is Not Breath Meditation

4. The point that I will be making is the following. "Annāpānasati Bhāvan $\bar{a} "$ is NOT "Mindful of Breathing." Breath meditation is NOT a Buddhist meditation. Hindus practice breath meditation too.

- Some people try to cheat by saying $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p a \overline{n a s a t i ~ B h a ̄ v a n a ̄ ~ i s ~ t h e ~ f i r s t ~ s t e p ~ a s ~ a ~ S a m a t h a ~ B h a ̄ v a n a ̄, ~ a n d ~}$ then one needs to do "insight meditation." However, I will present evidence to show that $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p \bar{a} n a s a t i$ Bhāvanā, by itself, is all one needs to attain Arahanthood.
- Furthermore, one CAN NOT do the CORRECT insight mediation if one does not even understand that $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p \bar{a} n a s a t i ~ B h \bar{a} v a n \bar{a}$ is not breath meditation!
- The Buddha has clearly stated that if one completes the steps in $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p \bar{a} n a s a t i ~ B h \bar{a} v a n \bar{a}$, one will be fulfilling the steps in the Satipaṭthāna Bhāvanā. Satipaṭ! $\bar{a} n a$ Bhāvanā discusses the same steps in greater detail.
- An Introduction to Ānāpānasati is in posts \#5 through \#8 in "Bhāvanā (Meditation)." The following is an overview of topics in posts in the ""Elephant in the Room' 3 - Ānāpānasati"' subsection.


## Breath Not Mentioned in Ānāpāna Vagga in Saminutta Nikāya

5. There is a small collection of suttas in the $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p \bar{a} n a$ Vagga of Samyutta Nikāya, BEFORE the section on $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p \bar{a} n a s a t i$. That is to give an idea of what is involved in $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p \bar{a} n a$, which comes from "A$n a$ " + "āpāna," where two words mean "taking in (kusala)" and "discarding (akusala or defilements)."

- That section in the $\bar{A} n \bar{n} p \bar{a} n a \operatorname{Vagga}$ has several suttas starting with the "WebLink: suttacentral: Atthikamahapphala Sutta (SN 46.57)" and ending with the "WebLink: suttacentral: Ānāpāna Sutta (SN 46.66)."
- You can read the English translations in the above links and see that the word "breath" is NOT there!
- Instead, those suttas briefly describe some KEY CONCEPTS that one needs to understand to correctly "take in "and "discard" ( $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p \bar{a} n a)$ to cultivate $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p \bar{p} n a$ sati.

6. For example, the first sutta explains that one needs to understand how to cultivate "at!thika sañña." That is the "anicca or unfruitful" nature of this world. It is amusing to see that the English translation in the first link above translates "atṭhika saññ̄" as "perception of a skeleton"!

- Word-by-word translations can lead to such ridiculous statements.
- The word "attthi" can mean "bones." But the correct meaning in this context is not that, as I will explain later.
- Other suttas in that series briefly mention several types of meditations in Satipatthāna, and the series ends with "WebLink: suttacentral: Ānāpāna Sutta (SN 46.66)" which briefly states, "Bhikkhus when $\bar{A} n a \bar{p} a \overline{n a s a t i}$ is developed and cultivated it's very fruitful and beneficial.."


##  Arahanthood

7. There are twenty suttas in the $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p \bar{a} n a$ Saimyutta of Samiyutta Nikāya DIRECTLY stating that Ānāpānasati Bhāvanā - by itself - can lead to Arahanthood.

- The series starts with the "WebLink: suttacentral: Ekadhamma Sutta (SN 54.1)." Ekadhamma means "one dhamma," implying that this is all one needs to get to Arahanthood.
- The series ends with a short sutta stating that Ānāpānasati Bhāvanā will lead to the removal of all samiyojana, anusaya, and āsava. There is no question that it leads to Nibbāna! See, "WebLink: suttacentral: Āsavakkhaya Sutta (SN 54.20)."
- Thus, this series of suttas provides enough evidence by itself.
- Incredibly, the translator in the link (and other "well-known" teachers) did not realize this while they did these translations. As I keep saying, sutta translation has become a mechanical process. It is a dangerous practice. Many suttas with deeper meanings require detailed explanations. See, "Sutta Interpretation - Uddesa, Niddesa, Patiniddesa."


## 

8. The Buddha discussed the Ānāpānasati Bhāvanā in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Ānāpānassati Sutta (MN 118)." Let me make two quotes from the sutta that should be enough to make the case.
"Ānāpānassati, bhikkhave, bhāvitā bahulīkatā cattāro satipațthāne paripūreti."

- Translation: "Anāpānasati (Bhāvanā), when developed and cultivated, fulfills the four sections of the satipaṭthāna (Bhāvanā.)


## "Nāhaì, bhikkhave, mut!̣hassatissa asampajānassa ānāpānassatim vadāmi."

- Translation: "I do not teach this $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p a ̄ n a s a t i ~(B h a ̄ v a n a \bar{a})$ to those who do not have (sammā) sati."
- Anyone who has not understood the Four Noble Truths/PaticcaSamuppäda/Tilakkhaṇa would not have sammā sati.

The English translation in the above link translates that Pāli verse as: "There is no development of mindfulness of breathing for someone who is unmindful and lacks awareness, I say."

- As I have explained, it is not about "breathing in and out." Any person should be able to "mindfully breathe in and out"! The translator does not understand "sati" there is "Sammā Sati."


## Assāsa/Passāsa in Ānāpānasati Is not About the Breath but <br> Kusala/Akusala

9. How did those translators miss the above critical points? I am not quite sure. I cannot even imagine how ALL OF THEM missed such crucial verses.

- As you can see, the English translations in the above links do not contradict my statements. But from their manner of writing, it is clear that they did not grasp the meanings.
- They must have been intent on cranking out as many suttas as possible without really paying attention to check self-consistency.
- One possibility is the following. No one in recent years had understood the deeper meanings of assāsa and passāsa (in the context of cultivating the Eightfold Noble Path.) So, they mechanically used the ordinary meanings of inhaling and exhaling.
- There is no question that even breath meditation can lead to a calm mind. Yet, that will NOT lead to rāgakkhaya, dosakkhaya, mohakkhaya (i.e., Nibbāna.)

10. One word with two or more meanings (depending on the context) is common in all languages.

- Let us consider a simple example in English. "Turn right at the next junction" and "You are right" are perfectly correct statements. The word "right" has very different meanings in the two contexts.
- These translators of the Tipitaka suttas have not understood the meanings of assāsa and passāsa in cultivating the Eightfold Noble Path.


## $\bar{A} n a ̄ p a ̄ n a s s a t i k a t h \bar{a}$ - Detailed Explanation in Paṭisambhidāmagga

11. There is a detailed explanation of Ānāpānasati Bhāvanā in the Tipitaka commentary Patisambhidāmagga: "WebLink: suttacentral: Ps 1.3 Ānāpānassatikathā."

- One can write a book translating this detailed explanation!


## Summary

12. I hope I have given enough information to make the case without writing another post.

- But I will provide further details, even if not in the same order as above. Some sections above do not need further clarification.
- In the meantime, please post your comments/questions in the new thread that I opened in the discussion forum: "WebLink: PuredDhamma Forums: Posts on 'Elephants in the Room'."
- Please use that new thread to make comments/questions on the posts in the previous subsection, "WebLink: PuredDhamma Forums: Word-for-Word Translation of the Tipitaka."


### 6.1.3.2 Assāsa Passāsa - What Do They Mean?

June 8, 2022; revised August 18, 2022
In an ordinary sense, assāsa and passāsa mean inhaling and exhaling. However, the deeper meanings in the context of $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p a \overline{n a s a t i ~ B h a ̄ v a n a ~}$ are about purifying a mind by taking in morals and discarding immoral.

## $\bar{A} n a \bar{p} \bar{a} n a$ and Assāsa Passāsa

1. $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p a ̄ n a$ comes from "āna" + "āpāna," where the latter two words mean "take in/import" and "discard/export." Thus, in connection with the Ānāpānasati Bhāvanā, assāsa and passāsa represent taking in morals and discarding immoral.

- Cultivating (taking in) good morals and discarding immoral is the basis of Buddha Dhamma.
- Breathing in and breathing out are physical activities. How can that cleanse a mind?
- Yet, it can calm down the mind because when concentrating on the breath, the mind cannot wander around and start generating sensual, angry, or foolish thoughts. That is indeed a lower form of Samatha Bhāvanā. However, Ānāpānasati Bhāvanā is NOT a Samatha Bhāvanā, as we will see below.
- A better way to get to Samatha is to listen to a Dhamma discourse or read about a Dhamma concept.


## Words With Multiple Meanings

2. In any language, there are words with multiple meanings depending on the context.

- For example, in English language. the word, "interest" has very different meanings in the following two sentences: "We are paying a high interest on the loan" and "She has no interest in him."
- In the same way, the Pāli words assāsa and passāsa can mean very different things depending on the context.


## Mundane Meanings of Assāsa Passāsa

3. In some suttas, assāsa passāsa mean inhaling and exhaling. But most suttas convey a deeper meaning in the context of $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p a \bar{a} n a s a t i ~ B h \bar{a} v a n \bar{a}$. It is easy to figure out which meaning applies.

- For example, assāsapassāsā in the context of kāya sañkhāra refers to breathing in and out. The Buddha explains that in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Dutivakāmabh̄̄ Sutta (SN 41.6)." "Assāsapassāsā kho, gahapati, kāyasañkhāro, vitakkavicārā vacīsañkhāro, saññā ca vedanā ca cittasañkhāro"ti. In that verse, the Buddha says, "Assāsapassāsā means kāyasañkhāra."
- When asked why, the Buddha explained: "Assāsapassāsā kho, gahapati, kāyikā. Ete dhammā kāyappattibaddhā, tasmā assāsapassāsā kāyasañkhāro" i.e., "inhaling and exhaling is associated with bodily functions (kāyappaṭibaddhä), and that is why it is associated with kāya sañkhāra."
- The same definition of $k \bar{a} y a$ sañkhāra is in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Cūlavedalla Sutta (MN 44)."

4. The "WebLink: suttacentral: Anupubbanirodha Sutta (AN 9.31)" states:"catutthaim jhānamं samāpannassa assāsapassāsā niruddhā honti."

- Here, assāsa and passāsa again refer to the breath. That verse says: "Breathing ceases in the fourth jhāna."
- Two more suttas with the ordinary meanings for assāsa and passāsa: "WebLink: suttacentral: Sappa Sutta (SN 4.6)" and "WebLink: suttacentral: Mahāsaccaka Sutta (MN 36)."
- Now let us look at some suttas with the deeper meanings of assāsa and passāsa.


## Deeper Meanings - Assāsa and Parama Assāsa

5. Two suttas clearly illustrate the deeper meaning of "assāsa." The following is my translation of "WebLink: suttacentral: Assāsappatta Sutta (SN 38.5)" First, note that "patto" means "to get to a certain state." Here, "assāsappatto" means "someone who has got to assāsa" or, in the context of this sutta, "someone who started taking in lokuttara morals."
"Venerable Sāriputta, who is an assāsappatto? When a Bhikkhu truly understands the origin and ending of the six contact fields (phassāyatanāna) and their gratification, drawback, and escape, they have gained solace/relief by entering the Noble Eightfold Path."

The Pali verse: "Yato kho, āvuso, bhikkhu channaì phassāyatanānaì samudayañca atthañgamañca assādañca ādīnavañca nissaraṇañca yathābhūtain pajānāti, ettāvatā kho, āvuso, assāsappatto hotī" $t i$.

- Note: assāsappatto is a Sotāpanna/Sotāpanna Anugāmi and "pajānāti" means "understands."
- When asked how to get there, Ven. Sripuatta replies that it is the Noble Eightfold Path ("Ayameva kho, $\bar{a} v u s o$, ariyo aṭthañgiko maggo etassa assāsassa sacchikiriyāya, seyyathidaím-sammādiṭṭhi ... pe... sammāsamādhi.")
" (Also note that when the two words "assāsa" and "patto" are combined, it is pronounced as "assāsappatto.")

6. The "WebLink: suttacentral: Paramassāsappatta Sutta (SN 38.6)" completes the description by saying that at the Arahant stage one has completed the Noble Path and has gained the ultimate (parama) solace/relief.
 assādañca ādīnavañca nissaranañca yathābhūtamं viditvā anupādāvimutto hoti, ettāvatā kho, $\bar{a} v u s o, ~ p a r a m a s s a ̄ s a p p a t t o ~ h o t \bar{\imath} " t i$." Note: That means becoming an Arahant.

- Note: "viditva" means "experienced and verified" and that gets to "anupādāvimutto" or the "release from the Samsaric journey, i.e., the Arahanthood." In "paramassāsappatto" the word "parama" means "ultimate."
- Note: The English translation in the above link does not even translate those last critical verses in the two suttas! That is a clear illustration that the translator did not comprehend the importance of those verses.

7. In the "WebLink: suttacentral: Nakulapitu Sutta (AN 6.16)" the Buddha tells Nakulapitu Gahapati that his wife is an "assāsappatto" (i.e., a Sotapanna) whose advice he should take; see the end of the sutta.

- At the beginning of the "WebLink: suttacentral: Kalāra Sutta (SN 12.32)" bhikkhu Kalārakhattiyo asks Ven. Sāriputta: "Tena hāyasmā sāriputto imasmim dhammavinaye assāsamin patto"ti? That means, "Has Ven. Sāriputta found solace/relief in this teaching and training?"
- Venerable Sāriputta explains how one can get there, i.e., how to attain Nibbāna.


## One Becomes Assāsappatto by Cultivating the Noble Path

8. Both "WebLink: suttacentral: Assāsappatta Sutta (SN 38.5)" and "WebLink: suttacentral:
Paramassāsappatta Sutta (SN 38.6)" state that one becomes an "assāsappatto/paramassāsappatto" (Sotapanna Anugami/Arahant) by following the Noble Eightfold Path.

- In each sutta the following question is raised, "Katamo panāvuso, maggo katamā patipad $\bar{a}$, etassa assāsassa/paramassāsassa sacchikiriyāay""ti?" OR "Is there a path, is there a way to become a Sotapanna Anugami/Arahant."
- The reply was: "Ayameva kho, $\bar{a} v u s o$, ariyo atṭhañgiko maggo etassa assāsassa sacchikiriyāya, seyyathidaì-sammādiṭthi ...pe... sammāsamādhi." OR "Yes. It is the Noble Eightfold Path sammādiṭṭhi ...pe... sammāsamādhi."


## Ānāpānassati Sutta (MN 118)

9. Now, let us look at the "WebLink: suttacentral: Ānāpānassati Sutta (MN 118)" briefly to see the usage of the words assāsa and passāsa.

- The first usage of those words is in: "So satova assasati satova passasati."
- Note that the words "assa" and "passa" combined with "sati." Here, "sati" does not just mean to "fix the attention" but "Samma Sati" that comes with the comprehension of the Four Noble Truths.
- That verse means: "He contemplates (with Sammā Sati) what to take in, and what to discard (regarding an ārammaña.)"

10. The third verse below that: "'sabbakāyapatisamंved̄̄ assasissāmì'ti sikkhati,' 'sabbakāyapaṭisaìved̄̄ passasissām $\vec{\imath} t i \operatorname{sikkhati} . "$

- The phrase "assasissāmī’ti sikkhati" becomes apparent when written, "assa sissāmīti sikkhati" That means, "He trains by taking in what will be good for that training (purifying the mind)."
- In the same way, "passasissāmī'ti sikkhati" means "He trains by discarding what will be bad for that training (which is to purify the mind)."
- Those Verses in \#9 and \#10 are critical and appear many times throughout the sutta. We will discuss them in detail in an upcoming post.


## Aritṭha Sutta (SN 54.6) - Both Meanings

11. The incorrect version of $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p \bar{a} n a s s a t i$ was there even before the Buddha. In the WebLink: suttacentral: Arittha Sutta (SN 54.06), Bhikkhu Ariṭha told the Buddha that he practices Ānāpānassati as follows: "So satova assasissāmi, satova passasissāmi."

- In the above verse, Bhikkhu Ariṭ़ha meant, "I breathe in mindfully, breathe out mindfully." There is no "sikkhati" in this verse. Inhaling and exhaling does not lead to training on the Noble Path, i.e., removal of defilements from the mind." Furthermore, there is no role for "Samm $\bar{a}$ Sati" via "So satova assasati satova passasati" as in Ānāpānassati Sutta (MN 118); see \#9 above.

The Buddha told him the following. "..Atthes $\bar{a}$, aritṭha, $\bar{a} n \bar{a} p \bar{a} n a s s a t i, ~ n e s a ̄ ~ n a t t h \bar{i} t i ~ v a d a ̄ m i . ~ A p i ~ c a, ~$ aritṭha, yathā ānāpānassati vitthārena paripuṇ̣ā hoti tạ̣ suṇāhi, sādhukam manasi karohi; bhāsissāmỉti.

- Translated: "..There is that ānāpānassati, Aritṭha. I don't say that there isn't. But I will describe the real (yathā) ānāpānassati in detail, listen and pay close attention. I will speak."

Then the Buddha explains with the same verses from the Ānāpānassati Sutta (MN 118): "So satova assasati, satova passasati. Dīgham va assasanto 'd̄̄ghamं assasāmīti pajānāti ...pe... 'paṭinissaggānupassī assasissāmī’ti sikkhati, 'paṭinissaggānupassī passasissāmī'ti sikkhati. Evaì kho, ariṭtha, ānāpānassati vitthārena paripuṇ̣ā hotī"ti."

- Of course, this explanation is the uddesa version. We will discuss that in the niddesa (with more details) in an upcoming post.


## Sabbe Saìkhārā Anassāsik $\bar{a}$

12. Anassāsik $\bar{a}$ comes from $\boldsymbol{n a}+$ assāsik $\bar{a}$. Thus, "anassāsik $\vec{a} "$ is something that should not be taken in or associated with or cultivated because it can only be detrimental.

- The verse, "evai̇ anassāsikā, bhikkhave, sañkhārā" means, "Bhikkhus, you should not cultivate sañkhārā." There are several suttas with that verse. See, for example, "WebLink: suttacentral: Vepullapabbata Sutta (SN 15.20)." Some others are SN 22.96, AN 7.66, MN 76, MN 112, and DN 17.
- It is easy to see why. The Akusala-mūla Pațicca Samuppāda starts with, "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" and ends with "bhava paccayā jāti, jāti paccayā jarā, maraṇa, soka-parideva-dukkhadomanassupāyāsā sambhavan'ti. Evametassa kelavassa dukkhakkhandhassa samudayo hoti." OR to "whole mass of suffering."
- Of course, "sañkhāra" are many types that can bring vipāka to varying degrees. Apuñña abhisañkhāra (or apuññabhisaṅkhāra) can lead to birth in the apāyās. Puñña abhisañkhāra (or puññābhisañkhāra) leads to "good births" but still extends the rebirth process where future rebirths in the apāy $\bar{a} s$ are still possible. All sañkhāra generation stops at the death of an Arahant.

1. Lokuttara $=$ Loka + Uttara. Here Loka, means the five aggregates. Uttara means above, beyond or that which transcends. It is the supra mundane consciousness that enables one to transcend this world of mind body. [loka : 'world', denotes the 3 spheres of existence comprising the whole universe, i. e. (1) the sensuous world (kāma-loka), or the world of the 5 senses; (2) the fine-material world (rūpa-loka), corresponding to the 4 fine-material absorptions (s.jhāna 1-4); (3) the immaterial world (arūpa-loka), corresponding to the 4 immaterial absorptions (s.jhāna, 5-8). uttara : [adj.] higher, further; northern; over. (nt.), an answer; reply.

### 6.1.3.3 Ānāpānasati Not About Breath - Icchānañgala Sutta

## October 7, 2022; revised October 19, 2022 (\#10 added)

Icchānañgala Sutta - and many others — clearly illustrate that Ānāpānasati is not breath meditation.
"WebLink: suttacentral: Icchānanggala Sutta (SN 54.11)" is a short sutta. One can get a clear answer to whether $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p a \overline{n a s a t i}$ is breath meditation. I will translate the complete sutta so that there will be no ambiguity.

## Buddha Spending a Rainy Season (Vassā̄̄̄̄̄sa) in Seclusion

1. "Ekaṃ samayam bhagavā icchānañgale viharati icchānañgalavanasaṇde. Tatra kho bhagavā bhikkhū āmantesi: "icchāmahaṃ, bhikkhave, temāsaṃ paṭisall̄̄yituṃ. Nāmhi kenaci upasañkamitabbo, añ̃̃atra ekena piṇ̣dapātanīhārakenā"ti.
"Evaṃ, bhante"ti kho te bhikkhū bhagavato paṭissutvā nāssudha koci bhagavantaṃ upasañkamati, añ̃̃atra ekena piṇ̣dapātanīhārakena."

Translated: "On one occasion, the Blessed One was staying in Icchānanggala in the Icchānangala forest grove. He addressed the bhikkhus: "Bhikkhus, I wish to go into seclusion for three months. I am not to be approached by anyone except for the one who brings alms food."
"As you say, Bhante," the bhikkhus responded to him. And no one approached the Blessed One except the one who brought alms food.
2. "Atha kho bhagavā tassa temāsassa accayena paṭisallānā vuṭthito bhikkhū āmantesi: "sace kho, bhikkhave, aññatitthiyā paribbājakā evaṃ puccheyyuṃ: 'katamenāvuso, vihārena samaṇo gotamo vassāvāsaṃ bahulam vihāsīti, evaṃ puṭthā tumhe, bhikkhave, tesaṃ añ̃atitthiyānam paribbājakānaṃ evaṃ byākareyyātha: ‘ānāpānassatisamādhinā kho, $\bar{a} v u s o, ~ b h a g a v a ̄ ~ v a s s a ̄ v a ̄ s a m ̣ ~$ bahulam vihāsī’ti.

Translated: "Then the Blessed One, having emerged from seclusion after the passing of three months, addressed the bhikkhus: "Bhikkhus, if adherents of other sects ask you, 'How did Buddha Gotama spend the rains residence?' You should answer them in this way: 'It was with ānāpānasati samädhi that the Blessed One dwelled.'

## Buddha Spending Vassā $\bar{a} \bar{s} a$ in $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p a ̄ n a s a t i ~ S a m a ̄ d h i ~$

3. "Idhāham, bhikkhave, sato assasāmi, sato passasāmi. Dīgham assasanto 'dīgham assasāmī'ti pajānāmi, dīgham passasanto 'dīgham passasāmī'ti pajānāmi; rassaṃ assasanto 'rassaṃ assasāmìtti pajānāmi, rassaṃ passasanto 'rassaṃ passasāmīti pajānāmi; 'sabbakāyappaṭisaṃved̄̄ assasissāmī'ti pajānāmi ... pe ... 'paṭinissaggānupassī assasissāmī’ti pajānāmi, 'paṭinissaggānupassī passasissāmī̀ti pajānāmi."

The above verse (phrase) is the stock phrase describing $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p \bar{p} n a s a t i$ in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Ānäpānasati Sutta (MN 118)" EXCEPT for a critical difference. Let us look at the corresponding description in the Ānāpānasati Sutta (MN 118):
"So satova assasati satova passasati. Dīghaì vā assasanto 'dīghaì assasāmī'ti pajānāti, dīghaì vā passasanto ‘d̄̄ghaì passasāmī’ti pajānāti; rassam va assasanto 'rassam assasāmī'ti pajānāti, rassamं vā passasanto 'rassamं passasāmī’ti pajānāti; sabbakāyapatiisamंved̄̄ assasissāmī’ti sikkhati ... pe ...paṭinissaggānupassī assasissāmī'ti sikkhati, 'paṭinissaggānupassī passasissāmī'ti sikkhati."
4. I highlighted the words that are different in the two cases. Those in red denote Buddha's Ānāpānasati described in the Icchānañgala Sutta (SN 54.11). They are replaced by the ones in blue in the procedure followed by a bhikkhu in the Ānāpānasati Sutta (MN 118.)

- Also, ... pe ... indicates skipping the intervening part to keep the text short. The skipped sections include the sections of kāyānupassanā, vedanānupassanā, cittānupassanā, to the end of dhammānupassanā. That skipped section is a couple of pages long. The switch from pajānā$m i$ to sikkhati applies in all sections.

5. Other than the first-person usage for the Buddha (e.g., sato assasāmi) and the third-person for a bhikkhu (e.g., satova passasati), the main difference is in pajānāmi replacing sikkhati in kāyānupassanā through dhammānupassanā in the Ānāpānasati Sutta (MN 118.)

- The skipped sections include the four sections of $k \bar{a} y \bar{a} n u p a s s a n a \bar{a}$, vedanānupassanā, cittānupassan $\bar{a}$, to the end of dhammānupassanā. In kāyānupassanā, the verse "sabbakāyapatisamived $\bar{\imath}$ assasissāmī’ti sikkhati" for a bhikkhu is replaced by "sabbakāyappatisampvedī assasissāmī’ti pajānāmi" for the Buddha. Lastly, in dhammānupassanā, "paṭinissaggānupassī assasissāmī'ti sikkhati" for a bhikkhu is replaced by the verse "paṭinissaggānupassī assasissāmī'ti pajānāmi" for the Buddha.
- There, pajānāmi means "I know," and "sikkhati" means "(a bhikkhu) will train thus." In the Icchānañgala Sutta (SN 54.11), the Buddha recalls/reenacts the process for a "pleasant abiding," as stated in \#8 below, whereas a sekha bhikkhu would train that way, as indicated in \#7.
- Of course, the switching applies to all corresponding verses for vedanānupassanā and cittānupassanā, as pointed out in \#4.
- That distinction will become more apparent in \#7 and \#8 below.


## 

6. 'Yañhi taṃ, bhikkhave, sammā vadamāno vadeyya: 'ariyavihāro' itipi, 'brahmavihāro' itipi, 'tathāgatavihāro' itipi. Ānāpānassatisamādhim sammā vadamāno vadeyya: 'ariyavihāro' itipi, 'brahmavihāro' itipi, 'tathāgatavihāro' itipi."

Translated: "One can call that pleasant abiding of the Buddha a Noble dwelling, a Brahmā dwelling, a Tathāgata dwelling. The Ānāpānasati samādhi can be rightly called a Noble dwelling,' 'Brahmā dwelling,' or 'a Tathāgata dwelling.'

## A Trainee (Sekhā) Makes Progress With Ānāpānasati

7. "Ye te, bhikkhave, bhikkh $\bar{u}$ sekh $\bar{a}$ appattamānas $\bar{a}$ anuttaram yogakkhemam patthayamān $\bar{a}$ viharanti tesaṃ ānāpānassatisamādhi bhāvito bahulīkato āsavānaṃ khayāya saṃvattati."

Translated: "For those bhikkhus who are still trainees (sekhā) who have yet to attain the Arahanthship, cultivation of $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p a \overline{n a s a t i ~ s a m a ̄ d h i ~ l e a d s ~ t o ~ t h e ~ e n d i n g ~ o f ~ t h e ~} \bar{a} s a v \bar{a}$ (i.e., attaining Arahanthood)."

## A Buddha (or Arahant) Lives With Ānāpānasati for a Pleasant State of Mind

8. "Ye ca kho te, bhikkhave, bhikkhū arahanto khīnāsavā vusitavanto katakaraṇìyā ohitabhārā anuppattasadatthā parikkhīnabhavasaṃyojanā sammadañn̄̄̄vimuttā, tesam ānāpānassatisamādhi bhāvito bahulīkato diṭthadhammasukhavihārāya ceva saṃvattati satisampajaññāya ca."

Translated: "For those bhikkhus who are Arahants, who have irradicated defilements and have completed the Noble Path, $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p a ̄ n a s a t i ~ s a m a ̄ d h i ~ l e a d s ~ t o ~ a ~ p l e a s a n t ~ a b i d i n g ~ i n ~ t h i s ~ l i f e ~ t o g e t h e r ~ w i t h ~ m i n d f u l n e s s ~ \& ~$ alertness."

## Thus the Synonyms: Ariya Vihāra, Brahma Vihāra, Tathāgata Vihāra

9. 'Yañhi taṃ, bhikkhave, sammā vadamāno vadeyya: 'ariyavihāro' itipi, 'brahmavihāro' itipi, 'tathāgatavihāro' itipi. Ānāpānassatisamādhim sammā vadamāno vadeyya: 'ariyavihāro' itipi, 'brahmavihāro' itipi, 'tathāgatavihāro' itipī"'ti."

Translated: Therefore, "Ānāpānasati samādhi can be correctly called: 'Noble dwelling,' 'Brahmā dwelling,' 'Tathāgata dwelling.'

- Note: Brahma and Tathāgata can be (and have been) used for an Arahant and a Buddha, even though that is not standard usage. Brahma here does not mean one in a Brahma realm.
- That is the end of the Icchānañgala Sutta (SN 54.11).

10. If the Buddha (or an Arahant) has already discarded the opposites of the Noble Path Factors, why do they need to engage in Anapanasati?

- Because that provides relief to the mind.
- Even Arahants have "agitation of the mind" (NOT defilements) due to kamma vipaka. They also have bodily dukkha/sukha vedana due to kamma vipaka as everyone else.
- Several suttas state that contemplation of Tilakkhana is advised for all, including Arahants. See "WebLink: suttacentral: 16 results for ditthadhammasukhavihārāya."


## Kañkheyya Sutta Is Similar to Icchānañgala Sutta

11. "WebLink: suttacentral: Kañkhevva Sutta (SN 54.12)" is similar. The use of the term "sekho vihāro" there indicates the abiding of a trainee bhikkhu (sekha) engaging in Ānāpānasati in the beginning verse of that sutta.
"Ekaṃ samayam āyasmā lomasakambhiyo sakkesu viharati kapilavatthusmiṃ nigrodhārāme. Atha kho mahānāmo sakko yenāyasmā lomasakaṃbhiyo tenupasañkami; upasañkamitvā āyasmantam lomasakaṃbhiyam abhivādetvā ekamantaṃ nisīdi. Ekamantạ̣ nisinno kho mahānāmo sakko àyasmantaṃ lomasakaṃbhiyam etadavoca: "so eva nu kho, bhante, sekho vihāro so tathāgata vihāro, udāhu aññova sekho vihāro añño tathāgatavihāro "ti?"

Translated: "At one time, Venerable Lomasavangisa was staying in the land of the Sakyans, near Kapilavatthu in the Banyan Tree Monastery. Then Mahānāma the Sakyan went up to Venerable Lomasavangisa, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him, "Bhante, is the meditation/abiding of a trainee (sekho vihāro) just the same as the meditation/abiding of an Arahant (tathāgata vihāro)? Or is the meditation/abiding of a trainee different from the meditation/abiding of an Arahant?"
12. "Na kho, āvuso mahānāma, sveva sekho vihāro, so tathāgatavihāro. Añño kho, āvuso mahānāma, sekho vihāro, añ̃no tathāgatavihāro. Ye te, āvuso mahānāma, bhikkhū sekhā appattamānasā anuttaraṃ yogakkhemaṃ patthayamānā viharanti, te pañca n̄̄varaṇe pahāya viharanti. Katame pañca? Kāmacchandanīvaraṇam pahāya viharanti, byāpādan̄̄varaṇaṃ ... pe ... thinamiddhanīvaraṇam ... uddhaccakukkuccan̄̄varaṇaṃ ... vicikicchānīvaraṇaṃ pahāya viharanti.

Yepi te, $\bar{a} v u s o ~ m a h a ̄ n a ̄ m a, ~ b h i k k h \bar{u} ~ s e k h a ̄ ~ a p p a t t a m a ̄ n a s a ̄ ~ a n u t t a r a m ~ y o g a k k h e m a m ~ p a t t h a y a m a ̄ n a ̄ ~$ viharanti, te ime pañca nīvaraṇe pahāya viharanti."

Translated: "Mahānāma, the meditation of a trainee and an Arahant are not the same; they are different. Those bhikkhūs who are trainees haven't attained Nibbāna; they strive to attain Nibbāna. They meditate, seeking to give up the five hindrances. What five? Kāmacchanda, byāpāda, thinamiddha, uddhaccakukkucca, vicikicchā."

- Another point is that sekha vihāra does not mean a meditation session. Instead, that is how a trainee bhikkhu LIVES.


## Cultivation of Ānāpānasati Fulfills Satipaṭthāna, Satta Bojjhañga

13. The rest of the suttas in that series, "WebLink: suttacentral: Pathamaānanda Sutta (SN 54.13)" through "WebLink: suttacentral: Āsavakkhava Sutta (SN 54.20)," describe how the cultivation of $\bar{A} n a ̄ p a ̄ n a s a t i$ will lead to the fulfillment of all requirements to get to Nibbāna or Arahanthood. More evidence is discussed in the post "Is Ānāpānasati Breath Meditation?"

- It is incredible to see those who have (mechanically) translated all those suttas did not realize the obvious statements in the suttas. Please read the English translations in the above links. But it is not just this translator. All English translators have translated without grasping the meanings. Were they not paying attention?
- All of them insist that A$n a \overline{p a ̄ n a s a t i ~ m e a n s ~ " b r e a t h ~ m e d i t a t i o n . " ~ A m a z i n g!~}$
- That is why I call this series "Elephants in the Room." It is like: a giant elephant is in a room, and someone is saying, "What elephant? No. There is no elephant here"! They can pretend to ignore the elephant until getting crushed by elephant. Such is the blinding nature of miccha ditṭhi.


### 6.1.3.4 Mahārāhulovāda Sutta and Ānāpānasati

October 28, 2022
Mahārāhulovāda Sutta provides Buddha's instructions to Ven. Rāhula for setting the background before starting the practice of $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p \bar{a} n a s a t i$ and his instructions on $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p \bar{a} n a s a t i$. It also explains the correct kasiña mediation.

## Buddha advises Ven Rāhula to Contemplate Any Rūpa Cannot be "Mine"

1. I will translate selected chronological verses from the "WebLink: suttacentral: Mahārāhulovāda Sutta (MN 62)." I will provide the meaning of verses and not word-by-word translations. If you read it carefully, you can grasp the more profound and actual meaning of Ānāpānasati.
"yaim kiñci, rāhula, rūpaím-atīt̄nāgatapaccuppannaiं ajjhattaì vā bahiddhā va olārikaím vā
 nesohamasmi, na meso attā'ti evametain yathābhūtamं sammappaññāya datthabban"ti."

- Translation: "Rāhula, any rūpa whatsoever - past, future, or present; internal or external; obvious or subtle; inferior or superior; far or near - any rūpa's fundamental nature (yathābhūta) needs to be seen with wisdom in this way: 'This is not mine, I am not this, this is not me (my essence)."


## Then Ven. Rāhula asked: "Rūpameva nu kho, bhagavā, rūpameva nu kho, sugatā"ti?"

- Translation: "Only contemplate on rūpa, Blessed One?"

The Buddha replied: "Rūpampi, rāhula, vedanāpi, rāhula, sañn̄āpi, rāhula, sañkhārāpi, rāhula, viññānampi, rāhulā"ti."

- Translation: "Rāhula, rūpa, and also vedanā, saññā, saǹkhārā, and viññāña."
- As we know, any sentient being can be described in terms of the five aggregates. First, one must understand that no "soul-like" permanent entity exists in any of those five. The Buddha was setting up the background for Ven. Rāhula to cultivate $\bar{A} n \bar{p} p a \overline{n a s a t i}$ by getting rid of sakkāya diṭthi.


## Advice of Ven. Sāriputta

2. Later in the day, Ven. Rāhula was meditating on the true nature (yathābhūta) of the five aggregates; Venerable Sāriputta approached and advised as follows: "ānāpānassatim, rāhula, bhāvanaì bhāvehi. Ānāpānassati, rāhula, bhāvanā bhāvitā bahulīkatā mahapphalā hoti mahānisamisa"ti."

Translation: "Rāhula, practice ānāpānassati. Rāhula, when ānāpānassati is practiced and cultivated, it will bring enormous benefits."

- Then in the evening, Ven. Rāhula approached the Blessed One, paid respects to him, and asked, "Bhante, how should I practice ānāpānasati that is of great benefit?"
- The Buddha first advised how to set up the background to cultivate annāpānasati. That is related to his instructions earlier in the day in \#1 above. Both are about getting rid of sakkāya dittthi.


## Buddha's Description of $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p \bar{a} n a s a t i$ - The Basis

3. I will skip the Pāli verses starting at the 8.1 mark: "WebLink: suttacentral: Mahārāhulovāda Sutta (MN 62)" and also only provide the essence of those verses to keep the post to a reasonable length. The following is Buddha's advice to Ven. Rāhula for first setting up the background to practice ānāpānassati.

- "Rāhula, think about the "hard components" that make up your physical body - hair, nails, teeth, skin, muscle, etc. - Rāhula, those are made of the earth element (pathavī dhātu).' It is the same earth element in your body as in any other external object. One should think about pathavī dhātu as follows: 'This is not mine, I am not this, this is not me (my essence).' When one has accurately seen that with wisdom, one becomes disenchanted with the earth element (and the body), and the mind becomes dispassionate towards the earth element (and the body).
- "Rāhula, there are "liquid components" that make up your physical body - such as bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, etc. - are made of āpo dhātu. Whether āpo dhātu is internal or external, it is the same $\bar{a} p o d h \bar{a} t u$. It should be correctly seen with wisdom in this way: 'This is not mine, I am not this, this is not me (my essence).' When one has accurately seen that with wisdom, one becomes disenchanted with the $\bar{a} p o$ dhātu (and the body), and the mind becomes dispassionate towards $\bar{a} p o$ $d h \bar{a} t u$ (and the body).
- "Rāhula, what is the "heat element" (tejo dhātu)? It may be internal or external. Rāhula, the internal 'heat element" is that which keeps your body warm, that which leads to aging of the body, that which heats you when feverish, that which properly digests food and drink - Whether tejo dhātu is internal or external, it is the same tejo dhātu. One should think about tejo dhātu as follows: 'This is not mine, I am not this, this is not me (my essence).' When one has accurately seen that with wisdom, one becomes disenchanted with tejo dhātu (and the body), and the mind becomes dispassionate towards tejo dhātu (and the body).
- "Rāhula, what is the "air element" (vāyo dhātu)? Like the others, it may be internal or external. What is internal vāyo dhātu? Whatever internal personal component is experienced as air - such as upward air and downward air (through the body), the air in the abdomen, air moving along the limbs, inhalation, exhalation, etc. - Rāhula, this is internal vāyo dhātu. Whether vāyo dhātu is internal or external, it is the same vāyo dhātu. One should think about vāyo dhātu as follows: 'This is not mine, I am not this, this is not me (my essence).' When one has accurately seen that with wisdom, one becomes disenchanted with vāyo dhātu (and the body), and the mind becomes dispassionate towards vāyo $d h \bar{a} t u$ (and the body).
- "Rāhula, what is $\bar{a} k \bar{a} s a ~ d h a \bar{a} t u$ (space element)? It can be internal or external. What is the internal $\bar{a} k \bar{a} s a$ $d h \bar{a} t u$ ? There is space within your body - such as the ear cavity, the nose-cavity, the mouth, the gullet, the stomach, the rectum, or any other internal personal component that is experienced as space or spacious - this is internal $\bar{a} k \bar{a} s a d h \bar{a} t u$. Whether $\bar{a} k \bar{a} s a ~ d h \bar{a} t u$ is internal or external, it is the same $\bar{a} k \bar{a} s a$ dhātu. One should think about $\bar{a} k \bar{a} s a$ dhātu as follows: 'This is not mine, I am not this, this is not me (my essence).' When one has accurately seen that with wisdom, one becomes disenchanted with $\bar{a} k \bar{a} s a d h \bar{a} t u$ (and the body), and the mind becomes dispassionate towards $\bar{a} k \bar{a} s a d h a \bar{a} u$ (and the body).

4. The point is that our physical body is made of the same "basic elements" as any other person, tree, or stone. In the terminology of modern science, everything in this world is made of the same set of atoms and shares the same space.

- The only thing we don't share with anything else in the world is the (temporary) manomaya kāya (gandhabba.) Even then, the suddhäṭhaka are the same. The uniqueness is in the kammic energy that sustains the hadaya vatthu and the pasāda rūpa.
- That manomaya kāya arises with kammic energy that WE create in OUR javana citta! Of course, any manomaya kāya has a finite lifetime. When it dies (loses its embedded kammic energy), our minds grasp one of many seeds for another manomaya kāya.
- That process will stop ONLY WHEN a mind loses its tendency (anusaya/āsavalgati) to be attached to things in this world!
- That happens only when one understands that no "soul/atman" moves from life to life. That we, ourselves, create root causes and conditions via Akusala-mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda.


## Buddha's Prerequisites for $\bar{A} \boldsymbol{n} \bar{a} p \bar{a} n a s a t i$

5. What we discussed above has critical implications for the next steps that the Buddha recommended to Ven. Rāhula. There are two steps for cleansing a mind before start cultivating ānāpānasati.

- Follow a set of precepts (like the five or eight precepts), avoid immoral deeds and engage in moral deeds. People try to live with such "moral codes" because they want to avoid bad outcomes, such as "bad rebirths," and have good outcomes, such as "good rebirths."
- The second step is understanding why precepts are for one's benefit but are NOT ENOUGH to avoid future suffering. That means understanding that "working on getting good rebirths" WILL NOT stop future suffering. One must comprehend the Four Noble Truths/Paṭicca Samuppāda/Tilakkhaṇa and realize that the only way to eliminate future suffering is to stop the rebirth process altogether.
- But that is a scary proposition for those who have not comprehended the Noble Truths about suffering. That is why the Buddha emphasized Ven. Rāhula that there is no "soul/ätman" like entity that can be designed as "me." However, that DOES NOT mean that we don't exist. We do exist, but no permanent entity goes from life to life. We suffer mightily in the rebirth process (especially when born in the apāyās) because of that ignorance about the fundamental nature of this world.
- That is why getting rid of sakkāya ditṭhi (the wrong view about a permanent "soul type" entity) MUST BE eliminated BEFORE PRACTICING ānāpānassati. Future lives (jāti) arise due to acting with avijjä, i.e., via the Paṭicca Samuppāda process starting with "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra."


## Buddha's Description of Ānāpānasati - Way to Cleanse the Mind

6. After explaining that all our desires and false expectations arise from the wrong view of an "everlasting soul-like entity," the Buddha explained several procedures for cleansing the mind of accumulated defilements and not accumulating more. That starts at the $\mathbf{1 3 . 1}$ mark.

- First, the Buddha described the correct version of "kasiña meditation." The version in Visuddhimagga using clay balls, water bowls, fires, etc. - is not in the Tipitaka. Here the point is that the "four great elements" (pathavi, āpo, tejo, vāyo) are inert and are not "bothered" by external influences. The mind starts generating defilements when attached to sensory inputs from worldly things made of those inert things.
"Rāhula, live as the earth does. When people put clean things or unclean things like excrement, urine, saliva, pus, or blood on the earth, the earth is not bothered, humiliated, or disgusted. Then sensations that arise whether pleasing or displeasing - will not dominate your mind."
"Rāhula, live as the water does. When people dispense clean things or unclean things like excrement, urine, saliva, pus, or blood in the water, the water is not bothered, humiliated, or disgusted. In the same way, Rāhula, when you are not bothered by praises or insults that others throw at you, your mind will not be perturbed."
'Rāhula, live like a fire. Rāhula, people throw clean and unclean things, like feces, urine, and spit, into fires.
But the fire is not bothered, humiliated, or disgusted. It burns them all. In the same way, Rāhula, when you learn to live with equanimity, pleasant and unpleasant contacts will not occupy your mind."
"Rāhula, learn to live like the wind. If the wind were to blow on clean things or unclean things like feces, urine, spit, etc., the wind would not be excited, horrified, repelled, and disgusted. It will get rid of all those in due time. In the same way, Rāhula, don't let external sensory contacts perturb the mind."
"Rāhula, learn to live like space ( $\bar{a} k \bar{a} s a ~ d h a \bar{a} u$ ). Just as space is not established anywhere, don't let sensory contacts take root in your mind."

7. Of course, those steps can be followed correctly only after comprehending the unfruitfui/dangerous nature of ALL realms in this world, not only the apāy $\bar{a} s$. This is why the Buddha said (in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Ānāpānassati Sutta (MN 118)') that he recommends ānāpānasati to only those with lokuttara Sammā Sati.
"Nāhaì, bhikkhave, muṭ! hassatissa asampajānassa ānāpānassatim vadāmi."

- Translation: "I do not teach this $\bar{A} n a \bar{p} \bar{n} a s a t i(B h \bar{a} v a n \bar{a})$ to those who do not have (sammā) sati."
- The meaning of "mutṭha" is quite evident in verse " Rūpaí disvā sati mutṭhä" or "When you see a sight (and attaches to it), mindfulness is lost" in "WebLink: suttacentral: Mālukyaputta Sutta (SN 35.95)".
- Anyone who has not understood the Four Noble Truths/Paṭicca Samuppāda/Tilakkhaṇa would not have Sammā Sati.
- See "Ānāpānasati- Overview."


## Rest of the Background Required for $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p \bar{a} n a s a t i$

8. I have now discussed the above critical points up to marker 18.1: "WebLink: suttacentral: Mahārāhulovāda Sutta (MN 62)."

- The Buddha then advised Venerable Rāhula to contemplate that all sentient beings are trapped in this suffering-filled world. That would help cultivate mett $\bar{a}$, karuṇa, mudit $\bar{a}$, and $u p e k k h \bar{a}$.
- Then he again emphasized the need to contemplate the asubha and anicca nature of "this world" of 31 realms" (at marker 22.1.)
- Thus, up to marker 24.1, the Buddha described the background mindset required for cultivating $\bar{a} n \bar{p} p a ̄ n a s a t i$.
- In the remaining part of the Mahārāhulovāda Sutta, the Buddha repeated the critical steps in $\bar{a} \boldsymbol{n} \bar{a} p \bar{a} n a s a t i$. That is the last step in a three-step process to Arahanthood, as summarized next.


## Rest of the Mahārāhulovāda Sutta Repeats Key Steps in $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p \bar{a} n a s a t i$

9. As we have discussed repeatedly on this website, the way to Nibbāna has three critical steps.

- Cultivate the mundane path and remove the ten types of micchā ditthi. It would be impossible to cleanse a mind without getting rid of the first layer of wrong views.
- The second layer of wrong views is the mindset that future suffering can be eliminated by seeking births in Deva or Brahma realms. The uniqueness of Buddha's teachings is the following. Suffering is present at various levels in all the realms of this world, and until escaping (or transcending) this world, it will not be possible to stop the worst suffering in the apāyās in the future. Those wrong views (mainly sakk $\bar{a} y a$ dittthi) are removed at the Sotāpanna stage with lokuttara Sammā ditṭhi (comprehension of Four Noble Truths/Paṭicca Samuppāda/Tilakkhaṇa. This is only a change of mindset, but it requires a dedicated effort.
- The third layer is to follow the vision (Noble Path) gained by cultivating the correct versions of Ānāpānasati (same as Satipatṭhāna.) That leads to Arahathood. But these days, people start with $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p \bar{q} n a s a t i$, incorrectly assuming that it is "breath mediation." One MUST attain the Sotāpanna stage BEFORE starting on the correct Ānāpānasati.

10. Up to marker 24.1, the "WebLink: suttacentral: Mahārāhulovāda Sutta (MN 62)." discussed completing the first two steps of $\# 9$ above. In the rest of the sutta, the Buddha outlined the critical steps in ānāpānasati, the same as in "WebLink: suttacentral: Ānāpānassati Sutta (MN 118)" and "WebLink: suttacentral: Satipatthāna Sutta (MN 10)."

- At marker 24.1, the description of ānāpānasati starts with the verse: "Ānāpānassatim, rāhula, bhāvanawin bhāvehi" meaning "Rāhula, cultivate ānāpānasati."
- That is followed by the standard verses in $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p \bar{a} n a s a t i / S a t i p a t ̣ t h a ̄ n a, ~ s t a r t i n g ~ w i t h ~ t h e ~ v e r s e, ~$ "Ānāpānassati hi te, rāhula, bhāvitā bahulīkatā mahapphalā hoti mahānisamisā" or "When $\bar{a} n \bar{a} p a \overline{n a s a t i} i$ is developed and cultivated, it will be of great benefit" followed by "Idha, rāhula, bhikkhu araññagato vā rukkhamūlagato vā suññāgāragato vā nisīdati pallañkaì ābhujitvā ujumi kāyaì panidhāya parimukhaim satim upatṭhapetvā."
- Now you should realize that the next verse, "So satova assasati satova passasati," is NOT about breathing in and out. For details, see "Elephant in the Room 3 - Ānāpānasati."
- There "assasati" is "assa sati" and "passasati" is "passa sati" It is true that "assāsa" and "passāsa" can mean "in breath" and "out breath." But here, the keyword "sati" means Sammā Sati on the Noble Path attained at the Sotäpanna stage.


## VII Three Levels of Practice

It is a good idea for anybody to read the first section, because the basic ideas and fundamentals are described in that section.
$\circ$ First Section: Moral Living and Fundamentals

- Subsection: The Basics
- "The Pale Blue Dot........"
- "The Law of Attraction, Habits (Gati), and Cravings (Āsavas)"
- "Habits, Goals, and Character (Gati)"
- "Wrong Views (Micchā Ditthi) - A Simpler Analysis"
- "First Noble Truth - A Simple Explanation of One Aspect"
- Subsection: Calming the Mind
- "Key to Calming the Mind - The Five Hindrances"
- "Solution to a Wandering Mind - Abandon Everything?"
- "Right Speech - How to avoid Accumulating Bad Kamma"
- "Three Kinds of Happiness - What is Nirāmisa Sukha?"
- "Need to Experience Suffering in Order to Understand It?"
- "Does Impermanence Lead to Suffering?"
- Subsection: Buddha Dhamma and Buddhism
- "A Buddhist or a Bhouddhaya?"
- "Where to Start on the Path?"
- "What Reincarnates? - Concept of a Lifestream"
- "Recent Evidence for Unbroken Memory Records (HSAM)"
- "Buddhism without Rebirth and Nibbāna?"
- Subsection: Dhamma Concepts
- "Kilesa - Relationship To Akusala, Kusala, And Puñña Kamma"
- "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)"
- "Punna Kamma - Dāna, Sīla, Bhāvanā"
- "The Five Precepts - What the Buddha Meant by Them"
- "How to Evaluate Weights of Different Kamma"
- "What is Kamma? - Is Everything Determined by Kamma?"
- "Account of Añgulimāla - Many Insights to Buddha Dhamma"
- "The Four Bases of Mental Power (Cattāro Iddhipāda)"
- "Why is it Necessary to Learn Key Pāli Words?"
- Subsection: Buddha Dhamma and Morality
- "Origin of Morality (and Immorality) in Buddhism"
- "Is Eating Meat an Akusala Kamma (Immoral Deed)?"
- "Do Things Just Happen? - The Hidden Causes"
- Second Section: Working Towards Good Rebirths
- "Sansāric Habits and āsavas"
- "Vagaries of Life and the Way to Seek Good Rebirths"
- "How to Avoid Birth in the Apayas"
- "Rebirth - Connection to Suffering in the First Noble Truth"
- How the Buddha Described the Chance of Rebirth in the Human Realm
- "Kamma, Debt, and Meditation"
- "Ditthi (Wrong Views), Sammā Ditthi (Good/Correct Views)"
- "How do we Decide which View is Wrong View (Ditthi)?"
- "Three Kinds of Ditthi, Eightfold Paths, and Samādhi"
- "Implications of the Rebirth Process in Daily Life and in Society"
- "What Does Buddha Dhamma Say about Creator, Satan, Angels, and Demons?"
- "Patisandhi Citta - How the Next Life is Determined According to Gati"

Third Section: Seeking Nibbāna

- "Attha Purisa Puggalā - Eight Noble Persons"
- "Āsava, Anusaya, and Gati (Gathi)"
- "The Way to Nibbāna - Removal of āsavas"
- "Kanha (Dark) and Sukka (Bright) Kamma and Kammakkhaya"
- "Dasa Samyojana - Bonds in Rebirth Process"
- "The Cooling Down Process (Nibbāna) - How the Root Causes are Removed"
- "Why is Correct Interpretation of Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta so Important?"
- "How to Cultivate the Noble Eightfold Path Starting with Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta"
- "Difference Between Giving Up Valuables and Losing Interest in Worthless"
- 
- Fourth Section: Sotāpanna Stage of Nibbāna
- "The Sotāpanna Stage"
- "Why a Sotāpanna is Better off than any King, Emperor, or a Billionaire"
- "Myths about the Sotāpanna Stage"
- "Anuloma Patiloma Paticca Samuppāda - Key to Sotāpanna Stage"
- "Sotāpanna Anugāmi and a Sotāpanna"
- "Sotāpanna Anugāmi - No More Births in the Apāyā"
- "Four Conditions for Attaining Sotāpanna Magga/Phala"
- "Sotāpatti Anga - The Four Qualities of a Sotāpanna"
- "Sammā Ditthi - Realization, Not Memorization"
- "Sakkāya Ditthi is Personality (Me) View?"
- "How Does One Know whether the Sotāpanna Stage is Reached?"
- Subsection: "Assāda, Ādīnava, Nissarana"
- "Assāda, Ādīnava, Nissarana - Introduction"
- "How Perceived Pleasures (Assāda) lead to Dukkha"
- "Kāma Guna, Kāma, Kāma Rāga, Kāmaccandha"
- "Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways"
- "Feelings: Sukha, Dukha, Somanassa, and Domanassa"
- "What is "Kāma"? It is not Just Sex"
- "Kāma Āsvada Start with Phassa Paccaya Vedanā or Samphassa Ja Vedanā""
- "Akusala Citta - How Does a Sotāpanna Avoids Apayagami Citta"
- "What is the only Akusala Removed by a Sotāpanna?"
- Subsection: "Udayavaya Ñāna"
- "Udayavaya Ñāna - Introduction"
- "Nibbatti Lakkhana in Udayavaya Ñāna"
- "Āhāra (Food) in Udayavaya Ñāna"
- "Udayavaya Ñāna - Importance of the Cittaja Kaya"


### 7.1 Moral Living and Fundamentals

Basic core concepts in Buddha Dhamma (Buddhism) are discussed. Many misconceptions that persist in both Mahāyāna and Theravāda are discussed.

- The Basics
- "The Pale Blue Dot........"
- "The Law of Attraction, Habits (Gati), and Cravings (Āsavas)"
- "Habits, Goals, and Character (Gati)"
- "Wrong Views (Micchā Ditthi) - A Simpler Analysis"
- "Four Noble Truths: Recipe for Problem Solving"
- "First Noble Truth - A Simple Explanation of One Aspect"
- "Difference between a Wish and a Determination (Paramita)"
$\circ$ Calming the Mind
- "Key to Calming the Mind - The Five Hindrances"
- "Solution to a Wandering Mind - Abandon Everything?"
- "Right Speech - How to avoid Accumulating Bad Kamma"
- "Three Kinds of Happiness - What is Nirāmisa Sukha?"
- "Learning Buddha Dhamma Leads to Nirāmisa Sukha"
- "Need to Experience Suffering in Order to Understand It?"
- "Does Impermanence Lead to Suffering?"
- Buddha Dhamma and Buddhism
- "What is Unique in Buddha Dhamma?"
- "A Buddhist or a Bhouddhaya?"
- "Where to Start on the Path?"
- "What Reincarnates? - Concept of a Lifestream" Moved to Pațicca Samuppāda ==> Sakkāya Ditthi and Paticca Samuppāda
- "Recent Evidence for Unbroken Memory Records (HSAM)"
- "Buddhism without Rebirth and Nibbāna?"
- "'Self" and "no-self": A Simple Analysis - Do We Always Act with Avijijā?"
- Dhamma Concepts
- "Kilesa - Relationship To Akusala, Kusala, And Puñña Kamma"
- "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)"
- "Puñña Kamma - Dāna, Sīla, Bhāvanā"
- "Details of Kamma - Intention, Who Is Affected, Kamma Patha"
- "The Five Precepts - What the Buddha Meant by Them"
- "What is Kamma? - Is Everything Determined by Kamma?"
- "How to Evaluate Weights of Different Kamma"
- "Account of Angulimāla - Many Insights to Buddha Dhamma"
- "The Four Bases of Mental Power (Cattāro Iddhipāda)"
- "Why is it Necessary to Learn Key Pāli Words?"
- Buddha Dhamma and Morality
- "Origin of Morality (and Immorality) in Buddhism"
- "Is Eating Meat an Akusala Kamma (Immoral Deed)?"
- "Do Things Just Happen? - The Hidden Causes"
- "Craving for Pornography - How to Reduce the Tendency"


### 7.1.1 The Basics

"The Pale Blue Dot........."
"The Law of Attraction, Habits (Gati), and Cravings (Āsavas)"
"Habits, Goals, and Character (Gati)"
"Wrong Views (Micchā Ditthi) - A Simpler Analysis"
"Four Noble Truths: Recipe for Problem Solving"
"First Noble Truth - A Simple Explanation of One Aspect"
"Difference between a Wish and a Determination (Paramita)"

### 7.1.1.1 The Pale Blue Dot........

Revised March 2, 2020; August 28, 2022

1. Even if some of us are not thinking about a "wider world view" or "what happens after death," we all want a better world.

I thought of sharing this marvelous video from the late Dr. Carl Sagan:

## WebLink: YOUTUBE: Carl Sagan - Pale Blue Dot

2. When I read the writings of all those past scientists like Sagan, Feynman, Einstein, Bohm, Heisenberg, etc., I wonder how much more they could have accomplished spiritually if they had been exposed to pure Buddha Dhamma.

- Yet, I am still impressed by their pure reasoning and compassion for humanity; they were not just scientists with a narrow focus. They thought deeply about the "purpose of existence."

3. Even though science has revealed the unimaginable vastness of space, scientists think our universe is only 15 billion years old. However, each of us has an uncountable number of lives in the past. See "Origin of Life - There is No Traceable Origin." Not only is our place in the vast cosmos insignificantly small, but our existence of about 100 years (in this life) is also insignificantly small.

- Yet, out of countless beings that live on this Earth, we are the only species capable of forging our destiny.
- We must be mindful not only of the welfare of family and friends but of all other people and beings (seen and unseen).

4. Do you know why some actions are good and others bad? We may quote some ethical maxims or juggle with philosophical abstractions, but there is a simple explanation called nature. "Good is good because it leads to happiness and freedom of the heart. Bad is bad because it leads to suffering, and it feels bad."

- The Buddha said a moral deed (puñña kamma) is one that makes one's heart "pulsating with joy"; an immoral deed leads to a burdened heart.

5. Nature encourages morality and punishes immorality via its built-in reward-punishment system, which is none other than the laws of kamma. But the punishment is not immediate, so it is hard for people to make the connection.

- Even if the punishment in question comes a few lives later, this "time lag" is not that long since samisāra is "beginning-less" and "endless."

6. Humans innately know what is right and what is wrong. Most bad actions are committed with a mind that is not calm but is agitated. Therefore, we need to learn how to calm our minds: "Key to Calming the Mind The Five Hindrances."

- By the way, Dr. Sagan's books like "Pale Blue Dot: A Vision of the Human Future in Space," "The Varieties of Scientific Experience," and "Billions \& Billions: Thoughts on Life and Death at the Brink of the Millennium" are very informative. These are likely to be available in local public libraries.

Next, "The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Āsava)",

### 7.1.1.2 The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Āsava)

Revised October 24, 2018; March 2, 2020; November 1, 2020; August 11, 2022

## The Law of Attraction

1. The saying, "Birds of a feather flock together," is true, and we can see that all around us.

- We can put people into various categories: sportsmen/sportswomen, thieves, politicians, murderers, churchgoers, environmentalists, liberals, conservatives, etc.
- In school, kids tend to get into different groups: those who play sports, like partying, nerds, geeks, etc.
- Of course, there may be some overlaps, but we can clearly see people tend to socialize with those with common interests, likings, etc.


## Those With Similar Character/Habits (Gati) Tend To Stay Together

2. This is a universal principle. A basic rule in chemistry is that "like molecules" stay together.

- We all know that oil and water do not mix. Those two molecules have very different properties (analogous to gati in people.) On the other hand, water molecules stay together happily since they all have the same properties. Same with oil.
- In people, there are "good gati" as well as "bad gati."
- Like water and oil, those with similar gati tend to "stick together." This is why it is essential to stay away from those with "bad gati" and to try to associate with those with "good gati."

3. Buddha Dhamma describes the laws of nature. So it is not surprising that Buddha Dhamma's law of attraction comes naturally. There are three keywords in Dhamma that are relevant. (1) Habits/character (gati with the " $t$ " pronounced "th," like in "three" or in Thailand), (2) cravings ( $\bar{a} s a v \bar{a}$,) and (3) Hidden cravings (anusaya.) See "Habits and Goals, and Character (Gati)."

- One's gati are closely related to one's hidden cravings (anusaya.) Such gati or anusaya "come to the surface" as cravings (āsava) when triggered by sensory input (ārammana.) For example,
an alcoholic does not crave drinking all the time. That "drunkard gati" remains hidden as anusaya until he sees an alcohol bottle or is invited to a drink by a friend.
- Some of these habits we take from life to life, see "Samsāric Habits, Character (Gati) and Cravings (Āsava)."
- However, it is possible to change even those deeply-ingrained bad gati. The key is to realize the bad consequences of "bad gati" and cultivate "good gati."


## Paṭicca Samuppāda Explains the Law of Attraction

4. The law of attraction can be explained with Patticca Samuppāda, the principle of cause and effect in Dhamma; see "Paticca Samuppāda - Introduction."

- "Pati + iccha" means associate or bind with something one likes. "sama + uppāda" means what results (uppāda) from that is something similar (sama) in kind. That association leads to an outcome of the same kind.
- If a child hangs out willingly and enthusiastically with others who like to work hard and enjoy getting good grades, they will continue on that path to success. The more a child willingly hangs out with a criminal gang, his mind becomes more attuned to criminal behavior and becomes a criminal capable of doing atrocious crimes.
- Thus, Buddha Dhamma says, "gati (character) attracts a similar gati." We will see this develop into profound meaning.


## Environment Plays a Key Role in Changing Gati

5. However, Dhamma says this law of attraction does not need to be fatalistic, i.e., one with bad habits/cravings does not have to go down a slippery slope. One CAN change those habits/cravings GRADUALLY and thus change one's character (gati).

However, a child is not capable of doing this on his/her own. That is why it is the parents' responsibility to direct the child:

- Parents can make a HUGE contribution in setting up good habits/cravings in a child starting from conception. The fetus felts the love and cares the parent feel towards each other. That is as important, perhaps more important than the food consumed by the mother. A child born into an environment of abuse or violence may develop life-long problems.
- As the child grows, the child's behavior and habits are influenced HUGELY by the parents, friends, and the school environment. It is the responsibility of the parents and teachers to guide the child.

6. When one becomes an adult, one has full control of one's life (in a mundane sense). Even if childhood was not good, and even if one has acquired a set of bad habits (or even samisäric habits that have molded one's character in fundamental ways), it is POSSIBLE to change them.

- One can use the same Pațicca Samuppāda principle to change direction.
- All one needs to do is change the "pati+ichcha" part, i.e., change one's likings or habits. Then "sama+uppāda" will happen automatically. That is nature's law. See, "Paticca Samuppāda."


## One Needs to See the Consequences of Bad Gati

7. First, one needs to convince one's mind that the current path will lead to a bad destiny. That is getting rid of avijjā in the "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" step in Pațicca Samuppāda. One must contemplate the bad consequences of staying on the same wrong path. And one also needs to contemplate the benefits of cultivating good habits.

- For example, a smoker cannot just make a New Year resolution and stop smoking (a few can, but most cannot). Instead, it is better first to look at all the medical evidence.
- There is strong evidence that one could die early and may be burdened in old age with lung problems if one continues smoking. One could talk to someone who has given up smoking and listen to that person's "success story" or think about not seeing the annoyance of those around when one lights a cigarette, etc.


## Cultivating Good Gati

8. When one acquires "good habits" (initially slowly and with effort), one is attracted to people, settings, workplaces, and environments that further nurture and grow those habits, changing one's character. Thus, the process becomes self-feeding once started.

- The law of attraction is embedded in Pațicca Samuppāda: "pati+ichcha," leading to "sama+uppāda." Thus it is critical to develop a liking (chanda) and desire (citta) for what one wants to accomplish, to critically analyze the situation (vīmaimsā), and make an effort (viriya); see "The Four Bases of Mental Power (Cattāro Iddhipāda)." [vīmaimsā : 'investigation, inquiry, pondering', is one of the 4 roads to power (iddhi-pāda)]
- When one repeatedly engages in certain lifestyles and activities (good or bad), those become habits. In
 repeatedly and possibly over numerous rebirths, they get deeply embedded as deep-seated cravings (āsavā). Those gati (characters) also become "bhava" as well. Whatever that is liked becomes one's existence (bhava) or reality (in Sinhala, "ชอఎ๐Ъ ออ (thibena bhava)").
- When one has a certain character (gati), it becomes easy to get into the corresponding "state" or existence; this is one meaning of bhava. For example, one with a "drinking habit" is easy to be "born" in that state, i.e., just the sight of a bar may cause that person to get drunk. This is the concept extended in Buddha Dhamma. It is easy to be "born" with those characteristics in the new birth (uppatti bhava) or even in the present life (pavutti bhava). This is a bit deeper concept discussed in the Paticca Samuppāda section. See, for example, "Akusala-Mūla Paticca Samuppāda."


## Need to Have Patience

9. The problem many people run into is that they would like to change quickly, which does not normally happen. Initial progress could be slow. However, when one gets traction, the process speeds up. It is like trying to reverse the direction of a moving car. One needs to stop going in the wrong direction first. Even when one starts the car facing the right direction, it takes a little while to accelerate and ramp up the speed. See "Habits, Goals, and Character (Gati)" and the links there. Let us consider two examples:

- Suppose one wants to be a successful businessman. In that case, one should try to "build up" business people's habits: knowledge of the particular business, learning relevant skills, hard work, etc. THEN the law of attraction starts working and will automatically pull one to others with similar interests and environments or conditions.
- If a high-school kid wants to go to college, he/she should try to get into that mindset. Spending more time deciding what kinds of subjects to study and then getting "immersed" in them. The parent and teachers can make a big difference by encouraging and guiding on the correct path.
- If someone wants to attain "nirāmisa sukha" (see "Three Kinds of Happiness - What is Nirāmisa Sukha?'), one needs to spend some time and first learn the true Dhamma. As one learns, one gets motivated to learn more because one will start feeling the character's change (gati).


## Managing Gati is the First Step to Nibbāna

10. Finally, the law of attraction also works in the samisāric rebirth process.

- Many are reborn to the same families, same geographic locations, etc. (within the same "bhava.") See, "Bhava and Jãti - States of Existence and Births Therein."
- At the moment of death, one's mind automatically grasps a "matching birth" according to a specific kamma vipāka; however, habits and tendencies come into play too. One who has lived an immoral life is likely to get a similar outcome in the next life. Someone who "lives like an animal" is likely to be born an animal. One who lives like a "Deva" (a being devoid of hate) or a "Brahma" (a being devoid of greed and hate) is likely to reborn a Deva, Brahma.
- Thus by cultivating good habits and getting rid of bad habits, one CAN change the direction of one's current life (character) AND future lives too.
- The best way to do this is to be mindful all the time. See the bad consequences of bad actions and bad habits, avoid them; see the good consequences of good actions and good habits, and embrace them. At the fundamental level, this is the basis of $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p \bar{a} n a s a t i ~ a n d ~ S a t i p a t ̣ t h a ̄ n a ~ B h a ̄ v a n a ̄ ~(t a k i n g ~ i n ~ w h a t ~ i s ~$ good and getting rid of what is bad.) See " 9 . Key to Ānāpānasati - How to Change Habits and Character (Gati)."

11. Several books are available on the law of attraction and how one can use certain procedures to attain goals, build relationships, etc. The Buddha described those and more 2500 years ago.

## Next, "Habits, Goals, and Character (Gati),"...

### 7.1.1.3 Habits, Goals, and Character (Gati or Gathi)

## Revised November 26, 2018; revised June 6, 2020

1. As I mentioned before, Buddha Dhamma can be interpreted at three levels; see, "Foundation of Dhamma." But the key to making progress at ANY LEVEL is to get rid of bad habits and instill good habits because they mold one's character (gati) even though the rebirth process.

- The Pāli (and Sinhala) word for "character" is "gati" ( (๘ฬฺ).) One's character can be changed (for good or bad) via changing one's habits. These habits take deep roots when practiced over many lives, and become deep-seated cravings ("āsavas") that form one's character.
- Some habits are harmless. For example, some people have the habit of shaking their legs while sitting. It could be annoying to some, but it is not "morally wrong", i.e., it is not one of the ten defilements; see, "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)."
- But there are other habits, such as drinking, stealing, sexual misconduct, etc that are morally wrong. They belong to the ten defilements of dasa akusala. Generating greedy or hateful thoughts can be a bad habit too. Some have a tendency to easily "flare-up."
- Then there could some, like gambling, that could lead to immoral actions.
- There are good habits too. Giving, helping others, teaching, and being compassionate in general.

2. For someone at the highest level, the Sabbāsava Sutta explains how one can work towards Nibbāna in a systematic way by developing good habits ("gati") and removing āsavas; see "Key Points from the Sabbāsava Sutta" under "The Sotāpanna Stage."
3. Here we are going to look at it to see how those recommended steps can be used in the day-to-day life, i.e., to live a moral life. Those steps can be used to remove any bad habits. Some example are alcohol or drug use, smoking, and eating too much.

- They can also be used in achieving goals, say lose weight, getting rid of depression, or starting a new business. Achieving goals require building good habits.

4. A habit is something one gets used to by repeating it over and over. Good habits make a life easier to live with, and bad habits lead to bad results. Scientific studies have confirmed that our brains "can rewire its
connections" (plasticity of the brain), thus getting rid of bad habits and instilling good ones. The trick is to "stick to a set procedure." Many people give up before giving their brains enough time to "rewire"; this is why many "New Year resolutions" go unfulfilled.

- One way to remove bad habits is to look at the bad consequences of such habits; see, "The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Āsavas)."
- In-depth analysis at, "How Habits are Formed and Broken - A Scientific View."

5. The seven steps in the Sabbāsava Sutta can be helpful for developing good habits for a moral life. These steps basically convince the mind of the benefits of good habits/downside of bad habits and set up a conducive environment.

The 7 steps in the Sabbāsava Sutta (interpreted conventionally or mundane or "padaparama" interpretation):

1. Cultivate an understanding. Learn all about the direct and indirect benefits, what is involved, the best way to go about achieving the goal, etc.
2. Be discipline. Avoid getting distracted by things that provide "temporary pleasures", like a drug addict thinking it is OK to "take a small puff" while working to be free of drugs.
3. Association are important. Associate with knowledgeable people who can help and get to know other helpful resources.
4. Patience and tolerance. (Maintain focus and not get "shaken off" by small inconveniences. Perseverance is critical.
5. Avoidance are important as associations. Dissociating with people who have negative attitudes and avoiding unsafe places, practices, etc.
6. Removal of hindrances. Suppress discouraging thoughts by contemplating on the long-term benefits of the project.
7. Bhāvanā or "immersing in the project." That means constantly thinking about the main objective and the ways to get there.
8. A good idea of the goal is needed first. One should not undertake a journey without learning about the destination and how to get there. It is a good idea to explore how it can be beneficial to oneself and others (family, friends, and even to society) too.

- Once the overview is done and the decision to undertake the project is made, all steps should be used as appropriate. For example, the first and last items on the above list (understanding and meditating) go hand-in-hand.

7. Those steps can be used by anyone to enhance the quality of life in general, a moral life with a "peace-ofmind." They are the sensible things to do.

- For example, an important decision for anyone should be to live in a good area not prone to crime, floods, etc.
- Going out at inappropriate times, in inappropriate places, is just 'asking for trouble."
- It is critical to avoid associating with immoral and also those with negative attitudes.
- If one carefully goes through the list, it will be clear why all those steps make common sense.

If you would like to read about how these habits develop into deep-seated sansāric habits or $\bar{a}$ savas, see, "Sansāric Habits, Character (Gati) and Cravings (Āsava)." Also, "The Four Bases of Mental Power (Cattāro Iddhipāda)," can be helpful in achieving goals.

Next, "Wrong Views (Micchā Ditthi) - A Simpler Analysis",

### 7.11.4 Wrong Views (Micchā Ditṭhi) - A Simpler Analysis

## Revised November 27, 2017; revised May 12, 2020 (\#6)

Micchā means wrong or incorrect and ditthi means views. Pronunciation:

## WebLink: Listen to the pronunciation of ditthi

Here it is about the wrong views about our world or our existence. It is the most basic reason why people cannot grasp the message of the Buddha, and that is unfortunate. We all are looking at the world through "colored glasses"; each one has his/her own set of beliefs or "dittthis," so we cannot see the real nature.

- Some facts about nature are hard to believe, and it took the efforts of many scientists to change two common wrong views (ditṭhis) that had been with the humans up to recently: that the Earth is flat and it is at the center of the universe.

1. These days, most of us believe that the Earth moves around the Sun. But it is quite clear that it goes against our experience, and the accepted views were the opposites even a few hundred years ago. We do not have any direct experience of the motion of the Earth, either its rotation around its own axis or in its orbit around the Sun. And we see ample evidence to the contrary, i.e., for the Sun rotating around the Earth, because we experience a sunrise and a sunset everyday!

- If one looks at the speeds involved it becomes even more harder to believe that the Earth is moving: The Earth moves around its axis at a speed of about $1,040.4$ miles/hour ( $1,674.4$ kilometer/hour or 465.1 meter/second) at the equator (and zero at the North and South Poles) and it moves along its orbit around the Sun at an average speed of about 67,062 miles/hour ( 107,300 kilometer/hour). Thus it is surprising that we have no direct perception of such movements.
- Of course, we do not feel it because everything around us is also doing exactly the same thing. When we travel in a car, we "feel the ride" because we can see the scenery passing by (and because the ride may not be smooth; luckily, the Earth is very smooth in its motions). It is the "relative motion" that we perceive. If two cars are moving in parallel with the same speed, passengers in each car see the other car to be stationary.
- However, after Galileo invented the telescope, people made more precision measurements of the planets and the heliocentric model was needed to explain all those new findings.

2. But there are many people who still believe that the Sun goes around the Earth! To quote a passage from the Wikipedia article, WebLink: WIKI: Geocentric model

- "..Morris Berman quotes survey results that show currently some $20 \%$ of the U.S. population believes that the sun goes around the Earth (geocentricism) rather than the Earth goes around the sun (heliocentricism), while a further 9\% claimed not to know. Polls conducted by Gallup in the 1990s found that $16 \%$ of Germans, $18 \%$ of Americans and $19 \%$ of Britons hold that the Sun revolves around the Earth. A study conducted in 2005 by Jon D. Miller of Northwestern University, an expert in the public understanding of science and technology, found that about $20 \%$, or one in five, of American adults believe that the Sun orbits the Earth. According to 2011 VTSIOM poll, $32 \%$ of Russians believe that the Sun orbits the Earth."
- And, there are even some who believe that the Earth is flat: WebLink: WIKI: Modern flat Earth societies

3. Thus sometimes it is very hard to get rid of certain "wrong views" because of our "experiences" and "gut feelings." Yet, if one hangs onto such wrong views (in the face of contrary evidence) one cannot get a correct world view. This is why we always need to "look at the big picture"; the "bigger the picture", the better it is. It is hard to see much details while walking on the ground, but one see a whole lot better looking down from a helicopter.

- Luckily, nowadays, we have the advantage of technology to confirm that the Earth is not flat and that it moves around the Sun.

4. Similarly, it is very hard for many people to believe that humans could be reborn as animals. One argument that was given in a book that refuted rebirth was that "..in that case, the human population should not be changing, but we see an increase of the human population over the past centuries." Apparently, the author did not even consider that a human could be born an animal. Again, it is matter of a very narrow world view. There are innumerable beings in this world and they can be born in not only in the animal and human realms, but 29 other realms that we cannot see!

- When Darwin presented his theory of evolution, it made a huge psychological impact on the society, which was not ready to accept that humans evolved from animals. It is said that Darwin did not publish his now-famous volume, On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, until 1859, more than 20 years after he had first formulated his theory because he knew that it would create an uproar.

5. The theory of evolution is only partially correct according to Buddha Dhamma; we will discuss this in detail in the future. When conditions for a birth in certain realm are satisfied, the nature has come up with many ways to make that birth take place.

- Accepting the fact that human can be BORN in the animal realm is an even more shocking thing to contemplate for many people. But we should not just go by our instincts, because the world is much more complex than we perceive with our limited senses.
- Even though we consider the life of an animal as "useless", life is the most important thing in the world even for the lowest worm. All living beings have craving to continue the life they have, regardless of how pathetic it appears to us. Our "smelly bodies" are said to be repulsive to the devas who have fine bodies that are free of diseases as well.

6. The Buddha said, "..bhikkhus, sentient beings reborn as humans are few as this bit of sand on my fingernail. But those not reborn as humans are many as the sand on this great Earth. Therefore, you should strive diligently and without delay to end this suffering in the rebirth process." That statement appears to most people as an exaggeration. That quote is from the post, "How the Buddha Described the Chance of Rebirth in the Human Realm."

- But as described in that post, modern science is slowly proving that indeed the number of living beings, just in the animal realm, is unimaginably large. Comparatively, the human population of about 7 billion is negligibly small.
- There are more living beings in your backyard soil than the entire human population on Earth!

7. Of course we cannot see the beings in the other three lower realms. But, just because they are not amenable to our senses, we cannot say they do not exist.

- Human vision is restricted to an almost infinitesimal sliver of 400 to 700 nanometers in the wavelength spectrum. Our ears can detect only 20 to 20,000 Hertz audio frequencies. Other animals use their own "bands" above and below that. Human beings have one of the poorest senses of smell of all the organisms on Earth., etc; see the book, "The Meaning of Human Existence" by Edward O. Wilson, who is a leading biologist.
- Another way to think about this is to contemplate on the fact that there are hundreds of TV or radios broadcasts that can be "tapped into" by having a TV or a radio set to the right channel. Just because we cannot "see" those electromagnetic waves with our eyes, we cannot say they are not all around us. There are other living beings all around us with such fine bodies, we just cannot see them.
- We have only begun "see" other hidden parts of "our world" with the aid of science; see, "Expanding "Consciousness" by Using Technology."

8. Even though scientific progress has been impressive, it takes generations to move the "knowledge base" forward; see, "Dhamma and Science - Introduction."

- On the other hand, by PURIFYING the mind, one can discern EVERYTHING that is of importance within a lifetime; see, "Expanding "Consciousness" by Purifying the Mind," and the power of the mind in the posts starting with, "Power of the Human Mind - Introduction."
- That is how the Buddha knew about not only the existence of innumerable planetary systems in the universe (many other examples are discussed in other posts), but also about the fact that this life of about 100 years in insignificant in the rebirth process.
- And there is compelling evidence for rebirth; see, "Evidence for Rebirth."

9. Without the "correct view" of this world, we will be simply "groping in the dark." When one has only a narrow and blurred vision, one cannot move forward. If one believes that this is the only life we have, then one could be making bad decisions, that could affect one's future for billions of years to come.

- That is why it is worthwhile at least to examine the evidence of the "wider world view" of the Buddha, where both space and time are infinite. While modern science has confirmed the infinite extent of space, it has not yet "discovered" the fact that life does not end at physical death; it is just the end of one insignificantly small sliver of the time span of a sentient being.

10. Most people think the First Noble Truth is about suffering in the sense of just physical or mental suffering IN THIS LIFE; that is wrong. Those are RESULTS of past actions (kamma). But that suffering is NOT what the First Noble Truth is about; it is about the FUTURE suffering that CAN BE stopped.

- The First Noble Truth is about the suffering that is hidden. It is the unavoidable suffering for anyone in this cycle of rebirths, until one grasps the "correct world view."
- This is why the Buddha said, "my Dhamma has never been heard before." It is hard to grasp until one is willing to spend some time and examine the "bigger picture." One should not just go by one's instincts, but rather by the facts.

11. This is also why "samma ditthi" or "correct view" comes first in both versions of the Eightfold Path. Yes. There are two versions of the path: One is mundane (lokiya) and is easier to grasp. The other is transcendental (lokuttara) and requires the comprehension of Tilakkhaṇa or the Three Characteristics of this world, i.e., anicca, dukkha, anatta.

- Before trying to comprehend the Tilakkhaña, it is imperative that one follows the mundane eightfold path and removes all ten types of micch $\bar{a}$ ditt $t h i$; they are discussed in "Mahā Chattārī̄aka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty)."
- When one starts understanding the validity of laws of kamma (i.e., deeds have consequences), rebirth must be true, and there are other realms that we cannot see, one begins to embrace the mundane version of sammā ditṭhi.

12. With that samma ditthi, one realizes that it is not fruitful to: think immoral thoughts (micchā sañkappa), utter inappropriate speech (micch $\bar{a} v \bar{a} c \bar{a}$ ), do inappropriate things (micch $\bar{a}$ kammanta), live an immoral life ( micch $\bar{a} \bar{a} j \bar{\imath} v a$ ), to strive to achieve unfruitful things (micchā vāy $\bar{a} m a$ ), have an immoral mindfulness (micch $\bar{a}$ sati), and thus get into an immoral state (micchā samādhi).

- Even if we can "get away" from paying for misdeeds in this life, we will have to pay with interest in the future lives. Similarly, any good deeds will be rewarded in future lives, if not within this life itself.
- Thus, with correct views or Sammā Diṭthi, one will be automatically following the mundane eightfold path: sammā sañkappa, sammā vācā, sammā kammanta, sammā àjīva, sammā vāyāma, sammā sati, and thus get to sammā samādhi. It all starts with sammā ditthi, or the "correct views."

13. It is not a world view that is amenable to our "experience", because our sense faculties are limited as we discussed above. But as we make progress, our minds will become clear and we WILL be able to see for ourselves the true nature of this world.

- There is a lot of evidence that what the Buddha said about "the wider world" 2500 years ago are indeed true. We are lucky to be born at the time when efforts of many generations of scientists have confirmed many of his world views, and that should give us confidence (saddh $\bar{a}$ ) to take those views serious enough to spend some time examining the evidence. My goal is to present evidence from many aspects, because different people comprehend different aspects.

14. Such a critical evaluation itself could be enough to dispel any wrong views. It is like lifting of a fog and being able to see clearly. When the mind becomes pure, one does not need "evidence from science" to confirm the worldview of the Buddha.

- The lokuttara version of Sammā Ditṭhi (which requires the comprehension of Tilakkhaṇa to some extent) and the corresponding Noble Eightfold Path is discussed in other posts in the "Seeking Nibbāna" section. Also, see, "Buddha Dhamma - In a Chart" and the post referred to in that chart: "What is Unique in Buddha Dhamma?."


## Next, "Four Noble Truths: Recipe for Problem Solving", ...

### 7.1.1.5 Four Noble Truths: Recipe for Problem Solving

Pre-2016; re-written August 6, 2022; revised August 7, 2022
Problem solving can be reduced to four simple steps. That is the same approach the Buddha used in discovering the Four Noble Truths to solve the problem of suffering.

## Four Steps to Solving a Problem

1. When solving any problem, there are four steps:

- One needs to know the problem or even realize there is a problem.
- The reason or the cause for that problem (some may be superficial causes, but there are root causes).
- Knowing what result can be expected by solving the problem (there may be many possible outcomes depending on the approach).
- A procedure to systematically solve the problem based on the superficial or root causes.

Those were the same steps that our Bodhisatta used to attain Buddhahood.

## Figuring Out the Causes

2. Let us discuss an example. If a car would not start, the cause may not be clear to someone who does not have a technical background in automobiles, but a qualified technician will be able to find the cause quickly.

- He may find that it is a simple problem of some wires becoming loose in the ignition circuit, or it could be as bad as a problem with the engine itself.
- The solution to the problem will lead to being able to start the car.
- And the way to get there depends on the actual problem and going through the standard procedures to solve the problem. One could re-connect the loose wires if the problem is with a loose wire. If it is a failed engine, one could either replace the engine or fix it if it is a minor problem with the engine.


## Root Causes and Secondary Causes

3. Sometimes, there can be a temporary or a permanent solution.

- If we get a headache, In most cases, we would just take an aspirin or Tylenol, which would "fix it." But if the headache keeps returning, we may realize there could be a more serious root cause. Now we need to figure out why we are getting headaches frequently. First, we look at easy solutions. For example, if
we can connect the timing of the headaches to eating some specific food, we can stop eating that and see whether it goes away.
- If we cannot figure it out, and if the problem persists, we go to a specialist, in this case, a physician. The physician will ask a series of questions and may do a series of tests. The goal is to figure out the root cause that may not be obvious.
- Depending on the results of the diagnostic tests, the physician may find the root cause to be cancer. Then that cancer needs to be treated, etc. He will prescribe a method of treatment. If that root cause is removed, we would have removed recurring headaches.

4. There is an important difference between superficial causes and root causes. Superficial causes do not lead to serious problems. For example, if too many drinks taken by a person not used to alcohol causes a headache, which can be "fixed" by taking an aspirin. But some problems have root causes hard to see, like the one in \#3 above.

- It is interesting to note that root causes give the exact meaning of the Pāli term "mūlika hetu"; "mūla" is the root of a tree. Even if a tree is cut down, the tree may not be killed if the roots remain intact. It may still sprout new limbs and finally grow into a full-fledged tree.
- However, removing the deep roots of a tree will permanently kill the tree. Similarly, removing root causes will eradicate a persisting problem.


## Not Prudent to Apply Temporary Solutions

5. Most times, when a problem arises, we tend to do the most expedient thing to get it out of the way and move on. If the headache goes away until one gets through the day, one may decide just to take an aspirin and handle it daily like that.

- Even when the wife (or husband) says, "You have been taking aspirins almost every day for this many days. Why don't you see a doctor and see whether there is something else going on?" we may just continue with the "temporary fix" especially if we are busy.
- If that person was starting to develop cancer, postponing the "root cause" diagnosis could be a grave mistake. Cancer cells multiply rapidly and could spread to other body parts.
- Even though one could get temporary relief by taking aspirin daily (may be by gradually increasing the dose too), that is NOT the solution. The result in the short term could be temporary relief, but one is heading into a much more dangerous outcome.
- The ideal solution to the problem is not to temporarily be free from the headache but to be free from cancer!


## Suffering Associated with Existence

6. The Four Noble Truths handle the most critical problem of all: the suffering associated with existence.

- First, most of us are unaware that it cannot be handled with temporary solutions.
- For example, even if we don't suffer significantly in this life, there will be suffering in future lives. Some people do not realize that there is a rebirth process and that most rebirths are filled with unimaginable suffering. They are unaware that the problem is much more than just suffering in this life.

7. In complex situations, the root causes of a given problem will not be obvious if one does not have a sufficiently broad view of the situation. That means the ideal solution may not be obvious.

- When that happens, the problem leads to ever-increasing severity and may not be solvable. Therefore, postponing finding the root causes of a problem can be dangerous.
- In the example discussed in \#3 above, cancer may grow if one keeps postponing getting a good diagnosis by a qualified physician. It will be too late when cancer has spread through the body. Thus, and after some point, cancer may not be treatable.
- In the same way, our ability to grasp the deep teachings of the Buddha will decrease as we get old and our brains start deteriorating. Don't postpone this most critical task of learning Buddha Dhamma!


## The Solution to the Existence of Suffering Requires a Wider Worldview

8. That larger problem of existence can be "seen" only by the highly-purified mind of a Buddha. During the night of Enlightenment, the Buddha achieved three types of higher knowledge:
(i) Ability to recall one's past lives (pubbe nivāsānussati ñāna),
(ii) The ability to see any living being's cuti (end of bhava) and patisandhi (grasping of a new bhava). This is the cutūpapāta $\tilde{n} \bar{a} n a$.
(iii) The attainment of the Buddhahood with $\overline{\text { a }} \boldsymbol{s} \boldsymbol{a v a k k h a y a} \tilde{\boldsymbol{n}} \bar{a} n \boldsymbol{a}$. That involved grasping the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path to Nibbāna.

- Therefore, his worldview of a wider world with 31 realms and rebirth is NOT speculation. He could recall past lives, and he visited many other realms. Many suttas in the Tipitaka describe those recollections and visits. See "Buddhahood Controversies - Introduction."
- Of course, we have to believe that based on faith. Yet, that should not be blind faith: "Buddha Dhamma: Non-Perceivability and Self-Consistency."


## Focusing on This Life Yield Only Temporary Solutions

9. Of course, one can find temporary solutions by just fixing the superficial causes. Just like fixing a headache by taking an aspirin, one could find temporary happiness in this life by "trouble-shooting" each problem as it arises. That is the "rat race" most of us are engaged in.

- For example, most of our time is spent solving problems that pop up at the office or home. At the office, one is assigned a task to finish within a certain time. When finished, one gets another. That goes on until retirement!
- It is not that different at home. One must take care of the kids, house, cars, etc.
- At the end of this life, another WILL start. Then we do it all over again. There is no permanent solution to this short-sighted approach.
- But it could be much worse when future birth is in an apāya. That is when one will be helpless. The only way to avoid that possibility is to get to at least the Sotāpanna Anugāmi stage of Nibbāna.


## Only One Permanent Solution

10. Tackling superficial causes that we can readily see or discern is what we have been doing since the beginning-less time. Life after life, we just strive to "maintain things to our satisfaction," and at EACH time, we fail.

- Most times, we suffer trying to "get things going in the way we want," and by the time we achieve at least some success, our bodies start falling apart, so we will not be enjoying what we have gained with so much effort.
- Think carefully about any famous personality we believe has achieved their life goals. They all will have to leave behind their achievements at death. Furthermore, those things would not mean anything in their new life; they will have to start all over. The only things carried over to the new life are any good/bad habits or deeds they cultivated, not material gains.


## Root Causes of Saimsāric Suffering

11. If we understand where this never-ending process gets the required fuel from (i.e., the root cause for rebirths), then by ELIMINATING those causes, we can permanently solve the problem of perpetual suffering in the rebirth process.

- As long as we crave "mind-pleasing things" in this world by generating abhisañkhāra, rebirth ( $j \bar{a} t i)$ in this world is inevitable. Depending on the type of abhisañkhāra, rebirth may be in an apāya, human, Deva, or Brahma realm. But they all end up in old age and death.
- It is critical to realize that six root causes maintain this world for anyone: greed, hate, ignorance, and mundane versions of non-greed, non-hate, and non-ignorance. It is fairly easy to see how greed, hate, and ignorance can lead to rebirth in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a} s$.
- It is impossible to understand how mundane versions of non-greed, non-hate, and nonignorance can be bad until those "bad roots" of greed, hate, and ignorance are removed. An understanding of Pațicca Samuppāda is necessary to see the "hidden suffering" in apparently harmless sensory pleasures. See "Six Root Causes - Loka Samudaya (Arising of Suffering) and Loka Nirodhaya (Nibbāna)."
- Thus, stated succinctly, the root cause of our suffering is not being able to "see" the hidden suffering in sensory pleasures.
- Not understanding that is $a v i j j \bar{a}$ or ignorance.


## Removal of the Root Causes

12. The third step is to see that the successful solution to this problem is the attainment of Nibbāna or stopping the rebirth process. This is probably the hardest step to latch on to because it requires eliminating the root of cravings (attachments.)

- We can see that "mind-pleasing things" bring us happiness. It is not easy to "see" the suffering hidden in that.
- The Buddha likened this to the case of an ox dragging a fully-loaded cart eagerly while its owner is holding a stack of hay on a pole in front of it. The ox has its mind set on reaching the stack of hay and does not even realize the heavy load it is pulling.
- A fish can see only the tasty worm but not the dangerous hook hidden inside. We are not that different from the fish, as the Buddha explained in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Balisa Sutta (SN 17.2)."
- It is only when one truly comprehends that "it is fruitless to struggle to find happiness in this world of 31 realms" that one attains the Sotāpanna stage.
- Thus, cravings for worldly things can ONLY be removed via wisdom (paññā) when one can accept the wider worldview discovered by the Buddha (rebirth process) and how abhisañkhāra (generated with $a v i j j \bar{a})$ leads to rebirths in various realms, i.e., understanding Paṭicca Samuppāda/Tilakkhaṇa. That understanding leads to the Sotāpanna stage. It is a change of one's worldview!


## Following the Path to Remove Future Suffering

13. The Buddha said that when one sees one Noble Truth, one sees all four. Thus at the attainment of the Sotāpanna stage, the way to Nibbāna also becomes clear.

- The process of removing the root causes of $a v i j j \bar{a}$ and tanhh $\bar{a}$ is the Fourth Noble Truth, the magga sacca, or the Truth of the Path, where "magga" is a path. And this path is eightfold, and it is the Noble Eightfold Path.
- The Path has to be followed systematically. The first step is to realize the "correct vision" or Samm $\bar{a}$ Ditṭhi to eliminate "san." A Sotāpanna has achieved this to a significant extent by comprehending anicca, dukkha, and anatta to a certain extent.


## The Four-Step Process Is Universal

14. Therefore, the four-step process stated in \#1 above is a basic principle that can be used to solve any problem. That means solving a mundane problem temporarily and providing a permanent solution to the ultimate problem of existence. That approach is based on the principle of cause and effect, the same one that Nature is based on.

- One could even find a somewhat longer-term solution by working towards a better rebirth. We must do that too, but always the goal MUST BE to remove all root causes.


## First Step - Understanding the Existence of the Problem

15. The key point that the Buddha was trying to make was that we do not realize that there is a "problem of existence." The first step in the four-step process is to realize the validity of the rebirth process. Since we cannot readily see the rebirth process, most of us focus on just this life.

- All we have been doing is to "take aspirins" as headaches resurfaced instead of finding a permanent solution to the "problem of never-ending headaches."
- In every life so far, what we have done has been to 'take aspirins" to try to solve problems temporarily as they inevitably come our way. The Buddha taught that one must address the root causes of Saimsāric suffering to remove any future suffering.
- This is the First Noble Truth of "dukkha sacca" (pronounced "dukkha sachcha.") It means "existence in this world of 31 realms is filled with suffering, and it is a never-ending process. But that can be overcome permanently".
- Therefore, the main goal must be Nibbāna. There is no other permanent solution!


## Nibbāna - Elimination of All Six Root Causes

16. Nibbāna does not have a cause. Eliminating all six root causes in \#11 leads to Nibbāna. All these are removed via pañña or wisdom. It is important to realize that wisdom means understanding the Four Noble Truths/Paṭicca Samuppāda/Tilakkhaṇa.

- But for now, it suffices to say that the four lowest realms of this world are "maintained" via the "bad roots" of greed, hate, and ignorance. The remaining 31 realms are "supported" by (the mundane versions of) non-greed, non-hate, and non-ignorance, the so-called "good roots."
- This is why the Noble Eightfold Path is two-fold: the mundane (lokiya) Noble Eightfold Path must be followed first to avoid birth in the lowest four realms and cleanse the mind to a certain extent. But one could "fall back" in future lives unless one gets to the Sotāpanna Anugāmi stage.
- Then one follows the transcendental (lokuttara) Noble Eightfold Path to attain Nibbāna by fully cleansing the mind of all six roots. See "Mahā Cattārisaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty)."


### 7.1.1.6 First Noble Truth - A Simple Explanation of One Aspect

1. One does not need to be a Buddhist or even heard about the Buddha to know what conventional "suffering" is. Anyone knows that getting sick, getting old, and dying is cause for suffering.

- But then the Buddha said, "these four Noble Truths are not known to the world until a Buddha describes them."
- Thus the Buddha was talking about a kind of suffering that ANYONE in this world is destined to have either now or in the future. He was mainly concerned with the LONG TERM suffering, in the future rebirth, and how to STOP that from taking place.

2. However, there are some sufferings in this very life that arise due to our current way of life, or what we do or think right now. In this post, I want to address such "SHORT TERM" sufferings that also can be AVOIDED.

- A significant part of our suffering comes from the mind. Whether one lives in a grand mansion or in a hut, this part of suffering is common to us all.
- And even some famous and rich people that we know could not bear this mental pain to such an extent that they committed suicide. From Elvis Presley and Marilyn Monroe to Whitney Houston and Robin Williams, there are many well-known cases; see, WebLink: WIKI: List of suicides for a long list that extends to the past.
- Suicide Prevention, see : WebLink: HELPGUIDE: Suicide Prevention

3. Obviously, one can have mostly everything that any one of us can only wish for (health, wealth, beauty, fame, etc), but still, suffer. One could get a glimpse of what the Buddha meant by suffering if one could contemplate on this issue, and that revelation itself could lead to the avoidance of that kind of suffering.

- We can get rid of a big part of suffering in the near future by controlling hate or displeasure towards other people. Even though the other party may have done something wrong to us, most of the suffering is inflicted by ourselves. This needs some contemplation to clarify.

4. Suppose I come to know that someone said a bad (and untrue) thing about me to others. The moment I hear this my mind gets agitated. And I could be spending the next hour or two or even the next day or two saying to myself and friends, "I cannot believe that so and so said this about me. Why would he do that?", and may be even be thinking about how to retaliate. All this time spent on such activity was a burden to the mind. I caused more suffering to myself by just dwelling on it, and by generating more hateful thoughts.

- I could have handled the situation better as following: If I know from past experience that he would not have said it without a reason, I need to talk to him and clarify the situation. If that failed or if I knew that he was "just that type of a person" I just need to stay away from him. We cannot control the behavior of other people. The best thing is to stay away from such people.
- Staying away from "bad company" is critical especially for children. It is imperative for the parents to make sure that their children stay away from bad friends.

5. Another thing that is related is not to try to spend too much of your time and energy to convince other people to see "things your way." For valid or invalid reasons, each person has a set of beliefs and convictions. I have realized that it causes unnecessary mental suffering to myself and others if I try hard to convince the other party of my own views. I have no right to say my views are better than the views of the others; I just explain things the way I see them.

- Even the Buddha did not try to even advice certain people, because they could have caused long-term harm for themselves by generating hateful thoughts of the Buddha.
- One has to realize that getting rid of ditt hi or wrong views is the first step in getting some "cooling down." It is true that palpable "cooling down" can be attained by getting rid of the worst wrong views; see, "Wrong Views (Micchā Ditthi) - A Simpler Analysis."

6. Then there is extreme greed, that could also lead to unnecessary suffering. Here one needs to make a distinction between two extremes: It is really necessary to avoid physical discomfort on one extreme. But trying to "acquire fancy things" for the sake of pride is the other extreme.

- We do need food, clothes, shelter, and medicine to avoid living a miserable life. Therefore, we need to make a decent living to provide such necessities for ourselves and our families.
- However, if we try to acquire, for example, a "bigger and fancy house", that could cause anxiety and even suffering especially one is stretching one's resources to achieve that "extra bit of happiness." That "extra bit of happiness" could become a nightmare in some cases, for example, if one loses employment or encounters an unexpected expense.

7. One does not need to feel bad about the wealth one has acquired legitimately and to use that wealth for one's comfort. One has already paid for that in the past (a good kamma vipāka). In the same way, if one is poor, one needs to understand two things per Buddha Dhamma: First, one is in that situation because of a past cause (bad kamma vipāka). Second, and more importantly, one can work oneself out of that situation, because kamma vipāka are not deterministic; see, "What is Kamma? - Is Everything Determined by Kamma?."
8. The key is to live within one's means and strive for a better living condition if one actually does not have enough for a comfortable living. There is so much of "peace of mind" in a simple life, even if one has a lot of wealth. Most people ruin their lives by trying to seek sense pleasures using money. That only gets one on a track that leads to seeking more and more such pleasures and eventually running out options.

- The sad thing is that they do not know there is so much "peace of mind" to be had just by living a simple life with less greed and less hate.

9. It is hard to fathom, but it is true that craving for valuable material things makes one's mind temporarily happy at times but perpetually burdened. This statement needs a lot of thought for clarification.

- The perceived happiness comes from the perceived "value" of the item by one's mind, and if that item is lost or damaged that can lead to much more suffering. Here is a hypothetical situation: A mother dies and her two daughters inherit a supposedly highly valued necklace. Each daughter wants it, and they get into arguments and both come to much mental suffering. Eventually, a wise elder suggests to sell the item and share the money. When they try to sell it, they find that it is of low quality and is really worthless. They had each inflicted so much suffering because of a "perceived value" for that necklace.

10. The real happiness is not having anything to worry about. That does not mean one needs to give away everything one has.

- Using things that are available to oneself and having a greedy mindset are two different things.
- One could be living in a mansion with a peace of mind knowing that all his/her wealth is not forever, and another could be living with a burdened mind in a hut with so much attachment to whatever little he/she has or with jealousy/hatred for what others have.
- On the other hand, one could be living in a mansion with a burdened mind and could even commit suicide, while a poor person who has learned Dhamma could be living in a hut with a peace of mind content with what he/she has and knowing that any hardship is just for a short time (in this life).
- The bottom line is that things happen due to causes, and by controlling our minds we have the power to initiate good causes (moral deeds) and to suppress bad causes (immoral deeds). Some will be effective for the short term and all will be effective for the long term.

Also see, "First Noble Truth is Suffering? Myths about Suffering."
Next, "Difference between a Wish and a Determination (Paramita)",

### 7.1.1.7 Difference between a Wish and a Determination (Parāmitā)

1. It is easy to just wish for things, but a real determination has a firm commitment attached to it. A determination is a wish accompanied by a plan to make the wish come true.

- One can drop a stone in water and can wish for it to come back up. That is NOT going to happen.
- Some goals (wishes) can be attained in this life: quitting smoking, passing an exam, getting a good job, etc. But still one has to make an effort, i.e., one has to act with determination to achieve the wish.

2. Other goals can take many lifetimes to attain. These are called "pāramita" (pronounced "pāramithă"). Depending on the goal, a parāmitā can take many, many lifetimes. It is said that to become a Buddha, one needs to have a firm commitment carried over billions of lives; that is a parāmitā. And it is not like that someone just makes a wish to become a Buddha; that "gati" or the "tendency" has to develop first over many lifetimes, initially starting with the habit of helping others and generally living a moral life.

- Buddha Dhamma is all about causes and effects. If one can understand the causes for something to happen, and then work to make such cause to materialize, the effects WILL follow.

3. We can see that there are many people - some even may not have heard about Buddha Dhamma making great efforts to help others even at the risk of their own lives. Those people have such sansāric habits and they do have goals, even if it may not be clear to them at all times. They are just driven by that sansāric habit. If they come across pure Dhamma by any chance, they may be able to focus their efforts accordingly.

- To become an Arahant one needs to make a commitment and maintain it over many, many lives. We all are likely to have made that commitment in one or more lives; of course, we do not know. And if we had made such a commitment and have worked on it over many lives, it may be possible to fulfill it in this very life. Even otherwise, we can make a real effort to maintain that "paramita" and strengthen it.
- Some make firm determinations to become a deva, a Brahma, an emperor, or just to be rich; there are millions of things that people wish for, and sometimes make firm determinations on. Some of them can come true in this lifetime itself, especially if that is a firm commitment coming from previous lives. Normally the word "parāmit $\bar{a}$ " is reserved for those commitments that target Nibbāna.

4. In physics, there is a simple law that says, "every action has a reaction." In Buddha Dhamma, there is an even more generalized law: when one keeps doing something, an invisible energy buildup occurs that will result in a kamma bhava (potential energy) that will bring about a result (even a birth) of a similar kind.

- During a lifetime, the brain will help achieve goals by rewiring neural connections in the brain when someone keeps trying to develop habits; see, "How Habits are Formed and Broken - A Scientific View."
- And such habits may be carried over future lives by embedding in one's kamma seeds (bīia); see, "Sansāric Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Āsava)."

5. For example, if one keeps drinking heavily, it WILL become a habit; the brain's neural connections will get wired-up for it. If done long enough, it will get embedded in one's psyche (i.e., in kamma seeds), and one is likely to be matched up with a mother who has similar drinking habits, and then it is likely that habit to continue in that life too. It takes a determined effort to "unwire" those neural connections, more than just a wish.

- If one keeps doing activities that are suitable for a dog, one will increasingly act like a dog with such habits, and if that is kept up, eventually will be born a dog. It does not matter whether that person wished to be rich or powerful, what matters is what one habitually does. In his/her mind, one made that determination indirectly by acting accordingly.

6. In the same way, when one makes a determination to be "good", and starts helping out others, and start learning and living by Dhamma, one will be heading to "good births" whether one wishes or not. Then they become deeply-ingrained habits that are taken from birth to birth, and become "paramitas."

- Such dominant paramitas may manifest as one's character ("gathi"). As I mentioned previously, we can see such visible "gathi" in many people, regardless of their official religion or culture.


## 7. Thus habits cultivate character ("gathi"), and persistence of such strong character qualities or "gathi" through many rebirths develop into "paramitas."

- Especially in young children such "gathi" may manifest and then it will be easier to cultivate them. For example, in the post on "Evidence for Rebirth" there is a video of a child reciting complex sutt $\overline{\text { a }}$; if he was encouraged to follow that path, he could be able to attain a stage of Nibbāna in this very life. Similarly, a child with any kind of natural talent can be encouraged to cultivate it easily, because those are sansāric habits.

8. Breaking a bad habit takes time too. It is best to cultivate an opposing good habit, or at least a neutral one so that one has the option of doing something when the urge comes. For example, if one wants to quit smoking, one could start chewing gum instead.

- Both in developing a good habit or breaking a bad habit, one is bound to break the trend once in a while. A child learning to walk will fall many times. That is why one needs to have the perseverance to get back up with a renewed determination.

Whether one is making a determination on a mundane goal or to attain a stage of Nibbāna, the posts "The Four Bases of Mental Power (Cattāro Iddhipāda)," "The Law Attraction," and "Habits, Goals, and Character (Gati)" could provide helpful information.

Next, "Key to Calming the Mind - The Five Hindrances", ...

### 7.1.2 Calming the Mind

"Key to Calming the Mind - The Five Hindrances"<br>"Solution to a Wandering Mind - Abandon Everything?"<br>"Right Speech - How to avoid Accumulating Bad Kamma"<br>"Three Kinds of Happiness - What is Nirāmisa Sukha?"<br>"Learning Buddha Dhamma Leads to Nirāmisa Sukha"<br>"Need to Experience Suffering in Order to Understand It?"<br>"Does Impermanence Lead to Suffering?"

### 7.1.2.1 Key to Calming the Mind - The Five Hindrances

Revised August 2, 2016; November 25, 2018; September 9, 2019; February 23, 2021; August 25, 2021; re-written July 10, 2022

A wandering mind is an unhappy mind! The conclusion of an article in the prestigious journal "Science" which, using real-time input from 5000 people worldwide, confirmed what the Buddha said 2500 years ago; see, WebLink: A wandering mind is an unhappy mind-Science-Killingsworth-2010.

## Mundane Ways to Calm a Mind

1. The easiest way to calm a mind is to focus it on a neutral object. There is only one thought arising at a time. So if one can keep the mind focused on something neutral, those unwanted thoughts cannot come back. Several techniques are available. Let us discuss a few below.

- Especially when one gets angry, just stopping and counting to ten at least slows down the javana (or the impulse) from running wildly. Do not let unwanted thoughts take over. They multiply very quickly, and then things get out of control; for a more in-depth discussion, see "Javana of a Citta - Root of Mental Power."
- Taking a few deep breaths helps too. Or, in an angry situation, visualizing a Buddha statue and thinking about its serenity helps also.

2. A popular meditation technique to calm the mind is "breath meditation." Go to a quiet place (less bright and less noisy place), sit in a chair comfortably, and concentrate on the in-and-out breath. Most people can feel the breath at the tip of the nose or on the lips. If not, one can be aware of the falling of the chest or abdomen. Just fix the mind on any of these and do not let it move to some other thought. Initially, it may be hard, but with practice, it becomes easy. That is a crude form of Samatha meditation.

- However, those are just "tricks" to get a temporary solution. Just like a restless child is bound to throw a tantrum again, any relief from "breath meditation" is only fleeting.


## Buddhist Way to Calm a Mind

3. Even Samatha meditation becomes easier if one lives a moral life. One must at least obey the conventional five precepts of not killing other beings, stealing, lying, engaging in sexual misconduct, or using excessive amounts of alcohol. If one can further abstain from harsh speech slandering, and vain talk, that makes it even better, see, "Ten Immoral Actions - Dasa Akusala," and "Punna Kamma - Dāna, Sīla, Bhāvanā."

- One must be aware of those precepts 24 hours a day. They are not rituals to be obeyed. One follows them to purify one's mind. Don't worry if a precept gets broken once in a while. Such occurrences will become less and less with time.

4. The reason that the mind becomes agitated easily is because of the "gunk" that we have in our minds (they go by various names like kilesa, anusaya, "bad gati," or mental impurities). All this "gunk" is there due to greed, hate, and ignorance.

- If a mind is free from greed, hate, and ignorance (that is easily said than done), then the mind will be very calm, and nothing in the outside world can perturb that mind; see " 2 . The Basics in Meditation" and " $\underline{\text {. }}$ The Second Level - Key to Purify the Mind" for details.

5. In a simile, the Buddha compared a calm mind to a clear, calm lake that made the surroundings serene. That lake could become an undesirable eyesore, if one or more of the following happens. (i) A dark-colored dye is in the water, (ii) The lake has boiling water, (iii) Water is covered with moss, (iv) the Lake is perturbed by wind, and (v) Water is turbid and muddy.

## Pañca Nīvaraṇa - Root Causes for an Agitated Mind

6. Similarly, a peaceful mind will become polluted due to five hindrances (pañca nīvaraṇa). They are called " $n \bar{v} v a r a n a "$ because they cover the mind from seeing right from wrong. They are kāmacchanda, vyāpāda, thīna-middha, uddhacca-kukkucca, and vicikicchā.

- One cannot see the bottom of a lake if any of the above five factors are present. Similarly, the mind loses its capacity to "see things clearly" if those hindrances are there.


## Kāmacchanda - Main Culprit

7. Craving sensory pleasures (kāmacchanda) is like a dark dye. Kāmacchanda ("kāma" + "ichcha" + "anda" means blinded by sense desires).

- Note that there is an adopted convention to write Pāli with the English alphabet. Thus, "c" represents the "ch" sound and "icca" is pronounced, as "ichcha." See, "Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars - Part 1."
- Here "kāma" means indulging in conscious thoughts about the five sense faculties that belong to the kāma loka: eye, ear, nose, tongue, and the body; "ichcha" is desire, and "anda" is for blind.
- The attraction for something becomes so strong that one's complete attention is on that object. The mind can lose control over what is sensible and what is not rational (or immoral).


## Vyāpāda - Worse Than Kāmacchanda

8. Extreme hate (vayāpāda or vyāpāda) is like boiling water. We all have seen people who are so enraged that they are out of control.

- One could become "animal-like," and one who develops such character ("gati") could end up in hell (apāya).
- Vayāpāda ("vayā"+"pāda") means traveling downward (in the 31 realms): "vaya" is destruction and "pāda" means "(walking) towards."
- But vyāpāda arises because of $k \bar{a} m a c c h a n d a$.


## Thina Middha - Disinterest in Buddha Dhamma Due to Incomprehension of Basic Concepts

9. Thina middha ("frozen mind") is like moss covering the water. Sleepiness is just a symptom of it. It is a dull mind that has not been exposed to Dhamma.

- When one learns Dhamma, one's mind gets energized. Those meditators who fall asleep during meditation can get rid of that problem by learning pure Dhamma.
- This is why I started a new series of posts: "Basic Framework of Buddha Dhamma."


## Uddhacca kukkucca - Worse Than Either Uddhacca or Kukkucca

10. Uddhacca-kukkucca (customarily translated as restlessness and brooding), arises because of highmindedness (uddhacca) and low-mindedness (kukkucca); in most cases, because of the high-mindedness, one tends to DO lowly things.

- "Uddhacca" is "high-mindedness" (high regard for oneself) which can be at various levels and completely removed only at the Arahant stage. "Киккисcа" is the tendency to do lowly things such as mistreating others. It goes away probably at the Sotāpanna stage. Those are two separate cetasika: "Cetasika (Mental Factors)"
- Note that both words have "acca" (pronounced "achcha") which means "to overboard/to excess." One with uddhacca goes overboard with "high regard for oneself" and one with kukkucca tends to go to extremes in engaging in "lowly deeds" (" $k u$.")
- When they arise together, "uddhacca-kukkucca" is one of the five nivaraṇa that "covers a mind" and prevents "seeing the true nature of the world." Here, one tends to do "lowly things" based on highmindedness, power, etc. After the Sotāpanna stage, only uddhacca remains as a cetasika. It fades with higher magga phala and goes away only at the Arahant stage.


## Vicikicch $\bar{a}$ - No Faith Because of Incomprehension of Noble Truths/Paṭicca Samuppāda/Tilakkhaṇa

11. With vicikicch $\bar{a}$, one tends to do stupid things because of ignorance of the true nature of this world. It comes from " $v i$ " is twisted, "ca" (pronounced "cha") is thoughts, and "icch $\vec{a} "$ or cravings.

- For example, the tendency to do immoral actions to get one's wants comes from vicikicchā. One does not know or does not care about the adverse consequences of such activities. Thus vicikicch $\bar{a}$ is compared to muddy water. [kicca: [nt.] duty; work; service; that which should be done.]
- One must get rid of both the ten types of micchā dițthi and comprehend Tilakkhaṇa to some extent. That means having a good idea about the real nature (anicca, dukkha, and anatta) of this world. That helps REMOVE the vicikicchā nīvaraṇa.


## A Simile (Analogy)

12. In another simile, the Buddha compared the five hindrances (pañca n̄̄varana) to the darkness that keeps one from seeing true nature. For example, a furious person cannot see the damage to the other person and oneself. At least at that moment, hate and anger blind that person.

- A mind "blinded" by the five hindrances can keep on adding "more bad stuff" even without realizing it. If you take a glass of muddy water and add more mud to it, you cannot see much difference. On the other hand, if you take a glass of clean water, you can see the presence of even a bit of dirt.
- Thus when the mind is free of the five hindrances, one can easily see if any evil thoughts come to the mind. Then it is easy to contemplate the possible adverse consequences of such ideas and remove them. That will keep the mind from becoming perturbed. A mind free of the five hindrances is calm and peaceful.
- That is why one should listen to discourses or read Dhamma posts, preferably when the mind is calm. Then one can absorb more.
- More on pañca nīvaraṇa in "Pañca Nīvarana and Sensual Pleasures (Kāma Rāga)."


## Mundane Meditations - Good Start

13. It is good to practice mundane Samatha meditation for short times. That allows one to have a peaceful state of mind during that time. But it does not remove any defilements (i.e., the underlying root causes). Ariya meditation leads to the gradual removal of evils; see, "Bhāvanā (Meditation)."

- These hindrances are the results of bad habits ("gati") we have developed over many lives. They have become deep-seated cravings ("āsav $\vec{a} "$ ), which remain with us as mental impurities (kilesa). When one starts on Ariya meditation, such as bad habits, desires, and mental impurities will decrease. In the simile we talked about initially, the water in that lake will become pure by removing the dye, boiling water, moss, wind, and mud. Similarly, the lake becomes calm and serene again in the absence of those ROOT CAUSES.
- The hindrances of thina-middha and vicikicchā go away at the Sotāpanna stage. Those of kāmacchanda, vyāpāda, and uddhacca-kukkucca reduce to kāma rāga, patigha, and uddhacca. At this stage, the remaining three are no longer nīvaraña. Kāma rāga and patigha lessen at the Sakad $\bar{a} g \bar{m} m \bar{l}$ stage and disappear at the Anāgāmi stage. Uddhacca goes away only at the Arahant stage.
- Progressive lessening of the five hindrances can bring the mind to a stable, peaceful state over time. That happens even before the Sotāpanna stage. Then one could feel the increase of the nirāmisa sukha that it brings; see, "Three Kinds of Happiness - What is Nirāmisa Sukha?."

Next, "Solution to a Wandering Mind - Abandon Everything?",

### 7.1.2.2 Solution to a Wandering Mind - Abandon Everything?

Our minds become agitated when we see, hear, smell, taste, touch, or just think about something that we really like or really dislike. Those are called thought objects (ārammaṇa in Pāli or aramuna in Sinhala). If the thought object is to our liking, our mind starts the "wheeling process" on how to own it or at least to enjoy it for a while; if the thought object is something we dislike, the same "wheeling process" takes off on trying to figure out how to get rid of it; see, "Nibbāna - Is It Difficult to Understand?."

Living in a busy society, we are bombarded with multiple thought objects continuously. Of course, it can be reduced by going to a quiet place, where there are fewer EXTERNAL objects that could give rise to multiple
thoughts; many people do that to find a "bit of peace." Better yet, we can go to a meditation retreat where we focus the mind on the breath for example, and get a wonderful calmness.

But the problem is that peacefulness, the calmness of the mind goes away when we get back to the "normal life" with normal distractions (multiple thought objects). Is it possible to have a "peace of mind" without going to seclusion?

To understand what actually happens in our minds, let us think about the following case:

1. If you go to a stream, disturb the sediment at the bottom until the water gets dirty, you can fill a glass with that dirty water. It looks brown when stirred well.
2. Now if you set the glass on a table and let it sit there undisturbed, in a little while the dirt will drop to the bottom and the water will become clear.
3. If you stir it again with a stick, the water will be brown again; this is analogous to a thought object that is of great interest to us. BUT if you try to stir it with a thread, it will not get stirred; the thread is too weak to stir it. Similarly, we are not disturbed by a thought object that is of no interest to us.
4. If you now take a fine strainer, remove the dirt from that water, and put it back in the same glass, it will now be clear. Now, if you stir it as much as you want even with a stick, the water will never become brown.
5. We all have "sediments" (or deep-seated cravings or " $\bar{a} s a v \vec{a}$ ") in our minds that have been brewing/accumulating due to sansāric habits ("gati"); see, "Habits and Goals." Each one has a set of different "sediments" or different habits, i.e., one tends to like certain things AND also dislikes certain other things.
6. So, what happens is when we see something that we like OR dislike, our "sediments" get disturbed. How much it gets disturbed depends on how strongly we like OR dislike it.

- A strong disturbance may be the sight of a person you really like OR really dislike. But if it is something that does not interest you, it will be like stirring with a thread.

7. During the day, we have innumerable "inputs" coming in through the six senses; these stir up the sediments ("āsavas") inside us and bring out the five hindrances.

- Our minds are constantly agitated, but we may not even realize it because this is the "baseline state" that we have been used to. But we can at least suppress these five hindrances and make the mind calm; see, "Key to Calming the Mind - The Five Hindrances."

8. What you are doing in Samatha meditation (focusing the mind on the breath) is to let those sediments settle down. You feel peaceful. This is why you don't get the same results consistently. Some days your mind may be especially perturbed by something.
9. This is why people feel great at the end of a long meditation retreat. All the sediments are well-settled.

- But after coming back and getting back to regular routine, all external disturbances are back and the quality of that experience slowly wears out. It may be lost completely if one keeps practicing at home.

10. However, an Arahant has removed all the sediments. Even if an Arahant is exposed to any type of sensua/hateful situation, his/her mind will not be disturbed:

- A male Arahant will not be seduced by the most beautifil woman in the world; he will not have any hatefil feelings towards a person who just cut off his arm.
- So, an Arahant is like a pure glass of water that does not have any sediments at the bottom.

11. We don't have to become Arahants to improve the quality of our lives. What we can do is to try to get rid of some of the bad habits that are not good in the long term anyway:

- For example, if we really dislike someone, we can start cultivating Metta (loving-kindness) for that person in our mind first. Whenever angry thoughts about the person come to the mind, try to counter that; think about something wonderful or peaceful instead.
- If we have a craving for alcohol, tasty but unhealthy food, etc, think about the possible bad results, and again try to steer the mind to something else, some other activity.

Of course, this needs to be done gradually. People who make New Year's resolutions sometimes abandon them because they try to just "give up" something in one big step. The mind does not like that; it likes to change only when it actually experiences the benefits of changing the habit.
12. Finally, living a simple, moral life (following the five precepts), goes a long way to reduce such bad habits, and to have a peaceful mind in the midst of all "possible distractions."

- Simple yet powerful guidelines to achieve a peaceful state of mind are discussed in a step-by-step process in "Living Dhamma."

Thus it is all about cleaning up one's defilements (bad habits) INSIDE, i.e., in one's mind; see, "1. Introduction to Buddhist Meditation." Once that is done for all defilements, no outside influence can affect one's composure (see \#10 above). One CAN even attain that ultimate stage while staying in the real world.

## Next, "Right Speech - How to Avoid Accumulating Kamma."

### 7.12.3 Right Speech - How to Avoid Accumulating Kamma

## Revised May 27, 2018; January 2, 2020

1. The fourth precept of the five precepts for a moral life is right speech. Most people literally take it to mean "not lying."

- But since we know that intention (cetana $\bar{a}$ ) is at the root of deciding whether an action is right or wrong, we always need to be careful about what we intend to achieve by what we say.
- The correct meaning of "lying" is not to utter speech with "bad intentions" to hurt others or to deceive others.

2. If one does a wrong deed, one may be able to deny it in a statement worded in such way as to conform to legality.

- Yet it is registered as false speech in one's own mind, and thus one is not able to escape the kammic consequences.

3. Ven. Ayya Khema, in her book, "Visible Here and Now" (p. 53), has nicely summarized what right speech is NOT:

- If you know something that is not helpful and is untrue, then do not say it
- If you know something that might be helpful, but is untrue, do not say it
- If you know something that is not helpful and is true, do not speak about it
- If you know something that is helpful and is true, then find the right time to say it

4. If you carefully examine the above four statements, they say to prevent from lying, gossiping, and hate or vain speech; these are the four ways one can accumulate immoral kamma with speech (see, "Ten Immoral Actions - Dasa Akusala").

- Let us look at some of the examples from the Tipitaka on how the Buddha himself handled some situations.

5. When the Buddha was at the Jetavanārāmaya for many years, there lived a butcher Cunda "pig killer" right next door. When some bhikkhus suggested to the Buddha that he should preach the Dhamma to Cunda, and get him to understand the consequences of his actions.

- But the Buddha explained that if he were to go there and try to do that, Cunda would only generate hateful thoughts (patigha) Cunda's mind about the Buddha. Thus Cunda will commit an even worse kamma.
- So, we need to be tactful about our speech.

6. On the other hand, the Buddha walked a long distance to get to Angulimāla just before he was to kill his own mother.

- Anggulimāla had killed almost thousand people, but that was on the prompting of his teacher, who was trying to get Angulimāla into trouble. That morning, the Buddha saw what was about to happen and knew that he would be able to convince Angulimāla of the bad consequences of his actions. Añgulimāla became an Arahant in a few weeks. See, "Account of Angulimāla - Many Insights to Buddha Dhamma."

7. In the case of the wanderer Vacchagotta asking the Buddha about whether there is a "self" or "no-self", the Buddha just remained silent.

- After Vacchagotta left, Buddha's personal attendant, Ven. Ānanda asked him why Buddha did not explain the concept that it is not correct to say "there is no soul" or "there is a soul" (because there is only an ever-changing lifestream) to Vacchagotta. The Buddha told Ānanda that he did not think Vacchagotta was mentally capable at that time to understand the concept, and that he did not want to confuse him. See the post, "What Reincarnates? - Concept of a Lifestream" for the correct explanation.

8. The Buddha was endowed with that capability to see other people's mental status. We do not have that capability. So, we need to use our own judgment.
9. Lying to another human being (with "bad intentions") may have even worse consequences (depending on the particular case) than killing a being of a lower realm. In some cases, lying may lead to physical harm or even death for others.

- The kammic effects of such offenses depends on the status of the being in question and the consequences of the particular action. For example, killing an Arahant or one's own parents is a much worse crime than killing a normal human, and killing any human is much worse than killing any animal; see, "How to Evaluate Weights of Different Kammas."

10. During the Nazi terror in Germany, many Germans "lied" to the Nazis that they were not hiding Jews in their houses; of course the intention was to save human lives, and thus it was the right thing to do. They acquired good kamma for protecting lives.

- We need to realize that "lying" - as meant in as "musāvāda" in the five precepts - really means the "intention" involved: "Mus $\vec{a} "$ means "wrong or incompatible with morals" and "vāda" means "speech"; see, "Details of Kamma - Intention, Who Is Affected, Kamma Patha."
- Therefore, even though they were literally lying, their intention was not a "musāvāda," but actually a "good deed."

Next, "Learning Buddha Dhamma Leads to Nirāmisa Sukha",

### 7.1.2.4 Three Kinds of Happiness - What is Nirāmisa Sukha?

Revised October 29, 2019; re-written October 13, 2022

## Introduction

1. There are three kinds of happiness (sukha): (i) sensual pleasures (āmisa sukha), (ii) jhānic (nirāmisa sukha) pleasures, and (iii) Nibbānic (nirāmisatara) sukha.

- Similarly, three types of joy (pīti): joy due to (i) sensual pleasures (āmisa pīti), (ii) jhānic (nirāmisa pīti) pleasures, and (iii) Nibbānic (nirāmisatara pīti). This
- Note: Sukha is a vedana arising in mind due to bodily feelings (kayika vedanā.) Pīti is a different cetasika arising in mind due to any type of experience. The Nibbānic versions arise in the mind of a living Arahant. After Parinibbāna, we cannot speak about the vedanā or pīti of that Arahant since that Arahant will not be reborn in this world.
- Those are explained in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Nirāmisa Sutta (SN 36.31)."


## What is $\overline{A m i s a}$ ?

2. A$m i s a$ means material; "āmisa dāna" is the offering of material things. Thus $\bar{a} m i s a$ sukha is the pleasure that arises in the mind while enjoying sensory inputs. We are familiar with sensory delights. Indulging in sensory pleasures is all we know to be providing happiness. We want to see beautiful pictures of people, hear soothing music, taste good food, etc.

- The drawback of sensory pleasures is that the experience lasts only during that particular sensory event. For example, the satisfaction goes away as soon as we finish eating. Also, we could not keep eating even if we wanted to. We will get sick of it soon enough, no matter how good the food is.
- The same is true for any other sensory pleasure. One cannot keep listening to music or watching movies for too long at a stretch.
- However, craving any sensory pleasure comes back after a while. It is never permanently satisfying.


## Jhānic Pleasures - Nirāmisa Sukha

3. People who have been doing Samatha meditation (for example, breath or kasina) know that it gives a pleasure different from any sensory pleasure. That nirāmisa sukha transcends the āmisa sukha and is also longer-lasting.

- One could meditate for hours (especially if one gets into a jhānic state) and can enjoy it as long as one wants. Furthermore, even after the session, the calming effect is there. It gives a sense of peacefulness that can last for hours.
- If one dies while in a jhānic state, one will be born in the corresponding Brahma world (either in the rūpa loka or in the arūpa loka depending on the jhānic state). However, a birth in one of the lowest four realms is not ruled out in the future.
- The ability to get into jhānic states could be lost even in this lifetime if one commits an evil kamma or indulges heavily in sense pleasures.
- Jhānic states are attained via TEMPORARY blocking the evils of greed and hate from the mind by focusing the mind on a neutral object such as breath, rising and falling of the stomach, or a kasina object, for example.


## Nirāmisatara Sukha

4. The addition of "tara" (meaning "ultimate") elevates nirāmisa sukha to a state with even less agitation of the mind. The nirāmisatara sukha is more stable even compared to jhānic pleasures. It starts even before the first stage of Nibbāna, the Sotāpanna stage.

- Nirāmisa is the opposite of the $\bar{a} m i s a$ that we mentioned earlier. Thus nirāmisatara sukha does not arise due to material things. Nirāmisatara sukha is purely mental and arises from dissociation from the
stressful material world. It is a relief sensation rather than an enjoyment. Imagine the feeling when a pulsating headache goes away. It is a sense of calm and peacefulmess.
- In other words, worldly stresses diminish as the nirāmisa sukha grows.
- The nirāmisatara sukha of a Sotāpanna (or above) is permanent. The Sotāpanna status is never lost, even through future lives. However, physical suffering may still arise due to kamma vipāka.


## Three Types of Pīti - Similar to Sukha

5. As mentioned in \#1 above, pīti and sukha are different cetasika (mental factors.) Pīti is "joy that arises in mind," and sukha is a type of vedanā that also arises in mind.

- Details in "Nirāmisa Sukha".


## Permanent Happiness

6. The ultimate nirāmisatara sukha is reached at the Arahant. Of course, the complete absence of suffering is reached at the Parinibbāna of an Arahant. See "WebLink: suttacentral: Nibbānasukha Sutta (AN 9.34)."

- Upon attaining Nibbāna (i.e., Arahanthood), there is nothing else to do. An Arahant who has developed higher $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$ can even experience the complete Nibbānic pleasure (saññ̄ vedayita nirodha samāpatti) at will (up to seven days at a time.) The death of Arahant results in permanent Nibbāna, i.e., complete release from suffering or Parinibbāna.
- To emphasize, Parinibbāna is not a "place" with happiness. Instead, it is the complete absence of ANY suffering.
- The four Nibbānic states result via PERMANENT removal of greed, hate, and ignorance in four stages. That involves insight (vipassana $\bar{a}$ ) meditation, most importantly, on the three characteristics of existence: anicca, dukkha, and anatta.
- Even before the Sotāpanna stage, one can start feeling the nirāmisa sukha by systematically removing greed, hate, and ignorance; see "How to Taste Nibbāna."

Also see: Learning Buddha Dhamma Leads to Nirāmisa Sukha
More in-depth analyses at: "Nibbāna."

### 7.1.2.5 Learning Buddha Dhamma Leads to Nirāmisa Sukha

## Revised April 26, 2020

1. It is good to hear from those who have been able to "get to a peaceful state of mind" by reading posts at this site. This is nothing but early stages of Nibbāna or "niveema" or "cooling down", and is also called the "nirāmisa sukha." That is a characteristic of "pure Dhamma" and I cannot take any credit for it. This post explains how it happens.

- In other posts, I have discussed why "formal meditation" is not required to attain the Sotāpanna stage; see, for example, "What is the only Akusala Removed by a Sotāpanna?." Here would like to discuss how this "nirāmisa sukha" arises when one reads (or listens) to the true Dhamma, and how that can take one all the way to the Sotāpanna stage.
- Before that, I need to point out that the "Search" box on the top right can be very useful in navigating the site when one is looking for specific information. Avoid writing sentences or even phrases, but just enter keywords. One could narrow down the number of posts that come up by adding more relevant keywords.
- By the way, the "Search" box on the top right is very good for finding relevant posts on keywords.
- If you have questions or comments, it is best to make a comment at the discussion forum: "Forums."

2. Our minds are under stress constantly due to its tendency to know everything that is going on not only at the physical vicinity, but also things that happened in the past or one's hopes for the future.

- That tendency intensifies when we have excessively greedy or hateful thoughts; these two are called $k \bar{a} m a c c h a n d a$ (strong greed) and $v y \bar{a} p \bar{a} d a$ (strong hate), the two key elements of the five hindrances that "cover our minds." The other three hindrances are basically due to those and also due to our ignorance of how nature operates.
- Think about how "you were on fire" when you got either excessively angry or excessively greedy or lustful.
- When one reads (or listens) attentively to anything of interest, all those hindrances are REDUCED. However, depending on what type of material it is, this suppression may not be very effective. For example, if one is reading a scientific or geography paper, they may be reduced, but if one reading a pornographic novel or listening to rap music, they may actually increase.
- If one is reading Dhamma that is not true Dhamma (or for that matter, any type of religious materia), it will still reduce those five hindrances because that material will not induce any greedy or hateful thoughts.

3. However, there is a big difference in reading (or listening to) true Buddha Dhamma. This is, of course, something one can verify for oneself (as many have).

- Listening or reading true Dhamma elevates the "preethi" (or "pitit") cetasika making one joyful, which in turn makes the body "light", causes physical calmness, and lead to samādhi: "pīti manassa kayo passadati, passadi kayo sukhantiyati, sukhino samadhiyati."
- We will discuss this at a deeper level, in Abhidhamma, where we will discuss how various "mind made rūpa" like lahutā (lightness), Mudutā (Elasticity), and Kammaññat $\bar{a}$ (weildiness) can make one's body "light" or "heavy" depending on the mental status; see, "Rūpa (Material Form) - Table." For example, they are related to the cetasika like kāyapassaddhi (tranquility of mental body); cittapassaddhi (tranquility of consciousness); see, \#6 of "Cetasika (Mental Factors)."
- And this samādhi is attained via the suppression of ALL FIVE hindrances; it is commonly called "Samatha." One does not need to do a special "Samatha Bhāvanā" (like the breath meditation) to calm the mind. If one pays enough attention and gets absorbed in the subject matter while listening to a desanā or reading Dhamma, one could even attain the Sotāpanna stage.

4. This is the samādhi (or feeling of well-being) one feels when reading (or listening) to true Dhamma. It is also called the early stages of "nirāmisa sukha"; see the chart, "Nirāmisa Sukha - In a Chart." It can be printed for reference while reading this post.


- "Nirāmisa sukha," by definition, can be experienced only after one hears the true message of the Buddha: anicca, dukkha, anatta, even though some sense of calm can also be experienced when focusing on any religious activity in general where the difference between what is moral and what is immoral is taught.
- True nirāmisa sukha can be experienced only when one starts seeing a glimpse of the "true nature of this world" and becomes a "Sotāpanna Anugami," i.e., one on the way to become a Sotāpanna. This means one is exposed to the true meaning of existence in this world of 31 realms: anicca, dukkha, anatta. Now, one has the POTENTIAL to become a Sotāpanna.
- When one strives and comprehends the key message of the Buddha that seeking lasting happiness cannot be realized by staying in this beginningless rebirth process, one attains the Sotāpanna stage. Then one can "see" the path to Nibbāna and proceed on one's own. One has removed an "Earth-equivalent of defilements" through Sammā Ditṭhi; this is called "dassanena pahathabba," i.e., "removing defilements via true vision or wisdom"; see, "What is the Only Akusala Removed by a Sotāpanna?."
- Higher stages of Nibbāna normally need formal meditation techniques. The most comprehensive is given in the Mahā Satipatṭhāna Sutta. However, the early parts of the Mahā Satipatthāna Sutta, especially the Kāyānupassana a section, is geared towards help attaining the Sotāpanna stage.

5. The key difference between a person following the mundane Eightfold Path and the Noble Eightfold Path is the following: One on the mundane path avoids immoral activities because one is afraid of their consequences. However, a Sotāpanna avoids dasa akusala because he/she has seen the FRUITLESSNESS of such immoral activities.

- For example, "What is the point of lying to make money, if that cannot provide one with lasting happiness?" That can be applied to any of the 7 immoral activities done by speech and the body. And that is due to the cleansing of the mind and reduction of the 3 akusala done by the mind, where the one of them (niyata micchā diṭ!hi) has now been permanently REMOVED; see, "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)."
- Thus the moral behavior ("silla" or "seela") of a Sotāpanna comes from within, and it is called the "Ariyakāntha Seela." It is unshakeable and remains in future lives.
- Just like someone who has really learned algebra instinctively knows how to solve a previously-unsolved algebra problem, a Sotāpanna instinctively avoids doing dasa akusala of "apāyagām̄̄ strength", i.e., those actions that lead to birth in the ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$. (On the other hand, a person who has only memorized how to solve a few algebra problems can only solve those; he/she is likely to make mistakes in dealing with previously un-encountered problems).
- Once one sees a glimpse of Sammā Ditthi, one can cultivate it further; also the other seven components of the Noble Eightfold Path (Sammā Sañkappa, Sammā Vaca, etc) automatically follow.

6. During the time of the Buddha, many people attained the Sotāpanna stage during the first discourse they listened to. Attaining higher stages of Nibbāna could take more formal meditation by cultivating the basics that one has just grasped.

- Visaka attained the Sotāpanna stage at 7 years of age, and could not attain any higher stages until death. King Bimbisara also died as a Sotāpanna. Yet they are guaranteed to attain full Nibbāna within 7 bhava.
- Upatissa and Kolita attained the Sotāpanna stage while listening to a single verse; it took them a few days to attain the Arahant stage. They, of course, became the two chief disciples of the Buddha, Ven. Sariputta and Ven. Moggallana.
- Thus, formal meditation is normally needed to attain the higher stages of Nibbāna above the Sotāpanna stage. Of course, there are exceptions, like Bahiya Daruchiriya, who attained the Arahantship straightaway while listening to a verse uttered by the Buddha.

7. Whenever one become restless (the uddhacca kukkucca hindrance becoming strong) and get the urge to "go watch a movie" or "stop by a friend's house", one could try reading (listening to) Dhamma. Similarly, if one gets bored and lethargic (thina middha hindrance becoming strong), try the same; ditto for when one is struggling to figure out "how to proceed on a key decision" due to the vicikicchā hindrance.

- The "preethi" or joyfulness that arises with samādhi WILL keep all those hindrances down, especially the thina middha. This is the real test of one's ability to get to samādhi. If the state of samādhi is at a significant level, one should be able to follow the procedure in \#7 above and "not fall asleep" even right after a good meal when one usually gets sleepy.

8. Even though learning Dhamma, in general, will lead to the above-discussed effects, comprehending anicca, dukkha, anatta WILL make a big difference. However, that may take more reading and comprehension of the wider world view of the Buddha: how kamma operates, 31 realms of existence, the rebirth process, paticca samuppāda, etc.

- It is not possible even to suggest which order of topics to choose, because each person is different. And it is imperative that one should not rush through them. Gradual, steady progress is better than getting the hopes high and feeling depressed if things do not proceed fast enough.
- What I would suggest, in general, is to first focus on the concepts that one starts understanding easily and slowly expand the "knowledge base" by reading on other relevant links.
- Also, it is a good idea to go back and read some key posts that one has not read for a while. One may grasp more content from the same post when reading at a later time because what is learned in the meantime could expose deeper meanings. I know this by experience. This is the uniqueness of Buddha Dhamma; the learning never ends, rather it just intensifies with added evidence.
- It will stop being a "chore" and will become joyful as one learns more and more. The more one learns the more energized one will become.

9. Even though it may not seem to be a 'big deal', understanding anicca (or cultivating the anicca sañña $\bar{a}$ ) will make a huge change in one's progress, after one gains some understanding of the basic concepts like rebirth and kamma.

- I had struggled intensely for 3-4 years and made an enormous advance in listening to one discourse on anicca, dukkha, anatta. But of course, I had learned a lot of background material by that time and had given a lot of thought to various concepts.
- Still, by knowing what things are really important could make things easier for someone just starting out, or has been "on the wrong path."
－My hope is that many will be able to attain at least the first stage of Nibbāna much more quickly than I did．


## 7．1．2．6 How to Taste Nibbāna

## Revised November 24，2018；April 26， 2020

1．Elsewhere on the site，I have described Nibbāna in a deeper sense．But we can look at the early stages of Nibbāna in a simple way．
－In Sinhala language（spoken in Sri Lanka），Nibbāna is also called＂nivana＂or＂niveema＂（3ી己刃刃）．This means＂cooling down．＂As one moves towards Nibbāna，one feels cooling down，a sense of well－being．

2．Do you remember the last time when you got really mad？How did that feel？You get hot．Whole－body becomes hot and agitated．Blood pressure goes up and the face becomes dark because the blood becomes dark．By the way，this is clear evidence that the mind can affect the body．
－This＂burning up＂is called＂tāpa＂in Pāli（ $>3$ in Sinhala），and is due to greed，hate，and ignorance． ＂Ātāpi＂means the opposite，＂cooling down via getting rid of those defilements．＂This is what is meant by ＂ātāpi sampajāno＂in the Satipaṭthāna sutta；see，＂Mahā Satipatthāna Sutta．＂
－When someone can get to the＂ātāpi sampajāno＂state，one feels calm and＂cooled down＂；see， ＂Kāyānupassanā－The Section on Habits（Sampajānapabba）．＂

3．Do you remember how you felt when you made someone happy，either via a good deed or word？You cooled down；felt good．Didn＇t you feel the opposite of when you got mad？
－When one acts with greed，＂heating up＂still happens，may be to a lesser extent than when one is angry． As a kid，when I was stealing something，I felt heated and uncomfortable．
－The same is true when one acts with ignorance too．One is not certain whether that is the right thing to do；the mind goes back and forth：is this right or wrong？should I do it or not？This is called＂vicikicch $\vec{a}$＂ in Pāli．Because one does not really know，one is not certain，one becomes anxious，and the body gets heated up．

4．Thus，when one gives up acting with hate，greed，or ignorance，one becomes less agitated，at ease，with a sense of peacefulness．This is an early sense of what Nibbāna is．
－As one can see the benefits of cooling down，one will avoid actions done with hate，greed，and ignorance．And one will be looking forward to doing actions of goodwill，generosity，and mindfulness．
－Avoiding greed，hate，and ignorance is the same as avoiding dasa akusala．
5．Also，note the state of thoughts（citta）in the two opposing situations．When one acts with the defilements， thoughts run wildly；they come fast and they are energetic．The＂javana＂（impulsive power）of thought is high when acting with a defilement．
－On the other hand，thoughts run more smoothly and the javana（impulsive power）of a given thought is calm when acting benevolently，with kindness，with generosity，and with mindfulness；they are powerful too，but only in making one calm．Thus one can experience a taste of Nibbāna or＂cooling down＂even at the very early stages of the Path．

6．Now，one could get to TEMPORARY cooling down by not letting thoughts run wildly．The easiest to do is to keep the mind on a single focus．This can be done by focusing the mind on a religious symbol or just on the breath．Thus this＇temporary relief＇is felt by people of any religion when they contemplate a religious symbol with faith，or by doing＂breath meditation＂or mundane＂Ānāpānasati＂meditation．
－However，the only way to achieve permanent sense relief is to REMOVE greed，hate，and ignorance gradually by cleansing one＇s mind．This is done by＂taking in＂（ana）of good thoughts，speech，and actions，and＂getting rid of＂（apāna）defiled thoughts，speech，and actions．This is the Buddha＇s
$\bar{a} n \bar{a} p \bar{a} n a$ meditation that can lead to PERMANENT happiness. See, "Is Ānāpānasati Breath Meditation?"

- When one does this correct "ānāpāna" consistently, one's bad habits ("gati") will be gradually removed and good habits ("gati") will be cultivated.
- When one has removed the defilements to a significant extent, then this relief becomes permanent and will not reduce from that state even in future births. This first stage of Nibbāna is called the Sotāpanna stage. A Sotāpanna is guaranteed not to be reborn in the apāy $\bar{a}$ or the four lowest realms; he/she has removed all "gati" suitable for beings in the apāyā. See, "Gati to Bhava to Jāti- Ours to Control."

7. However, it is impossible to remove greed and hate just by sheer will power, i.e., forcefully. For example, one cannot get rid of greed even by giving away one's wealth; if that is done without understanding, then it could lead to remorse and hate.

- Rather, getting rid of greed and hate comes AUTOMATICALLY as one understands the worldview of the Buddha: that we cannot maintain anything to our satisfaction in the LONG RUN. This worldview is embedded in the Three Characteristics of "this world" or anicca, dukkha, anatta.
- Not knowing the Three Characteristics is the ignorance or $a v i j j \bar{a}$.
- Even before comprehending the Three Characteristics, one needs to reduce total ignorance (moha) to the avijjā level by getting rid of the 10 types of micchā ditt hi; see, "Micchā Ditthi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage."

8. This is why Sammā Ditṭhi or "correct world view" comes first in the Noble Eightfold Path. When one comprehends the true nature of "this world", one's mind will AUTOMATICALLY start rejecting thoughts, words, and actions through greed and hate.

- Then Sammā Ditṭhi (correct vision) will automatically lead to Sammā Sañkappa (fruitful thoughts), Sammā Vācā (fruitful speech), Sammā Kammanta (fruitful actions), Sammā $\bar{j} j \bar{\imath} v a$ (livelihood), Sammā Vāyāma (efforts in those), Sammā Sati (moral mindset) and then will culminate in Sammā Samādhi (peaceful state of mind). This Sammā Samādhi is permanent for a Sotāpanna.
- Thus it is clear that such a samādhi cannot be attained with breath meditation or any other way of "focusing attention" on one thought object.
- Purification of the mind is the key, and that comes first through reading, listening, and comprehending the true and pure Dhamma.

9. As one follows the Noble Eightfold Path of the Buddha, one can EXPERIENCE a sense of well-being called nirämisa sukha which is different from the sense pleasures; see, "Three Kinds of Happiness - What is Nirāmisa Sukha?."

- If you did experience a sense of well-being just by reading this post, that is a good start. That sense of well being will only grow as the understanding gets deeper. I have gone through this process myself and that is what I am trying to convey to others.

10. September 22, 2016: I have started a new section: "Living Dhamma," where an experience-based process of practicing Buddha Dhamma (Buddhism) is discussed with English discourses (desanā). Nibbāna can be experienced at various levels, one needs to experience the earlier stages of nirāmisa sukha first.

Next, "Need to Experience Suffering in Order to Understand it?", ..
A deeper analysis of Nibbāna at "Nibbāna."

### 7.1.2.7 Need to Experience Suffering in Order to Understand it?

Revised August 18, 2016; Revised February 4, 2017; April 26, 2020

1. It is a common misconception that one needs to experience harsh suffering in order to understand what the Buddha meant by the First Noble Truth, that there is "suffering in this world."

- Thus, especially in the days of the Buddha, some people deliberately lived a miserable life, thinking that it will help understand suffering. They subjected their bodies to various forms of discomfort and even torture.
- This is actually one extreme that the Buddha said NOT to follow: "atta kilamathānu yoga," or subjecting oneself to unnecessary suffering. Closest English translations would be "an ascetic life", where one forcefully abstains from any comforts.

2. The Buddha never encouraged anyone to deliberately undergo suffering. The suffering that the Buddha talked about is hidden and is about future suffering in this life and in future lives. There are two kinds of "hidden suffering" that the Buddha revealed to the world:

- One is the very harsh suffering in the rebirth process (when one is born in the lowest four realms or the apāyā).
- The other is the "incessant distress" that we all undergo even without realizing it: "Anicca - The Incessant Distress ("Pilana")."
- Anyone, rich or poor, undergoes this latter type of suffering in this life. The Buddha pointed out that one could discover this type of hidden suffering and remove it too: "Starting on the Path Even without Belief in Rebirth"and other posts in the "Living Dhamma" section.

3. If one needs to suffer more to attain Nibbāna, then those who are in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$ would be the first attain Nibbāna! Most of the suffering is experienced when one is born in the apāy $\bar{a}$ or the lower four realms, see, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma."

- In order to actually realize the true suffering, whether in this life or in the lower four realms, one needs to contemplate (bhāvanā) with a healthy body and a clear mind.
- If one is hungry, one CANNOT understand the causes of suffering; rather one will be generating hateful thoughts. The same is true for all four necessities of life: food, shelter, clothing, and medicine. We NEED those things to survive.
- What we should NOT do is to over-indulge in any of the above four necessities of life. That is the other extreme that the Buddha said to avoid: "kāma sukallikānu yoga," or to over-indulge in sense pleasures, i.e., to live a hedonistic life.

4. It is commonly said that the Buddha advocated the "middle ground", i.e., to avoid both an ascetic life (with self-induced suffering) or a hedonistic (over-indulgent) life. That is true, but there is more to it.
There is a deeper meaning to "majjima paṭipadā." The way to a peaceful existence (or to Nibbāna) is to get rid of greed, hate, AND ignorance. The two extremes that we talked about above do involve hate or at least patigha or "friction" (when subjecting oneself to suffering) and greed (indulging in excessive sense pleasures).

- Just because one stays away from those two extremes does not necessarily mean one is on the "correct path." The Path is not just a "middle ground" between those two extremes.
- The key is to learn Dhamma and to systematically reduce greed, hate, and ignorance.
- Of course, living a life away from the two extremes is conducive - even necessary - to learn Dhamma and to gradually remove defilements from the mind.

5. In between those two extremes, one needs to avoid being influenced by an "intoxicated mind." In between the above two extremes, people also act in improper ways intoxicated by power, beauty, position, (book) knowledge, lineage, etc as well as by alcohol and drugs. This is due to avijjā or ignorance.

- Thus, "majjihma patipada" really means to follow a simple lifestyle without veering to the extremes.
- Thus majjhima patipadā is to follow a lifestyle that avoids the corruption of the mind by excess attachments to sense pleasures. On the hand, there is no need to subject one's body to unnecessary hardships either.

6. In summary, the Buddha recommended a "common sense" comfortable, but simple, life that is conducive to meditation. Here meditation (Bhāvanā) is not necessarily "formal meditation." The Buddha said, "bhāvanāya bahulīkataya," or "contemplate as often as possible." [bahulīkata :[pp. of bahulikaroti] took up seriously; increased. (adj.), practised frequently.]

- One also needs to be avoiding immoral actions, speech, or thoughts as much as possible, and actually cultivate moral actions, speech, and thoughts. That helps suppress the five hindrances (pañcan̄̄varaṇa) and have a peaceful state of mind, i.e., one could start experiencing the nirāmisa sukha that arises due to a "more pure state of mind."

7. One can be contemplating the nature of the world as one goes through daily chores. Another aspect of this is the ability to calm the mind; see, "Key to Calming the Mind."

- A bigger picture implied here is that we need to educate our children so that they can find good employment and thus be able to live without having to worry about those four necessities of life. As they grow up, we need to educate them in Dhamma (how to live a moral life) too, but not at the expense of them getting a good education.

8. Suffering is NOT the Noble truth on Suffering, i.e., Dukha (feeling of suffering) is NOT dukkha sacca (the Noble Truth that suffering can be stopped from arising); sacca pronounced "sachcha" and means "truth."

- The Noble Truth of dukkha sacca is about comprehending how suffering ARISES due to greed, hate, and ignorance (of this fact). One can understand that -and take steps to avoid future suffering - by learning Dhamma: anicca, dukkha, anatta, paticca samuppāda, etc.
- The Buddha said, "This Dhamma is unlike anything that the world has ever seen." The actual suffering is hidden WITHIN the apparent enjoyments. Also see, "The Incessant Distress (Peleema") - Key to Dukkha Sacca."
- For another description of majjhima patipadā, see, "Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta."

Next, "What is Unique in Buddha Dhamma?", .........

### 7.1.2.8 Does Impermanence Lead to Suffering?

Revised April 26, 2020; June 7, 2020; August 23, 2022
The following INCORRECT statements are in frequent use in most books in both Mahāyāna and current texts on Theravāda:

1. "We suffer because our bodies are impermanent; they are subject to decay and death."
2. "We suffer because those things we get attached to are impermanent."
3. "If something is impermanent, that leads to suffering."
4. "Since everything in this world is impermanent, everything is suffering", etc.

Is there a direct correlation between impermanence and suffering? Let us examine those statements.

1. "We suffer because our bodies are impermanent; they are subject to decay (aging), illness, and death."

- We indeed suffer because OUR bodies are impermanent and are subject to decay (aging), illness, and death. But if it is an enemy, do we suffer when that enemy gets sick or die? We suffer if someone we

LIKE gets ill or dies, but it is cause for celebration for most people when someone they dislike gets ill or dies.

- The suffering/happiness is directly proportional to the attachment/dislike we have for that person. Suffering due to the loss of one's child is more compared to the loss of a distant relative. Happiness due to Bin Laden's death was higher compared to the death of an unknown terrorist. (For a follower of Bin Laden, his death would have led to suffering).

Suffering arises when things do not proceed as we like. It is human nature to want loved ones to be unharmed and enemies to come to harm. When either does not happen, that leads to suffering. That is what anicca means: the inability to maintain things to our liking.

## 2. "We suffer because those things we get attached to are impermanent."

- Many things in this world cause us suffering because they will not stay in the same condition or are destroyed. That is true.
- But many other "permanent" things in this world (at least relative to our lifetime of 100 years) are associated with suffering. If one has an illness that becomes "permanent" would that not lead to more suffering?
- A gold necklace is not impermanent, i.e., it will last for thousands of years. But the woman who owns one may be robbed of it, and in the process, could get hurt too. She could not "maintain that necklace as she desired."

If ANYTHING causes us suffering, that is only because we cannot maintain it to our satisfaction, oru liking.

## 3. "If something is impermanent, that leads to suffering."

The following is the conventional (incorrect) translation of Buddha's words: "yad aniccaim taín dukkhamं," i.e., "if something is not permanent, that leads to suffering." But the correct translation is, "if something cannot be maintained to our liking, that leads to suffering." Let us consider some examples:

- If we have a headache, and if it is not permanent (i.e., it goes away), does that cause suffering? No. However, if the headache becomes permanent, that will lead to suffering.
- If we come down with cancer, wouldn't it cause happiness if it becomes impermanent?, i.e., if it goes away?
- If a relative (we do not like) comes to stay with us, would it lead to happiness if the stay becomes permanent or impermanent? Of course, it will cause us happiness if the stay is not permanent and the person leaves.


## 4. "Since everything in this world is impermanent, everything is suffering."

The Buddha never said everything in this world leads to suffering. If it is obvious that everything is suffering, then everyone will be looking to attain Nibbāna as soon as possible. The reality is that there are sensory pleasures in this world. Most people do not understand why one should go to all this trouble to "give up all these pleasures and seek Nibbāna."

- Looking at the "big picture" of the 31 realms in this world, there are many realms where suffering is much less. See "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma."
- But there is unimaginable suffering in the lowest four realms, and we need to avoid that. Even though there are 31 realms, MOST LIVING BEINGS ( $99.99 \%+$ ) are in the lowest four realms.
- Thus what is true is that this samisāric journey is filled with UNIMAGINABLE suffering. However, one cannot see that unless one learns true Dhamma.
- Even in this life, there is much suffering, especially as one age. The suffering is highest close to death if the death is due to an ailment. If one enjoys sex, that ability to enjoy sex will fade away as one gets old. It
does not matter how much money one has. Even our taste buds will not give us the same enjoyment from foods as we get old. All our sense faculties will start performing less and less as we get old. That is anicca. We cannot maintain things to our satisfaction in the long run.
- Even if we are born in a higher realm with much happiness, that existence cannot be maintained. One day, that life will be over, and one WILL end up in a lower realm at some point, and then it will be very hard to get out of there. That is anicca.
- Furthermore, if the cause of suffering is impermanence, then it cannot be eliminated, see, "Would Nibbāna be Possible if Impermanence is the Cause of Suffering?."
In Pāli (or in Sinhala), the word "icca" (pronounced "ichcha") means liking. Thus anicca (pronounced "anichcha") means not to like.


## Correct Interpretations

5. Therefore, the correct translation of "yad aniccain taï dukkhaï" is "if something cannot be maintained to our satisfaction, that leads to suffering." As the Buddha stated, you can take any example you like and verify that it is a universal principle, an unchanging characteristic of this world.

- See "Anicca - Inability to Keep What We Like" for details.

6. Without understanding the three characteristics of "this world," it is impossible to grasp the Buddha's message. Those three characteristics are anicca, dukkha, and anatta. Here anatta is pronounced "anaththa." These are the words in the Tipitaka written more than 2000 years ago, in 29 BCE.

- The problem started when these words were translated to Sanskrit as anitya, dukha, and anātma; this started probably as far back as the first or second century CE.
" Then those Sanskrit words were translated to English as impermanence, suffering, and "no-self." The two worst translations are impermanence and "no-self." See, "Misinterpretation of Anicca and Anatta by Early European Scholars."
- Those two Sanskrit words, anitya and anātma, are being used by many in Sri Lanka today as Sinhala words representing the translations of the "Pāli words", anicca and anatta. Furthermore, the Pāli word nicca (pronounced "nichcha") was translated to Sanskrit as "nitya" (pronounced "nithya") which means "permanent." The Pāli word nicca means "something can be maintained to one's satisfaction and, thus, is fruitful [subha]."
- However, nicca, anicca, and anatta are "old Sinhala" words with entirely different meanings than nitya, anitya, and anātma. Those words are not commonly used today, but when explained, a Sinhalaspeaking person can understand the real meaning. Indeed old ladies in villages in Sri Lanka still say "ane aniccan" ( (\%చ0 \% \&

7. The Buddha stated that those three characteristics, anicca, dukkha, and anatta, are related:
"yad aniccain taì dukkhaì, taì dukkhaì tad anatt $\bar{a} "$, or,
"if something is not nicca, dukha arises, and because of that, one becomes helpless [anatta]."

- In the long-term, not realizing the anicca nature leads to rebirths in the four lower realms (apāyā.)

8. As mentioned above, as one gets old or gets disabled, these three characteristics will be easier to see for oneself; but then it would be too late because the mind gets weaker as we get old. One needs to learn Dhamma BEFORE the mind (and the body) become weak. Here is a video that shows this clearly (of course, we all will go through such changes as we grow old):

WebLink: RANKER: Celebrities Who Have Aged the Worst

Also, see "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta - Wrong Interpretations," and "Why is Correct Interpretation of Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta so Important?" for more details.

Next, "What is Mind - How do we Experience the Outside World?", $\qquad$
7.1.3 Buddha Dhamma and Buddhism
"What is Unique in Buddha Dhamma?"
"A Buddhist or a Bhouddhaya?"
"Where to Start on the Path?"
"What Reincarnates? - Concept of a Lifestream" Moved to Paticca Samuppādla $==>$ Sakkāya Ditthi and Pațicca Samuppāda
"Recent Evidence for Unbroken Memory Records (HSAM)"
"Buddhism without Rebirth and Nibbāna?"
""Self" and "no-self": A Simple Analysis - Do We Always Act with Avijiā??"

### 7.1.3.1 What is Unique in Buddha Dhamma?

Revised November 16, 2019; August 28, 2022; updated with new chart October 15, 2022

## All Religions Are the Same?

1. When I hear the frequent statement, "all religions are the same, $\backslash$ they teach you how to live a moral life," I cringe. That is because I think about all those unaware of the Buddha's actual message. In particular, this is the mindset of those who follow "secular Buddhism."

- Most religions indeed teach how to live a moral life. And there is also evidence that atheists may be as moral as religious people are; see "WebLink: Morality in everyday life-Science-2014-Hofmann."
- However, Buddha Dhamma goes beyond that. The Buddha said, no matter how well we live this life that will not help us in the long term, in the rebirth process.
- Yet, even to understand the message of the Buddha, one must live a moral life first.


## Two Paths Described by the Buddha

2. I have made a chart to illustrate the two types of Eightfold Paths explained by the Buddha:


This chart can be viewed in a separate panel by clicking on "Buddha Dhamma - In a Chart" and printed for reference. There are a few key things that need explanation first:

- The "mundane Eightfold Path" is depicted by the set of boxes in red, starting with "mundane samm $\bar{a}$ diṭthi." The next box depicts mundane versions of samma $\operatorname{sañkappa,~sammā,~vācā,~and~sammā~}$ kammanta." Which means "think, speak, and act morally to avoid bad outcomes/seek good outcomes" and so on until "mundane sammā samādhi."
- Most of these steps (not all) are in other religions and conventional or secular "Buddhism." They describe how to live a moral life. Most other religions aim to gain a (permanent) heavenly life at death.
- In the current distorted versions of "Buddhism," the joys of heavenly lives are highlighted. Sometimes one is encouraged to "enjoy such heavenly lives" before attaining Nibbāna. They don't understand the "anicca nature" of any realm in this world, i.e., they don't comprehend the Four Noble Truths. See "Paticca Samuppāda, Tilakkhana, Four Noble Truths."


## What Is a "Good Birth"?

3. This misconception in "Buddhism" arises because the rarity of a "good rebirth" has not been comprehended; see "How the Buddha Described the Chance of Rebirth in the Human Realm." This is why the Buddha said, "no happiness can be found anywhere in the 31 realms" (the true meaning of anicca).

- Even if a heavenly rebirth is attained in the next life, a future rebirth in the four lowest realms ( $a p \bar{a} \bar{y} \bar{a}$ ) cannot be avoided without attaining the Sotāpanna stage of Nibbāna. A phrase used by some bhikkhus in Sri Lanka goes as, "May you attain Nibbāna at the time of the Buddha Maitreya (next Buddha)." Why not attain Nibbāna in this life? Who is going to give guarantees that one will be born human during the time of the Buddha Maitreya? Everyone should use this rare opportunity to be human, to strive now!
- Until one comprehends anicca, dukkha, and anatta, one always values future happiness in permanent heaven (most religions) OR temporary happiness in heavenly worlds (traditional "Buddhists"). The difference between a traditional "Buddhist" and a Bhauddhaya is discussed in "A Buddhist or a Bhauddhaya?."
- One starts on the transcendental (lokuttara) or the Noble Eightfold Path when one comprehends the dangers of the rebirth process and BECOMES a Sotāpanna.
- When one is trying to attain that understanding, one is called a Sotāpanna magga anugāmi; see "Sotāpanna Anugāmi and a Sotāpanna."


## Two Eightfold Paths

4. In the "Mahā Cattārisaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty)," the Buddha discussed that one must first follow the mundane eightfold path. That will remove the ten types of wrong views (micchā ditṭhi) listed in \#3 of that post. After that, one needs to comprehend the Tilakkhaṇa (anicca, dukkha, anatta) to some extent to start on the Noble Eightfold Path.

- Thus, one starts on the Noble Eightfold Path starting with lokuttara (transcendental) sammā ditthi of a Sotāpanna (set of blue boxes in the chart). One has seen a "glimpse of Nibbāna," i.e., one KNOWS that permanent happiness is not possible anywhere in the 31 realms and that whatever effort one makes to achieve such happiness is like chasing a mirage.

5. Note the difference in the box next to "samma diṭthi" in the two cases. In the mundane path, "samm $\bar{a}$ sañkappa, samm $\bar{a} v \bar{a} c \bar{a}$, sammā kammanta" are "moral thoughts, speech, and actions" intended to avoid bad outcomes and to seek good outcomes.

- In the Noble path, "sammā sañkappa, samm $\bar{a} v \bar{a} c \bar{a}, \operatorname{samma}$ kammanta" are "thoughts, speech, and actions" intended to stop the rebirth process. One does not do immoral things because there is "no point" in doing such things. One knows that such things are unfruitful and dangerous in the long run.
- And one becomes more compassionate towards all living beings (not just humans) because one can see that each living being suffers because of ignorance of the Buddha's key message. One also realizes that one needs to fulfill obligations to others to "pay back old debts"; one is bound to the rebirth process not only via cravings for worldly things but also via unpaid debts from previous lives.


## Noble Eightfold Path

65. The decision to become a Sotāpanna magga anugāmi (the path to the Sotāpanna stage) can be made anytime after getting to the "red boxes," i.e., while one is on the mundane Eightfold Path.

- In a way, a Sotāpanna magga anugāmi is a Bhauddhaya in the real sense. See "A Buddhist or a Bhauddhaya?" Even though not in the Tipiṭaka, sometimes the word "Cūla Sotāpanna" (pronounced "chūla Sotāpanna") is also used to describe the same person.
- The key is comprehending the "true nature of this world of 31 realms," Buddha described. That says it is impossible to achieve/maintain anything that can be kept to one's satisfaction (anicca.) Thus one gets to suffer (dukkha), and thus, one is truly helpless in the rebirth process (anatta). This realization is like lifting a heavy load that one has been carrying, the first taste of Nibbāna.

7. This "change of mindset" for a Sotāpanna is PERMANENT, i.e., it will not change even in future rebirths. One has attained an "unbreakable" level of confidence (saddh $\bar{a})$ in the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sañgha.

- And a Sotāpanna can follow the rest of the seven steps in the Noble Eightfold Path even without help from others. Thus one will attain the following three stages of Nibbāna (Sakadāgāmī, Anāgāmī, Arahant) successively by following those steps.


## Mundane Eightfold Path

8. In the Mahā Cattārīsaka Sutta, the Buddha outlined how one needs first to follow the mundane ("lokiya") Eightfold Path; see "Mahā Cattārīsaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty)." This is the first NECESSARY step to eliminate the worst kinds of "gunk" that have been built up over countless past lives.

- The unique message of the Buddha has been hidden for hundreds of years. What is conventionally practiced today is just this mundane Eightfold Path. This is what we call "Buddhism" today.
- That superficial or "secular" Buddhism is not that different from what is advised by most other religions. Thus, it is easier for people to resonate with the mundane concepts in "Buddhism." Sammā Ditthi, for example, is considered the "correct vision" of "how to live a moral life."
- Of course, that is the first necessary step. That will help one to be able to experience the benefits of moral behavior (even in this life as a "nirāmisa sukha"; see "How to Taste Nibbāna") and then comprehend anicca, dukkha, and anatta, and embark on the Noble Eightfold Path to seek permanent happiness or Nibbāna.

Next, "A Buddhist or a Bhauddhaya?",

### 7.1.3.2 A Buddhist or a Bhauddhayā?

Revised August 18, 2016; revised April 25, 2019; April 22, 2022; re-written September 12, 2022

## Buddhism Versus Buddha Dhamma

1. The terms "Buddhism" and "Buddhist" were invented by English, French, and German historians in the nineteenth century when they frst came across Buddha Dhamma in India, Sri Lanka, and other Asian countries. The Pāli word for a Buddhist is "Upāsaka," and the Sinhala word is Bhauddhayā.

- The discovery of the "Asoka pillars" in India was followed by the discovery of the Pāli literature on Buddha Dhamma in Sri Lanka and other countries such as Burma and Thailand (together with translated Chinese Āgama scripts); of course, there were no practicing "Buddhists" or any Buddhist literature in India.
- See "Historical Background" for details.


## Buddha Dhamma - Ending of Future Suffering

2. Here are two key points that should be the basis for defining the terms:

- Up to that time, it was "Buddha Dhamma" or the "Dhamma or Teachings of the Buddha."
- The word Buddha comes from "bhava" + "uddha"; here, "bhava" means "existence (in the 31 realms)," and "uddha" means "removal." Therefore, Buddha is one who figured out how to stop the rebirth process and thus end future suffering. Every birth ends in old age and death; there are no exceptions.
- And a person who diligently followed the Path advised by the Buddha was called a "Bhauddhay $\bar{a} "(=b h a v a+u d d h a+y \bar{a}=$ one who strives to stop the rebirth process, i.e., to stop suffering).
- Thus, if religion is defined as "faith-based salvation," Buddha Dhamma is not a religion. It is a new worldview that can lead to stopping future suffering. Faith in that new vision will grow as one's understanding improves.


## Bhauddhay $\bar{a}$ and Up $\bar{a} s a k a$

 word for a lay Buddhist is "Upāsaka." Both words are being used in the Sinhala language today.

- The word upāsaka probably came from "upa" + "āsava" + "khaya," where those words mean "stay close to," "defilements," and "eliminate" or "wear away."
- Thus, it means someone who stays close to the goal of eliminating defilements (lobha, dosa, and moha) leading to Nibbāna. Hence both words have the same meaning.


## Most Adherents Today Are "Secular Buddhists"

4. When I hear the common statement, "all religions are the same; they teach you how to live a MORAL LIFE," I cringe. I think about all those people unaware of the Buddha's actual message. In particular, those who follow "secular Buddhism" have not realized the true value of Buddha Dhamma.

- Most people today have been exposed just to bits and pieces of Buddha Dhamma. Many do not believe in rebirth and are happy to be called "secular Buddhists." See "WebLink: en.wikipedia.org: Secular Buddhism."
- They are happy to follow the precepts of moral conduct, do breath meditation to relieve the stresses of modern life, and see where that leads them; see the discussion at "WebLing: PureDhammaForums: Goenka's Vipassana."
- That is a perfectly good starting point. But Buddha Dhamma is much deeper and can lead to a state without suffering, i.e., Nibbāna; see, "Nibbāna." Also, see "Buddhism without Rebirth and Nibbāna?"
- In addition, it is the best way to learn about this world. I have spent over ten years of my life to learning Buddha Dhamma, and I am still learning! It is an exhilarating experience.


## Misconceptions of Secular Buddhists

5. Each person understands Buddha Dhamma differently, mainly based on the level of exposure to "correct Dhamma." Most people have the following misconceptions:
i. Buddha Dhamma provides temporary relief (version of nirāmisa sukha) from mental stress (as in breath meditation).
ii. Some others believe mediation will help alleviate suffering from physical ailments.

- While (i) is correct, it is only a minor benefit. The main benefit is to stop future suffering in the rebirth process.
- Those who believe in (ii) turn to Buddhism too late, but better late than never! It is easier to grasp the worldview of the Buddha when the body and the mind are in good condition, i.e., when one is healthy and the mind is alert.


## Hidden Suffering in the Rebirth Process

6. The main message of the Buddha goes beyond "living a moral life." He pointed out two forms of hidden suffering that average humans are not aware of:
i. That incessant distress or agitation we all feel in $\# 5$ above arises due to greed, hate, and ignorance (of moral values first, then the ignorance of the true nature of this world at a deeper level.)
ii. Immoral deeds we commit due to these greedy, hateful, or ignorant mindsets will lead to much higher forms of suffering in future rebirths (especially when born in animals and other lower realms).

## Buddha Dhamma Is the Ultimate Science

7. In world religions, faith in religion is mostly "blind faith." Buddha Dhamma is more of a science than a religion. For example, one does not need to believe in rebirth with blind faith. There are two avenues to explore.
i. There is mounting evidence for rebirth; see "Evidence for Rebirth" and "Near-Death Experiences (NDE): Brain Is Not the Mind."
ii. Even more importantly, the worldview of the Buddha is self-consistent with rebirth among 31 realms of existence built-in. See "Origin of Life."

- However, those new to Buddhism need to start gradually. It is good to read "Starting on the Path without Belief in Rebirth" and "Is It Necessary for a Buddhist to Eliminate Sensual Desires?" frrst.

8. Closely related to rebirth is the fact that we can be reborn among 31 realms of existence. Thus, in addition to the human and animal realms, there are 29 more realms that we are not aware of.

- Thus, the "wider worldview" of the Buddha can be briefly summarized as follows:
(i.) Any living being will be reborn among the 31 realms,
(ii.) Most rebirths are in the lowest four realms, and one of those is the animal realm (that is why the rebirth process has more suffering)
(iii) Rebirth process happens naturally according to kamma accumulated via good/bad deeds.
- The first step to be released from that future suffering is to learn the wider worldview of the Buddha. This website is dedicated to explaining the Buddha's worldview.


## One Becomes a Bhauddhayā/Upāsaka by Learning Buddha's Worldview

9. There are no rituals to become either a "secular Buddhist" or a Bhauddhay $\bar{a}$. As one becomes convinced of the Buddha's worldview and starts seeing the truth of the "wider worldview," one becomes a better Buddhist or a Bhauddhayā.

- As one becomes a Buddhist/Bhauddhayā, his/her personality may start changing without forcefully changing it. That is because one starts seeing the world differently and reacting to outside events differently. It is all about changing perceptions about "this world," i.e., it is all mental.
- Because of this, one cannot become a Bhauddhayā or even a good Buddhist by just following rituals. One becomes a good Buddhist/Bhauddhayā by attempting to comprehend the message of the Buddha and by experiencing the benefits as one progresses.


## Making Gradual Progress

10. "Dhamma will guide and protect one who lives by Dhamma" ("Dhammo ha ve rakkhati Dhammacāri.') If one starts becoming a Buddhist/Bhauddhayā, one will be able to see the changes in oneself as time goes by (others will start noticing after a bit longer). One's likings and associations are the first to change.

- A Bhauddhayā/Upāsaka starts to realize the futility of staying anywhere in the 31 realms and will eventually attain the first stage of Nibbāna, i.e., become a Sotāpanna.
- A Sotāpanna would be automatically released from future births in the apāyās or the four lowest realms, including the animal realm.
- How that happens is described in other sections of the site, especially in the section "Sotāpanna Stage of Nibbāna."
- Another key point the Buddha made was no "soul-like" entity moves from birth to birth. Future births occur due to causes and conditions as described in Paticca Samuppāda. See "What Reincarnates? Concept of a Lifestream."
- The main teachings of the Buddha are embedded in "Paticca Samuppāda, Tilakkhana, Four Noble Truths."


## Summary

11. Many people (especially those new to Buddhism/Buddha Dhamma) waste time by plunging headlong into reading deep suttas. That is like trying to learn mathematics without understanding addition/subtraction.

- One MUST first understand the "new vision" presented to the world by the Buddha; it is previously unknown to the world. It follows the same principle of causality followed by modern science. The Buddha's version is Paticca Samuppāda. It explains in detail how future rebirths occur due to one's mindset and actions. Suttas on Paticca Samuppāda start with the "WebLink: suttacentral: Paticcasamuppāda Sutta (SN 12.1)."
- Another key point I did not discuss above is the importance of living a moral life. It is easier to grasp the deep Dhamma with a cleansed mind with less greed, hate/anger, and ignorance (of moral values); see "Sila, Samādhi, Paññā to Pañ̃̃̄̄, Sila, Samādhi." Thus, starting as a "secular Buddhist" is perfectly fine.


### 7.1.3.3 Where to Start on the Path?

This is a very important post. Please read the post through without clicking on any link first, in order to get the main idea that I am trying to convey. You may want to re-read the post several times, clicking on the links to find out more as you digest the key points. Actually, this is true of all the posts: It is better to read through a given post first to get the main idea, and then to look into the details provided by the links as needed.

- Anyone reading this website has been exposed to Buddha Dhamma in the past; by "past" I mean beginning-less time. Each of us have been "living" and "dying" innumerable times, in most of the 31 realms of existence; see, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma." Even though a Buddha appears in the world after very long times, there have been innumerable Buddhas too. Some of you may not believe this, and that is fine. It may make sense later on.

Each of us has listened to a Buddha delivering a discourse, attained the highest $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$, and also been born in the animal and niraya (the lowest realm) too. Our character and habits may have changed from "good" to "bad" many times over. Infinite time is very hard to grasp with the mind; see, "Sansāric Time Scale," and "Infinity - How Big is it?." Also, you may want to read the excellent book, "The Beginning of Infinity" by David Deutsch (2011) IF you are interested in a "scientific opinion"; actually, the descriptions are very similar in both cases in the sense that many things that sound implausible are not scientifically implausible, and in fact are necessary to explain the scientific data.

- As in this life, it is easy to remember relatively recent events in the sansāric journey. Those who can remember past lives, remember only the past one or few lives; see, "Evidence for Rebirth." The "habits" and "tendencies" that we have are the ones that we have had in the recent rebirths.
- Therefore, for some people, it may be easier to get into a jhāna (or to have a good meditative experience) just because they have had that experience in more recent lives; for another person, it may be harder just because that person may not have had that experience for very many births in the recent past.

One should not be discouraged if one's understanding of Dhamma or "meditation experience" seems to be different from what one hears from others. The important thing is to first determine where one is in the relative scale of things and start at the right place. Most times there is no correlation between this evaluation and one's "book knowledge" either.

One could use the basic guidelines provided by the Buddha. There are five stages starting with dana and ending with nekkhamma:

- Dana (giving, generosity, caring for others' well being).
- Sīla (moral conduct).
- Sagga (literally heaven, but meaning calm and peaceful mind).
- Ädeenava (seeing the fruitlessness and the danger of the 31 realms or the rebirth process).
- Nekkhamma (losing attachment to "things" in the 31 realms, and working diligently towards Nibbāna), which in turn leads to nissarana (stop this suffering-filled rebirth process) and thus Nibbāna.

These are not clear-cut steps, but are guidelines.

1. Most people, irrespective of the religion, are generous and enjoy giving. Just like silla below, dana induces happiness in oneself.
2. In Pāli it is silla (pronounced "seela"); in Sinhala it is "seelaya" ("sisil" means cooling down and "laya" means heart, so cooled heart), and thus is a bit more explanatory.

- Any act that makes one's heart to cool down is an act of silla, i.e., it is moral conduct.
- When we act with compassion, say give a meal to someone hungry or help out an elderly person to cross the street, it makes our heart cool down. On the other hand, when we do something immoral or inappropriate, our heart gets agitated and the heart rate goes up, and the whole body heats up; also see, "How to Taste Nibbāna."
- It is the same compassion, extended to other living beings as well, that makes up the basis of the five precepts: avoiding any act that is harmful to any living being; see, "The Five Precepts - What the Buddha Meant by Them."
- The humans are at a much higher "consciousness level" compared to animals, so we need to pay special attention not to even hurt the feelings of another human being; see, "How to Evaluate Weights of Different Kamma." It is a good habit also to cultivate metta (loving kindness) to all beings; see, 'Kamma, Debt, and Meditation."

3. When one gets to the Sagga stage, it is relatively easy to calm the mind. One starts feeling the nirāmisa sukha (see, "Three Kinds of Happiness - What is Nirāmisa Sukha?") or the happiness of "cooling down" by voluntarily "giving up" (and sharing with others) things that one used to be quite possessive of. It is very subtle. One cannot just start giving everything that one owns; that will only lead to patigha or internal friction. In addition, one has responsibilities and debts to pay; see, "Kamma, Debt, and Meditation."

- Different people get "agitated" due to different "triggers." This is because we have very different sansāric habits: things we really like and things we really dislike; there are several posts on these habits and
"āsavas." It is a good idea to make a self-assessment, figure out the "bad triggers" and make an effort to remove them.
- For example, if one has an "explosive temper" it is a good idea to make an effort to restraint oneself and also to do metta bhāvana $\overline{\text { a }}$. It is important to realize that the anger is within oneself; it is not in an outside person or thing. I could get mad by thinking about person A, but there are many other people who have loving thoughts about the same person A. Same with greed, it is inside of us, not outside. These all originate from our sansāric likes and dislikes.

4. While it is hard for some to even start thinking about the 'bigger picture" of the 31 realms, and the possible suffering in future rebirths, some others may have thought about this "in the recent past in the sansāric rebirths", and thus may be motivated to explore more.
5. The last stage is for those who have "seen the big picture" and the dangers of staying "in this world of 31 realms", or at least have some inkling of it. When one starts feeling the nirāmisa sukha strongly, and also start seeing the suffering to come in the lower realms, giving up the rebirth process becomes an urgent need, instead of being anxious about "giving up rebirth." Again, this cannot be forced. One will feel it when one's mind is ready.

- This website has posts that could be helpful in any of the above categories. One needs to look around and find the suitable topics; even though I have tried to put posts into different categories, there may be posts suitable for anyone in any category.
- My intention is to add material at all different levels, mainly up to the Sotāpanna stage of Nibbāna. I hope that will help a wide spectrum of people and also illustrate that Buddha Dhamma describes the ultimate natural laws not only about our human world, but of all existence. Buddha Dhamma is not just a philosophical theory; one can actually experience the improvement in one's quality of life as one follows the Path.

September 13, 2016: I recently started a new section, "Living Dhamma" detailing a step-by-step process on how to get started on the Path. One could get started even without belief in rebirth or the existence of 31 realms. There we start by looking at the (hidden) suffering experienced in this life and how to eliminate it.

### 7.1.3.4 Recent Evidence for Unbroken Memory Records (HSAM)

## Revised October 6, 2018; May 18, 2020; August 27, 2022

1. A normal human can remember some "significant events" even from the early days of this life. And these memories are not just a "summary," but we recall a significant event in detail. It is like playing back a videotape. We recall the scene with pictures, sounds, the background, everything. Just recall some past events, and one can verify that for oneself.

- Many cases of "memories from past lives" are reported mostly by children. But there are also accounts by some adults under hypnosis; see "Evidence for Rebirth."
- There is scientific evidence that our memory records are kept in minute detail and can be accessed at a moment's notice. Such "detailed records" are "nāmagotta" in Buddha Dhamma. See "Where Are Memories Stored? - Viññāna Dhātu" and "Nāma Loka and Rupa Loka - Two Parts of Our World."
- However, an average human can recall only a small fraction of past events.

2. Strong evidence is beginning to emerge that there is a "complete record" of one's past (in this life) just like a videotape. These studies started with Jill Price, who contacted a team of scientists in the early 2000s about her ability to recall anything from 1974 onwards. Here is a video of her with Diane Sawyer on an ABC News program:

## WebLink: YOUTUBE: The woman that never forgets

3. Note that she says she can "see" what happened that day. It is not like she is recalling a "summary" or the gist of what happened. She can recall the whole episode in detail. Even the day and date come out effortlessly.

- A team of scientists has studied her for five years and published a paper providing their findings: A Case of Unusual Autobiographical Remembering-Parker-2006
- She has written a book about her experience: "The Woman Who Can’t Forget", by Jill Price (2009).
- Jill Price's story led more people to come forward with their experiences, and ten more such individuals have been studied in detail recently: WebLink: Behavioral and neuroantomical investigation-LePort2012.

4. These individuals have "highly superior autobiographical memory," or HSAM. According to those two papers above, they are not any smarter than average people,. The ability to recall their past much more extensively is a "puñ̃̄̄a iddhi" of a special kamma vipāka in Buddha Dhamma. They can focus on any date in the past and "watch" what happened. Then they can say what the weather was like, who they were with, whether any significant world event took place that day, etc.

- This phenomenon is also known as Hyperthymesia; see, WebLink: WIKI: Hyperthymesia. Several other cases of HSAM are mentioned here.

5. Scientists believe that our memories are "stored" in the brain and synapses between neurons. I firmly believe that they will be proven wrong. This research is still in its infancy, but there has been an explosion of activity within the past 15 years.

- While it is true that synaptic wiring is responsible for habit formation (see "How Habits are Formed and Broken - A Scientific View"), it is a stretch to assume that "video-like recordings" of all past events are somehow embedded in neural connections!
- People without HSAM have false memories (or no memories) of past incidents that were insignificant to them. But their memories about significant/traumatic memories are astoundingly accurate.

6. There are a couple of key significant facts that come out of these studies on HSAM subjects:

- They can instantly access a "time slot" from many years back that is arbitrarily chosen by someone else. They "re-visit" that time slot and describe, in real-time, what took place in detail.
- Since it has been confirmed in 11 subjects, it is not a "random event."
- It is a stretch to assume that all such details for over 20 years can be stored in biological membranes that regenerate change continuously.
- It is not a matter of being able to remember. Jill Price describes extensively that it is hard for her to remember any "learning material"; she was an average student.
- Rather, it is a matter of having a "correctly wired" brain to access the "video recorder-like" memory stream in viññāṇa dhātu. It is not something one can develop by studying hard.

7. In Buddha Dhamma, the life of a sentient being is not restricted to the current life. As described in the previous post ("What Reincarnates? - Concept of a Lifestream"), any given sentient being has been born an uncountable number of times, with no "traceable beginning."

- And a record of each of those lives is kept intact in the "mind plane" and can be accessed to different degrees by different people.
- And people who develop abhiñ̃̃̄̄ powers via $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$ (need to get to at least the fourth $j h \bar{a} n a$ ) can develop Jill Price's capabilities and more; they can go back hundreds to thousands to billions of years depending on the level achieved.

8. According to Buddha Dhamma, the brain is just like a computer that helps extract these memory records from the "mind plane." The mechanism is similar to a television extracting a broadcast signal; I will write a post on this later.

- These memory records are called "nāmagotta" (pronounced "nāma goththā") and they go back for eons and eons, and even a Buddha cannot see a beginning; see "Memory, Brain, Mind, Nāma Loka, Kamma Bhava, Kamma Vipāka."
- We can recall only bits and pieces even during this life because our minds are covered by the five hindrances (pañca n̄̄varaṇa); see "Key to Calming the Mind - The Five Hindrances."
- Ancient yogis who could get to the eighth jhāna could see all past lives in the present eon or kappa. But the Buddha could see numerous eons within a short time.
- This is why it is mostly children who can remember past lives. As they grow up their minds get "contaminated" more and more, and these memories are lost. And those cases are different from the HSAM subjects.
- It appears that those individuals with HSAM have some of the capabilities of those who have developed abhiñ $\bar{n} \bar{a}$ powers. Since those with HSAM have been reported to have somewhat different brain structures, it will be interesting to see whether those with abhiñ $\tilde{n} \bar{a}$ powers have similar brain structures as people with HSAM. I believe that it is a matter of the brain wiring to be able to "receive" more information from the "mind plane."

9. Here is a video on the amazing accounts of a few people with memory capabilities.

Superhuman Geniuses (Extraordinary People Documentary):
WebLink: youtube: Superhuman Geniuses (Extraordinary People Documentary)

- More than anything else, they confirm the fact that memories are held intact in the mano loka or the "mind plane"; see, "The Amazing Mind - Critical Role of Nāmagotta (Memories)."
- The brain is the interface between the base of the mind (hadaya vatthu) and mano loka; see, "Brain Interface between Mind and Body." It is just that a few people's brains can do better in recalling those memories compared to others.


## Next, "Buddhism without Rebirth and Nibbāna?",

### 7.1.3.5 Buddhism without Rebirth and Nibbāna?

## Revised August 18, 2016; February 14, 2020

I participated in several internet forums on "Buddhism" over 2013 and a part of 2014. One thing that clearly stands out is the fact that there are many people who like Buddhism, but they cannot understand what the big deal is about rebirth, and they cannot comprehend what Nibbāna is. Thinking is: Why can't we have Buddhism without rebirth (because I do not believe in rebirth) and Nibbāna (because that seems to be too complicated)?

## They are turned off by the concept of rebirth and are mystified by the concept of Nibbāna.

- Rebirth. I think that the first issue lies in the fact that most major religions are based on three levels of existence: This life, and one of two eternal stages of life thereafter; committed to either heaven or hell for eternity based on what one does in this life. That model is very simple. Buddha's 31 realms of existence with many "unseen beings" seems to be far fetched. Also, the possibility of being reborn as an animal is an abhorrent thought similar to the one people had about "evolving from the monkeys" before the theory of evolution.
- Nibbāna. The second issue has become a problem mainly because of Mahāyāna doctrines. Mahāyāna sect arose basically out of the philosophical analyses of Nibbāna by Nagarjuna, Asanga and other

Mahāyāna forefathers. They could not understand the concept of Nibbāna or what happens to an Arahant when the Arahant dies. So, they came up with concepts like suñyata (suññatā) or emptiness; see, "What is Suñyata or Suñ̃aata (Emptiness)."

1. There are two co-existing facets of Buddha Dhamma:

- The Buddha said, "This Dhamma is unlike anything that the world has ever seen." It really needs a paradigm change to get into the "new perspective about this world view of the Buddha." One needs to be able to put aside all preconceived notions to understand the core message.
- However, the Buddha also said, "My Dhamma is good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good at the end." There is something to be gained from Buddha Dhamma for people who just came to know about it. This is why I have separated posts into three categories on the site.
- In Bhikkhu Bodhi's book, "In the Buddha's Words", there is a chapter on "The Happiness Visible in this Present Life", where Buddha's discourses to those who did not have aspiration to attain Nibbāna but were interested in pursuing moral lives, are described.
- The concepts such as rebirth and Nibbāna are paradigm-changing concepts. But as one follows what one understands, these concepts will become clear; I have summarized these two concepts below. But it will take much more effort and reading many more posts if one is really interested in understanding Buddha Dhamma.

2. For those who do not believe in rebirth, there is a simple way to get started without having to believe in the rebirth process. I strongly suggest the following post: "Starting on the Path Even without Belief in Rebirth."
3. However, at the end - If one is to benefit fully from Buddha Dhamma - one needs to understand its core message. And that core message is that this life is only but an insignificant time in the cycle of rebirths that we have been on from eternity, and that "our world" is much more complex than we see with 31 realms instead of the two (human and animal realms) that we see. Even more significantly, the suffering in many of the lower realms of existence is much worse than that in the human or even the animal realm.

- That is a LOT of things to accept as a basis. But we are fortunate compared to those who lived even a hundred years ago. Because now we have EVIDENCE to back up this wider world view of the Buddha; see, "Dhamma and Science - Introduction."
- And both major Mahāyāna sects as well as Theravāda Buddhism believe in rebirth and the concept of Nibbāna. All Buddhists (except the type of Stephen Batchelor, who has written some popular books on Buddhism) believe in rebirth and Nibbāna. I have seen the label "secular Buddhism" being used to describe those who like other aspects of Buddhism (basically moral living and meditation), but not necessarily rebirth and/or Nibbāna.
- Thus a Buddhist not believing in rebirth/Nibbāna is an oxymoron. The Pāli or Sinhala word for Buddhist is "Bhauddhaya" meaning "a person trying the stop the rebirth process" ("Bhava+uddha"). One meaning of Buddha Dhamma is "path or method of removing bhava and thus stopping the rebirth process." Buddha means, "one who has removed bhava (and attained Nibbāna)."
- However, There is no need to forcefully accept rebirth, which gives rise to sansāric suffering. One can start at a point where one can actually experience the other type of hidden suffering in this life that most people can locate and remove: "Starting on the Path Even without Belief in Rebirth."

4. Therefore, one can be a "secular Buddhist"; that could be an intermediate state before becoming a Buddhist. We just need to get the concepts clear. Since there is no formal established way to declare oneself a "Buddhist" (or a need to do that), it is really in one's own mind whether one is a Buddhist or not. The Buddha clearly stated that each person is at his/her own level of understanding. And there is no need to pretend; what one believes is what it is. The critical thing is to make sure one is fully informed.

- One does not become a Buddhist by reciting the precepts. One becomes a Buddhist gradually as the mind embraces the world view of the Buddha and realizes that the real happiness is attained by
comprehending the true nature of this world: anicca, dukkha, anatta, and eventually by stopping the rebirth process.

5. In the mean time, it is important to realize that certain wrong views are bound to have adverse consequences according to Buddha Dhamma. Established (firm) view that there is no rebirth process is one included in micch $\bar{a}$ dittthi, which is one of the (strong) dasa akusala, that makes a birth in the apāy $\bar{a}$ (four lowest realms of existence) possible. It is not necessary to firmly believe in rebirth, one should at least leave that as a possibility. What is critical is not to have niyata (established) micchā dittthi.

- Faith in Buddha Dhamma is different from that in other religions; belief in rebirth or Nibbāna are not tenets. One either believes in them or one does not; see, "Is Buddha Dhamma (Buddhism) a Religion?." One MAY change one's view after looking at the facts, and especially if one can experience the release from one kind of suffering; see, "Starting on the Path Even without Belief in Rebirth"

6. Finally, it will take a real effort to sort through all different versions of "Buddhism" that are out there. Over two thousand five hundred years, just like now, people have tried to "mold" Buddha Dhamma to a form to their liking, and that is why we have so many versions. But when that is done, the uniqueness, the real message, gets lost. We need to keep intact this unique message, with the understanding that not everyone comprehends it right away.

- The key is to discard any version or aspect that does not provide a consistent picture. Buddha Dhamma describe the laws of nature, and there cannot be any inconsistencies. That is what I try to do with this website. If you see something inconsistent on the website, please let me know.
- I use the Tipiṭaka (Pāli Canon) as the basis. It was written down over two thousand years ago (by Arahants who had experienced Nibbāna), and is the oldest document encompassing the three main teachings: Suttā, Vinaya, and Abhidhamma.
- I have documented the flaws in both Mahāyāna and (to a lesser extent) in current Theravāda books by pointing out the inconsistencies with the Tipitaka. Also, I show that everything is self-consistent, which is the scientific basis to illustrate the validity of a theory. Newton's theory on gravity had to be modified because they were not consistent with finer measurements.
- It does not matter what we believe personally. We need to find the true laws of nature that the Buddha discovered. Laws of nature, like gravity or laws of motion, do not care about what we believe; see, "Why it is Critical to Find the Pure Buddha Dhamma."
- Buddha Dhamma (in its pure form) has withstood all tests to date; see, "Dhamma and Science Introduction." Both current Mahāyāna and Theravāda teachings need to be revised back to the original. It can be proven that there are self-contradictions within both sects in addition to contradictions with the teachings of the Buddha. I have a series of posts that point out these "problem areas" starting with, "Key Problems with Mahāyāna Teachings."

Having established that rebirth and Nibbāna are the "lifeblood" of Buddha Dhamma, now we can turn to the next question: What evidence is there to "prove" rebirth? What is the big deal about Nibbāna, which sounds so esoteric?

## A. REBIRTH

I have summarized some of the existing evidence for rebirth; see, "Evidence for Rebirth." I am not sure what will qualify for "proof", but one thing is very clear: A strong case can be made for it. There is evidence from many different areas, and that are consistent with the Buddha's other teachings, for example, the existence of a manomaya kāya; see, "Manomaya Kāya and Physical Body."

- If a person can believe even a SINGLE piece of evidence presented there, it is not possible to explain that without accepting that there is a link between such two lives. Since there is no physical connection between the two lives (that existed many miles apart), the connection must be outside the physical realm, i.e., the mental energy. There is new evidence from "quantum entanglement" that is consistent with the
presumption that everything in this world is inter-connected; see, "Quantum Entanglement - We Are All Connected."
- However, one can actually verify the rebirth process by developing abhiñña powers via developing the fourth jhāna. One can then "see" one's previous lives; see, "Power of the Human Mind - Introduction" and the follow up posts. And there are some who have developed such abhiñ̃̃̄̄ powers, and this number can be expected to grow. When a significant number of people can verify the rebirth process, it will be accepted. Today, not everyone has traveled outside one's own country. But everyone accepts that all those countries exist, because they believe the accounts of those who have made visits.
- And recent evidence confirm that there is indeed an unbroken memory record, at least in this life; see, "Recent Evidence for Unbroken Memory Records (HSAM)."


## B. NIBBĀNA

1. "Bāna" in Pāli and Sinhala means "bondage"; thus Nibbāna means becoming free of bondage (to this world). We are bound to the unending cycle of rebirths via ten fetters called "sanyojana = "san+yojana"; see, "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Samsāra)"; yojana means bond. Samyojana rhymes like called samyojana and that is normally written.

- The ten samiyojana are removed via the four stages of Nibbāna: three at the Sotāpanna stage, two reduced at the Sakad $\bar{a} g \bar{a} m \bar{\imath}$ stage and removed at the $A n \bar{a} g \bar{a} m \bar{\imath}$ stage, and the remaining five removed at the Arahant stage.
- Removal of the ten samyojana also removes greed, hate, and ignorance from our minds; the nirāmisa sukha increases step-wise at each of the four stages, and the "cooling down" or "nivana" becomes complete; see, "How to Taste Nibbāna." There are many synonyms for Nibbāna, and nivana (or niveema) is one of them. The Sanskrit name "nirvana" does not convey any of these meanings.

2. When the mind becomes pure, a being is simply not reborn anywhere in the 31 realms. The mind has attained full release, and unconditioned happiness called nirāmisa sukha. Thus Nibbāna is stopping the rebirth process; the suffering stops. it is as simple as that. That mind cannot grasp even a fine form of a material body (which is subject to decay and death) anywhere in "the 31 realms." The mind becomes free of a body that is subject to decay and death (suffering). That is Nibbāna.

- The Nibbānic experience cannot be described by the terminology of "this world"; it is transcendental or "lokuttara," beyond "this world"; see, "Nibbāna "Exists", but Not in This World."
- Also, all we can say about what happens to an Arahant at his/her death is that he/she will not be reborn in "this world" of 31 realms. There is no more suffering. The mind is free of bondage to a physical body that leads to so much suffering.
- Many people say, "What suffering? I do not feel that much suffering." But the real suffering is in the lowest four realms; that is why the complete picture of 31 realms of existence is important. Furthermore, there is much suffering that is masked, especially when one is young. As one gets old, it is inevitable that one will start experience suffering at a higher degree, and then face death. Here is a video that illustrates this point:


## WebLink: YOUTUBE: Aging Stars of the Golden Age

3. However, the point is NOT to get depressed about this inevitability. Some people get depressed thinking about old age, and try to "give up" everything to follow the Path of the Buddha.

- It is not even possible for someone who is not familiar with Buddha Dhamma to start working on attaining Arahanthood straight away, and it is not advised either. It needs to be done with understanding. As one follows the Path, and learns Dhamma, one could start feeling early stages of Nibbānic pleasure (nirāmisa sukha) and thus will start having fact-based faith on concepts like rebirth and Nibbāna: see, "Three Kinds of Happiness - What is Nirāmisa Sukha?."
- Have you seen any depressed Buddhist monks? They have given up the worldly pleasures voluntarily, NOT with the mindset of a depressed person. Depression leads to hate; true "giving up" is done with wisdom.

This is only a summary. All these are described in detail with supporting evidence at this website. The key point is that EVERYTHING we observe, all we experience CAN be explained with the complete "world view" of the Buddha of which rebirth and Nibbāna are essential foundations.

One does not need to know all that if all one needs is a peace of mind. One could follow the basic guidelines for a moral life that the Buddha provided. However, his key message was that this 100year life can be only be compared to a "drop of water in a huge ocean" that is the cycle of rebirths filled with suffering. Thus one should at least critically examine the evidence to see whether that message needs to be taken seriously.

## Next, "Starting on the Path Even without Belief in Rebirth",

### 7.1.3.6 "Self" and "no-self": A Simple Analysis - Do We Always Act with Avijjā?

October 23, 2015; revised August 14, 2019; July 30, 2022
I like to address two comments that I recently received. Questions such as these bring out significant issues that help clarify fundamental concepts.
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First comment (by Mr. Alexander Ausweger):
Premises:
(1) The number of rebirths of a single sentient being before now is infinite.
(2) The probability of becoming an Arahant in one life-phase (from birth to death) is minuscule but not zero. (The possible probability-values range from 0 to 1 as usual in probability theory).

Conclusion: In an infinite number of rebirths, the probability of reaching Arahantship would be one, which means that everyone would already have left samisāra.

Conclusion: Since we are still here, one of the premises must be wrong.
***
Second comment (by Mr. Chamila Wickramasinghe):
"....in akusala-mūla Pațicca Samuppāda, since "avijjā anusaya" is remaining for a person below the Arahant stage, is there not a single "citta-kshana" (or citta) that arises without avijjā? .."

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There is a perception of well-defined "self" embedded in both the above comments. That there is "a well-defined sentient being" that goes through a cycle of rebirths. Since we use names to label a person, that automatically gives the impression of a non-changing "self." Thus it is a bit hard to remove this "sense of a self" from our minds.

- The other side of this issue is the common misconception that "anatta" means "no-self." That is correct in a strict sense. However, there is a sense of a "self" until one attains Arahanthood. The other meaning of "anatta" is "being helpless" and "subject to suffering" as long as one has the perception of a "self."
- That is why the Buddha said it is wrong to believe that there is a "self." It is also incorrect to think that "there is no self." That is a bit difficult to comprehend at first; that is why the Buddha said, "My Dhamma has never been known to the world...". So we will discuss some examples to clarify why both these views are incorrect.

Let us first discuss the First comment. The answer to the second comment will become apparent during that discussion.

1. The critical issue brought out by the first comment is the first premise: By assuming that "there is a single sentient being..." we are distorting the actual reality. That says there is a "soul" or "self." To assign an absolute identity, there must be something unchanging in it.

- Now, let us discuss HOW the Buddha explained that the above premise is incorrect.
- At the time of the Buddha, many believed in a "ātma" or a "soul" or a "self." When asked what is a "person" is unique to give that absolute identity, some said it was one's body ( $r \bar{u} p a$ ). Others said either one's feelings (vedanā), one's perceptions (saññā), one's actions (sañkhāra), one's thoughts (viññāna), or some combinations of the above five. However, we are not talking about pañcakkhandha here, i.e., not rūpakkhandha etc. I will write a series of posts later to clarify the difference.
- There is nothing else that can be called "one's own."

2. The Buddha explained in detail why none of the above remains the same in a "given person." Let us take a simple example to understand the basic idea. Let us consider person A when entering and leaving high school.

- Did any of the five categories (rūpa, vedanā, saññ̄a, sañkhāra, viññ̄ạna) remain the same at those two instances of time, several years apart? Person A would have grown and will not have the same body. At the time of his leaving high school, most of his primary thoughts (vedanā, sañ̃̄̄̄, sañkhāra, viññāna) are on getting a job or entering a university. Those would be very different from the time he entered high school.

3. Now we can reduce the time interval to the end of his first year at high school. All of the above arguments still hold. "He" would have changed in all five of the above characteristics that define "him."

- We can keep reducing the time interval for that person. When we think about this carefully, we can see that even his physical body would have changed a little by the time he got to the school from home. Of course, all his "metal properties" keep changing moment-to-moment.
- To see a "significant change" over a long period, we need to look at time intervals several months apart. But when we keep narrowing down the time interval, we can see that all five characteristics of that person keep changing even moment-to-moment.
- When a person enters a room, walks to the other side, and leaves the room through the back door, is it the "same person" who left? Which of the above five characteristics would have remained the same?
- Once we start contemplating it, it is easy to see that all four of our mental characteristics keep changing moment-to-moment. It is a bit harder to "see" that our bodies change moment-to-moment, but the above argument logically extends to smaller and smaller time intervals. That is why it is called "seeing with wisdom."
- Furthermore, modern science indeed shows how fast our bodies change. Every few months, most cells in our bodies get completely REPLACED. We have a "new body" every year!
- Still, this is NOT the same as saying EVERY SINGLE suddhatṭhaka (smallest material unit) in a body is re-made moment-to-moment. See, "Does any Object (Rūpa) Last only 17 Thought Moments?." However, at least SOME OF THE CELLS in a body of trillions of cells will change even moment-tomoment. Please re-read and understand the enormous difference. Also, see "Human Life - A Mental Base (Gandhabba) and a Material Base (Cell)."
- This way of "seeing" with wisdom (instead of "seeing" with the eyes) is what the Buddha called "cakkhumं udapādi.." or "seeing with dhamma eye..." Unless we do this, when we look at a person, we automatically get the perception (sañ̃̃̄ $\bar{a}$ ) of a "non-changing self," say John Smith.

4. We assign a name to a person and talk about, say, a "John Smith." But we can see there was nothing common about John Smith at various points in his life. A newborn baby looks different when grown to be a young person; with more time, the older adult will appear very different.

- However, we also should not go to the other extreme and say that "there is no such person called John Smith." How can we say that, either? We can talk to John Smith and see him actively engaging in various activities, etc. That is the other extreme of "no-soul" or "no-self."
- That is why the Buddha rejected both "self" and "no-self" as reality.
- We need to use the terminology of a person named John Smith to be able to communicate. Even the Buddha talked about "his previous lives." But we must remember that there is nothing to be called an "unchanging person."
- A "person" can acquire a "new identity" within moments. We have talked about several people who attained Arahanthood within a few minutes. Even these days, we have heard about people who have drastically changed their character within a few months. Of course, we can gain or lose significant weight in a month and change our appearance.

5. The absolute truth (paramattha) is that all our mental phenomena CAN change moment-to-moment. Some of this mental activity arise due to avijjā and can lead to significant changes even in real-time; see, "Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda."

- While using conventional terminology (vohāra), we need to keep in mind that the absolute reality (paramattha) is that the "state of existence" changes moment-to-moment.
- Our physical bodies (and any material form or a sañkhata) change with time. Some change fast (a fruit fly lives a few days; thus, it goes from birth to ripe age to being dead in a few days), but others change slower (a tortoise lives about 200 years).

6. Thus "a person," in absolute reality, CAN change for better or worse even moment-to-moment, according to Paṭicca Samuppāda.

- A kusala Paṭicca Samuppāda cycle starts with "kusala-mūla paccayā sañkhāra"; see, "Kusala-Mūla Paticca Samuppāda."
- An akusala-mūla Pațicca Samuppāda cycle starts with "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra"; see, "AkusalaMūla Paticca Samuppāda" and "Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda."
- But most of the time, we do things that are neither kusala nor akusala.
- Thus avijjā is not there ALL THE TIME, even for a normal human being. Avijjā is triggered when a desirable/undesirable sense input tempts one.

7. Now we can address the second comment. Yes. The avijjā anusaya is there with anyone who has not attained the Arahant stage of Nibbāna. But not all thoughts (citta) arise due to avijjā, and there are many levels of $a v i j j \bar{a}$ when it appears.

- Anusaya means our cravings and habits (that we have acquired through avijja) that lie underneath the surface, waiting for a trigger to surface.
- Thus $a v i j j \bar{a}$ itself is not something that is there all the time. An average human being acts without $a v i j j \bar{a}$ most of the time. Only when one does something with greed, dislike, or without a full understanding of the situation does one takes action with avijj $\bar{a}$.
- Avijj $\bar{a}$ is triggered by a sensory input that is either pleasing or displeasing to our mind. Whether a given "trigger" will set off avijj $\bar{a}$ will depend on one's gati (gathi) and anusaya; see, "Āsava, Anusaya,
and Gati (Gathi)," "Sansāric Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Āsava)," and "Gati to Bhava to Jāti - Ours to Control."
- Thus it is not correct to say that an average human is an entity with avijjā. There is no such "fixed living being," i.e., one with "self." The only things associated with "a person" are his/her gati and anusaya; these keep changing too.

8. Even when $a v i j j \bar{a}$ arises, it can occur at many levels ranging from moha (totally covered mind) to not knowing the Four Noble Truths. In that latter case, one may do moral acts (puññābhi sañkhāra) but expect meritorious results. Here also, the akusala-mūla PS cycle operates but will lead to good births within the 31 realms.

- The kusala-mūla PS cycle operates only when one acts meritoriously without any future expectations in return, i.e., without avijjā. That happens when one becomes an Ariya or a Noble Person. An Ariya knows that it is unfruitful to strive for anything in this world. An Ariya below the Arahant stage may act with $a v i j j \bar{a}$ at lower levels (i.e., would not have moha).
- But in most cases, we disregard what we see, hear, etc. Unless one becomes interested in something, avijjā does not arise.
- Thus $a v i j j \bar{a}$ is something that is not there all the time for any person. The avijj $\bar{a}$ anusaya gets triggered by sensory input.

9. Getting back to the first comment, instead of saying either "a person exists" or "a person does not exist," the Buddha said the a living being exists moment-to-moment. We cannot deny that a people exists; but there is nothing absolute about "a person." Instead, "a person" continually changes; we conventionally call a person "John Smith," etc.

- Another way to say the same thing is to say that "a living being" exists in a given state until the cause (and conditions) that give rise to that existence exist. Once root causes are changed, that existence will change to a new one. For example, if a human starts doing things that animals usually do, then that person will likely get an animal birth after death.

10. We can get more insight into both comments by considering what happens when one attains Arahanthood.

- One attains the Arahanthood when one loses avijjā anusaya; see the links in \#7. When that happens, $a v i j j \bar{a}$ will not get triggered by ANY sense input. There is no "upādāna" for any likes/dislikes. Thus at death, there in no "sama uppada" (birth of similar characteristics) corresponding to "paticca" (whatever one willingly attaches to).
- But the kammic energy that fueled the present life is still there. So, just a rock thrown by someone will stay up until the energy given to it is exhausted, and the Arahant will live until the kammic energy for his/her life is exhausted. Still, he/she will not be tempted by any sensory input, since there is no āsava/anusaya left.
- An Arahant will experience all sense inputs just like any other human being but will not generate any likes/dislikes. And since he/she is likely to have many kamma vipāka left, he/she could also experience pains and aches or even worse. The Buddha himself suffered from some ailments, and Ven. Mahā Moggallāna was beaten to death.
- It is the FUTURE SUFFERING that is removed at the Arahant stage. Since there is no rebirth, there is no future suffering. The mind is forever released from the material body that CAN AND WILL impart suffering to those who remain in the samisāra, the cycle of rebirths.


## Dhamma Concepts

[^3]"Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)"
"Punna Kamma - Dāna, Silla, Bhāvanā"
"Details of Kamma - Intention, Who Is Affected, Kamma Patha"
"The Five Precepts - What the Buddha Meant by Them"
"What is Kamma? - Is Everything Determined by Kamma?"
"How to Evaluate Weights of Different Kamma"
"Account of Añgulimāla - Many Insights to Buddha Dhamma"
"The Four Bases of Mental Power (Cattāro Iddhipāda)"
"Why is it Necessary to Learn Key Pāli Words?"

### 7.14.1 Kilesa - Relationship to Akusala, Kusala, and Puñña Kamma

## August 27, 2022 (revised \#7 later)

Note: The current post replaces an old post "Kusala and Akusala Kamma, Puñña and Pāpa Kamma."
Kilesa means defilements hidden in the mind. They can be expressed in terms of anusaya, samyojana, āsava, or asobhana cetasika.

## Pāli Word Analysis (Pada Nirutti)

1. We can get an idea of various terms by looking at the Pāli roots of those words. Knowing how Pāli terms originated ("pada nirutti") provides insight.

- Kusala comes from "ku" +" sala," where "ku" refers to "kunu" or kilesa or evils, and "sala" means "to get rid of."
- Akusala is the opposite of kusala. It will accumulate kilesa or evils. See "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)."
- Kamma is an action with kammic consequences.
- Kiriya is an action without kammic consequences. For example, brushing teeth is a kiriya.


## What Are Kilesa (Defilements)?

2. This is a crucial term hardly discussed. These defilements are not "stored" anywhere. They are not in the brain. They are associated with the hadaya vatthu (seat of the mind.) Those defilements (kilesa) can be represented differently; for example, by ten types of samiyojana or seven types of anusaya.

- "WebLink: suttacentral: Yuganaddha Sutta (AN 4.170)" states that removing all types of anusaya and samyoojana leads to Nibbāna.
- A Sotāpanna would have removed two types of anusaya and three samiyojana. As a Sotāpanna progresses on the Noble Path, defilements diminish at each higher stage. Thus, an Arahant is free of all kilesa.
- Also, see "Conditions for the Four Stages of Nibbāna."


## Kilesa - Strengthened by Akusala Kamma and Eliminated by Kusala Kamma

3. We can see that akusala kamma strengthens one's defilements. An akusala kamma will create kammic energy that feeds hidden defilements (anusaya/samyojana) and sustains the rebirth process.

- A kusala kamma will help reduce AND remove anusaya/samiyojana. Thus, kusala kamma will cleanse a mind and will lead to Nibbāna.


## Pāpa Kamma and Kusala Kamma

4. A pāpa kamma is a worse form of akusala kamma that will lead to rebirth in the apāyās. Pāpa in Pāli and Sinhala means "evil" or "sinful" actions that are obvious: Killing of a human or routine killing of animals, raping, and niyata micchā ditthi are some examples of pāpa kammā.

- A puñña kamma is the opposite of papa kamma and will lead to rebirth in the "good realms" at or above the human realm. The word "pиñ̃a" is related to joy. The Sinhala word "pina" (Зß)) is associated with "pinaveema" ((ช)తోல) or "making one's heart joyful." Therefore, a puñna kamma is an action that makes one's heart filled with joy.
- The critical point is that while a kusala kamma will help reduce AND remove anusaya/samyojana, a puñña kamma can only reduce them but NOT remove those defilements. That is the difference between kusala kamma and puñña kamma we discuss now.


## Difference Between Puñña Kammā and Kusala Kamma

## 5. There is a critical difference between puñ̃̃a kamma and kusala kamma.

- A puñna kamma is a meritorious/good action that CAN lead to rebirth in the higher realms. But it DOES NOT lead to Nibbāna. Therefore, puññābhisañkhāra associated with a puñña kamma contribute to the "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" step in Akusala-mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda. As we know, Akusala-mūla PS leads to rebirths in good and bad realms.
- The goal of a Buddhist is to attain Nibbāna and stop the rebirth process. That requires the Kusala-mūla PS process, which starts with "kusala-mūla paccayā sañkhāra." Thus, avijjā in the Akusala-mūla PS is replaced by "kusala-mūla" in Kusala-mūla PS. One can do kusala kamma only by engaging in Kusala-mūla PS.
- Therefore, to switch from avijjā to "kusala-mūla" requires dispelling avijjā by comprehending the dangers of the rebirth process, as explained in the First Noble Truth/Paticca Samuppäda/Tilakkhaṇa.
- Average humans fear Nibbāna because they do not see the dangers of remaining in the rebirth process. See "Basic Framework of Buddha Dhamma."


## Puñña kamma Can Become Kusala kamma

6. When one starts comprehending the dangers of rebirth, some puñ̃̃a kamma will automatically become kusala kamma. The difference is one's understanding of the true nature of this world. Let us take an example to illustrate this point.

- Offering food to bhikkhus is a puñ̃̃a kamma for an average human. Even though one may not specifically wish for a "good kamma vipāka" in terms of future wealth or a good rebirth, such an expectation is there even without knowing it. That is part of the anusayalsamyojana.
- When one starts seeing the dangers of remaining in the rebirth process at the Sotāpanna stage, that leads to the removal of ditthi anusaya (together with three samyojana of sakkāya dittthi, vicikicchā, and sīlabbata parāmāsa.) Thus, the above puñ̃̃a kamma may become a kusala kamma for that person; it will help remove the remaining defilements (anusayalsamyojana.)
- Since most people may not be certain about whether they have attained the Sotāpanna Anugāmi stage (or higher), it is best to cultivate "good kamma." They will "branch out" to puñna kamma or kusala kamma based on their comprehension of the Four Nobel Truths/Pațicca Samuppāda/Tilakkhaṇa.
- When one gets to the Arahant stage, there are no more anusaya/samyojana to remove, i.e., an Arahant does not do either puñña kamma or kusala kamma. All "good deeds" by an Arahant are kiriya without kammic consequences.


## Average Humans Engage Only in Puñ̃̃a Kamma, Akusala Kamma, Pāpa Kamma

7. Until a Buddha is born, no one would have a clear idea about (i) the rebirth process, (ii) that most rebirths are in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a} s$, and (iii) how to stop that rebirth process. Other yogis or religions teach about the rebirth process, but no one but a Buddha can teach how to stop the rebirth process by cleansing the mind.

- Most religions teach how to live a moral life. They teach how to engage in puñña kamma. But even those who try their best are tempted by sensory pleasures and spontaneously engage in pāpa kamma.
- Only by understanding the Four Noble Truths and following the Noble Eightfold Path can one automatically stop such temptations. and engage in kusala kamma.
- Both pāpa kamma and puñña kamma fall into the category of akusala kamma that maintain the rebirth process with the Akusala-mūla Paticca Samuppāda starting with "avijjā paccayā (abhi) sañkhāra." Those abhisañkhāra include puññābhisaǹkhāra involved in puñ̃̃a kamma. See "Sañkhāra - Many Meanings." It is critical to understand various types of abhisañkhāra.

8. Therefore, living a moral life (and engaging in puñ̃̃a kamma) is not enough to stop future suffering in the rebirth process.

- That is stated clearly in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Sabhiva Sutta (KN Snp 3.6):
"Kosāni viceyya kevalāni, "Having investigated all possibilities of rebirth, Dibbain mānusakañcaHeavenly, human, even the Brahma-realms, brahmakosaim; One is truly freed only when free of all of them,
Sabbakosamūlabandhanā That requires cultivating "kusala." pamutto,
Kusalo tādi pavuccate tathattā."


## Engaging in Kusala Kamma Starts at the Sotāpanna Anugāmi Stage

9. No one is even aware of kusala kamma until comprehending the Four Nobel Truths/Paṭicca Samuppāda/Tilakkhana.

- Many try to evade suffering by engaging in moral deeds, cultivating $j h a \bar{a} n a$, etc. Those can lead to temporary relief when born in the good realms. But until the rebirth process is stopped (at Parinibbāna), suffering does not stop.
- The "WebLink: suttacentral: Anusaya Sutta (SN 18.21)" states the key to attaining Nibbāna is to realize that nothing in the five aggregates (rūpa, vedanā, sañ̃̄̄̄, sañkhāra, viññāna) can be considered to be "mine." That is the same as getting rid of sakkāya dittthi. See "Sakkāya Ditthi - Wrong View of "Me" and "Mine."
- The Buddha defined Nibbāna as "rāgakkhayo dosakkhayo mohakkhayo-idaì vuccati nibbānan" $t i$ " OR "the ending of greed, hate, and delusion/ignorance "-is called Nibbāna." See, for example, "WebLink: suttacentral: Nibbānapañhā Sutta (SN 38.1)."
- Thus, the result of the step-by-step removal of the ten samyojana/seven types of anusaya, etc., is equivalent to the elimination of $r \bar{a} g a$, dosa, and moha.


## Summary

10. Akusala kammā cultivate defilements; pāpa kammā are the strongest kind of akusala that lead to rebirth in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a} s$.

- Puñña kammā are the opposites of pāpa kammā and lead to rebirths in the "good realms" at or above the human realm.
- Kusala kamma leading Nibbāna can be done only by those on the Noble Eightfold Path.
- Starting on the Noble Eightfold Path requires comprehension of "Paticca Samuppāda, Tilakkhana, Four Noble Truths."
- An Arahant does only kiriyā (actions without kammic consequences.)

11. Defilements (kilesa) in mind can be described in different ways: anusaya and samyojana are two good "indicators."

- Those who have not yet reached the Sotāpanna Anugāmi stage have kilesa in various strengths. Their strengths keep changing but are never eliminated until starting on the Noble Eightfold Path at the Sotāpanna Anugāmi stage. All defilements are absent only in Arahant's mind.
- Living beings spend most of their samisāric journey in the apāyās. Even when a "good birth" takes place, it has a finite lifetime, and after that, rebirth in an apāya is inevitable unless one gets to the Sotāpanna Anugāmi stage.
- Thus, the only way to stop future suffering is to comprehend the Four Nobel Truths/Paticca Samuppāda/Tilakkhaṇa and start on the Noble Eightfold Path. See "Paticca Samuppāda, Tilakkhana, Four Noble Truths."

12. More information on kilesa (in terms of cetasika) at "What Are Kilesa (Mental Impurities)? Connection to Cetasika" and "Cetasika - Connection to Gati."

- Further details on different types of kamma in "Six Root Causes - Loka Samudaya (Arising of Suffering) and Loka Nirodhaya (Nibbāna)."


### 7.14.2 Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)

Revised October 6, 2016; November 24, 2017; March 9, 2020; December 12, 2020; July 20, 2022

## Dasa Akusala Connected to Sañkhāra

1. One can do immoral acts with the body, speech, and mind (leading to $k \bar{a} y a, v a c \overline{1}$, and mano sañkhāra); see, "Sañkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka." Mano sañkhāra arise first automatically, according to one's gati and the specific ārammaṇa. Then some of them lead to vacī and $k \bar{a} y a$ sañkhāra, and that is when they become abhisañkhāra (strong kamma.) Thus the way to reduce all bad sañkhāra is to get control over bad vacī and kāya sañkhāra. See "Correct Meaning of Vacī Sañkhāra."

As we know "Paticca Samuppāda" processes leading to suffering start with "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra." This means we do dasa akusala because we generate sañkhāra due to avijj $\bar{a}$ (not fully comprehending the Four Noble Truths.)

These are ten immoral acts (dasa akusala). They divide into three categories, as follows:
Three mano sañkhāra (immoral acts done with the mind):

1. Abhijj $\bar{a}[A b h i j j h \bar{a}]$ (covetousness; greed for other's belongings)
2. Vyāpāda (ill-will, hatred)

## 3. Micchā Ditṭhi (wrong views)

Four vacī sañkhāra (immoral acts done with speech):
4. Musāvāda (Lying)
5. Pisuñāvācā (slandering)
6. Parusāvācā [Pharusāvācā] (harsh speech)
7. Sampappalāpa (frivolous talk)

Three $k \bar{a} y a$ sañkhāra (immoral acts done with the body):
8. Pāṇātipātā (killing)
9. Adinnādāna (taking what is not given)
10. Kāmesu micchācāra (not just sexual misconduct, but also excessive of sensory pleasures)

## Dasa Akusala Expand to Forty

2. In Buddha Dhamma (i.e., in nature,) it is always one's intention that matters. Based on that, each dasa akusala expands to $\mathbf{4 0}$. For example, it is not only stealing by oneself that matters. Also, getting someone else to steal, helping another's act, and praising such action by another are included.

- In another example, regarding micchā dittthi, the following also count. Propagating micchā ditthi to others, encouraging another to cultivate micch $\bar{a}$ diṭthi (say, for instance, that the rebirth process is not valid,) or praising such practices.
- That is how ten dasa akusala expand to forty.
- There are ten suttā in the Kammapathavagga of the Anguttara Nikāya that lists those "four divisions" for each of the dasa akusala, AN 4.264 through AN 4.273. English translations of those start with: "WebLink: suttacentral: 264. Killing Living Creatures." You can click the "next" arrow at the bottom of the webpage to get to all ten suttā.
- As one starts avoiding more and more of these forty actions, one will start feeling the early stages of Nibbāna or "nivana," i.e, cooling down of the mind. The constant stress and excited-ness of the mind will gradually ease. Also, see "Root of All Suffering - Ten Immoral Actions."


## A Sotāpanna Is Free of Only Micchā Ditṭhi

3. First of all, it is essential to realize that only Arahant is free from doing any of these. Even a Sotāpanna may commit some of these at least once in a while. There are six things that a Sotāpanna is incapable of: killing a mother or father, killing an Arahant, injuring a Buddha, knowingly causing a schism in San̈gha, and having micchā diṭthi or wrong views.

- Thus, anyone below the Sotāpanna stage could break dasa akusala. Even a Sotāpanna has completely removed only micchā ditṭhi. A Sotāpanna would not WILLINGLY commit any of the dasa akusala, but some COULD happen, except for those six mentioned above; see, "Key to Sotāpanna Stage - Ditthi and Vicikicchā."
- It is essential to realize that one needs to AVOID them if possible. It becomes easier as one learns Dhamma to see the benefits of avoiding them.
- However, a Sotāpanna has reduced lobha (extreme greed, especially for other's belongings) and dosa (hate) to reduced levels of rāga (craving for sense pleasures) and patigha (friction or tendency to get upset or angry); see "Lobha, Dosa, Moha versus Rāga, Patigha, Avijiā."


## Two Categories of Micchā Ditṭhi

4. The first category is the ten types of micchā ditth (wrong views) discussed in \#5 below.

- The deeper level of micchā ditṭhi is not comprehending the essential characteristics of "this world" of 31 realms; see "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma" and "Wrong Views (Micchā Ditthi) - A Simpler Analysis."
- Because of the ignorance of the complete world view, one is likely to have the following three main wrong world views. (i) Everything has sprung without a cause (ahetuka ditthi). (ii) Good and bad produce no effect (akiriya ditṭhi). (iii) There is no afterlife (natthika dițthi).
- A common form of micch $\bar{a}$ dittthi is to assume that if one obeys the five precepts, then one will be exempt from birth in the apa $\bar{a} \bar{a}$. That belief itself can lead to the birth in the ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$; see "The Five Precepts - What the Buddha Meant by Them."

5. If one has such wrong worldviews, one is likely to commit immoral acts. They will have kamma vipāka leading to rebirth in the ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$ (the lowest four realms,) i.e., in future rebirths. There are ten such specific wrong views or micchā ditthi (sometimes just called ditthi):

- (1) No kammic benefits in giving, (2) no need to pay back debts (for what others have done for you), (3) no benefits of respecting Noble Ones and also yogis with abhiñ̃̃̄ powers, (4) kamma do not have vipāka, no kammic benefits of taking care of (5) mother and (6) father, (7) this world does not exist ("natthi ayam̀ loko"), (8) Paralowa does not exist ("natthi paro loko"), (9) there are no opapātika birth (instant full-formed birth), (10) there are no Noble Ones and yogis exist who can see past lives. [WebLink: suttacentral: AN 3.117. Vipattisampadāsutta - Distress and Attainment Sutta '(1) natthi
 vipāko, (7) natthi ayamं loko, (8) natthi paro loko, (5) natthi mātā, (6) natthi pitā, (9) natthi satt $\bar{a}$ opapātikā, (10) natthi loke samaṇabrāhmaṇā sammaggatā sammāpaṭipannā ye imañca lokaim parañca lokaì sayaì abhiññā sacchikatvā pavedent $\vec{\imath}$ ]
- For explanations on (7)-(10), see "Micchā Ditthi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage."
- In particular, para loka is where a gandhabba lives in-between consecutive births with a physical human bodies; see "Hidden World of the Gandhabba: Netherworld (Para loka)."


## Niyata Micchā Ditṭhi

6. What is akusala is to hold "niyata micchā ditṭhi" or "established wrong views," i.e., one is not even prepared to consider, say, that there is a rebirth process. Thus, if one has unwavering doubts about any of the ten categories in the above paragraph, one has established wrong views (niyata micchā dittthi). Such wrong views can lead to actions with kamma vipāka responsible for births in the apāy $\bar{a}$.

- The critical point is that when one has established wrong views, one looks at the world differently without realizing that there are consequences for one's actions. One would not be aware of that without a Buddha explaining the world's true nature. That includes the validity of the rebirth process, life in other realms, an uncountable number of planetary systems like the Earth, etc.
- As scientists are finding out, there are many things in nature that we do not experience/understand. For example, scientists can only account for $4 \%$ of the mass of the universe; they cannot account for the rest (Google "dark matter" or "dark energy"). Thus one needs to keep an open mind and learn more Dhamma to see whether all these make sense.

7. The only akusala completely removed by a Sotāpanna is the micchā ditthi; see, "What is the only Akusala Removed by a Sotāpanna?."

- As explained there, an unimaginably huge amount of defilements is removed at the Sotāpanna stage, just via getting rid of micchā ditt!hi, mainly through the comprehension of anicca, dukkha, and anatta.


## Only a Buddha Knows All About This World

8. A lot of you may be thinking "How do I know all this is true? Is there any evidence for the existence of rūpa/arūpa lokā, apāyā (hell), or spontaneous birth?. "

- There are many things we do not know about "this world." We cannot rely on just science to verify/confirm these. Only within the last 100 years or so has science has accepted that our world is bigger than a few galaxies (now science has confirmed that there are billions of galaxies). Whereas the Buddha stated that cakkavāla (star systems or planetary systems) come into existence all the time, science has confirmed that only within the past 100 years; see, "Dhamma and Science - Introduction."
- Furthermore, the newest findings (yet unconfirmed) in string theory indicate that we live in an 11dimension world, not the 4-dimension world that we experience. For a look at different dimensions, see, "Consciousness Dependence on Number of Dimensions." Thus, more of Buddha's teachings will be confirmed with time.

9. It is easy to see that all immoral deeds start with mano sañkhāra (bad thoughts) in mind. Any of the vacī sañkhāra (speech) or kāya sañkhāra (bodily actions) are done with greed, hate, or not knowing the true nature of the world (ignorance). In particular, the basis for moral behavior comes from the correct worldview. Let us examine this below:

- The fact that there is no discernible beginning to conscious life (see "Samssāric Time Scale, Buddhist Cosmology, and the Big Bang Theory") means all of us have been going through this rebirth process for an unimaginably long time. Thus we have been born in most of the 31 realms of existence. Not only that, we have been born innumerable times in EACH of those realms (except those reserved for the Anāgāmīs).
- The above fact means each sentient being had been related to any other sentient being at some point in this long samisāra (or saysāra, rebirth process). The Buddha said, "it is difficult to find ANY sentient being that was not your father, mother, or a sibling at some point in this long samisära." Infinity is a hard concept to grasp; see "Infinity - How Big Is It?."
- An interesting book that talks about such hard to grasp ideas (in science) involving infinity is, "The Beginning of Infinity: Explanations That Transform the World" by David Deutsch.
- Therefore, humans and ALL sentient beings are connected/related. This is why it is wrong to kill any living being, steal from anyone, verbally abuse anyone, etc. Those are the foundations of morality. This is WHY it is not good to do any of the ten immoral acts.


## The Intention is An Important Factor

10. The Buddha said, "Cetanāhaì, bhikkhave, kammaì vadami," i.e., "Bhikkhus, I say that kamma is the intention involved." We always need to look at the intention to pinpoint whether or what kind of kamma was committed.

- For example, if someone shoots a dog attacking a child, one's intention here is to save the child. On the other hand, if someone is shooting a dog for "target practice," there is no excuse. The life of a human is million-fold more precious than an animal's; see "How to Evaluate Weights of Different Kamma."
- Sometimes it is impossible to judge the kammic consequences just by looking at the particular act. Only the person committing the act will know whether it is a good or bad intention. Thus normally it is not wise to judge other people's actions.
- If it is a mano sañkhāra (bad thoughts), the only person who even knows about that is the one who is committing it.

11. In many cases, it is possible for others to "see" when one is committing vacī or kāya sañkhāra. But not always. Disciplinary actions against a child by a parent may appear to be kāya sañkhāra (spanking) or vac̄ sañkhāra (verbal threats), but the parent is likely to have good intentions for the child in most cases.

Also, in many cases, no person can advise another on what to do when conflicting issues are involved. Is it OK to steal some food to feed one's kids when they are crying in hunger? Is it OK to spank a child when the child is misbehaving? Only the parent can make that decision based on the circumstances.

Also see, "Details of Kamma - Intention, Who Is Affected, Kamma Patha." This post was updated on February 21, 2018, and provides a simple two-step process to evaluate a given situation.

## Relative Weights of Kamma

12. One critical problem many people have is trying hard to avoid actions with relatively small kammic consequences while unknowingly doing things with stronger kammic consequences. Let us take an example: Suppose we have a large tank of water that is losing water due to many holes at the bottom. Some holes are pinholes, some are a little larger, and a few holes are big and lose water fast. One would want to plug those large holes first. Then one would fix the medium-size holes. The smallest or the pin holes are the last to be fixed.

- The relative weights of ten immoral acts are not easy to quantify. However, we can see that kāya sañkhāra have higher "kammic potential" compared to vacī sañkhāra if they are directed to the same living being; hurting someone physically is worse than verbal abuse.
- Another example: Say someone has hateful thoughts about a particular person all day. That could be worse than just saying something to that person and "getting the load off the mind." However, even that is not necessary. The best solution is to develop mettā (loving-kindness) towards that person and eliminate those hateful thoughts. We always must realize that we all are trapped in this constant struggle to find happiness in a world that is not set up to provide lasting happiness; see, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta Wrong Interpretations."

13. Kammic consequences also depend strongly on the "consciousness level" of the living being against whom the immoral act was committed.

- Killing a human will have far stronger consequences compared to killing an animal. This is discussed in the essay, "How to Evaluate Weights of Different Kamma."

14. Dasa akusala and relative weights of different kamma are discussed in the following desanā:

WebLink: Download "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)"

- This desana is in the post, "Root of All Suffering - Ten Immoral Actions," where you can find the relevant posts mentioned.

Related post: Origin of Morality (and Immorality) in Buddhism
Next, "Puñña Kamma - Dāna, Sīla, Bhāvanā",

### 7.1.4.3 Puñña Kamma - Dāna, Sīla, Bhāvanā

Revised March 24, 2016; September 14, 2017; major revision with title change April 27, 2018; edited February 14, 2021; December 21, 2021; May 27, 2022; August 27, 2022

1. Here we discuss the ten types of puñña kamma (doing meritorious deeds). These are in three groups: dāna, sīla, and bhāvanā.

- Those are essential for progress in one's mundane eightfold path.
- One must cultivate the mundane path and remove the ten types of micch $\bar{a}$ ditt thi before being able to comprehend the Tilakkhaṇa and start on the Noble Eightfold Path; see "Buddha Dhamma - In a Chart."

2. A previous post discussed the differences between kusala/akusala kamma and puñña/pāpa kamma : "Kilesa - Relationship To Akusala, Kusala, And Puñ̃̃a Kamma."

- For details on the ten types of akusala kamma, see "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)."
- The ten types of kusala kamma are just the avoidance of akusala kamma.

3. As discussed in the above two posts, kusala kammā (getting rid of rāga, dosa, and moha) eventually leads to Nibbāna. However, puñna kamma (meritorious actions) help set the background to attain Nibbāna and are thus critically important.

- One needs to do both. However, the ability to do kusala kammā is vastly improved when one starts comprehending Tilakkhaṇa; see, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta."
- Puñña kammā lead to rebirths in "good realms." Furthermore, one will be born with long life, good health, comfort, and wealth ( $\bar{a} y u$, vaṇna, sukha, bala) to be able to comprehend Tilakkhaṇa and pursue Nibbāna with ease. The following Dhammapada verse emphasizes that:
"Abhivādanasīlissa, niccam̀ vuḍ̣hāpacāyino;

Cattāro dhammā vaḍ̣hanti, àyu vaṇno sukhamं balaim."

- $\overline{A y u}$, vanna, sukha, and bala mean the length of life, health, happiness, and strength. [vanna : [m.] colour; appearance; colour of the skin; sort; caste; a letter; quality.]

These ten meritorious actions (puñña kamma) are divided into three groups: dāna (generosity), sīla (moral behavior), and bhāvanā (meditation).

## Puñna Kamma - Dāna, Sīla, Bhāvanā

4. The ten types of puñña kammā are:
5. Dāna (giving)
6. Transfer of merits to others (pattidāna)
7. Rejoicing (accepting or participating) in other's merits (pattānumodanā̄)
8. Sïla (morality), i.e., observing 5, 8, or 10 precepts
9. Reverence to elders and holy persons (apacayana)
10. Pay homage to religious places, take care of such places, etc (veyyāvacca)
11. Meditation (bhāvanā)
12. Listening to Dhamma discourses (Dhamma savana)
13. Teaching Dhamma (Dhamma desana)
10.Correcting one's wrong views, especially on kamma (dițthijukamma)

- The first three belong to the Dāna (Generosity) group, the next three belong to the Sīla (morality) group and the last four to the Bhāvana (Meditation) group.
- On the last one, see, "What is Kamma? - Is Everything Determined by Kamma?."

5. Therefore, dāna, sīla, and $\bar{b} \bar{a} v a n a \bar{a}$ constitute the "base" of a life of a moral person.

- "Dāna group" helps one overcome one's greed (lobha).
- "Silla group" helps to remove hate (dosa) from one's mind.
- "Bhāvanā group" helps to remove ignorance (moha) from the mind by learning Dhamma and getting rid of the wrong views (micchā ditt

6. Since Nibbāna is removing greed, hate, and ignorance from one's mind, it is clear how these ten actions pave the way for Nibbāna. As one engages in these activities more and more, one can experience the "cooling down" or "niveema"; see "How to Taste Nibbāna."

- In the silla group of activities, one starts by observing the five precepts, i.e., abstaining from killing living beings intentionally, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, and getting intoxicated. This last one usually involves intoxication with alcohol or drugs, but it also includes money, beauty, power, position, etc.

7. It is always a good idea to keep in mind why these are moral actions: Because they help purify one's mind:

- To avoid breaking the five precepts, most people abstain from drinking but do not hesitate to show off their wealth, beauty, power, etc.; they are "drunk" too.
- Others pay a lot of attention not to lying, but do not hesitate to gossip, slander, or verbally abuse others.
- Also, one should realize that human life has much more weight than animal life; see "How to Evaluate Weights of Different Kamma."
- Most of all, the tenth is the most potent one that most people neglect to consider. Having established wrong views (niyata micchā ditṭhi) can lead to frequent immoral actions. Thus, one needs to understand this clearly; see "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)."

8. This is why learning Dhamma is prominent in the bhāvanā section. As one keeps learning deeper concepts of Dhamma, wrong views will gradually fade. It is not enough to say, "I will not have these views anymore," even though making such a determination is good. The mind needs to see evidence to get rid of the wrong views. When one starts on the Path, the feeling of the nirāmisa sukha will make it easier to remove wrong views; see, "Three Kinds of Happiness - What is Nirāmisa Sukha?."

## The High Value of Puñ̃̃a Kamma Done with Understanding

9. If one performs a wholesome deed with the knowledge of kamma and its effects and anicca, dukkha, and anatta, then the wholesome roots will be associated with understanding. Then one's actions will be based on all three wholesome roots: non-greed, non-hate, and non-delusion. So three-root (tihetuka or "ti" + "hetu") wholesome kamma is acquired.

- On the other hand, performing a wholesome deed without knowing the laws of kammā will dilute its effects on future outcomes (vipāka.) Then one's intention will not have wisdom or pañ̃̃̄a (true nondelusion) but only the two roots of non-greed and non-hate. So two-root (dvihetuka = "dvi"+ "hetu") kamma is acquired. These are less meritorious compared to the three-root (tihetuka) kamma.

10. A detailed discussion can be found in "A Simple Way to Enhance Merits (Kusala) and Avoid Demerits (Akusala)." We will discuss these effects in detail in the Abhidhamma section too.

- But it is essential to realize that the strength of the kamma vipāka for a given meritorious act will vary depending on the level of understanding. For example, just writing a check to charity will have some results. But more substantial results will materialize if it was done with a good understanding of the laws of kamma.

11. To engage in this superior kamma, one should consider the moral action in advance. After the deed, one should reflect on it and contemplate it. Furthermore, one can gain more merits by doing a puñña anumodana or pattidāna (transfer of merits to others, \#2 kusala kamma above) because this amounts to paying off sansāric debts; see, "Kamma, Debt, and Meditation."

- On the other hand, if one feels lazy, reluctant, jealous, or stingy before a moral action such as giving charity and regrets doing the moral action afterward, then the moral volition of giving to charity will be
surrounded by other unwholesome intentions (cetanā). Consequently, its results will be weaker. The wholesome kamma acquired, in this case, is inferior.

Thus the importance of learning Dhamma in grasping such details and realizing the full benefits of one's meritorious actions. It is interesting to see how all these details "fit into the big picture"; see "The Importance of Purifying the Mind."

Next, "The Five Precepts - What the Buddha Meant by Them", ...

### 7.1.4.4 Details of Kamma - Intention, Who Is Affected, Kamma Patha

July 24, 2022
We discuss several factors that determine the strength of a kamma, including intention, who is affected, and how a kamma becomes a kamma patha.

## Cetanā in Kamma Is Different from Cetanā Cetasika

1. In the "WebLink: suttacentral: Nibbedhika Sutta (AN 6.63)" (toward the end), the Buddha said, "cetanāhain, bhikkhave, kammaì vadāmi." Thus, what determines the type of kammā is the cetana or the "intention."

- Did the Buddha refer to the cetan $\bar{a}$ cetasika in the above verse? No, because the cetana cetasika in is in EVERY citta. I introduced cetasika in "Cetasika (Mental Factors)" and have discussed some aspects of them in the "Citta and Cetasika" section.
- It is not necessary to review those posts. The point here is that the cetana cetasika is in ANY citta, including vipāka citta. Therefore, not all citta arise with an "intention of getting something done."
- For example, vipāka citta only brings in an ārammaṇa. In such cases, we see, hear, taste, smell, touch something, or recall a past event. There is no "intention" of doing something with such vipāka cittās.


## Intention Leads to Kamma Generation

2. We can see the following from that key verse in \#1 above. Cetanā, in that verse, is connected to the kamma generation!

- The meaning becomes more apparent with the following verse in the sutta: "Cetayitvā kammaim karoti -kāyena vācāya manasā," meaning "After making an intention, one takes action (kamma)-by way of body, speech, and mind."
- Thus, one acts with intention ONLY AFTER an ārammaṇa comes to the mind first. One decides how to respond to a sensory input that just came in as a kamma vipāka. The intention depends on the type of action one chooses to take.
- For example, upon seeing an enemy, one may decide to say something harsh to that person.

3. Note that we are not talking about neutral actions like walking to the kitchen to get a glass of water. In Buddha Dhamma, the discussions are about how we do puñ̃̃a/kusala kamma or apuñña/akusala kamma that can lead to good or bad vipāka in the future.

- Thus, the "intention" involves puñña/kusala kamma or apuñña/akusala kamma. Based on that, we can see that the critical point is whether "good cetasika," like compassion, or "bad cetasika," like greed or anger, arises in the mind.
- Cetanā cetasika combines the cumulative effect of many cetasika that come into play. "The "intention" comes from the types of cetasika "incorporated by the cetan $\bar{a}$ cetasika" based on one's gati."


## Connection to Gati/Anusaya

4. The "intention" in committing an akusala kammā is one of the dasa akusala. That intention arises BECAUSE OF one's gati. A particular set of cetasika will arise automatically according to one's gati (pronounced "gathi.") Of course, gati is closely related to one's anusaya.

- When committing an akusala kammā, a set of four universal cetasika always comes into play. Those are moha (ignorance), Ahirika (shamelessness), Anottapa (fearlessness in the wrong), and uddhacca (restlessness or agitation.)
- Other "akusala cetasika," like lobha, diṭthi, vicikicchā, etc., may also be present depending on the situation and the person committing the act; see "Cetasika - Connection to Gati." For example, one may lie about something because of greed (lobha); another person may tell the same lie because of hate (dosa.) The consequences are worse for the latter.
- When committing an akusala/apuñ̃̃a kamma, the intention is to do one (or more) of the dasa akusala. Thus cetana cetasika is not the "intention." The "intention" depends on how the cetana cetasika incorporates one's gati/anusaya when it "prepares" a citta in response to ārammaṇa.
- Kusala/puñña kammā work the same way. Here the "intention" is to commit one or more kusala/puñña kammā, and here a set of moral (or sobhana) cetasika come into play.

5. From \#4, it may appear that we don't have control over the response to an ārammaña. But \#4 only describes the initial "automatic response" to an ārammaṇa with mano sañkhāra.

- However, we can change that automatic response when we start generating vacī and kāya sañkhāra. If we are mindful, we can catch ourselves starting to engage in a bad kamma and stop it. See "Correct Meaning of Vacī Sañkhāra."
- Suppose we instead keep generating bad vacī and kāya sañkhāra (by going along with bad gati/anusaya). In that case, we will strengthen that bad kamma by strengthening our expectation, i.e., "kamma viññāṇa" that arose based on that ārammaṇa.


## Connection to Kamma Viññāna and Rebirth

6. In the "WebLink: suttacentral: Cetana $\operatorname{Sutta}$ (SN 12.38)," we get further clarification on how this "intention" relates to our "future expectations" that manifest as "kamma viññāna."
"Yañca, bhikkhave, ceteti yañca pakappeti yañca anuseti, ārammaṇametaì hoti viññānassa ṭhitiyā.
Ārammaṇe sati patitṭhā viññānassa hoti.
Tasmim patiṭthite viññāne virūlhe āyatim punabbhavābhinibbatti hoti."

## Translated:

"Bhikkhus, what you intend or plan, and what you have underlying tendencies (anusaya) for, become a support for the kamma viññāna.
When one focuses on an ārammaṇa (with an expectation/intention), kamma viññāna becomes established.
When that viñ̃āạa is established and grows, that can bring rebirth into a new state of existence in the future."

- That is what I mentioned in \#1 above. For an intention/expectation to arise, an ārammana must first bring in sensory input. For greedy anticipation for a particular food to occur, one must either taste that food or the memory of consuming that food must come to mind first.
- Then we start thinking, speaking, and acting about how to get more of it to eat. The more we do, the more that "kamma viññāṇa" will grow ("sañkhāra paccaya viññāna" in Paṭicca Samuppāda.)
- Growing the "kamma viññāna" is the same as "growing the strength of the kamma." Such sañkhāra are abhisañkhāra!
- That is how we accumulate kamma with intention (cetanā.)


## Strength of Kamma

7. There are two key factors to be remembered in evaluating how to assess the relative strength of a kamma:
(i) Which of the dasa akusala is the intention? For example, it could be taking a life, stealing, or harsh speech. As we see, the relative strengths decrease in that order. Who is affected is not involved in this step. The "cetanā" in "cetanāhamं, bhikkhave, kammaì vadāmi", is just which dasa akusala is in one's mind.
(ii) Then the strength of the kammā vipāka will also depend on the "level of consciousness" or "status" of the living beings affected by that kamm $\bar{a}$. For example, killing a human will bring stronger kamma vipāka than killing an animal.

## Some Examples

8. In the case of a person killing a bunch of people with a bomb, his intention (cetana $\bar{a}$ ) is to kill. Thus the dasa akusala involved is "pānātipāt $\bar{a}$," that of taking a life.

- Now to the second step. He may not even know who got killed. By some coincidence, if the bomb killed a parent of the killer, then he would have done an ānantariya p $\bar{a} p a$ kamm $\bar{a}$. If an Arahant died, the same. If a Sotāpanna died, it would not be a ānantariya kammā but still be equivalent to killing thousands of ordinary humans.
- So, it is essential to understand that "cetan $\vec{a}$ " is which of dasa akusala are in one's mind while committing a kamm $\bar{a}$. It could be more than one. In the case of the bomber, there is micch $\bar{a}$ ditṭhi and likely greed also, in addition to "pān̄ātipātā."
- One can analyze various situations with the two steps in \#7 above.

9. Let us consider some prominent examples from the Tipitaka.

- Ascetic Siddhartha had to endure such hardships for six years to attain the Buddhahood because he had said some insulting things regarding the Buddha Kassapa in his previous life. At that time, Siddhartha was a wealthy person named Jotipala and had a friend called Gatikara who listened to desanas from Buddha Kassapa and became an Anägāmi. Gatikara tried to persuade Jotipala to go and listen to Buddha Kassapa, but Jotipala kept refusing, saying, "I do not want to go and listen to the bald monk."
- That kamma forced ascetic Siddhartha to undergo such hardships before attaining the Buddhahood. That is a clear example that one DOES NOT NEED TO KNOW that one is insulting a Buddha to accumulate the corresponding kamma vipāka.
- Eleven more such kamma vipāka brought adverse effects to the Buddha Gotama even after attaining the Buddhahood. Three of those were for bad kammā committed against Pacceka Buddhas. It is especially not possible to recognize a Pacceka Buddha as such because they appear during times when a Samm $\bar{a}$ Sambuddha (like Buddha Gotama) is not present, and they cannot teach Dhamma to others.
- Therefore, NOT KNOWING the status of the person (to whom the wrongful act was directed) is not an excuse. These are not rules made up by the Buddha, and the Buddha himself was not immune from those laws. Kammic laws are Nature's laws, just like laws of gravity; a Buddha just discovers them.
- Kamma/kamma vipāka is a complex subject. Let us consider one more aspect of a "completed kamma" or "kamma patha."


## Kamma and Kamma Patha

10. A given akusala kamma takes four stages to be "completed."

- For example, in the case of taking a life, the following are the four steps:
(i) one must think that it is alive,
(ii) one must have the intention to kill that being,
(iii) making a plan
(iv) executing the plan to kill
(v) the living being ends up dead.
- Upon completing all five steps, that kamma becomes a "kamma with maximum strength" or a kamma patha.
- As the number of completed steps keeps increasing, the severity of the vipāka will increase. When all are complete, a kamma becomes a kammā patha, and the kammā vipāka will be the strongest possible.
- When we walk on grass, we may unintentionally kill many small insects. But since the "intention" is not there, none of the five factors will come to play. If someone hits a toy snake intending to kill, only the last factor will not be fulfilled.

11. Let us consider another example of the four steps that constitute a kamma patha involving lying/deceiving (musāvāda.)

- (i) there must be a person(s) to be deceived,
(ii) one must have the intention to deceive that person(s),
(iii) makes plans
(iv) carries out the deception,
(v) that person (and possibly others not even intended) suffer due to that deception.
- I have been trying to find a Tipitaka reference for these "five factors." Please comment in the discussion forum if you know.
- If all factors are completed, the "kammic energy" will be optimized, and it becomes a "janaka kamma," possibly leading to rebirth in a bad realm. If only some factors are completed, such a kamma can bring $v i p a ̄ k a$ during a lifetime.


## Dasa Akusala Expand to Forty

12. In Buddha Dhamma, it is always one's intention that matters. Based on that, each dasa akusala expands to 40. For example, the following four are inclusive in pan $\bar{a} t i p \bar{a} t \bar{a}$ :
(i) Taking life by oneself
(ii) Getting someone else to kill
(iii) Helping another to kill
(iv) Praising a killing by another

- There are ten suttā in the Kammapathavagga of the Anguttara Nikāya that lists those "four divisions" for each of the dasa akusala, AN 4.264 through AN 4.273. The first sutta is "WebLink: suttacentral: Killing Living Creatures (AN 4.264)." You can click the "next" arrow at the bottom of the webpage to get to all ten suttā.
- In another example, regarding micchā ditṭhi, the following also count. Propagating micchā dittthi to others, encouraging another to cultivate micch $\bar{a}$ ditṭhi (say, for instance, that the rebirth process is not valid), or praising such practices.
- That is how ten dasa akusala expand to forty.
- As one starts avoiding more and more of these forty actions, one will start feeling the early stages of Nibbāna or "nivana," i..e, cooling down the mind.


## Complexity of Life

13. Buddha has taught us how to understand why different living beings are born that way and why people are born with wide-ranging health, wealth, beauty, etc.

- One time a Brahmin asked about how that happens. The Buddha's description is in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Cūlakammavibhañga Sutta (MN 135.)."
- Also, see "Complexity of Life and the Way to Seek 'Good Rebirths'."


### 7.1.4.5 The Five Precepts - What the Buddha Meant by Them

## Revised December 23, 2020

1. The five or eight precepts, of course with different meanings, were there before the Buddha. It is said that on the day the future Buddha, Prince Siddharttha (Siddhārtha in Sanskrit), was born, his mother had observed the eight precepts.

- Ancient kings banned the so-called five immoral acts in order to maintain a peaceful society. These were: killing (of probably other people), stealing, sexual misbehavior, lying, and getting intoxicated.
- The vedic Brahmins expanded these to include the killing of animals. They also expanded to eight precepts which enabled them to attain mundane $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$.
- By the way, except those referring to the God, the Ten Commandments in Christianity also identify many of these "immoral acts."

2. Just like he did with many existing terminologies at that time (kamma, the four great elements of pathavī, $\bar{a} p o$, tejo, vāyo, etc.), the Buddha adopted these precepts, but re-defined what he meant by them. (In fact, those concepts originated with Buddha Kassapa, who lived a long time before Buddha Gotama. The true meanings of many concepts were lost by the time of Buddha Gotama.)

- In Buddha Dhamma, all possible immoral acts are included in the dasa akusala; see "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)."
- Therefore, all those are in the five precepts too. When one truly understands Buddha Dhamma, i.e., the nature of this world as embodied in anicca, dukkha, and anatta, one sees that these precepts come out naturally from the nature's laws. At that stage, one's mind automatically rejects all dasa akusala, and thus the five precepts are automatically obeyed; one does not even have to think about them.

3. For one embarking on the Path prescribed by the Buddha, the conventional five precepts (killing other beings intentionally, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, and intoxication) are a good start.

- Furthermore, one needs to recite the five precepts, understanding that it is not a promise, but one's intends to do the utmost (otherwise, the act will itself be a musāvāda or a lie). This is because anyone other than an Arahant is bound to break some of them per their true meanings.
- But as one proceeds on the Path and experiences the benefits (peace of mind or the early stages of nirämisa sukha), one should try to expand the scope of those five precepts from the conventional meanings. This can be done systematically: when one truly understands the meanings of anicca, dukkha, anatta, AND that our existence does not end with this life, one begins to have a deeper insight.
- When that happens, the precepts are not followed as a ritual or a set of rules. Rather, one realizes that there is no other moral way to live.

4. For example, when one realizes that one has been an animal or worse in previous lives, one stops thinking of animals as "mere things" that exist for our pleasure. Furthermore, understanding the laws of kamma, i.e., taking any life has consequences will make one re-think of just wantonly taking another life.

- But some people go to extremes. They start treating animal life on the same level as human life and then freak out when they have to clear a spider web in cleaning their house. Inevitably, we will unintentionally kill many small creatures while walking on the ground or even boiling some water. So, one need to get a sense of the relative weights of kamma; see, "How to Evaluate Weights of Different Kamma?."
- What needs to be avoided first is those "pleasure killings" like fishing, hunting, etc.

5. Stealing is not merely acted like shop lifting, but also includes gains by immoral means. To live a functional society, we have to do transactions with each other. We need to make sure we do not take advantage of another person and becoming "morally indebted" to that person.

- Vinaya rules ("vi" + "naya" where "naya" is debt and Vinaya is becoming free debts) in Buddha Dhamma setup for the monks show how to live their lives by properly paying back for the sustenance they get from the laypeople.
- When the Buddha said to test any act or concept with "Dhamma and Vinaya," he meant that the concept needs to be consistent with Paṭicca Samuppāda (cause and effect) and also consistent with "rāga vinaya, dosa vinaya, and moha vinaya," i.e., not getting into debt via greed, hate, and ignorance.
- If we gain from someone by unjust means, we will have to pay that debt if not in this life, but in future lives; see, "Kamma, Debt, and Meditation."

6. The third precept, "kāmesu micchācārā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaim samādiyāmī", is commonly translated as "avoiding sexual misconduct." But "kāma" is not just sexual activity. "Kāma" includes all sense pleasures that are available in the kāma loka. And "micchācārā" (pronounced "michchāchārā") means "misbehavior" in the sense of "going to extremes." Thus the real meaning is not to over-indulge in sense pleasures.

- In fact, excessive drinking, gambling, etc., are included in this precept.
- We have to use all our five physical senses to live in this world. But we need to have restraints to not abuse them to the extent that we will hurt ourselves or others. Even a simple example of over-eating leads to health problems, which will hurt not only oneself but the whole family.
- The first three precepts include all three akusala kamma done with the body.

7. The fourth precept on musāvāda (lying) in Buddha Dhamma includes all abuses done in my speech, including harsh speech, slandering, and gossip which WILL harm oneself and others.

- Thus the fourth precept encompasses all four akusala kamma done with speech.

8. The fifth is a big one that is almost always misinterpreted. If it included just drinking, it would have been, "surāmeraya veramaṇī......." That was probably the original verse.

But in Buddha Dhamma it is, "surāmeraya majjapamā daṭthānā veramaṇī sikkhāpadam......."
In the word, "sur $\vec{a} ", ~ " r \vec{a} "$ means "rāga" or excess greed. Thus "sur $\vec{a} "$ means with excess greed; "meraya" is delicious. "Majja" means intoxication and "majjapama"" is getting delayed via intoxication, and "datṭhāna" means that mindset. Of course, "veramaṇ̄̄ sikkhāpadaim samādiyām $\vec{\imath}$ " means "I decide to avoid doing such things willingly."

Thus it should be interpreted as, "avoid the mindset of getting intoxicated by alcohol, drugs, money, power, etc.," anything that can make you "fall behind":

- All this happens in one's mind. One gets intoxicated with greedy thoughts, and when one does not get one's way with them, one generates hate. And all this happens because one does not understand the true nature of this world, i.e., one has micchā dittthi or wrong views.
- To put it another way, one should be careful not to get intoxicated by the five sense inputs or "kāma assäda"; see, "What is "Kāma"? It is not Just Sex."
- One believes that either, (i) one's actions will not have future consequences, and (ii) therefore, one needs to think about how to get what one wants (because there are so many tempting things out there to be had!); one does not realize all that is temporary.
- Thus in order to really obey the fifth precept, one needs to start working on one's mind. All three akusala kamma done with the mind are included in this fifth precept; see, "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)."

9. The following scenario is given as an example to illustrate the futility of blindly following precepts. Many people live their entire lives without intentionally killing, stealing, engaging in sexual misconduct, lying, or getting intoxicated. But their minds are burdened with greed, hate, or ignorance. Depending on the state of their minds, they may not even get a human birth next time around.

- There is this story about an older woman who followed those conventional five precepts to the letter. Even though she was poor, she was greedy and kept all her money under her pillow. She was reborn as a louse (plural lice) on that pillow, because of her attachment to that money in the pillow.
- And if keeping those precepts will take one to Nibbāna, then a cow or a horse living in isolation will be certain to attain Nibbāna. They do not kill, steal, lie, or get intoxicated, and if their owners do not have any other animal of that kind, then there is no chance of sexually misbehaving either.
- It is all about purifying one's mind. A pure mind gains wisdom, and will not allow any harmful action by speech or by deed. Such a mind is not burdened, but has "cooled down"; that is the happiness of Nibbāna.

10. The path to Nibbāna starts with the mundane Eightfold Path with sīla, samādhi, pañ̃ñ in that order. Then, one will comprehend the Noble Truths/Tilakkhanal Paṭicca Samuppāda and become a Sotāpanna Anugāmi. That is when one starts on the lokuttara or Noble Eightfold Path with lokuttara Sammā Diṭthi. Now the sequence shifts to pañ̃̃̄̄, sīla, samādhi with wisdom (paññā) in front. See, "Sīla, Samādhi, Pannā to Pannā, Silla, Samādhi."

- A key step in completing the mundane Eightfold Path is to get rid of the wrong views (micchā diṭthi), as explained in that post. Another is to understand that kamma is not deterministic.
- A brahmin by the name of Niganṭanāṭaputta in the days of the Buddha was preaching that everything happens due to kamma. He advised his followers to refrain from breaking the five precepts because, INEVITABLY such deeds lead to the birth in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$. He also preached that if someone did not break even a single precept, that person would NOT be born in the apāy $\bar{a}$ in the next birth.
- The Buddha said that both were wrong. We have done both good and bad kamma in our previous lives, and the next birth will be determined by the relative strengths of those and what we do in this life. For example, Angulimāla, who killed nearly 1000 people, attained the Arahantship in a week. And Buddha gave examples of those who lived a perfectly moral life, but were born in the apāyā, because they had bad kamma vipāka from previous lives. For details, see, "WebLink: suttacentral: Mahā Kammavibhañga Sutta (MN 136)."
- Furthermore, the Buddha said that if someone dies with such misconceptions, that is miccha ditt $t h i$, and one WILL BE born in the apāy $\bar{a}$ just BECAUSE OF that micch $\bar{a}$ dittthi. It is critically important to figure out this point. I meet many people (even Buddhists) who say, 'I have not done anything bad to anyone; therefore, I do not think anything bad will happen to me." That is a miccha dittthi. The only way to guarantee that one will be exempt from birth in the ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$ is to attain the Sotāpanna stage of Nibbāna.

Next, "What is Kamma? - Is Everything Determined by Kamma?", .........

### 7.1.4.6 What is Kamma? - Is Everything Determined by Kamma?

Revised January 28, 2020; June 7, 2022 (\#2)

## Things Happen Due to Causes and Conditions

1. A key concept in Buddha Dhamma is cause and effect. Nothing happens without a cause or a reason.

- But even if root causes are there, we can stop them from bringing their results by blocking the CONDITIONS for them to come to fruition (a seed has the potential to bring about a tree, but for that to happen the seed must be given a fertile soil, water, and sunlight).
- That is explained with simple terms in, "Working of Kammā - Critical Role of Conditions."
- That is why in Paticcca Samuppāda, "paccayä" does NOT mean "it will happen"; see, "What Does "Paccayā" Mean in Paticca Samuppāda?."


## Nature's Laws - Dhamma Niyāma

2. Nature enforces this cause and effect via niyāma dhamma (dhammaniyāmatā or dhammatā.) It comes from niyama (meaning "fixed.")

- Some Commentaries describe "five types of niyāma dhamma": kamma niyama, citta niyama, utu niyama, bïja (or bija), and dhamma niyama. However, I have not found any such description in the Tipitaka.
- Everything happens according to Paṭicca Samuppāda. The "WebLink: suttacentral: Paccaya Sutta (SN (12.20)" explains the word dhammaniyāmatā:
"Katamo ca, bhikkhave, paṭiccasamuppādo? Jātipaccayā, bhikkhave, jarāmaraṇaim. Uppādā vā tathāgatānaì anuppādā vā tathāgatānaì, thitāva sā dhātu dhammaṭ̣hitatā dhammaniyāmatā idappaccayatā."
- There is a discourse by Waharaka Thero which addresses this issue about the "five dhammat $\bar{a}$ ". For the benefit of those who can understand the Sinhala language here is the link: "WebLink: waharaka.com:


3. First of all, there are actions by individuals that lead to harmful consequences right away. If one jumps from a tall building, one is bound to get hurt or worse. That is a result of dhamma niyāma (law of gravitation is a dhamma niyāma,) which is cause and effect. Paṭicca Samuppāda is the ultimate dhamma niyāma. It explains how and under what conditions kamma vipāka produces results.

- When something appears in this world, it does not stay the same. It changes in unexpected ways (viparināma) and is eventually destroyed. Thus anything in the world (a sañkhata [sankata in Sinhala]) is subjected to the utu niyāma. Whatever results that kamma vipāka may bring in, they will also eventually go away.
- Bīja (or bīja) niyāma is not relevant to the workings of the plant seeds, as some books explain. It dictates how kamma bīja (seeds) lead to their fruits (vipāka). A "puñña kamma seed" or a "good seed" will always produce excellent results, and a "pāpa kamma seed" or a "bad seed" will generate a bad result. A Sotāpanna would have made all those kamma seeds, that make it possible to have rebirths in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$, to be ineffective. Thus a Sotāpanna will NEVER be born in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$.
- Citta niyama involves laws associated with the working of the complex mind, and that can affect kamma vipāka in a significant way. For example, by purifying the mind, one can attain the Sotāpanna stage and thus make INEFFECTIVE all those kamma seeds that could lead to birth in the ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$.
- Kamma vipāka are the root causes for all that happens in this world, but their effects can be altered and even stopped by exploiting the other laws of nature. That is what a Buddha discovers when he attains Enlightenment. All kamma vipāka are made ineffective at reaching full Nibbāna or the Arahanthood.

The main point here is that most bad consequences can be avoided by understanding Dhamma, living a moral life, and being mindful (yoniso manasikāra).

## We Have Done Many Good and Bad Kamma in Our Past Lives

4. In this beginning-less long journey of rebirths called saysāra (or sainsāra,) each of us has done an uncountable number of both good and bad things. When we do a good or an immoral act, the kammic energy associated with that act gives rise to a seed, called a kamma seed. It is energy (not a material thing) that stays with our minds until it gets a chance to come to fruition. An apple seed will not germinate and grow into an apple tree until the right conditions (soil, water, sunlight, etc.) appear. In the same way, all our kamma seeds lie in waiting for the right conditions to appear. If we allow such "conditions," we will have to experience the result of that kamma or kamma vipāka at that time.

- Our kamma seeds (kamma bīja) are subjected to the bīja niyāma mentioned above. In either case, a seed gives rise to a plant or a vipāka according to the type of seed. Someone, who did something terrible that only an animal would do, will pay for that may be with a birth in the animal realm; someone who did an act of generosity may get rewarded accordingly.


## Conditions Must be Right to Bring Vipāka of Past Kamma

5. We can keep an apple seed (for example) in a dry, cool place for a long time. Some seeds have been kept intact for thousands of years. It will not germinate until we plant it in fertile soil and provide water and sunlight. In the same way, a kamma seed (good or bad) can lay dormant for a long time until conditions become right for it to germinate. We all have accumulated numerous kamma seeds over these repeated rebirths. What we need to do is to provide conditions for good kamma seeds to germinate and NOT allow conditions for bad ones to germinate.

- Thus kamma is the act, AND kamma vipāka is the result of that act. But since the right conditions need to appear for a kamma seed to "germinate," the vipāka may not come until later in the same life, next life, or even many lives later.
- That is why it is not easy for people to see that their actions will have consequences. Kamma niyāma is not the only law that is in effect; there are four more as mentioned above, and they all work together. It is a very intricate network. In particular, because there is a citta niyāma (principle of thoughts), we also have some control over kamma vipāka. We cannot change any of the five niyāma, but we can OVERCOME a cause (a power) due to a niyāma by building an opposing force.


## Being Aware of the Conditions Is Key

6. We can take many steps to suppress the bad kamma vipāka coming to fruition and ALSO to get good kamma vipāka to come to fruition. As emphasized above, we all have an unlimited number of both good and bad kamma vipāka waiting to bear fruit. Rather than giving in to bad vipāka and saying "what to do, this is my kamma," we can find ways to suppress those. And rather than saying, "I must not have done any good kamma, and this is my fate," we can probe and locate those hidden good kamma seeds and cultivate them. Let us consider some examples:

- If one does not take care of one's physical body, it may become fertile ground for many bad kamma vipāka to come to fruition. If we eat healthily and exercise, the body will not be vulnerable to ailments or injuries.
- The brain needs good food and exercise too. A healthy body and mind exercises such as solving problems, even word puzzles, keep the brain in good condition. But the best is meditation, and vipassanā or insight meditation is better than Samatha meditation. For example, even if one's family has a history of Alzheimer's disease, one can avoid getting by keeping the brain active and healthy.


## Outcome Can be Changed - Environment And Associations Are Critical

7. One may be born into poverty because of a past kamma vipāka that came to fruition at the death of the previous life. But this is NOT a reason to give up. Any person has an unlimited number of good kamma vipāka waiting to come to fruition. Indeed, birth to a poor family did not set up optimum conditions. But one has control over the citta niyāma mentioned at the beginning (see, "The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Āsavas)'"). One could use one's mind to overcome this condition and cultivate the background to achieve success.

- That is why the environment is critical to anyone. One needs to surround oneself with optimistic, moral people, who will help cultivate the good qualities that lie dormant. At the same time, one needs to avoid "bad company" that could pull one in the wrong direction. It is not that any person is intrinsically good or bad. Rather, at any given phase of life or even through most of this life, some people may be displaying their "bad habits" that have come to the forefront. One will be affected negatively by associating such people.
- The environment is CRITICAL for young children starting from the time of conception. Even the fetus in the womb is affected by the environment. For example, a loving mother and father showing affection to each other positively affect the baby. When the mother is being abused by the father it will be a negative effect.
- It is critical to have a nurturing environment within the family, and also in the school. A significant part of an individual's character is molded by the first 10-15 years of life. That is the time they can acquire habits and once established, it will take a lot of effort to change them. The parents must instill good habits: moral behavior, eating well, exercising, associating with good friends, avoiding bad friends, studying well, etc.


## "Wearing Out" Some Kamma Seeds

## 8. It is also possible to remove many of one's bad kamma seeds.

- When we acquire a "bad kamma seed," we get indebted to another being. In the same way that one can be debt-free by paying off existing loans, one can "payback" old debts accumulated in the cycle of rebirths. That can be done by "transferring merits" when one does good deeds, and also by doing the Ariya Mettā Bhāvanā. See, "Transfer of Merits (Pattidana)- How Does That Happen?" and "5. Ariya Metta Bhāvanā (Loving Kindness Meditation)."


## Laws of Kamma Are Complex

9. The world is VERY complicated. Because all those five niyama are acting simultaneously to enforce the "cause and effect," it is not possible to sort through each event in isolation and say, "this is THE reason for this particular event." There could be a dominant cause in some cases, but most times, it is a combination of several, and most of those are from the past.

- The main thing we have remember is that each action by us will have consequences (law of kamma). There is nowhere to hide. Even if we can fool law enforcement sometimes, nature cannot be fooled.
- We need to make a concerted effort to get rid of bad habits and acquire and cultivate good habits. A habit can snowball into a saysāric habit, good or bad (related to the law of citta and law of bīja). The environment is an essential factor in getting rid of bad habits and acquiring/cultivating good habits.
- We need to be constantly aware that there are zillions of kamma bīja (good and bad) waiting to germinate. We should not provide conditions for "bad seeds" to grow. Thus we should avoid bad
company, bad environment, etc. We must also provide conditions for "good seeds" to germinate (i.e., study well, provide the necessary requirements to get a promotion or a job, and learn and practice Dhamma). I am sure you can apply these principles to your own life; each one is different.
- Then some things happen due to random events: floods, hurricanes, earthquakes, etc. These come under utu niyama or circumstances that occur due to physical causes in the environment. When those happen, thousands of apparently "unconnected" people may be affected the same way. Again, this is partly due to the incredible number of kamma we have accumulated in this beginning-less rebirth process. There is ALWAYS something from the deep past that is going to MATCH any circumstance.


## Nibbāna Attained via Removing Upādāna (and Taṇhā)

10. Finally, there is a misconception out there that one needs to get rid of all kamma (more accurately kamma vipāka) to attain Nibbāna. That is entirely false. One reaches Nibbāna via removing deep-seated cravings, called $\bar{a} s a v \bar{a}$; see, "The Way to Nibbāna - Removal of Āsavas." More details at "Difference Between Tanhā and Upādāna."

- Another way to say the same thing is to say one needs to remove lobha, dosa, and moha or the defilements in mind.
- However, one could remove most of one's bad kamma vipāka via cultivating Ariya Mettā Bhāvanā; see, \#8 above.

Some of the main concepts are discussed further in the "Sanjkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka," "Habits and Goals," "Sansāric Habits and Āsavas," "The Way to Nibbāna - Removal of Āsavas," and other related posts.

Next, "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)",

### 7.1.4.7 How to Evaluate Weights of Different Kamma

## Revised February 21, 2018

In the previous essay, "Ten Immoral Acts (Dasa Akusala)," we looked at the ten different types of acts that will have bad kammic consequences.

1. First of all, the most potent of all is micchā dittthi. The only akusala completely removed by a Sotāpanna is the micchā ditṭhi and in doing that he/she removes an unimaginably huge amount of defilements; see, "What is the only Akusala Removed by a Sotāpanna?."

- One critical problem many people have is that they try hard to avoid actions with relatively small kammic consequences, while unknowingly doing things that have stronger kammic consequences. Let us take an example: Suppose we have a large tank of water which is losing water due to many holes at the bottom. Some holes are pin holes, some are a little larger, and there are a few holes that are big and losing water fast. Obviously, one would want to plug those large holes first. Then one would fix the medium-size holes and those pin holes are the last to be fixed.

2. We can see that many akusala are with "acts" that are directed towards other beings, whether it is done bodily, verbally, or just by thought. In principle, a being could be in any one of the 31 realms (see, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma").
3. The severity of the consequence of any misdeed (ie., kamma vipāka) involving another living being depends strongly on the "level of existence" of the living being from lowest level of realm 1 (niraya) to the highest at the 31st realm (fourth arūpa loka); Any "Ariya" or a Noble Person (who has attained one of the four stages of Nibbāna), are at the highest levels regardless of the realm. A hurtful word against an Ariya carries thousand-fold bad kamma vipāka compared to killing thousand ants.

- See, "Details of Kamma - Intention, Who Is Affected, Kamma Patha." This post has been updated on February 21, 2018, and provides a simple two-step process to evaluate a given situation.

4. It is difficult to identify whether a given human is just an immoral human or an Arahant by just looking at that person. Human realm is unique in many ways.

Thus, we can try to sort out the kammic consequences of a given immoral act on the 'level of consciousness" of the being that act was directed to:

- Regardless of the realm, the highest four levels are Arahant, Anāgāmī, Sakadāgāmī, and Sotāpanna. Humans can attain all four levels.
- Out of the 31 realms we can directly experience only the human and animal realms. Thus, normally we need only to evaluate how our actions affect other humans AND animals.
- Since any animal is inferior to any human, we need to pay special attention to how we interact with other human beings.
- In particular, it is not possible to judge whether a given human has attained a Nibbānic state. Even by directing hurtful words to an Ariya (one who has attained at least the Sotāpanna stage), one could be acquiring thousand-fold more bad kammic potential compared to doing the same to a normal human.
- In some cases, even the person in question may not know that he/she is a Sotāpanna. There may be "jäti Sotāpannas," i.e., those who had attained the Sotāpanna stage in a previous life and thus born as a Sotāpanna, and may not realize it.
- Thus we need to be very careful with dealing with fellow humans in particular.

5. When we say killing is immoral it is implicit that killing is taking the life of any living being. But killing a human has a kammic consequence that is much higher compared to killing an animal. Killing a Sotāpanna has a even more drastic consequences, Sakadāgāmī even higher, Anāgām̄ even higher, and killing an Arahant will have the highest, and is of the strongest kind at par with killing a parent (an annantariya kamma that will cause the very next birth in an apāya).
6. Similarly other immoral acts will have consequences depending on the "consciousness level" of the living being. It is not a matter of one particular living being is "better" than another.

- Rather it is a matter of how valuable that "level" is, and how difficult it is to attain that "level." One has been born a human because of the merits one has acquired in previous lives; it is extremely difficult to get a human birth as we will discuss in a separate post; see, "How the Buddha Described the Chance of Rebirth in the Human Realm."
- One becomes a Sotāpanna by cultivating moral behavior and by purifying one's mind; thus a life of a Sotāpanna is much more valuable compared to a normal human being.

7. Even among humans who have not attained any Nibbānic state, there are "different levels of consciousness": One who has more wisdom (pañña) is at a higher level than one with less wisdom.

- Here wisdom does not mean book knowledge, but knowledge of Dhamma; understanding of the true nature of "this world", or anicca, dukkha, anatta. Thus the possibility of that person attaining a Nibbānic stage is more likely, compared to one who has less wisdom.

8. Another important thing is not to worry about things that one does not have any control over. Everyday, we kill so many small animals unintentionally: stepping on them while walking, cleaning the yard, cleaning the house, and even while boiling water.

- We need to remember that "kamma is intention." We are not boiling water to kill any unseen life forms, rather we boil water to make sure we do not get sick by drinking contaminated water.

9. It is not even possible to live "in this world" without harming other beings unintentionally, even though we may be aware that our acts may lead to the destruction of many life forms.

- Once a bhikkhu who had developed abhiññā powers was getting ready to drink a glass of water, and with his ability to "see" finer things saw that there were numerous microscopic beings in the water glass. He tried to filter them out, but they were too small. The Buddha then explained to him that it is not possible to live without doing things that are necessary to sustain one's life.
- In another example, suppose one has a wound; if left alone it could lead to one's death. Thus one needs to apply medication to the wound. However, that wound is infested with numerous microscopic living beings, and they will be killed by the medication.
- Walking on the ground (especially grass) kills many insects; but we cannot live our lives without going places. What matters is our INTENTION. When one is walking, there is no intention of killing living beings.

10. What we need to do is to be careful not to do any harm to even the smallest of the creatures with a hateful or greedy mind. It is the intention, or the state of the mind, that counts.

- There is this story about an old woman who was very careful about not breaking the five precepts. But she was extremely greedy; she was quite stingy, did not give much to charity, and kept all her money under her pillow. Because of that greed, she was born a peta (a hungry ghost).
- It is relatively easy to keep the five precepts. What is harder is to purify one's mind of greedy, hateful, and ignorant thoughts. This is what needs to accomplished in true "ānāpānasati bhāvanā"; see, "․ What is Ānāpāna?."
- Even though we may not be greedy or hateful in this life, we may have acquired such bad kamma in previous lives. This is why the Buddha said even if one lives morally in this life that does not guarantee a good rebirth unless one has attained the Sotāpanna stage of Nibbāna; see, "Why a Sotāpanna is Better off than any King, Emperor, or a Billionaire."
- Buddha Dhamma is all about the mind. Purifying the mind is the key, not just to follow set rules. Just following precepts will not be enough.

11. Finally, it is important to remember that hate is worse than greed. Excessive hateful actions lead to rebirth in the lowest realm, the niraya. Excess greed lead to rebirth mainly as petas (hungry ghosts).

- Mixture of hate and greed lead to rebirth in all four lowest realms, the apāy $\bar{a}$. Even if one does not carry over the hateful or greedy thoughts to speech or bodily actions, they still count especially if one thinks about them most of the time.
- This is why it is important to develop good meditation habits; see, "Bhāvanā (Meditation)." A mind free of hate and greed becomes less agitated and peacefuil; then it leads to wisdom (paññ̄ $\overline{\text { }}$ ).

More details on weights of different kamma at: 12 . Key Factors to be Considered when "Meditating" for the Sotāpanna Stage. Also see, "What is Kamma? - Is Everything Determined by Kamma?."

Next, "The Four Bases of Mental Power (Cattāro Iddhipāda)", ..

### 7.1.4.8 Account of Angulimāla - Many Insights to Buddha Dhamma

February 17, 2019; revised March 7, 2020

## Introduction

1. Angulimāla had killed 999 people but was able to attain the Arahanthood within a few weeks after meeting the Buddha. His life story can help us understand how and why even vipāka for such highly immoral deeds can be overcome.

- Even though the laws of kamma play an important role in Buddha Dhamma, one can overcome the consequences of such highly immoral actions. That is by comprehending the more fundamental principle
of causality: one can bypass all such kamma vipāka (all future suffering) by getting rid of avijjāa and $\tanh \bar{a}$ (the root causes).
- The following two posts also discuss kamma and kamma vipāka: "What is Kamma? - Is Everything Determined by Kamma?" and "How to Evaluate Weights of Different Kamma."

2. I highly-recommend a good account of the life story of Angulimāla here: "WebLink: accesstoinsight.org: Angulimāla - A Murderer's Road to Sainthood."

- Reading that account first will help with the discussion below.


## Brief Summary of Angulimāla's Life

3. To summarize the critical points in the story of Angulimāla:

- He was called Ahimsaka ("Harmless") as a boy and was an excellent student. He was the best in class at the premier learning institute of that day in Takkasila (Taxila). His peers were jealous and tried to convince the teacher that Ahimsaka was plotting to take his job.
- The teacher finally believed those false accusations and came up with a way to get Ahimsaka killed. When Ahumsaka finished his studies and asked how he can pay for his education, the teacher said: "You must bring me a thousand human little fingers of the right hand."
- That is how Ahimsika became a killer and came to be known as "Angulimāla", because he started wearing some of those cut fingers in a garland around his neck.

4. Angulimāla had killed 999 people and was about to kill his mother to get the last finge when the Buddha intervened.

- The quick-witted Angulimāla was able to comprehend a few verses that the Buddha uttered and asked the Buddha to ordain him right there.
- Ven. Anggulimāla became an Arahant soon afterwards.
- Later on, the Buddha reminded Ven. Angulimāla that he had now been "born" a Āriya (Noble Person), even though he had killed so many people when he was a murderer. This concept of changing "bhava" even during a given existence discussed below.


## First Observation - Importance of Gati and Environment

5. The first thing we can see is that obedient and well-behaved Ahimsika became a murderer because of his teacher's influence. External influences (family, friends, etc.) can be a crucial factor in changing one's gati (pronounced "gathi") loosely translated as "character." (Note that Pāli words are written not in "standard English," but with an adopted "Tipiṭaka English" convention. See, ""Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars - Part 1" and "Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars - Part 2")

- This is why parents must always be on the lookout on what kind of friends a child has. Friends can be a considerable influence on a child.
- This is also true for adults. One must get away from those who pull in wrong directions, and make new associations along "good directions."
- Gati are discussed in many posts at this site. One can find a list of relevant posts by entering "gati" in the "Search" box on top right.


## Second Observation - There is no "unchanging self"

6. The second thing we can see is that there is no "unchanging self."

- Harmless Ahimsika became a violent murderer in Anggulimāla and killed almost 1000 people.
- Then that violent Angulimāla the murderer, became a Noble Person within a short time after meeting the Buddha and within weeks Ven. Angulimāla became an Arahant too!

7. In the "bigger picture" of the "three lok $\vec{a}$ " and " 31 realms," we saw that the "lifestream of any living being" can change from "good to bad", "bad to good", "good to bad again," etc. an uncountable times in the beginning-less rebirth process.

- We all have been in the highest brahma realm and the lowest apāya too. But we all have spent most of that time in the suffering-filled $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$.
- The only way get out of this "ceaseless wandering in the rebirth process (saysāra or saimsāra)" is to become an Arahant, as Ven. Angulimāla did.
- The first step is to attain the Sotāpanna stage be free of at least the four lowest realms (apāyā).


## Third Observation - There is a Causal Link ("Sort of a Self")

## 8. However, as we discussed in the previous post, it is not possible to say that "there is no-self" either.

- Nothing happens without a reason or a cause (at least one, but usually many causes).
- A human is reborn an animal or a brahma due to a reason. There is a CONNECTION between two adjacent "bhava" or existences.
- Ahimsika did not become Angulimāla without causes. One cause was the influence of his peers on the teacher. Then Ahimsaka blindly followed the instructions of the teacher.
- But then all that was reversed due to the influence of the Buddha.

9. That is why it is also incorrect to say, "there is no-self." There is a always a "self" - living at least momentarily - that is responsible for how that "self" evolves in the future.

- But that "changing self" can and will change between "good' and 'bad" based on many factors. Key factors are self's deeds and external influences on that "self" at any given time.


## Fourth Observation - Two Types of "Bhava" or Existence

10. Another critical point is that one could be born in a "temporary bhava" or "temporary existence" DURING this life. As we saw, Angulimāla switched "temporary bhava" from an innocent boy to a murderer, and back to an Arahant!

- For example, a person who drinks habitually is not drunk all the time. He is in a "drunken bhava" or "drunken existence" while he is intoxicated. The next day he is sober and would not be in a "drunken bhava" until he drinks again.
- In the same way, one is in an "angry bhava" when she gets angry. But after the anger subsides, she is not in that "existence" or "bhava" anymore.
- Temporary bhava (or transient existences) explained via "Idappaccayatā Pațicca Samuppāda" processes (those operate during a given life) . Even though only one type of Paṭicca Samuppāda is presented in the textbooks today, there are different types.

11. When one habitually gets into such a "temporary bhava" repeatedly, then that becomes a cultivated gati or habit/character.

- In that case, it could lead to a new "upapatti bhava" (or "bhava associated with rebirth") too. For example, when one gets angry all the time and then one day kills a another human, that could lead to rebirth in an apāya. That is a "more permanent bhava" that can last a long time.
- That is the more common Paṭicca Samuppāda cycle, i.e., the "upapatti Paticca Samuppāda."
- The section on "Paticca Samuppāda" is a must-read.


## Fifth Observation - Going Back and Forth in the Rebirth Process

12. So, there could be some period in the rebirth process where one mostly does "good deeds", cultivates "good gati," and thus gets "good bhava" and therefore "good births" ( $j \bar{a} t i$ ). We discussed the difference between bhava and $j \bar{a} t i$ in the post: "Bhava and Jāti - States of Existence and Births Therein."

- Then, one's gati may change to "bad gati," especially when one comes under "bad influences and associates." In that case, one may start on a "downward path" and eventually one's gati will become harmful to the extent that one will get a "bad bhava."
- We can see such examples around us. We all have seen good children becoming drug addicts and then becoming even murderers due to bad associations. The opposite happens too, when a violent person may change those bad gati and become a "good citizen" under right influences.
- That is what we all have been doing (going back and forth between good and bad existences,) in this beginning-less rebirth process.


## Sixth Observation - Angulimāla's Realization

13. When Angulimāla was chasing the Buddha and could not get even close to the Buddha. To quote from the account referenced above, Angulimāla stopped and called "Stop, monk! Stop, monk!"
"I have stopped, Angulimāla. You stop, too."

- That got Angulimāla to thinking, and he started asking why the Buddha - while still walking — said that he had stopped. The Buddha explained that he had stopped his samsäric wandering (rebirth process) and had overcome all suffering.
- That is when Añgulimāla gained insight and became Ven. Añgulimāla.

14. Therefore, the critical point to understand is that it is NOT ENOUGH just to do "good deeds," even though that is a must.

- One MUST take another step and realize that we have been trapped in this rebirth process filled with (mostly) suffering due to two reasons.
- Let us briefly discuss those two CRITICAL points.


## Seventh Observation - The Critical Discovery of the Buddha

15. First, until a Buddha comes to the world (meaning a human attains the Buddhahood by purifying the mind to the greatest extent), humans are unaware of the "wider world view" with "three types of lok $\vec{a}$ " and 31 realms.

- Even though one could be occasionally born in "good realms" at or above the human realm, beings are reborn mostly in the lowest four realms ( $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$ ) due to misdeeds done in seeking sense pleasures.
- Of course, there is suffering in any realm, but it is less in higher realms.
- Therefore, most of the rebirths lead to much suffering. That is the essence of the First Noble Truth.

16. Secondly, until a Buddha comes to the world, it is not known hot to escape from this endless rebirth process filled with suffering.

- There have been, and there will always be teachers who realize that misdeeds lead to unfortunate rebirths and good deeds lead to good rebirths, and teach that to others.
- But it is only a Buddha that can figure out that doing good deeds is not enough. One needs to see the anicca nature of this world of 31 realms. That means even if one gets a rebirth in the highest realm with long lifetimes of billions of years, one will end up in despair and eventual death.
- Then one gets back to the same cycle of rebirths, where one will inevitably do evil deeds (due to cravings or sense temptations) and will be born in the apayy $\bar{a}$.


## Eighth Observation - The Root Cause for Suffering

17. Therefore, the key is to realize that one needs to REMOVE the tendency to be tempted by sense desires.

- One needs to "see" that anicca nature, i.e., it is a waste of time to seek happiness in this world. That will sooner or later lead to rebirth in the ap $\bar{y} y \bar{a}(d u k k h a)$. Therefore, in the end, one will become helpless (anatta), when born in an apāya.
- It is not possible to forcefully suppress cravings under "strong sense temptations." When one sees the "anicca nature," cravings are automatically removed (in four stages of Nibbāna).
- That is the Second Noble Truth, the cause of future suffering.


## Ninth Observation - The Way to Nibbāna

18. Once the "big picture" of the 31 realms - together with how one WILL BE born among them due to one's actions (kamma) - is understood, one would have removed the ten types of micchā ditthi.

- That is because that "complete picture" requires the rebirth process, laws of kamma, etc.

19. Then one can begin to understand the "unfulfilling and dangerous nature of the wider world of 31 realms" or the "anicca nature."

- That "anicca nature" explains how "dukkha" or suffering arises, and one will become helpless (anatta) in the rebirth process. Those are three main characteristics (anicca, dukkha, anatta) that are called Tilakkhana (and they are inter-related).
- That is when one attains the Sotāpanna stage of Nibbāna.

20. That is why anicca has nothing to do with "impermanence," and "anatta" has nothing to do with a "self" or a "non-self."

- That knowledge about Tilakkhaṇa or the "true nature of this world" is available only in Buddha Dhamma.
- Until a Buddha comes to this world and DISCOVERS that "bigger picture," no one will be able to see that "bigger picture." Thus humans are unaware of the dangers in remaining in this cycle of rebirths filled with suffering.


## Tenth Observation - Kamma Vipāka Will be Effective Until Death of an Arahant

21. Even though Ven. Angulimāla had attained the Arahanthood, he was getting injured by "stone-throwers" regularly. Most of the time, those stones were not directed at him, but he was getting hit accidentally.

- As described in the above essay, "with blood running from his injured head, with his bowl broken, and with his patchwork robe torn, the venerable Angulimāla went to the Blessed One. The Blessed One saw him coming, and he told him: "Bear it, brāhmanā, bear it, brāhmanā! You have experienced here and now the ripening of kamma whose ripening you might have experienced in hell over many a year, many a century, many a millennium."
- If Angulimāla died without being saved by the Buddha, he would have suffered in the apāyā for an unimaginable time!

22. As we had discussed before, even a Buddha cannot avoid some of kamma vipāka. The physical body in this life arose due past kamma, and many aspects associated with that body cannot be changed.

- At the death of the physical body, there are no more rebirths anywhere in the 31 realms. Then, there is no way for any kamma vipāka to materialize (come to fruition). That is why the physical death of an Arahant is called "Parinibbāna" or "complete Nibbāna."
- There will be absolutely no suffering after the Parinibbāna.

23. Therefore, we can see that there are many insights in the accounts of notable personalities in the Tipitiaka. They are all consistent with the core teachings.

### 7.1.4.9 The Four Bases of Mental Power (Cattāro Iddhipāda)

I used to have this post titled, "The Four Factors of Accomplishment." I changed it because those words do not do justice to these four mental qualities. They are called satara Iddhipāda in Pāli or Sinhala, meaning factors that are critical to accomplishing any goal, whether mundane or transcendental.

- Iddhi is conventionally taken to mean "magical" powers. Those yogis who could see things that are far away, hear sounds that are far away, read minds of others, etc., were supposed to have iddhi powers. They acquired those powers by harnessing the power of these four factors to KEEP THEIR DEFILEMENTS SUPPRESSED.
- When one works towards attaining Nibbāna, one can use the same factors to REMOVE defilements from the mind.
- One could use the same factors to attain mundane goals, such as achieving financial independence, excelling in academics or a sport, improving health, etc.

They are chanda (liking, but close to an obsession), citta (thoughts), viriya (effort), and vīmaimsā (analysis). Chanda is NOT greed, it is the determination to attain a goal.

- Any innovator, business person, scientist, architect, in fact anyone who is an expert at his/her occupation, knows these factors are critical, even though they may not have thought about them.

1. One needs to have an liking (more like an obsessed liking) for the project; this is called chanda which we can translate as liking. It is not greed, but pure in quality and grows to become a life goal.
2. When one has this "obsession", one keeps thinking about it all the time. When one gets up at night to go to the bathroom, one thinks about it; it is the first thing that comes to mind when one wakes up. This is called citta; we will call it thought or contemplation.
3. Thus one makes one's best efforts (viriya) to achieve the goal. This is what makes swimmers get up early morning to do laps, a scientist/innovator forgets about his/her meal, an innovator stays awake thinking about how to make improvements to his products, etc.
4. One is always on the lookout for any faults or possible improvements in current efforts. If the concepts involved do not make sense, one is always looking for a better explanation, a better way to make something, etc. This is reasoning/investigating (vīmaimsā).

- These factors are mutually supportive of each other. Because of this, once getting started (slowly), they can lead to explosive growth; these factors feed on each other, and the project becomes selfsustaining. This is called exponential growth. Thus it is hard to calculate the time taken to finish the project by linear extrapolation.
- The same is true for someone starting on the Path. Initially, it takes time to absorb the concepts. But IF THE CONCEPTS ARE CORRECT (i.e., no contradictions), then progress is made very quickly. The principle of paticca samuppāda starts working and one will be attracting resources that will help in ways
one would not have even thought about; see, "The Law of Attraction, Habits (Gati), and Cravings (Āsavas)."

I know this by experience both as a scientist and now as a follower of the Path. After working for over four years, up until 2013, I had made only slow, steady progress on the Path. But I progressed enough that I kept looking for better explanations, discarding many things on the way. Since the middle of 2013, the growth exploded. That is when, just by the law of attraction (see, "The Law of Attraction, Habits (Gati), and Cravings (Āsavas)') I came across the pure Dhamma.

- By the way, this is process the Buddha called bhāvanā (meditation). One keeps contemplating, clarifying, investigating, etc. it all the time, i.e., "Asevitaya, bhavithaya, bahuleekathaya, ......"
- One can be meditating in all four postures: sitting, standing, walking, and lying down (on a bed). Of course one can concentrate better sitting down in one of the more formal sitting postures.


## Deeper Meanings when Cultivating the Noble Eightfold Path

See, "Javana of a Citta - The Root of Mental Power" for an anlysis based on Abhidhamma.

1. Chanda (cha + anda, where "cha" is mind and "anda" is "anduma" or clothes) means wrapping one's mind with appropriate "attire", which here means sammā vaca, sammā kammanta, and sammā ajiva. This is what fuels the "liking" for Nibbāna with increased nirāmisa sukha.

- By the way, a different meaning of "anda" (blind) is implied when chanda is used in "kāmachanda" (= "kāma" + "cha" + "anda"), i.e., mind blinded by kāma or sense pleasures.

2. Citta here means the mindset to attain Nibbāna.
3. However, even if one has liking and mindset on attaining Nibbāna, one needs to make an effort or viriya.
4. Even if one is exerting effort, it needs to be directed in the right direction. Thus one needs vīmaims $\bar{a}$ (investigation/reasoning) to comprehend anicca, dukkha, anatta, and to get to sammā ditṭhi.
5. "Iddhi" means "grow", and "pada" means "headed direction." Thus with iddhipada one is accelerating in the direction that one sets one's mind. Thus all four factors of chanda, citta, viriya, vīmaimsā need to be there.

## Next, "Why is it Necessary to Learn Key Pāli Words?", ...

### 7.1.4.1 Why is it Necessary to Learn Key Pāli Words?

## Original written before October 23, 2015; Revised March 4, 2017; October 8, 2018

I had not given this issue much thought until someone at an online forum pointed out in 2014 that I was using too many Pāli words and it was difficult to understand the meaning of those terms. This is an important point that has two aspects:

- In the Arana Vibhanga sutta (MN 130), the Buddha advised bhikkhus to explain the Dhamma by providing the MEANINGS and not to emphasize a given language. As long as one comprehends the concept, it does not matter what language is used.
- On the other hand, we need to have a way to transmit the key foundational words for future generations without distorting the meaning of such words. And it is difficult to find suitable words in other languages for keywords like anicca, anatta, and paticca samuppāda.
- I have explained the meaning of any Pāli term I use. But for a first-time reader, this could be a legitimate issue. Please use the "Search" button on the top right to locate relevant posts for any keyword. There is a "Pāli Glossary (A-K) and Pāli Glossary (L-Z)" too.

1. Buddha Dhamma is the most complex theory in the world; it encompasses all of nature's laws. Even though its basic premises are not hard to grasp, if one needs to dig deeper, one needs to spend some time "learning the basics", or the "fundamental ideas involved."

- Think about it this way: Can one learn algebra without knowing arithmetic?
- The key is to learn the basic ideas well, words like anicca, anatta, bhava, etc. It is said that one could understand the Buddha's message about existence just by comprehending anicca (which will lead to an understanding of dukkha and anatta), and that is true.
- But that is not possible if anicca is translated into English as just one word: impermanence. The Pāli word anicca means much more than just impermanence. So, it is better for the word anicca and to learn what is meant by that word.
- Viññāna is another word like that. It should not be be translated just as "consciousness"; it is much more complex; see, "Viññāna - What It Really Means."

2. There is another aspect too. If one learns the basic concepts in addition/subtraction or even quantum mechanics, it does not matter what language one uses to learn it. The key is to get the IDEA, not just learn the words. One can learn addition/subtraction or quantum mechanics in ANY language, not by memorizing words but by understanding the key concepts.

- When a child learns how to add/subtract, he/she has to learn the basic multiplication table and the procedures on how to use that knowledge in handling big numbers. After that he/she can solve any arbitrary problem involving big numbers.
- In the same way, one needs to get the IDEAS embodied in some key Pāli words because many of those Pāli words CANNOT be directly translated into other languages: They are highly condensed, each word packed with deep meanings.
- In quantum mechanics, the word "quantum" embodies the subject; regardless of the language one uses, one knows what a quantum is. In the same way, one needs to know what "anicca" is. There is no other word for it in English.
- Once one UNDERSTANDS the meaning of a certain key Pāli word, then one may even be able to find a suitable word in any language to keep it in mind. There is no need to memorize Pāli words for the sake of memorizing. It is similar to learning any concept.
- We just should not change the original Pāli words in the Tipitaka. That is the "blueprint" that needs to be transmitted intact so that Buddha's original message will be kept intact.

3. Let us first examine the reasons why Pāli is a special language.

- The Buddha delivered his discourses in Mäghadhi language; a version of that language suitable for memorization (Pāli) was used to SUMMARIZE those suttā. For example, Dhamma Cakka Pavattana Sutta was delivered to the five ascetics overnight. How many pages would it take to write all that down? Yet, it was condensed into a few pages.
- In the old days, suttā were orally transmitted generation-to-generation, and that was the other reason to condense it into a special form like a poem that is easy to remember and recite. The origin of the word "Pali" comes from that particular way of organization of the words.

4. Therefore, it may take several words in a different language to express the meaning of some Pāli words like anicca, anatta, bhava, etc. Pațicca samuppāda is another whole phrase that is best kept intact and just learn what is meant by that phrase; see, "Paticca Samuppāda - "Pati+ichcha" + "Sama+uppāda"."

- Thus most Pāli words are impossible to be translated word-by-word to other languages. There is a system to glean the true meanings of the suttā as well as the deep subject of paticca samuppāda; see, "Sutta Interpretation - Uddesa, Niddesa, Patiniddesa."
- This is the reason that many commentaries were written in the old days to explain the meaning of keywords and phrases; see, "Preservation of Dhamma" for details.
- Unfortunately, most of those original commentaries (Sinhala Attakathā) cannot be found today, except for three; see the above post.

5. Most of the problems we have today are due to such "word by word" translation of suttā into other languages.

- The most visible and disastrous translations are the translation of the words anicca and anatta into Sanskrit as anitya and anātma; these words were then ADOPTED in the Sinhala language to express the meaning of anicca and anatta. Then within the last two hundred or so years, those Sanskrit words were directly translated to English and now have become established to mean "impermanence" and "noself"; see, "Misinterpretation of Anicca and Anatta by Early European Scholars."
- Incorrect translation of just those words have kept the message of the Buddha hidden for over fifteen hundred years. It is not an accident that there have not been that many Arahants during that time.
- For the correct meanings of these words, see, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta - Wrong Interpretations" and the follow-up post.

6. In fact, it is said that one can reach the Sotāpanna stage by just comprehending the true meanings of anicca, dukkha, anatta, the three characteristics of the world. These three words have embodied in them a very broad message. Whole sutta were delivered to describe what was meant by those words! It is WRONG and DISASTROUS to just translate them as impermanence, suffering, and "no-self."

- But if one wishes, and knows the correct interpretations, one can dig much deeper to unimaginable depths. For example, there is a process involving 9 steps where a given citta starts off as a pure (pabhasvara) citta and gets "contaminated" before getting to the viññānakkhandha stage within within a billionth of a second!
- Those are discussed in detail, for example, "Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)" and "Pabhassara Citta, Radiant Mind, and Bhavañga."
- However, there is no need to go to that depth for most people (and many will not have enough time to do that anyway, but there could be a few who would really enjoy it).
- I just want everyone to appreciate Buddha Dhamma for what it is, and to help remove many misconceptions that are out there today.

7. To summarize, I cannot emphasize enough the importance of UNDERSTANDING the meanings of key Pāli words. It may take some time to truly grasp those meanings. I keep revising those key posts, whenever a better way to express an idea comes to mind or when someone else points out a better way to express it.

- Experience is a key factor in understanding. The word "elephant" may not mean anything to someone who does not understand English. But if it is shown to him what an elephant looks like, then he can associate the word "elephant" with the big animal.
- In the same way, it is important to UNDERSTAND what anicca means, by using one's experience: for example, we cannot maintain even our body the way we would like for the LONG TERM, etc. Then you look at others, especially those who are even older than us, or those who died of old age, and realize that it is true. Then you think about anything in this world, and realize that it is true, i.e., we cannot maintain ANYTHING in this world to our satisfaction, and that is anicca.
- Also see, "Saññā - What It Really Means."

8. The following is a table with some key Pāli words and links to a few posts that describe what those words mean. More posts probably can be found by using the "Search" button on the top right.

Next, "Origin of Morality (and Immorality) in Buddhism", ..

| Word | Links |
| :---: | :---: |
| Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta | Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta |
| Gati, Bhava, jāti | Gati, Bhava, and Jāti |
| Āsava | Habits, Goals, and Character (Gati), The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Āsavas), Sansāric Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Āsava) |
| Nibbāna | Nibbāna |
| Nirāmisa sukha | Three Kinds of Happiness - What is Nirāmisa Sukha?, How to Taste Nibbāna, Nirāmisa Sukha (Happiness Arising from Dissociating from the 31 realms) |
| Pațicca Samuppāda | Paticca Samuppāda - "Pati+ichcha"+"Sama+uppāda, Paticca Samuppāda Introduction |
| San | San |
| Saṅkhāra | Sañkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka |

### 7.1.5 Buddha Dhamma and Morality

"Origin of Morality (and Immorality) in Buddhism"
"Is Eating Meat an Akusala Kamma (Immoral Deed)?"
"Do Things Just Happen? - The Hidden Causes"
"Craving for Pornography - How to Reduce the Tendency"

### 7.1.5.1 Origin of Morality (and Immorality) in Buddhism

1. Morality and immorality are both built-in to nature. A human can choose to become moral or immoral. This is because a human has a mind that can grasp right from wrong; on the other hand, an animal does not have a developed mind that can sort out good deeds from the bad most of the time.
2. In Buddha Dhamma, which describes nature's laws, the foundation of the moral code is the set of ten moral actions (dasa kusala), which are to avoid the ten immoral actions (dasa akusala); see, "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)" and the follow-up post.
3. If one does not follow this fundamental moral code, one becomes indebted to other humans and also to the nature (which means all living beings, from which we "see" only a small fraction) in general. In this life as well as in previous lives, we have become indebted to other beings.

- Thus getting out of that debt, as well not to get into new debts, is also a part of the moral code in Buddha Dhamma; see, "Kamma, Debt, and Meditation" for more details.
- This is in the "vinaya pitaka" of the Tipitaka; it is also described in the suttā in the sutta piṭaka. The third section of the Tipitaka, Abhidhamma, describes the ten moral/immoral actions in depth.

4. Now let us see how most of our conventional moral code(s), comes from these two foundational aspects of Buddha Dhamma.

- Of the ten immoral actions three are done with body: killing, stealing, and sexual misconduct. The basic difference with "conventional code" is that killing of animals is not considered immoral in many societies.
- There are four immoral actions done with speech: lying, slandering, harsh speech, and frivolous talk, of which the latter is not taken seriously as immoral in most cases; but one can experience the benefits of avoiding it for oneself.
- Those seven immoral actions and speech ARISE due to the three kinds of immoral thoughts: greed for other's belongings, ill will or hatred, and established wrong views (lobha, dosa, moha). In a way the last one is the root cause for all other nine, because one would not violate any of them if one knew the true nature of the "wider world" (of 31 realms of existence and the rebirth process therein): that it is unfruitful to engage in any of those nine immoral actions (called "avijj $\bar{a} "$ " or ignorance).

5. Then there is the other aspects of morality that comes from abstaining from getting into new debt and paying off old debts (from the vinaya).

- As one can easily see, giving (dana) in general is an excellent way of "paying off debt." Since we do not know who we have becomes indebted to in this long cycle of rebirths, giving can be to anyone, including animals. For animals, the best giving is of course abstain from killing; not to take their lives. Even though they cannot think like us, they do have feelings.
- This point of "being debt free" incorporate many of our "conventional moral actions": helping out others, being considerate to others, etc.
- A big part of this is also making sure to fulfil one's responsibilities. All our associations have, at the root, "long term debts" in play even though we do not realize it. The biggest debts are those to our families and especially to children (and parents in return).
- We constantly benefit from the actions of innumerable others living in this complex society; we depend on each other for survival. Our food, energy needs, infrastructure needs, are hard to sort out. The best way to pay off such debts is to do "one's own part", honestly doing one's own job and being a "good citizen."

6. But the most important thing is to understand the true nature of this "wider world." When one has that understanding it will become automatic to follow the moral code. One does not have to make an effort, because one's mind clearly sees what is right and what is wrong. There are then such meritorious actions (puñña kriya), which cultivate the "moral code behavior" and also purifies the mind; see, "Punna Kamma Dāna, Sīla, Bhāvanā."

- The goal of this website is to clarify how people engage in immoral actions because their inability to REALLY understand the true nature of this "wider world" (anicca, dukkha, anatta) and thus to help get rid of such wrong views.
- If one understood the "long term consequences" (and unfruitfuiness) of acting with extreme greed and hate, then one becomes automatically moral.

7. Finally, morality is not a one street. Unfortunately, the nature has both morality and immorality built-in. Even though we think, "how one can do a highly immoral act like killing another human and have a peace of mind?", there are some who do ENJOY such acts. People like Hitler and Pol pot, as well as serial killers, are good examples. They PLAN and carry out such vicious deeds with pleasure.

- Thus the nature, at least on the surface (because the consequences are hidden and time-delayed), is neutral on the matter of morality and immorality. One can go the moral route or the immoral route. Humans have the ability to sort out which route is the correct one. However, it is not easy for children to figure that out. This is why the guidance of the parents and teachers is CRITICAL to point a child in the right direction.

Related Post: What Does Buddha Dhamma Say about Creator, Satan, Angels, and Demons?
Next, "What does Buddha Dhamma say About Birth Control?",

### 7.1.5.2 Is Eating Meat an Akusala Kamma (Immoral Deed)?

## Published before October 23, 2015; revised October 19, 2016; February 16, 2018

Note added June 2, 2016: I decided to revise this post because I received comments from a few people who thought it could encourage people to eat meat. My intention was not that, but merely to point out that there are much worse things people ordinarily do even without thinking twice. It is best to avoid eating meat out of compassion for animals.

1. The Buddha spent a lot of his time dispelling "bатипи matha" or "superficial concepts about morality" adhered to by the vedic brahmins of that day.

- It is unfortunate to see that many current "Buddhists" are practicing the same "bamunu matha." We have gone a full circle and are back to status that the Buddha tried very hard to change.
- The reason is that we humans have the tendency to judge everything by how we perceive them with our five physical senses, on outward appearances. There is more to nature than what we see (ditta), hear (suta), taste (rasa) and smell (muta), and perceive (vinnata). The whole point of the appearance of a Buddha in this world is to show us that the truth is much deeper, and we need to "see" with pañ $\tilde{n} \bar{a}$ (wisdom). This will become clear as one learns Dhamma.
- Thus the Buddha advised us to go beyond that and to "see the reality" by always paying attention to his "pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu....", or "'dhamma that has never been heard before...." Therefore, let us analyze this matter using his "cause and effect" doctrine, and not the absolute, fatalistic doctrine of kamma; see, "What is Kamma? Is Everything Determined by Kamma?."
- Thus, sometimes, the outward appearance of morality could be nothing but micchā dittthi. Some people try to attain Nibbāna by following rituals, and this is actually one micch $\bar{a}$ dittthi one needs to get rid of (silabbata paramasa) before attaining the Sotāpanna stage.
- Misconception of categorizing "eating meat" as an akusala kamma is a micchā ditthi too. Since there is ample evidence in the Tipitaka that the Buddha himself accepted meat prepared under certain conditions (see \#9 below), are these people saying that the Buddha himself committed an akusala kamma?

2. In the "WebLink: suttacentral: Amagandha Sutta (Sutta Nipata 2.2)", the Buddha explained to a brahmin why engaging in dasa akusala, and NOT eating "properly prepared" meat is a duccarita (immoral deed). If one kills an animal to get the meat, then it is not "properly prepared."

Pāli verse:
"Pāṇātipāto vadhachedabandhanam,
Theyyaì musāvādo nikativañcanāni ca;
Ajjhenakuttaì paradārasevanā,
Esāmagandho na hi maìsabhojanam.
Here is one verse from the WebLink: suttacentral: English translation:
"Taking life, torture, mutilation too, binding, stealing, telling lies, and fraud; deceit, adultery, and studying crooked views: this is carrion-stench, not the eating of meat."
3. Devadatta, who tried to kill the Buddha and thereby to "become a Buddha", first tried to split the Buddha Säsana by proposing "five strict conditions for the bhikkhus to obey." His intent was to show that he was "more moral" than the Buddha.

- Devadatta demanded that the Buddha accede to the following five rules for the monks: they should dwell all their lives in the forest, live entirely on alms obtained by begging, wear only robes made of discarded rags, dwell at the foot of a tree, and abstain from eating meat.
- The Buddha replied that Buddha Dhamma does not advocate a "path of rituals" (vatha). Instead one attains Nibbāna by cleansing one's mind and moral behavior follows automatically. This is what is mean by, "sanvarattena silan," or "when one sees the futility of 'san' via comprehension of anicca, dukkha, anatta, moral behavior or 'silla' is realized automatically"; see, "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Samisāra)."
- On the other hand, there are people who are genuinely repulsed by the thoughts of animals living under harsh conditions and being killed in animal farms and have voluntarily given up meat eating, and that is good. In fact, as one gains pañ̃̃̄̄ (wisdom), one's craving for many sensually pleasurable things, not just meat, automatically diminishes.
- The craving for excess sense pleasures diminish automatically when one starts feeling the nirāmisa sukha and realizes that that is much more calming and long lasting to the mind than any sense pleasure that is brief, see, "Three Kinds of Happiness - What is Nirämisa Sukha?."
- But the point is that pañña (wisdom) comes through understanding the true nature, and not being persuaded via untruths.

4. In the Jivaka sutta, the Buddha states that bhikkhus can accept meat, " when it is not seen or heard or suspected that an animal has been purposely slaughtered for that offering." I also found out recently that the custom those days was to use "pavatta mānsa" for bhikkhus which means the meat was from animals killed by other animals in the forest (lions and tigers normally eat only parts of an animal and leave the rest which people then recover for food).

- However, the Buddha prohibited bhikkhus from eating the flesh of human, elephant, horse, dog, cat, lion, tiger, leopard, bear, hyenas. This was done for various reasons and the chief among them is that they are not suitable for human consumption.
- Just like some vegetations are toxic, some meats can have harmful effects. Other than that, meat of a dead animal is no different from corn or wheat; they are all made out of satara mahā bhūta: pathavi, $\bar{a} p o$, tejo, vāyo.
- Once the mind leaves the physical body, the body becomes inert like a log. What is immoral is to end the life of a living being willfully or to aid in such acts; once that deed is done, what is left is no different than a log of wood.
- However, this is not to say that the Buddha advocated eating meat. It is actually better for the body to eat less meat and more vegetables and fruits. In general, we eat much more food than necessary, and that leads to many health problems starting with obesity.

5. The key point is that EATING MEAT or ANYTHING ELSE if done with greed, then that is an akusala kamma done with the mind: abhijjā [abhijjhā] or strong greed.
6. Then there are people who say, "if we all eat meat, that encourages other people to operate animal farms and kill animals; therefore, we should not eat meat." For those who are bothered by such thoughts, it is better not to eat meat for the peace of mind. I actually have cut down a lot just out of compassion. But we also need to examine the REASONS for some acts to be categorized as akusala kamma.

- Don't farmers use pesticides to kill uncountable number of living beings when they cultivate rice, wheat, vegetables, for our consumption? With the above logic, aren't we encouraging farmers to kill all those insects by eating basically any food that we buy at the supermarket?
- These are the true "musavāda" ("musa" means "incorrect" and "vāda" means "debate"), i.e., trying to win an argument by using false premises. They appear to make sense on the surface, but when you examine carefully, they have no substance.
- We have to be really careful about having such "micchā ditțhi," because niyata micchā diṭthi can lead to rebirth in the apayy $\bar{a}$. There are many such false beliefs that appear "harmless" but count as micch $\bar{a}$ ditt thi (not knowing the true nature of things), and that is another reason why it has been hard for people to attain the Sotāpanna stage.
- The bottom line is that it is better not to eat meat especially if that bothers one's conscience. But for those who don't have that problem, there are probably other bad acts one needs to worry about first; see, "How to Evaluate Weights of Different Kamma."

7. There will always be people who engage in immoral acts and make a livelihood from that. We cannot force others to be moral; we can only point out what is moral and what is immoral. It is up to each person to decide, and understand that, "what one sows, one will reap."

- As I mentioned before, there was a "pig butcher" Chunda Sukara, who ran his butcher shop right next to Veluwanaramaya, where the Buddha resided for many years. Even at the time of the Buddha some questioned why the Buddha did not try to "save him." If he did that, Chunda Sukara would have generated hateful thoughts about the Buddha and would have ended up in an even worse apāya, as explained by the Buddha. Thus one needs to think deeper than just go by "outward appearances."
- On the other hand, we should point out the bad consequences of raising animals under unfathomably harsh conditions in animal farms, and killing animals with unimaginably cruel ways (see \#10 below). Even though animals have much lower levels of "consciousness", they feel pain same as us. Still, we need to get rid of the "wrong sañ̃ $\bar{a}$ " that eating meat (which is like any other food made of the satara mahā bhūta), is equivalent to eating "an animal." Once the animal is dead, the dead body is inert; the gandhabba has left that "inert shell"; see, "Ghost in the Machine - Synonym for the Manomaya Kāya?."
- In Sri Lanka, and probably in many Buddhist countries, there are many movements to "rescue cows and other animals from the butcher." They consider this act as an "abhaya dana," which they interpret as "giving back the life or saving the life of that animal."

8. First, let us examine WHY a cow is born a cow in the first place. A cow is called a "harak $\bar{a} "$ in Sinhala, which comes from "hara" meaning "the essence or what is good", and "kā" meaning "eat or destroy." Thus one is born a cow due to a "cow sankhara," i.e., one had done acts that led to hardships for people. We know many people who do immoral acts that destroy other human lives or at least lead to hardships for other people; those people are bound to be born cows, pigs, and other animals and "pay back those debts."

- Even though we may save the life of a cow by paying off the butcher, that cow will go through many such "cow lives" until the kammic energy of that "cow bhava" is spent and during that time will be subjected to numerous killings. This may sound harsh, but that is the reality.
- Instead of "trying to save existing cows", which is a futile task as we saw above, what we SHOULD do is to try to prevent even a single HUMAN from becoming a cow in future lives. Once one gets a "cow bhava" one will be born in that bhava multiple times; see, "Bhava and Jāti - States of Existence and Births Therein." What we can do is to try get as many people as possible to be EXPOSED to true Dhamma.
- Thus even though we should not try to prevent people from rescuing such animals (saving a life is always good), we need to educate people about the misconceptions on relative merits of different deeds.

9. In that context, let us see what is really meant by "abhaya dana." "Bhaya" means "fear" and "abhaya" means preventing one from a dreadful outcome; of course "dāna" means "giving." Thus "abhaya dana" means giving the gift of removing one's fright.

- One should be dreadful about the suffering one could undergo in the four apāyā (four lowest realms of existence), animal realm being one. If one can motivate a single human to contemplate on that, that itself will be much more meritorious than "saving" millions cows; of course, as we saw above a "saved cow" is not truly saved; it will pay its debts somehow or other.
- Yet, imagine the number of cow, pig, ... lives that one could save if one can point another human being toward becoming a Sotāpanna: that person will NEVER be born in any of the four apāyā. That could be an uncountable number of lives saved by "saving a SINGLE human." That is the true "abhaya dana," and that may not even cost any money.

10. The key point here is that a cow (or any other animal) cannot be "saved" by making it comprehend Dhamma. And, there is no way to "shorten the time of existence" or in this case the duration of the "cow bhava." the It just has to wait until the kammic energy for that existence to run out through however many "cow lives."

- But a human can comprehend Dhamma and could change the type of existence, and say for example become a brahma. Furthermore, one could attain the Sotāpanna stage and be freed from the apāyā, and may even attain the Arahanthood stage.
- So, there is a HUGE difference in saving an animal life versus a human life.
- Still I am not discouraging anyone from saving an animal. I am just saying that there are better ways to utilize resources and try to help out humans. We never kill a bug or a fly that occasionally gets in our house. We have a "bug catcher cup" that we use to catch it and throw outside; trap the thing in the cup, slide a cardboard piece underneath slowly and carry to the door.

11. I need to also point out that the Buddha himself ate meat when offered under the conditions given in \#3 above. In fact, the last meal of the Buddha was a "pork dish" which was especially made to alleviate the pain that the Buddha had with ulcer-like ailment.

- In this context, let us discuss another misconception about that "last meal." After the meal, the Buddha asked the remainder of the meal not be consumed by any human, and to be buried. Some say this was because of a "contamination problem with that meal" which led to a discomfort of the Buddha. If there was a problem with the dish, the Buddha would have seen it beforehand.
- The reason that the Buddha asked the remainder of the meal to thrown away was simply because that meal was a special meal just like the first meal of milk rice offered to him at the time of the attainment of the Buddhahood. Such meals can be digested only by a Buddha. Devas and brahmā infuse highly potent nutrients into such meals; the Buddha was sustained for 7 weeks with that single meal of milk rice.

12. Finally, the suffering of the animals is real, and this is one form of sansäric suffering that the

Buddha referred to. If you have nerves made out of steel, you can watch the gruesome acts that occur in some animal farms, see the full movie "Earthlings" at the following site (Warning: These scenes are highly disturbing to the mind, especially after about 10-15 minutes): "Nationearth.com"

- We should not hesitate to point out the bad consequences of raising animals under unfathomably harsh conditions in animal farms, and killing animals in unimaginably cruel ways.
- As I pointed out above, animals are bound to "reap what they already sowed in their past lives." Nature always finds a way to impart kamma vipāka. But the problem is that humans volunteer to carry out those punishments, and in turn, generate much future suffering for themselves.
- Thus the only tragic that CAN BE AVOIDED is the creation of similar outcomes (in future births) for current humans who engage in such activities.
- In any case, we cannot force morality on others. We can only point out the dangers and help enact and enforce laws to forbid such unconscionable activities; such efforts have led to making cockfighting illegal in the United States.

Next, "Do Things Just Happen? - The Hidden Causes", ..

### 7.1.5.3 Do Things Just Happen? - The Hidden Causes

October 30, 2015

Just like in science, Buddha Dhamma is based on cause and effect. Nothing happens without a cause (or more accurately multiple causes). But some of the causes are hidden and can be revealed only a Buddha with the perfect mind. By learning his Dhamma, we can figure out many such important and relevant causes that affect us.

1. There are many instances when we face a traumatic situation, and the first thing comes to our mind is "Why is this happening to me? What have I done to deserve this?."

- And when we encounter good fortune (say landing a good job or winning a lottery), we are overjoyed: "my luck has finally turned around."
- Both those conclusions are wrong. Nothing happens in this world without a cause (usually there are multiple causes). Things DO NOT just happen. Nature does not work that way. In science, we always look at the underlying causes to explain material phenomena.
- A scientific theory is not even taken seriously unless it can provide evidence to support the theory, i.e., to illustrate "cause and effect." Buddha Dhamma is based on "cause and effect."

2. The "cause and effect" of inert objects is easy to see and verify. Scientists can accurately land a spaceship on the Moon because they can take into account all the causes and effects that would be relevant to the flight of the spaceship. All scientific progress is made due to the "apparent" causes and effects.

- We can even predict/control the behavior of plants. By making suitable conditions for their growth, farmers can reap good harvests. Even when things do not work out with farming, we know the reasons (drought, too much rain, etc).
- Thus we can verify the applicability of "cause and effect" when dealing with inert matter and vegetation. The causes are not hidden.
- This principle is also known as "action and reaction" in physics. Every action has an equal and opposite reaction. Laws of kamma are more complex, but it is the same basic principle. You cannot expect to do something and assume that it has no consequences.

3. Unlike material phenomena that involve dead and inert matter, each sentient living being has a "history that goes back into the deep past" (a tree is living, but not sentient, i.e., it cannot think).

- Therefore, for each sentient being, there could be causes that lie in the deep past. We just cannot see them (if we develop abhiñ̃̃̄a powers, we could see some).
- This is why it is hard for many people to grasp the concept of kamma. When we look around us, we may not see the "law of kamma" working. While a pious peasant may be living in a hut, a drug lord seems to be enjoying life. Yet, in the long run, the laws of kamma work: that pious peasant may be reborn to enjoy a good life, while the drug lord may suffer for a long time to come in future births.
- The present birth started due to past causes. It will proceed until that kammic power is exhausted. What we should be mainly worried about is the next life.
- All deeds have their consequences. As Nietzsche (1882) said, "..Lightening and thunder require time, the light of the stars require time, deeds require time even after they are done, before they can be seen and heard..."

4. Then people ask: "But where is the evidence for that?." The (indirect) evidence is all around us. We just do not take time to analyze what we see. Our tendency is to take things at the face value, without bothering to analyze a bit deeper; see, "Wrong Views (Micchā Ditthi) - A Simpler Analysis."

- When we look around we see that some people are rich, some are poor; some die within a few months, but there are others live to old age; some are healthy and vibrant, others are sick most of the time, etc. All these happen now due to causes from past lives.
- What are the causes for all those and much more varieties of life that we see all around us? Many more are discussed in, "Vagaries of Life and the Way to Seek Good Rebirths."

5. Laws of kamma are nothing but "causes and effects." Moral behavior leads to good results either in this life OR in future lives. Immoral behavior leads to bad results, including bad rebirths.

- However, kamma is nondeterministic, i.e., a cause does not inevitably lead to a result; see, "What is Kamma? - Is Everything Determined by Kamma?." By acting with mindfulness, one can avoid many possible bad kamma vipāka, and also make conditions for good kamma vipāka to come to fruition.
- Actually, without a Buddha in the world, a normal human cannot figure out these things on his/her own. But luckily, some evidence is coming from modern science due to the efforts of thousands of scientists over the past few hundred years.
- Many "wrong views" that people used to have in the old days have been corrected by science. Actually, those helped confirm what the Buddha taught 2500 years ago; see, "Dhamma and Science."

6. Our ancestors could not explain many natural phenomena like earthquakes, volcano eruptions, floods, etc and attributed those to "the fury of the Gods." Even to date, whenever we don't understand something, our tendency is to attribute that to a supernatural being and "fill that gap"; this tendency is called, "God of the gaps."

- But advances in science are slowly but surely closing those gaps, that exist with regard to the workings of the MATERIAL WORLD. Those are due to natural causes.

7. However, there ARE gaps in our knowledge base that CANNOT be closed by the current approach of science. These are to explain the workings of the human mind or consciousness.

- Most theologians of today are correct in saying that mind cannot arise from matter; it does not make sense to say that a human with feelings and perceptions can just "arise" out of inert matter.
- However, there is no need to "fill that gap" with God either. The Buddha described in detail the workings of the human mind, which is separate from the working of the material world; see, "Is Buddha Dhamma (Buddhism) a Religion?."
- The "cause and effect" for the mind to arise is described by patticca samuppāda, but before that can start making sense, one needs to understand the basics of Buddha Dhamma discussed in the "Key Dhamma Concepts" section on the top menu.

8. Another effect that cannot be explained by current science is the "sense of fulfilment" one gets by giving to the poor. If one takes a totally materialistic view, it is not possible to see ANY benefits in giving.

- There was a wealthy brahmin at the time of the Buddha, who was very much against giving. He explained to others why giving can only lead to a loss by actually doing a demonstration: He took a sack of rice and started giving portions to those who gathered. At the end the sack was empty and he said, "look, this is what happens when you give. You lose what you have."
- The Buddha explained that the brahmin was unable to see the benefits in giving even in this life (sense of joy), because of his wrong views, and thus there was no way he could see the benefits in future lives. The brahmin died and was born a dog at the same house. It is a long story and I may get to it in a future post.
- The key point here is that there are many things that cannot be explained by just what we see with our eyes. Cause and effect is not readily apparent when it involves the mind. Furthermore, benefits of giving are not proportional to the value of the things given, but the state of the mind of the giver.

9. But more than anything else, the truth of what the Buddha taught can be experienced. When one follows the path recommended by the Buddha one can feel and experience the results in this life itself.

- Just by reading and understanding Dhamma concepts one's mind can become calm and peaceful; see, "Key to Calming the Mind - The Five Hindrances." I encourage everyone to peruse through different sections at the site and read first whatever seem to make sense or relevant to what one is looking for.
- For example, one of the key issues that led people to believe in a supernatural being was how morality can be there without such a being. But the Buddha taught that morality and immorality are both built into nature; see, "Origin of Morality (and Immorality) in Buddhism."
- It could be surprising to many. But Buddha Dhamma can explain ANY phenomenon, whether material or mind-based. Everything happens due to causes, even though some may be hidden from a normal human's sense faculties. By purifying one's mind, one can have a better understanding of how the nature operates; see, "The Importance of Purifying the Mind."
- October 18, 2016: A new post explains this in more detail: "Micca Ditṭhi - Connection to Hethu Phala (Cause and Effect)."


### 7.1.5.4 Craving for Pornography - How to Reduce the Tendency

March 4, 2016; revised January 22, 2020; June 20, 2022; June 25, 2022
Craving pornography is fundamentally the same as any other sensual pleasure, but it could lead to serious crimes if not controlled. One must first abstain from activities harmful to oneself or others.

## Introduction

1. Of course, engaging in sexual activities with one's spouse is not a problem for even a Sotāpanna. It is when one gets to the $A n \bar{a} g \bar{a} m \bar{l}$ stage that one AUTOMATICALLY loses the sexual urge; see, "The Cooling Down Process (Nibbāna) - How Root Causes are Removed" and "Is It Necessary for a Buddhist to Eliminate Sensual Desires?."

- Cravings for ordinary sensory pleasures (sexual or otherwise) CANNOT be removed by sheer will power, just like darkness cannot be removed by being willing for light. Darkness can be gotten rid of only by bringing in light.
- Sense desires can be cleansed only by "cleansing the mind," i.e., by contemplating the real (anicca) nature of the world. In simple words, that means seeing the bad consequences of strong cravings for sensory pleasures. As we discuss below, that understanding comes through learning Dhamma and getting rid of the extreme activities first.
- Even a Sotāpanna has only "seen" the futility of sense pleasures; he/she has not "experienced" the benefits of NOT DESIRING sense pleasures; see the posts in the "Sotāpanna Stage of Nibbāna."


## The Bigger Picture

2. We have had an uncountable number of rebirths so far simply because we cannot comprehend the consequences of attaching to sense pleasures and also because we become angry when we don't get what we desire.

- Those objects that we desire so much will lose their appeal over time. Sense pleasures, sexual or otherwise, are short-lived. Even if one can have access to sense pleasures, the ABILITY to enjoy them WILL decrease with time. That is something that people typically do not realize.
- The attitude of most people is, "I need to enjoy them to the fullest while I can." But one needs to stay away from extreme behaviors at least. Learning Dhamma will help to avoid future suffering; one must start as soon as possible. When we get old, we lose not only the ability to enjoy such pleasures but also the ability to comprehend Dhamma (because our brains degrade with time).
WebLink: YOUTUBE: Changes: Young to Old

3. Fundamentally, craving sex-related activities are not any different from craving other sense pleasures. Each person has samisāric habits (gati) for some specific set of sense pleasure(s).

- Some have an excess craving to eat tasty foods, some like gossiping about others, some want to go hunting, etc., and some may have the desire for sexual pleasure, and it is usually a combination of several. Each person has a unique set, and that changes with time too.
- The danger with such habits is that under extreme conditions, they could lead to worse actions. Sexual tendencies could especially become problematic. We all have heard about cases where "good citizens" committed rape when prevailing conditions led them to "lose control."
- More on the subject at, "The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Āsava)" and posts therein.


## Contemplate on Adverse Consequences

4. The critical and first thing to do is to get rid of those habits that can bring harm to others. A Sotāpanna in inherently incapable of doing such extreme actions because his/her mind has clearly grasped the consequences of such actions. Focusing on sexual urges, one MUST NOT DO certain things: rape and having relationships with children, or others' spouses are prominent examples.

- Learning Dhamma helps through all stages of "rehabilitation." Learning the adverse consequences of extreme habits such as those mentioned above is one way to convince the mind (i.e., subconscious viññāna) to voluntarily give up those habits.
- The Buddha said, "don't do things to others that one would not like to be done to oneself." Always try to pause a moment and contemplate the consequences of any harsh action. That is the basis of Kāyānupassanā in Satipaṭthāna meditation; see, "Mahā Satipatthāna Sutta."


## Learning and Following Buddha Dhamma Will Help

5. It is also important to realize that one cannot remove the basic tendencies for ordinary sense pleasures by sheer willpower alone. Trying to do that could bring more harm (stress) than benefits.

- The key is to train the mind to grasp the harmful future consequences of extreme habits and desires (gati), whether it is due to excess craving for sex or the tendency to get mad at the slightest provocation. These are all habits that most likely originated in many lives back.
- We either develop new habits via repeated use or more likely re-energize and further cultivate old habits from previous lives.
- The following links discuss how to change one's gati: "9. Key to Ānāpānasati - How to Change Habits and Character (Gati)" and "How Habits are Formed and Broken - A Scientific View," among others. One could type gati or habits in the Search button on the top right and get a list of relevant posts.


## The validity of the Rebirth Process - Actions Have Consequences

6. The other important thing to realize is that one does not NEED TO get rid of less-severe cravings for sense pleasures (sexual or otherwise) at once. The key is to do it gradually. It is better to say, "realization will sink in gradually as one learns Dhamma or the true nature of this world."

- The Buddha gave the following simile: When one is cultivating a field, all one needs to do is to follow the procedures that will optimize bringing a good harvest. One needs to prepare the soil, plant healthy seeds, and then keep weeds out. One must also provide water and nutrients regularly. There is no point in watching the plants throughout the day to see whether they are growing or to worry about them. They will grow and yield a good harvest if one does one's part.
- In the same way, one needs first to understand the basic broader world view, i.e., that we are spending a relatively short time in this life and move from life to life-based on causes that we create (based on how we live). The post on dasa akusala (ten defilements) is a guide: "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)."

7. Here is a list of critical things that is comparable to getting the soil ready to plant the seeds:

- One needs to first understand, at least to some extent, the long-term nature of our lives far beyond our deaths. Many people believe that it all ends with this life. What if that is not correct? One needs to make sure, because the answer to that question may have consequences for billions and trillions of years to come.
- Also, do things happen, or do they arise due to CAUSES? The principle of causality (cause and effect) is the basis of science. Things ALWAYS occur due to (multiple) causes. People don't just get born out of nothing. Previous causes led to the birth of a human being (or any other living being). The Buddha said these causes are the kamma, what we have done in the past.
- There are certain principles or laws that Nature follows. Scientists can explain most of the things that happen to inert objects: If one throws up a stone, we can even calculate its path on the way back to the ground. The reason that it falls to the ground is that the Earth is pulling it down; that is the cause for it to fall. Like that, EACH AND EVERY EVENT has a reason. Events based on mental causes typically are complex and not easy to sort out).


## Consequences in the Rebirth Process

8. After making some progress, one needs to contemplate the implications of over-indulgences: (1) They are short-lived. When one's ability to enjoy them goes away, one gets depressed, (2) Such over-indulgences build corresponding character or "gati," and one's future births are according to one's gati.

- Another samisāric gati is the tendency to get angry at the slightest provocation. Here also, one needs to think about the adverse consequences of that behavior.
- In both cases, the harmful consequences are two-fold: The short-term result is that one gets stressed out shortly after responding to the "urge" and getting temporary relief.
- The more adverse long-term consequences are worse. Each time one does it, the habit strengthens. Furthermore, depending on the action, one may cultivate animal gati (when blinded by extreme sense pleasures) or niraya gati (when blinded by rage).

9. There is a reason that one is born human and another is born an animal. A human-born had done a wholesome kamma that deserved being born human. Furthermore, that kamma was possible because that person tended to do that type of deed. This tendency to do certain things depends on one's "gati."

- If a human displays "animal gati" or does things that animals do (do whatever one feels like doing without any consideration for others, have sex indiscriminately, etc.), then it is likely that he/she will be born an animal in the future.
- On the other hand, if a human displays kindness, can even tolerate others' bad behavior, etc., then he/she has deva or Brahma "gati," then he/she is likely to be born a deva, Brahma, or a human, in future lives.
- In the language of Paticca Samuppāda, "jāti" is according to "bhava," "bhava" according to "upādāna," "upādāna" according to "taṇhā," i.e., "what one likes to do or has a craving for." Thus if one likes to do what dogs usually do, then a future " $j \bar{a} t i$ " or birth as a dog is hard to avoid. That is true for any other kind of birth.


## Buddha's Middle Way

10. Thus whether it is a sexual craving or any other craving for sensory pleasure, we need to be careful first to avoid any extreme behavior. One cannot jump from the bottom of the ladder to the top; one has to climb step-by-step. Get rid of the worst habits first and move up on the ladder.

- The one who was born an animal was likely to have engaged in activities suitable for an animal; some of the sexual activities shown in pornographic movies are suitable only for animals. One does such extreme deeds due to a reason, i.e., one has tendencies or gati to do such acts. They do not change much unless one willfully tries to change them. Getting rid of such extreme behavior is the first step. The sooner done is better.
- Then one can tackle less severe problems. Always thinking about tasty foods and overeating is as bad as the tendency to watch adult movies habitually. They are both bad habits that need to be broken gradually, with an understanding of the consequences. Of course, pornography has different categories; one tends to watch "extreme" pornography when one has extreme habits.
- A living being can significantly change its "gati" only as a human. An animal is not capable of any significant change of character, even though some of its habits can be changed if trained by a human. Even for devas and Brahmā, it is hard to improve their gati unless they had attained the Sotāpanna stage of Nibbāna as a human.


## Summary

11. In summary, one MUST stop the most harmful acts (which could lead to rebirth in the lowest four realms or the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a})$ by any means possible using sheer will power. However, less harmful acts will reduce over time. One needs to follow a systematic procedure as outlined in the links given in \# 4 and \#5 above.

- Learning Dhamma can reduce the tendency to engage in any immoral or unwise activities in the long run. In this regard it is essential to understand the different levels of greed and hate; see, "Sorting out Some Key Pāli Terms (Tanhā, Lobha, Dosa, Moha, etc.)" and, in particular the post, "Lobha, Dosa, Moha versus Raga, Patigha, Avijiã."
- The section on "Assāda, Ādinava, Nissarana" provides more advanced analyses, especially for those who are at least on the way to becoming a Sotāpanna, i.e., a Sotāpanna magga anugāmi.


### 7.2 Working Towards Good Rebirths

"Sansāric Habits and āsavas"
"Vagaries of Life and the Way to Seek Good Rebirths"
"How to Avoid Birth in the Apayas"
"Rebirth - Connection to Suffering in the First Noble Truth"
"How the Buddha Described the Chance of Rebirth in the Human Realm"
"Kamma, Debt, and Meditation"
"How do we Decide which View is Wrong View (Ditthi)?"
"Three Kinds of Ditthi, Eightfold Paths, and Samādhi"
"Implications of the Rebirth Process in Daily Life and in Society"
"What Does Buddha Dhamma Say about Creator, Satan, Angels, and Demons?"
"Patisandhi Citta - How the Next Life is Determined According to Gath"
"Ditthi (Wrong Views), Sammā Ditthi (Good/Correct Views)"

### 7.2.1 Sansāric Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Āsava)

## Revised December 7, 2016

Our character (gati), behavior, and cravings (āsava) sometimes have causes from past lives. It is easier to break bad habits when one understands causes and consequences.

- In the "Moral Living" section, we discussed how to get rid of bad habits, incorporate good habits, and thus achieve goals; see, "Habits, Goals, and Character (Gati)." We saw that one's behavioral patterns or habits can form one's character (gati). Here we will see that some of these habits are not formed in this life, but may have origins in previous lives. In a way, these are only "discernible things" we carry from life-to-life; see, "What Reincarnates? - Concept of a Lifestream."

1. Habits ("gati" in Pāli and Sinhala) are acquired by the repeated use. Habits can be neutral (one can make a habit of start brushing teeth on the top left), good (exercising at a scheduled time), bad (smoking).

- The more one can stick to a set habit, that habit becomes more ingrained in the mind. Riding a bike or learning to drive is a habit to learn. Initially it is hard, but once the habit is formed it is done almost automatically; it becomes an ingrained "gati."

2. Bad habits can be stopped by making a conscious effort to disrupt the habit. Initially this takes a lot of effort, and that is why assessing the consequences and convincing the mind of the dangers of a bad habit is important at the very beginning.

- Replacing a bad habit with a good (at least less harmful) habit is also important. Instead of smoking, one could chew on a chewing gum when one gets the urge.

3. Habits also help mold the character (gati) of a person. We see very different qualities of character among people: kind and malicious, calm and agitated, thoughtful and easily-excitable, etc. It is easy to see that people with "bad character qualities" are those with one or more prominent bad habits.

- But the good news is that no one is "inherently bad." There are causes (reasons) for a person to have bad habits/character, and once those causes are removed one becomes a person with good habits/character.
- The best example is Angulimāla, who lived during the time of the Buddha and killed close to thousand people. The Buddha was able to show him the consequences of his behavior and he was able to attain the Arahantship within a few weeks!

5. It is not only humans that display such personal characteristics; animals have them too. Some dogs are vicious while others are adorable; some are more loyal than others, etc.

- These are habits/character (gati) that have been molded over multiple lives; but most character (gati) CHANGES happen only during a human life, because human mind is the most capable of CHANGING habits. Animals, for example, are more like robots (not completely).

6. Bad habits are formed via bad judgements arising from a defiled mind that is covered by the five hindrances. And bad habits lead to actions that further strengthen those same habits.

- Once a certain bad "gati" becomes established it can even lead to a birth with that "gati," i.e, will be destined for "dugati" (du + gati) which is another name for the apāy $\bar{a}$ (the four lowest realms). for example, someone who behaves and acts like an animal could well be reborn an animal.
- The cycle needs to be broken to stop this self-feeding process. But as long as the hindrances are there, it is likely that sooner or later new bad habits will be formed.

7. Those beings that are in the ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$ can be put in to four major categories according to the proportions of greed and hate that are in their sansāric "gati" (of course ignorance is in all of them) :

- Pretas [Sanskrit], petas [Pāli], i.e., hungry ghosts, have "greedy" gati.
- Those in the lowest realm, niraya (hell), have gati dominated by hate.
- Animals have "gati" with both greed and hate. Therefore, the Pāli (or Sinhala) word for animals is "thirisan" (="thiri"'"'san" or three defilements). Remember that ignorance is there always.
- Those in the asura ("a"+"sūra", where " a " means "not" and "sūra" means proficient or capable; thus asura means those who depend on others, and are lazy) realm have the habit of doing as least as possible and exploit others' hard work.

8. Similarly, one who cultivates good habits is destined for a "good" rebirth (sugati $=$ su + gati), i.e., human realm or above. For example, one who does not indulge in sense pleasures and cultivates compassion and loving kindness could be reborn in the Brahma realms where there is relatively less suffering, and mostly jhānic pleasures.

- Devas (realms 6-11) are full of compassion and do not have hateful thoughts. But they like to enjoy sense pleasures.
- Brahma (realms 12-31) do not have either greed or hate.
- Humans (realms 5) COULD have all three. However, the unique aspect of the human realm is the ability to purify one's own mind and REMOVE all three, and become an Arahant (attain Nibbāna). This is done by following the Noble Eightfold Path and removing all "bad habits" one has.

Of course, Devas and Brahmā both have ignorance, and thus could be reborn in any realm when they die (unless they had attained the Sotāpanna stage).
9. Once ingrained in the mind, habits can be carried over repeated rebirths, from life to life. One who is easily tempted by alcohol is likely to have had that habit in the previous lives.

- One who forms that habit in this life (even if he did not have it before), is likely to carry it over to the next life. Similarly, one who cultivates generosity in this life is likely to have that habit in the next life as well.

10. If those bad habits keep building up life after life, they get fermented and solidified and thus will become deeply embedded in one's psyche. We all carry deeply ingrained sansäric habits associated with one or
more of defilements. These are called mental fermentations or deeply embedded cravings ("āsava"
in Pāli or Sinhala).

- Some gati and āsava lay hidden (sleeping), and are called "anusaya." With a strong enough "trigger" an ingrained anusaya can be brought to the surface. Anusaya are the hardest to get rid of.
- When one continually acts in ways to strengthen one's gati (character), that makes the corres ponding āsava and anusaya even stronger.

11. Thus it is clear why breaking bad habits is critically important, not only for the benefit of this life, but also for future lives.

Next, "Complexity of Life and the Way to Seek "Good Rebirths"",
If you would like to read about how these āsavas can be removed, see, "The Way to Nibbāna - Removal of Āsavas."
7.2.2 Complexity of Life and the Way to Seek "Good Rebirths"

Revised May 18, 2017; March 14, 2020; July 3, 2022; July 24, 2022

## Introduction

1. Everything we see around us can be roughly put into three categories: lifeless matter, plant life, and sentient beings (i.e., life with consciousness). Scientists have been most successful in explaining the behavior of inert matter, at least on the macroscopic scale.

- For example, a rocket can be launched with high precision to land on a given spot on the Moon.
- However, complexity increases when going to biological matter without consciousness (plants).
- Complexity is highest for sentient beings.


## Complexity of Life

2. The behavior of a sentient being is almost impossible to predict with any kind of precision. This is because the working of a mind with 89 types of citta (thoughts) and 52 types of cetasika (mental properties) is very complex; see "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma" and the posts in the "Abhidhamma" section.

- However, the Buddha has taught us how to understand why different living beings are born that way and why people are born with wide-ranging health, wealth, beauty, etc.
- Laws of kamma can explain such phenomena that involve conscious minds.

3. When we look around, we see that animals generally encounter more suffering than humans. Even among people, the range of suffering is enormous. Then some people seem to be enjoying life without showing signs of suffering.

- Also, some are born rich, healthy, beautiful, etc. others are born in poverty, handicapped, ugly, etc.
- As discussed above, people's character also lies in a very broad spectrum.
- Furthermore, the "fortunes" of a given person could change drastically in a relatively short time. One could go from being penniless to riches or the other way around quickly.
- When we look at animals, some pets get treated even better than some humans, while others live under horrible conditions. They also have a wide range of personal characteristics.


## The Complexity of Life - Buddhist Explanation

4. Such apparent vagaries of life have perfectly good explanations in Buddha Dhamma. However, there are no simple one-to-one correspondences compared to the comparatively simpler rules that are available for tracking the behavior of macroscopic inert objects.

- One time a Brahmin asked about how that happens. The Buddha's description is in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Cūlakammavibhañga Sutta (MN 135.)."

5. The behavior of (macroscopic) inert matter can be explained in terms of simpler cause and effect. If one knows the current conditions, one can predict the future using scientifically-found natural laws (the law of gravitation or laws of relativity).

- However, even this is beginning to change with the advent of quantum mechanics; we are now beginning to probe the realm where matter merges with the mind. See, for example, "Origin of Life" and "Dhamma and Science."

6. Similarly, the behavior of life can be explained in terms of kamma vipāka (results of one's actions) together with habits ("gati") and āsava; see "Sansāric Habits and Āsavas." However, unlike cause and effect regarding inter matter, the behavior of life is much more complex because the MIND IS COMPLEX, see "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma."

- There are many causes (innumerable kamma vipāka and numerous types of habits and āsava) leading to many effects, versus just one or few causes leading to one or more effects.
- This is discussed in many suttā, but a good start is the "WebLink: suttacentral: Cūla Kamma Vibhañga Sutta (MN 135)." That site gives translations in several languages, but as with most websites, translations of some key Pāli words may not be accurate.


## Good and Bad Kamma Bring Corresponding Vipāka

7. In general, good habits and good kamma vipāka lead to rebirth in realms at or above the human realm. We need to ensure not to commit any akusala (unwholesome) kamma that could lead to rebirth in the four lower realms (apayy $\bar{a}$ ) and to engage in meritorious actions.

- Another is to realize that āsava (mental fermentations or deeply embedded cravings) could lead to spontaneous actions (in a rage or a sudden mental weakness). Maintaining good habits, removing bad habits, and acting with generosity, kindness, and wisdom help clean up the deeply embedded $\bar{a} s a v a$. That will help prevent such actions impulsively.


## Meditation Is Contemplation

8. Any meditation (Samatha, Mett $\bar{a}$, and Vipassan $\bar{a}$ ) will also be helpfil. Just contemplating good thoughts and suppressing bad thoughts as they arise throughout the day is also meditation (this was the original definition of Bhāvanā).

Next, "How to Avoid Birth in the Apāyā."

### 7.2.3 How to Avoid Birth in the Apāyā

## Revised July 3, 2022

1. There are five heinous kamma (acts) that GUARANTEE a rebirth in the lowest four realms (apāy $\bar{a}$ ) in the very next birth. These are called the pañca annantariya kamma or five acts that will bring a bad birth without "a gap" (unlike many kamma vipāka can come to fruition in later lives, i.e., their results are seen only later in samisāra). These five are:

- Killing one's mother
- Killing one's father
- Killing an Arahant
- Causing an injury to a Buddha
- Causing schism in the Sangha (the monastic order)

2. The next level is "niyata micchā dițthi" or "an established wrong world view" (which means one is not even willing to consider the possibility that one could be wrong in holding onto such views) that will cause one to be born in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$ at some point in samisāra. This means that one with these false views could be reborn in the apāya in the next life or any future life. There are eight such views: [niyata : [adj.] sure; certain; constant.]

- No such thing as, (1) mother, (2) father, (3) Buddha, (4) rebirth, (5) kamma vipāka, (6) opapātika birth (instant full-formed birth), and the existence of (7) ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$, and (8) rūpa loka/arūpa loka. For explanations on (6)-(8), see, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma."

3. Thus the possibility of a birth in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$ in any future birth is there until all established (unshakable) wrong views (niyata micchā ditthi) are rejected by one's mind. We all have committed both good and bad kamma in the past lives that we are not aware of, thus any of those could cause a birth anywhere in the 31 realms.
4. It is important to remember that those false views cannot be just memorized and pretended to be discarded. The mind needs to be convinced that those are indeed false views. This is why it is important to examine the world view of the Buddha. These are the key concepts discussed in the top menus, especially, "What is Buddha Dhamma?" and "Key Dhamma Concepts."
5. The only guaranteed way to stay out of the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$ (the four lowest realms) in ANY future life is to become a Sotāpanna Anugāmi/Sotāpanna.

## What Happens at the Sotāpanna Stage?

1. As I keep repeating, the Buddha is just the messenger. He discovered the true nature of this world. First of all, this world is much more complex than we perceive. In order to understand how to remove suffering, one has to understand the causes, and that requires a complete picture of "this world" (see, "What is Buddha Dhamma?" and in particular, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma") and also why it is not possible to remove suffering without understanding the Three Characteristics of "this world" (see, "Key Dhamma Concepts" and in particular, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta - Wrong Interpretations").
2. When one "sees" the true nature of "this world", the mind will automatically give up those false views mentioned in the above section (\#2). This is why it is first important to learn Dhamma first. No one, regardless of one's high intellect, can discover the complete set of nature's laws other than a Buddha.
3. From the discussion so far, it is clear what needs to be done to reach the Sotāpanna stage. All that is needed is to carefully examine the world view of the Buddha as mentioned in \#1 in this section. One needs to understand the "vision", and to become "dassanena sampanno" or "one with a clear vision." This is why "dassanena pahātabba" or "removal by vision" is listed as \#1 item in the seven items required to attain Nibbāna in the Sabbasava Sutta; see, "Key Points in the Sabbasava Sutta" in "The Sotāpanna Stage."
4. Thus essentially all that happens at reaching the Sotāpanna stage is to get a clear world view. Now one has understood the true nature of this world, and thus "knows" that it is not possible to achieve lasting happiness anywhere in the 31 realms. One may not have removed any $\bar{a} s a v \bar{a}$ other than the diṭthāsava (ditthi āsava). Thus one still may have kāmāsava, bhavāsava, and avijjāsava, i.e., one still may have greed, hatred, and ignorance even though parts of all three have been permanently been removed by the clear vision. How the $\bar{a} s a v \bar{a}$ are formed starting with habits is discussed in the "Habits and Goals," "Sansāric Habits and Āsavas," and "The Way to Nibbāna - Removal of Āsavā" sections in that order.
5. Therefore, even though one may have greed, hate, and ignorance left, one knows what they are. And one knows how to remove them.

- After attaining the Sotāpanna stage one does not need a teacher. One knows what needs to be done. As one gets rid of the remaining $\bar{a} s a v \bar{a}$, the vision becomes clearer, and $a v i j j \bar{a}$ is removed completely (with all four $\bar{a} s a v \bar{a}[k \bar{a} m a \overline{s a v a, ~ b h a v a ̄ s a v a, ~ d i t t ̣ h a ̄ s a v a, ~ a n d ~ a v i j j a ̄ s a v a]) ~ o n l y ~ a t ~ t h e ~ A r a h a n t h o o d . ~}$

Next, "How the Buddha Described the Chance of Rebirth in the Human Realm", .......

### 7.2.4 Rebirth - Connection to Suffering in the First Noble Truth

June 8, 2021; revised August 7, 2022

## [This topic replaces the old topic "How the Buddha Described the Chance of Rebirth in the Human Realm."]

Rebirth in the lowest four realms is responsible for the "long-term suffering" that the Buddha pointed out in the First Noble Truth. Even though there is less suffering in the higher realms, most rebirths are in the lower realms. That is why there is NET suffering the rebirth process by a huge margin.

## Living a Moral Life Is Not Enough

1. Many believe that if we live a "good, moral life," a human rebirth or rebirth in higher deva worlds is guaranteed. That is a misconception. Even if we do not accumulate a new bad kamma in this life, we may have accumulated uncountable bad kamma in our past lives. That is why it isn't easy to get a human existence (bhava).

- Evidence for rebirth is in "Evidence for Rebirth." Rebirth can occur not only as a human but in any of the 31 realms. Most suffering in the cycle of rebirth occurs in the lowest four realms: niraya (hell), asura, animal, and peta. Of those four, only the animal realm is visible to us. They are collectively called the apāyās.
- Getting a "human existence (bhava)" is rare. But once one grasps a human bhava, one could be born ( $\bar{a} t i$ ) many times as a human until the kammic energy for that human bhava is exhausted. That is why children can recall past lives. In between consecutive human births, that lifestream exists in the nether world or "para loka" as a gandhabba with a subtle body; see, "Hidden World of the Gandhabba: Netherworld (Para Loka)."
- The 31 realms of existence are described in "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma."


## Most Rebirths Are in the Four Lowest Realms

2. Starting with the "WebLink: suttacentral: Nakhasikhā Sutta (56.51)" there are about 80 suttās in the Samiyutta Nikāya 56 that describe the chance of rebirths in good realms (human and above) compared to those in the lowest four realms.

- Here is the English translation at Sutta Central: "WebLink: suttacentral: A Fingernail (SN 56.51)." You can go through the whole series there.
- Those suttās specifically state the rarity of rebirth in a "good realm" and the common occurrence of rebirths in bad realms. Many suttās specifically state that for a sentient being in any realm, rebirths will be mostly in the niraya (hell), animal (tiracchāna), hungry-ghost (peta) realms; see SN 56.102 through SN 56. 131.
- Another version of the Nakhasikhā Sutta is in Samiyutta Nikāya 20, summarized below.
- Before that, it is good to emphasize the difference between a human bhava and births with a human body (jāti) within that human bhava.


## Human Bhava Is Rare - But It Can Last a Long Time

3. Some people ask the following question: If human birth is so rare, why do rebirth accounts indicate human rebirth only after a few years of death? The answer lies in the fact that a human bhava is rare.

- When a sentient being is born a human, that "human bhava" has a specific kammic energy, say several thousand years worth. In that case, the person may be born ( $j \bar{a} t i)$ with a human body many times. In between, that human lives with only a manomaya kāya (i.e., as a gandhabba.)
- For example, if a Deva dies and gets a human bhava, then at the cuti-patisandhi moment, a human gandhabba is born into human bhava. After some time, that gandhabba gets into a womb, and a human baby is born. When that human grows old and dies, there is still much more time left in the human bhava. Thus, the gandhabba comes out of that dead body and waits for another womb. See "Bhava and Jāti States of Existence and Births Therein" and "Cuti-Patisandhi - An Abhidhamma Description."
- In most other realms (i.e., Deva, Brahma), there is only one $j \bar{a} t i$ within that bhava. Multiple $j \bar{a} t i$ within a bhava is common in the human and animal realms.
- It isn't easy to get a human bhava, but once in a human bhava, one can be born tens or even hundreds of times as a human. A given animal may be reborn thousands or even millions of times in that animal realm to exhaust that kammic energy.
- Of course, we cannot see realms other than the human and animal realms. We can easily discern the rarity of human bhava by comparing the number of humans to the number of animals. While there are only about 8 billion humans, there are multiple trillions of ants alone! But modern science has shown that billions of microscopic sentient beings live in a single human body. Let us discuss that next.


## The abundance of Animal Life Compared to Human Life

4. Even though the similes given in the suttās below may seem out of proportion with the realities, there are not. Modern science has given a boost to Buddha Dhamma by making many things clear. Ordinary humans were unaware of the existence of innumerable microscopic living beings until the invention of the microscope in the 1500s. In 1676, Van Leeuwenhoek reported the discovery of micro-organisms. He observed numerous tiny living beings in a glass of water, see, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Microscope

Here is a short video showing countless such microscopic creatures:

## WebLink: youtube: There are as many creatures on your body as there are people on Earth

- If you go out and dig some dirt, there could be millions of living organisms. There may be a few humans in a household, but possibly billions or even trillions of microscopic living beings. The oceans cover twothirds of the Earth's surface, and living creatures are much more densely packed. And there are beings in other 29 realms that we cannot see. Seven billion or so humans in this world are indeed a thumb-full compared to countless living creatures associated with the Earth (as the Buddha stated in the Nakhasikha Sutta; see below).
- Uncountable sentient beings are living in the water. One can actually "see" such microscopic beings in a glass of water if one develops abhiñ̃̃̄̄ powers; see "Power of the Human Mind - introduction." One time, a bhikkhu who had developed abhiñ̃ñ $\bar{a}$ skills but had not becomes an Arahant saw the presence of a large number of microscopic beings in a glass of water. He tried to filter them out but was unsuccessful and became distraught. The Buddha told him that "it is not possible to live in this world without harming other beings. It is necessary to live this life to attain Nibbāna" and to drink the water. The INTENTION is to quench the thirst; see "How to Evaluate Weights of Different Kamma."
- Modern science has confirmed that millions of living beings are on a single human body (and any other large animal). Scientists have used sophisticated instruments to see such microscopic creatures. See, "There are as Many Creatures on your Body as there are People on Earth!."
- Now, let us briefly discuss a few of the suttās mentioned in \#2 above.


## The Rarity of Human Existence

5. As mentioned in \#2 above, the WebLink: suttacentral: Nakhasikha Sutta (SN 20.2) provides a good analogy of rare human existence. We have that opportunity, and we should not waste it.

## Translation:

At Sāvatthī. Then the Buddha, picking up a little bit of sand on his fingernail, addressed the bhikkhus: "What do you think, bhikkhus? Which is more: the little bit of sand on my fingernail or this great Earth?"
"Bhante, the great earth is far more. The little bit of sand on your fingernail is tiny. Compared to the great Earth, those cannot be compared or even imagined; it is not even a significant fraction."
"In the same way, bhikkhus, sentient beings reborn as humans are few as this bit of sand on my fingernail. But those not reborn as humans, are many as the sand on this great Earth. Therefore, you should strive diligently and without delay to end this suffering in the rebirth process."
6. Another favorite sutta of mine is the WebLink: suttacentral: Dutiyachiggalayuga Sutta (SN 56.48).

## Translation:

"Bhikkhus, suppose that this great Earth had become one mass of water, and a man would throw a yoke with a single hole upon it. An easterly stream would move it eastward. A westerly stream would move it westward; a northerly flow would move it northward. A southerly stream would move it southward.

There was a blind turtle that would come to the surface once every hundred years. What do you think, bhikkhus, would that blind turtle, coming to the surface once every hundred years, insert its neck into that yoke with a single hole?"
"It would be a rare occurrence, Bhante, that the blind turtle, coming to the surface once every hundred years, would insert its neck into that yoke with a single hole."
"So too, bhikkhus, how extremely rare that one is born a human.
You have this rare chance now, bhikkhus, to be not only born a human but be born while a Tathāgata has arisen in the world. While the Dhamma and Discipline proclaimed by the Tathägata shine in the world.

Therefore, bhikkhus, you should strive without delay to understand the following. 'This is suffering (dukkha). This is the cause of suffering (dukkha samudaya). This is how that cause can be removed (dukkha nirodhaya). And this is the way leading to the cessation of suffering (dukkha nirodha gāmini patipadā).""

- The other related issue is that this rebirth process will not stop until one truly comprehends the FACT that existence in this world of 31 realms is not only unfruitful, but also DANGEROUS. That is the "anicca nature" in Tilakkhana.
- This rebirth process has no "discernible beginning," as stated by the Buddha. We have suffered mightily, and this is the opportunity for a rare human life to end that suffering.


## Unimaginable Length of the Rebirth Process

7. There are 20 suttās in Saimyutta Nikāya 15 (SN 15.1 through SN 15. 20) that provide various analogies to describe the length of the rebirth process. Let us look at the WebLink: suttacentral: Assu Sutta (SN 15.3).

## Translation:

First, the Buddha made the famous statement: "Anamataggoyam bhikkhave, samsaro pubbā koti na pannāyati avijjā nivārananam sattānam taṇhā-samyojananam sandhāvatam samsāratam."

- Translated: "Bhikkhus, this rebirth process has no discernible (na pannāyati) beginning. Beings whose minds are covered by ignorance and are bound to this rebirth process with bonds of craving."

The rest of the sutta is as follows:
"What do you think, bhikkhus: Which is greater, the tears you have shed while trapped in this rebirth process or the water in the four great oceans? (crying because of being born into a bad birth or separated from loved ones in good births)."
"As we understand the Dhamma taught to us by the Bhante, the tears we have shed while trapped in this beginning-less rebirth process is greater than the waters in the four great oceans."
"Excellent, bhikkhus. It is good that you thus understand the Dhamma taught by me. That is the larger: the tears you have shed while trapped in this beginning-less rebirth process - not the water in the four vast oceans.

Long have you (repeatedly) experienced the death of a mother? The tears you have shed over the death of a mother while trapped in this beginning-less rebirth process are greater than the water in the four vast oceans.

Long have you (repeatedly) experienced the death of a father, death of a brother, death of a sister, death of a son, death of a daughter, loss of relatives, or loss of wealth. The tears you have shed over diseases while trapped in this beginning-less rebirth process would fill the four vast oceans.

Why is that? The beginning of this rebirth process is not discernible."

- In another analogy in SN 15.13 , the blood from uncountable times when one is killed while born a specific animal (deer or cow, for example) is more than the water in the four oceans.


## Summary

1. As pointed out in those 20 suttās (SN 15.1 through SN 15. 20), Buddha used many analogies to describe the unimaginable length of the rebirth process (Sainsāra): it is infinite. There is no discernible beginning to "sentient life." The principle of Causality dictates that there can be no "beginning."

- Infinity is hard to comprehend. Scientists have only recently realized this; see "Infinity - How Big Is It?" and "Origin of Life - There is No Traceable Origin."
- Many scientists are discussing these "hard to fathom" ideas about infinity. Of course, they are unaware of Buddha's teachings. See, for example, "The Beginning of Infinity" by David Deutsch (2011).

2. The other suttās discussed in \#2 above emphasize that it is rare to be born a human, Deva, or Brahma in this rebirth process.
3. Therefore, each of us has spent MOST of that time in the suffering-filled lowest four realms (apāy $\bar{a} s$.) Even though the realms at and above the human realms have much less suffering than the apāyās, the time spent in those higher realms would have been insignificant.

- This is why it is unwise to seek rebirths in higher realms. Even though the lifetime in a Deva/Brahma realm can be many millions of years, that is INSIGNIFICANT compared to the time spent in the apāy $\bar{a} s$ over the long run.
- We CANNOT avoid births in the lower realms as long as we do not comprehend these facts (Noble Truths) about this world. The deeper one's understanding is, the clearer it becomes. Then one's tanh $\bar{a}$ and upādāna for "worldly pleasures" will AUTOMATICALLY diminish and disappear. That CAN NOT be forced.

4. That is the suffering addressed in the First Noble Truth (the truth about suffering or "dukkha sacca.") The Second Noble Truth is about the causes of that suffering (the truth about "dukkha samudaya.") The Third Noble Truth says we can stop future suffering by eliminating those causes (the truth about "dukkha nirodhaya."). The Fourth Noble Truth is the way to achieve that goal (the truth about "dukkha nirodha gāmini patipadā.")

- Most human beings head to the apāyās because they are unaware of the ten immoral actions; see "Ten Immoral Actions - Dasa Akusala" and "How to Evaluate Weights of Different Kamma." It is also essential to know the baseline procedure to avoid such immoral actions and cultivate moral behavior; see, "Punna Kamma - Dāna, Sīla, Bhāvanā."


### 7.2.4.1

## How the Buddha Described the Chance of Rebirth in the Human Realm

Revised May 5, 2017, August 24, 2017; October 30, 2018; February 29, 2020; June 3, 2021
Many people believe that if we live a "good, moral life," a human rebirth or rebirth in higher deva worlds is guaranteed. That is a misconception. Even if we do not accumulate a single new bad kamma in this life, we may have accumulated many bad kamma in past lives. That is why it isn'st easy to get a human existence (bhava).

- Evidence for rebirth is at "Evidence for Rebirth." Rebirth can occur not only as a human but in any of the 31 realms. Most suffering in the cycle of rebirth occurs in the lowest four realms: niraya (hell), asura, animal, and peta realms. Of those four, only the animal realm is visible to us. They are collectively called the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$.
- Getting a "human existence (bhava)" is rare. But once one grasps a human bhava, one could be born ( $j \bar{a} t i$ ) many times as a human until the kammic energy for that human bhava is exhausted. That is why children can recall past lives. In between consecutive human births, that lifestream exists in the nether world or "para loka" as a gandhabba with a subtle body; see, "Hidden World of the Gandhabba: Netherworld (Paraloka)"
- The 31 realms of existence described in "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma."


## 1. From the Nakhasikha Sutta (SN 20.2):

## Pāli version: WebLink: suttacentral: Nakhasikha Sutta (SN 20.2):

## Translation:

At Sāvatthī. Then the Buddha, picking up a little bit of sand on his fingernail, addressed the bhikkhus: "What do you think, bhikkhus? Which is more: the little bit of sand on my fingernail, or this great Earth?"
"Bhante, the great earth is far more. The little bit of sand on your fingernail is tiny. Compared to the great Earth, those cannot be compared or even imagined; it is not even a significant fraction."
"In the same way, bhikkhus, sentient beings reborn as humans are few as this bit of sand on my fingernail. But those not reborn as humans are many as the sand on this great Earth. Therefore, you should strive diligently and without delay to end this suffering in the rebirth process."

Let us make two points clear regarding the above simile of the Buddha:

1. When a being gets a human life, that "human bhava" has a specific kammic energy associated with it, say 1000 years worth. In that case, the person may be born a few times with a human body (this is the difference between "bhava" and "jāti"). The cuti-patisandhi transition to a new "bhava" happens at the end of 1000 years; see, "Bhava and Jāti - States of Existence and Births Therein"" and "Cuti-Patisandhi - An Abhidhamma Description."

- Therefore, the human bhava may not end at the death of the physical body. Switching to a new bhava (as a Deva, animal, etc.) happens at the cuti-patisandhi moment when the kammic energy for the human bhava runs out. Until then, a human exists either with a physical body or just the mental body (gandhabba.) See the above-mentioned posts.
- It isn't easy to get a human bhava, but once in a human bhava, one can be born tens or even hundreds of times as a human. A given animal may be reborn thousands or even millions of times in that animal realm to exhaust that kammic energy.

2. Even though the above simile may seem to be out-of-proportion with the realities, it is not. That is why modern science has given a boost to Buddha Dhamma by making many things clear. Ordinary humans were not aware of the existence of innumerable microscopic living beings until the invention of the microscope in the 1500 s. In 1676, Van Leeuwenhoek reported the discovery of micro-organisms. He observed numerous tiny living beings in a glass of water; see, WebLink: WIKI: Microscope
Here is a short video showing countless such microscopic creatures:
WebLink: Live in a water drop @,TSRlab

- If you go out and dig a bit of dirt, there could be millions of living organisms there. There may be a few humans in a household, but possibly billions or even trillions of microscopic living beings. The oceans cover two-thirds of the Earth's surface, and the living creatures there are much more densely packed. And there are beings in other 29 realms that we cannot see. Seven billion or so humans in this world are indeed a thumb-full compared to countless living creatures associated with the Earth. Thus, as in many cases, modern science has helped verify Buddha's words.
- Some of these realms could be in other dimensions; see, "Consciousness Dependence on Number of Dimensions." In string theory, scientists say there could be ten dimensions instead of the three that we experience.
- However, one can actually "see" beings in other dimensions and microscopic beings in a glass of water if one develops abhiñ̃̄̄a powers; see "Power of the Human Mind - Introduction" and the follow-up posts. One time, a bhikkhu who had developed abhiññ̄a skills but had not becomes an Arahant saw the presence of a large number of microscopic beings in a glass of water. He tried to filter them out but was unsuccessful and became distraught. The Buddha told him that "it is not possible to live in this world without harming other beings. It is necessary to live this life to attain Nibbāna" and to drink the water. The INTENTION there is to quench the thirst; see "How to Evaluate Weights of Different Kamma."
- Modern science has found out that there are millions of living beings on a single human body (and any other large animal). They have used sophisticated instruments to see microscopic creatures. See, "There are as Many Creatures on your Body as there are People on Earth!."

Thus modern science has shown that the human population is negligible compared to just the animal populations (including microscopic beings). And we can experience only two realms (animal and human) compared to the 31 realms that the Buddha described.

## 2. Dutiyachiggalayuga Sutta (SN 56.48)

Pāli version: WebLink: suttacentral: Dutiyachiggalayuga Sutta (SN 56.48)

## Translation:

"Bhikkhus, suppose that this great Earth had become one mass of water, and a man would throw a yoke with a single hole upon it. An easterly stream would move it eastward. A westerly stream would move it westward; a northerly flow would move it northward. A southerly stream would move it southward.

There was a blind turtle that would come to the surface once every hundred years. What do you think, bhikkhus, would that blind turtle, coming to the surface once every hundred years, insert its neck into that yoke with a single hole?"
'It would be a rare occurrence, Bhante, that the blind turtle, coming to the surface once every hundred years, would insert its neck into that yoke with a single hole."
"So too, bhikkhus, how extremely rare that one is born a human.
You have this rare chance now, bhikkhus, to be not only born a human but be born while a Tathāgata has arisen in the world. While the Dhamma and Discipline proclaimed by the Tathägata shines in the world.

Therefore, bhikkhus, you should strive without delay to understand the following. 'This is suffering (dukkha). This is the cause of suffering (dukkha samudaya). This is how that cause can be removed (dukkha nirodhaya). And this is the way leading to the cessation of suffering (dukkha nirodha gāmini pattipadā)."

- Many scientists are now discussing these "hard to fathom" ideas about infinity. Of course, they are unaware of Buddha's teachings. See, for example, "The Beginning of Infinity" by David Deutsch (2011).
- Most human beings head to the apāyā because they are not aware of the ten immoral actions; see, "Ten Immoral Actions - Dasa Akusala" and "How to Evaluate Weights of Different Kamma." It is also essential to know the baseline procedure to avoid such immoral actions and to cultivate moral behavior; see, "Puñña Kamma - Dāna, Sīla, Bhāvanā."

However, when a living being acquires a human bhava or human existence, that can last a long time (many hundreds to many thousands of years). Within that human bhava, there will be multiple human births; see, "Bhava and Jāti - States of Existence and Births Therein."

## 3. Assu Sutta (SN 15.3)

Pāli version and translation at WebLink: suttacentral: Assu Sutta (SN 15.3)

## Translation:

First, the Buddha made the famous statement: "Anamataggoyam bhikkhave, samisāro. Pubbā koṭi na


- Translated: "Bhikkhus, this rebirth process has no discernible (na paññāyati) beginning. Beings whose minds are covered by ignorance and are bound to this rebirth process with bonds of craving."

The rest of the sutta is as follows:
"What do you think, bhikkhus: Which is greater, the tears you have shed while trapped in this rebirth process or the water in the four great oceans? (Crying because of being born into a bad birth or being separated from loved ones in good births)"
"As we understand the Dhamma taught to us by the Bhante, the tears we have shed while trapped in this beginning-less rebirth process is greater than the waters in the four great oceans."
"Excellent, bhikkhus. It is good that you thus understand the Dhamma taught by me. That is the larger: the tears you have shed while trapped in this beginning-less rebirth process - not the water in the four vast oceans.

Long have you (repeatedly) experienced the death of a mother. The tears you have shed over the death of a mother while trapped in this beginning-less rebirth process are greater than the water in the four vast oceans.

Long have you (repeatedly) experienced the death of a father, death of a brother, death of a sister, death of a son, death of a daughter, loss of relatives, or loss of wealth. The tears you have shed over diseases while trapped in this beginning-less rebirth process would fill the four vast oceans.

Why is that? The beginning of this rebirth process is not discernible."

The Buddha many other analogies to describe how long the rebirth process is: it is infinite. In another analogy, the blood from uncountable times where one is killed while born a specific animal (deer or cow, for example) is more than the water in the four oceans.

- Infinity is a hard to comprehend. Scientists have only recently realized this; see, "Infinity - How Big Is It? "
- In fact, there are many suttā in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Anamatagga Samiyutta (SN 15)," "WebLink: suttacentral: Opamma Samyutta (SN20)," and the "WebLink: suttacentral: Sacca Saimyutta (SN 56)" SN 56.31 through SN 56.70 of the Saminutta Nikāya provides many more similes/descriptions to illustrate the beginning-less rebirth process, during which an infinite amount of time has passed.
- In the above, I presented only three out of about 70 such suttā in SN 15, SN 20, and SN 56. They all provide analogies to show how rare human birth is.

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Next, "Kamma, Debt, and Meditation"
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### 7.2.4.2 Nakhasikha Sutta (SN 22.97 SN 56.51 SN 13.1 SN 20.2)

"At one time the Buddha, showing them some dust which he had taken upon the tip of his finger-nail, addressed the disciples thus: 'If, O Bhikkhus, these few grains of dust upon my finger-nail and all the dust in the universe were compared in quantity, which would you say was less, and which more?' The disciples replied: 'Lord, the dust on your finger- nail is less, and that of the universe is more. Surely, Lord, the dust on your finger-nail is not worthy of mention in comparison with the dust of the universe.' Then the Buddha continued; 'Even so, Bhikkhus, those who are reborn in the abodes of men and Devas whence they have expired, are very few even as the few grains of dust on my finger-nail; and those who are reborn in the four realms of misery are exceedingly many, even as the dust of the great universe. Again, those who have expired from the four miserable worlds and are reborn in the abodes of men and Devas are few even as the grains of dust on my finger-nail; and those who are repeatedly reborn in the four miserable worlds are innumerable, even as the grains of dust of the great universe."

What has just been said is the substance of the Nakhasikha Sutta. But, to say nothing of the beings of all the four realms of misery, the creatures that inhabit the four great oceans alone will suffice to make evident how great is the evil of Vinipatana-gati, that is, the dispersion, the variety of possible kinds of existence after death.

## Saṁyutta Nikāya 22

## 10. Pupphavagga

## 97. Nakhasikhāsutta

Sāvatthinidānam.. Ekamantam nisinno kho so bhikkhu bhagavantam etadavoca: "atthi nu kho, bhante, kiñci rūpam் yam̉ rūpam் niccam் dhuvamं sassatamं aviparịā̄madhammam̉ sassatisamam tatheva ṭhassati? Atthi nu kho, bhante, kāci vedanā yā vedanā niccā dhuvā sassatā aviparịāmadhammā sassatisamam tatheva ṭhassatì? Atthi nu kho, bhante, kāci saññā ... pe ... keci sañkhārā, ye sañkhārā niccā dhuvā sassatā aviparịāāmadhammā sassatisamam tatheva ṭhassanti? Atthi nu kho, bhante, kiñci viññāṇam, yam viññāṇam niccam dhuvamं sassatam avipariṇāmadhammamं sassatisamam tatheva ṭhassati'tit? 'Natthi kho, bhikkhu, kiñci rūpaṁ, yam̉ rūpam் niccamं dhuvam̉ sassatam avipariṇāmadhammam̉ sassatisamam tatheva ṭhassati. Natthi kho, bhikkhu, kāci vedanā ... kāci saññā ... keci sañkhārā ... pe ... kiñ̃ci viññāṇaṁ, yaṁ viñ̃̃āṇam niccam̉ dhuvam sassatam aviparinạāmadhammam̉ sassatisamam tatheva ṭhassatī’ti.

Atha kho bhagavā parittamं nakhasikhāyam pamisum āropetvā tamं bhikkhumं etadavoca: "ettakampi kho, bhikkhu, rūpam் natthi niccam் dhuvamं sassatam avipariṇāmadhammamं sassatisamam tatheva ṭhassati. Ettakañcepi, bhikkhu, rūpam̉ abhavissa niccam dhuvamं sassatam avipariṇāmadhammaḿ, nayidaḿ brahmacariyavāso paññāyetha sammā dukkhakkhayāya. Yasmā ca kho, bhikkhu, ettakampi rūpaḿ natthi niccam் dhuvamं sassatam avipariṇāmadhammaḿ, tasmā brahmacariyavāso paññāyati sammā dukkhakkhayāya."

Ettakāpi kho, bhikkhu, vedanā natthi niccā dhuvā sassatā avipariṇāmadhammā sassatisamam tatheva ṭhassati. Ettakā cepi, bhikkhu, vedanā abhavissa niccā dhuvā sassatā aviparināāmadhammā, na yidam brahmacariyavāso pañ̃̃̄̄yetha sammā dukkhakkhayāya. Yasmā ca kho, bhikkhu, ettakāpi vedanā natthi niccā dhuvā sassatā aviparināmadhammā, tasmā brahmacariyavāso paññāyati sammā dukkhakkhayāya.

Ettakāpi kho, bhikkhu, saññā natthi ... pe ... ettakāpi kho, bhikkhu, sañkhārā natthi niccā dhuvā sassatā avipariṇāmadhammā sassatisamam tatheva ṭhassanti. Ettakā cepi, bhikkhu, sañkhārā abhavissamisu niccā dhuvā sassatā aviparināmadhammā, na yidam̉ brahmacariyavāso pañ̃̄̄yetha sammā dukkhakkhayāya. Yasmā ca kho, bhikkhu, ettakāpi sañkhārā natthi niccā dhuvā sassatā avipariṇāmadhammā, tasmā brahmacariyavāso paññāyati sammā dukkhakkhayāya.

Ettakampi kho, bhikkhu, viññ̄ṇam̉ natthi niccam̉ dhuvam̉ sassatam̉ avipariṇāmadhammam̉ sassatisamam tatheva ṭhassati. Ettakampi kho, bhikkhu, viññāṇam abhavissa niccam் dhuvam sassatam avipariṇāmadhammaṁ, na yidaṁ brahmacariyavāso paññāyetha sammā dukkhakkhayāya. Yasmā ca kho, bhikkhu, ettakampi viññāṇam natthi niccam̉ dhuvamं sassatam avipariṇāmadhammam, tasmā brahmacariyavāso pañ̃āyati sammā dukkhakkhayāya.
 sañkhārā ... viññāṇam niccam̀ vā aniccaṃ vā"tit? "Aniccaḿ, bhante" ... pe ... 'tasmātiha ... pe ... evamं passam $\ldots$ pe ... nāparam itthattāyāti pajānātř’ti.

Pañcamam.

## Samyutta Nikāya 56

## 6. Abhisamayavagga

## 51. Nakhasikhāsutta

Atha kho bhagavā parittam nakhasikhāyam paṁsum āropetvā bhikkhū āmantesi: "tam kim maññatha, bhikkhave, katamam் nu kho bahutaramं-yo vāyamं mayā paritto nakhasikhāyamं paṁsu āropito, ayam vā mahāpathavi"ti? "Etadeva, bhante, bahutaram yadidam-mahāpathavī; appamattakāyam bhagavatā paritto nakhasikhāyam pamisu āropito. Sañkhampi na upeti, upanidhampi na upeti, kalabhāgampi na upeti mahāpathavim upanidhāya bhagavatā paritto nakhasikhāyam pamisu āropito"ti. "Evameva kho, bhikkhave, aríyasāvakassa diṭ̣hisampannassa puggalassa abhisametāvino etadeva bahutaram dukkham yadidam் parikkhīnamं pariyādinnam்; appamattakam் avasiṭ̣ham. Sañkhampi na upeti, upanidhampi na upeti, kalabhāgampi na upeti purimam dukkhakkhandham parikkhịnam pariyādinnam upanidhāya yadidam sattakkhattuparamatā; yo 'idamं dukkhan'ti yathābhūtam pajānāti ... pe ... 'ayam dukkhanirodhagāminī paṭipadā’ti yathābhūtam pajānāti.

Tasmātiha, bhikkhave, ‘idam̉ dukkhan'ti yogo karaṇīyo ... pe ... 'ayam dukkhanirodhagāminī paṭipadā’ti yogo karaṇīyo"ti.

Paṭhamam.

## Samiyutta Nikāya 13

## 1. Abhisamayavagga

## 1. Nakhasikhāsutta

Evamं me sutaḿ - ekam samayam bhagavā sāvatthiyam viharati jetavane anāthapiṇịikassa ārāme. Atha kho bhagavā parittam nakhasikhāyam pamisum āropetvā bhikkhū āmantesi: "tam kim maññatha, bhikkhave, katamam nu kho bahutaramं, yo vāyam்
mayā paritto nakhasikhāyam pamsu āropito, ayamं vā mahāpathavi’ti?
"Etadeva, bhante, bahutaramं, yadidamं mahāpathavī. Appamattako bhagavatā paritto nakhasikhāyamं paṁsu āropito. Neva satimam் kalam upeti na sahassimam் kalam் upeti na satasahassimam kalam upeti mahāpathavim upanidhāya bhagavatā paritto nakhasikhāyam pamisu āropito"ti. "Evameva kho, bhikkhave, ariyasāvakassa diṭ̣hisampannassa puggalassa abhisametāvino etadeva bahutaram dukkham yadidam parikkhīnam pariyādiṇ̣aṁ; appamattakam avasiṭ̣ham.. Neva satimam kalam upeti na sahassimam kalam upeti na satasahassimam் kalam் upeti purimam dukkhakkhandham parikkhị̄am pariyādiṇnam upanidhāya yadidamं sattakkhattumiparamatā. Evam் mahatthiyo kho, bhikkhave, dhammābhisamayo; evamं mahatthiyo dhammacakkhupaṭiābho"ti.

Paṭhamam.

## Saṁyutta Nikāya 20

## 1. Opammavagga

## 2. Nakhasikhasutta

Sāvatthiyamं viharati. Atha kho bhagavā parittam nakhasikhāyam paṁsum āropetvā bhikkhū āmantesi: "tam kim maññatha, bhikkhave, katamam் nu kho bahutaram, yo cāyam mayā paritto nakhasikhāyam paṁsu āropito yā cāyamं mahāpathav>"ti? "Etadeva, bhante, bahutaram yadidam mahāpathavī. Appamattakoyam bhagavatā paritto nakhasikhāyam paṁsu āropito. Sañkhampi na upeti upanidhimpi na upeti kalabhāgampi na upeti mahāpathavim upanidhāya bhagavatā paritto nakhasikhāyam pamisu āropito"ti. "Evameva kho, bhikkhave, appakā te sattā ye manussesu paccājāyanti; atha kho eteyeva bahutarā sattā ye aññatra manussehi paccājāyanti. Tasmātiha, bhikkhave, evam sikkhitabbami: 'appamattā viharissāmā’ti. Evañhi vo, bhikkhave, sikkhitabban"ti.

# Samyutta Nikāya 56 

## 5. Papātavagga

## 47. Paṭhamachiggalayugasutta


#### Abstract

"Seyyathāpi, bhikkhave, puriso mahāsamudde ekacchiggalam yugam pakkhipeyya. Tatrāpissa kāṇo kacchapo. So vassasatassa vassasatassa accayena sakim̀ sakim ummujjeyya. Tam̉ kim maññatha, bhikkhave, api nu kho kāno kacchapo vassasatassa vassasatassa accayena sakim sakim ummujjanto amusmim ekacchiggale yuge givam paveseyyā"ti? 'Yadi nūna, bhante, kadāci karahaci dīghassa addhuno accayenā"ti. 'Khippataram kho so, bhikkhave, kāṇo kacchapo vassasatassa vassasatassa accayena sakimं sakim ummujjanto amusmim ekacchiggaḷe yuge givam paveseyya, na tvevāham, bhikkhave, sakim vinipātagatena bālena manussattam vadāmi.

Taṁ kissa hetu? Na hettha, bhikkhave, atthi dhammacariyā, samacariyā, kusalakiriyā, puññakiriyā. Aññamaññakhādikā ettha, bhikkhave, vattati dubbalakhādikā. Tam̉ kissa hetu? Adiṭ̣hattā, bhikkhave, catunnam் ariyasaccānam. Katamesam catunnami? Dukkhassa ariyasaccassa ... pe ... dukkhanirodhagāminiyā paṭipadāya ariyasaccassa.


Tasmātiha, bhikkhave, 'idam̉ dukkhan'ti yogo karaṇīyo ... pe ... 'ayam̉ dukkhanirodhagāminī paṭipadā’ti yogo karaṇīyo"ti.

Sattamam.

## Samyutta Nikāya 56

## 5. Papātavagga

## 48. Dutiyachiggalayugasutta

[^4]Tasmātiha, bhikkhave, 'idam̉ dukkhan'ti yogo karaṇ̄̄yo ... pe ... 'ayam̉ dukkhanirodhagāminī paṭipadā’ti yogo karaṇīyo"ti.

Atṭhamam.

# Saṁyutta Nikāya 56 <br> Connected Discourses on the Truths 

## 47. Yoke with a Hole (1)

"Bhikkhus, suppose a man would throw a yoke with a single hole into the great ocean, and there was a blind turtle which would come to the surface once every hundred years. What do you think, bhikkhus, would that blind turtle, coming to the surface once every hundred years, insert its neck into that yoke with a single hole?"
"If it would ever do so, venerable sir, it would be only after a very long time."
"Sooner, I say, would that blind turtle, coming to the surface once every hundred years, insert its neck into that yoke with a single hole than the fool who has gone once to the nether world would regain the human state. For what reason? Because here, bhikkhus, there is no conduct guided by the Dhamma, no righteous conduct, no wholesome activity, no meritorious activity. Here there prevails mutual devouring, the devouring of the weak. For what reason? Because, bhikkhus, they have not seen the Four Noble Truths. What four? The noble truth of suffering ... the noble truth of the way leading to the cessation of suffering.
'Therefore, bhikkhus, an exertion should be made to understand: 'This is suffering.' ... An exertion should be made to understand: 'This is the way leading to the cessation of suffering.'"

Samiyutta Nikāya 56
Connected Discourses on the Truths

## 48. Yoke with a Hole (2)

"Bhikkhus, suppose that this great earth had become one mass of water, and a man would throw a yoke with a single hole upon it. An easterly wind would drive it westward; a westerly wind would drive it eastward; a northerly wind would drive it southward; a southerly wind would drive it northward. There was a blind turtle which would come to the surface once every hundred years. What do you think, bhikkhus, would that blind turtle, coming to the surface once every hundred years, insert its neck into that yoke with a single hole?"
"It would be by chance, venerable sir, that that blind turtle, coming to the surface once every hundred years, would insert its neck into that yoke with a single hole."
"So too, bhikkhus, it is by chance that one obtains the human state; by chance that a Tathāgata, an Arahant, a Perfectly Enlightened One arises in the world; by chance that the Dhamma and Discipline proclaimed by the Tathāgata shines in the world.
'You have obtained that human state, bhikkhus; a Tathāgata, an Arahant, a Perfectly Enlightened One has arisen in the world; the Dhamma and Discipline proclaimed by the Tathāgata shines in the world.
'Therefore, bhikkhus, an exertion should be made to understand: 'This is suffering.'... An exertion should be made to understand: 'This is the way leading to the cessation of suffering.""

### 7.2.4.4 Assu Sutta (SN 15.3)

## Linked Discourses 15 <br> Chapter One

## 3. Tears

### 1.1At Sāvatthī.

1.2"Mendicants, transmigration has no known beginning.
1.3No first point is found of sentient beings roaming and transmigrating, hindered by ignorance and fettered by craving.
1.4What do you think? Which is more: the flow of tears you've shed while roaming and transmigrating for such a very long time-weeping and wailing from being united with the unloved and separated from the loved -or the water in the four oceans?"
1.5 "As we understand the Buddha's teaching, the flow of tears we've shed while roaming and transmigrating is more than the water in the four oceans."
2.1"Good, good, mendicants! It's good that you understand my teaching like this.
2.2The flow of tears you've shed while roaming and transmigrating is indeed more than the water in the four oceans.
2.3For a long time you've undergone the death of a mother ...
2.42 .5 father ..
2.6brother ...
2.7sister ...
2.8son ...
2.9daughter ...
2.10loss of relatives ...
2.11loss of wealth ..
2.12 or loss through illness. From being united with the unloved and separated from the loved, the flow of tears you've shed while roaming and transmigrating is indeed more than the water in the four oceans.
2.13 Why is that?
2.14Transmigration has no known beginning. ..
2.15This is quite enough for you to become disillusioned, dispassionate, and freed regarding all conditions." 2.16

## Samyutta Nikāya 15

1. Paṭhamavagga

## 3. Assusutta

1.1Sāvatthiyam viharati.
1.2"Anamataggoyam, bhikkhave, samsāro.
1.3Pubbā koṭi na paññāyati avijjānīvaranānam் sattānam taṇhāsaminojanānamं sandhāvatam samsaratam.
1.4Tam் kim maññatha, bhikkhave, katamam nu kho bahutaraṁ, yam vā vo iminā dīghena addhunā sandhāvatam samssaratam̉ amanāpasampayogā manāpavippayogā kandantānam rodantānamं assu passannam paggharitaṁ, yaḿ vā catūsu mahāsamuddesu udakan"ti? Variant: rodantānamं $\rightarrow$ rudantānam (bj) | passannam் $\rightarrow$ passandam் (bj); pasandam் (sya-all, km); pasannam் (pts1ed, pts2ed, mr)
1.5"Yathā kho mayam, bhante, bhagavatā dhammamं desitamं ājānāma, etadeva, bhante, bahutaram் yamं no iminā dīghena addhunā sandhāvatamं samंsaratamं amanāpasampayogā manāpavippayogā kandantānam rodantānam் assu passannam் paggharitam̉, na tveva catūsu mahāsamuddesu udakan"ti.
2.1"Sādhu sādhu, bhikkhave, sādhu kho me tumhe, bhikkhave, evam dhammam desitamं ājānātha.
2.2Etadeva, bhikkhave, bahutaram் yamं vo iminā dīghena addhunā sandhāvatam saḿsaratam amanāpasampayogā manāpavippayogā kandantānam rodantānaṁ assu passannam paggharitam், na tveva catūsu mahāsamuddesu udakam.
2.3Dīgharattamं vo, bhikkhave, mātumaraṇam paccanubhūtam;;
2.4tesamं vo mātumaraṇam paccanubhontānam amanāpasampayogā manāpavippayogā kandantānam் rodantānam் assu passannam் paggharitam, na tveva catūsu mahāsamuddesu udakam.
2.5Dīgharattam̉ vo, bhikkhave, pitumaraṇam paccanubhūtaṃ ...pe...
2.6bhātumaraṇam paccanubhūtaṃ ..
2.7bhaginimaraṇam paccanubhūtam் ...
2.8puttamaraṇamं paccanubhūtamं...
2.9dhitumaraṇamं paccanubhūtam ...
2.10ñātibyasanam̉ paccanubhūtaṁ ..
2.11 bhogabyasanamं paccanubhūtam.
2.12Dīgharattam vo, bhikkhave, rogabyasanamं paccanubhūtaṁ, tesamं vo rogabyasanamं paccanubhontānam் amanāpasampayogā manāpavippayogā kandantānam rodantānam assu passannam paggharitam, na tveva catūsu mahāsamuddesu udakam.
2.13 Tam kissa hetu?
2.14Anamataggoyam, bhikkhave, samısāro ...pe...
2.15yāvañcidaṁ, bhikkhave, alameva sabbasaṅkhāresu nibbinditum, alam virajjitum, alam vimuccitun"ti.
2.16Tatiyam.

### 7.2.5 <br> Kamma, Debt, and Meditation

## Revised April 7, 2016; September 4, 2019

1. "This world" of 31 realms is very complex; see, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma." Nothing happens due to a single cause, and nothing happens just by itself: Multiple causes lead to multiple effects.
2. In a perfect world, everyone will share everything equally, and everyone will be happy. But people are born with different levels of not only wealth but also different levels of health, physical appearance, capabilities, etc. These are the results of kamma (good and bad) accrued over very long periods in the past.
3. No one has everything "just right." So, we try to get what we don't have or like to have. Every time we crave for something and try to acquire those things by immoral means, knowingly or unknowingly we get into debt.

- When those akusala kamma (immoral deeds) involves another living being, we get into some kind "sansāric relationship" with that being; this is how we have friends, family, AND enemies. These things do not happen by chance.

4. NOTHING in this world happens by chance. Everything happens due to a cause, a reason. But since results (vipāka) can materialize later, even in future lives, we cannot see this "cause and effect" in most cases. When we do something harmful to another being we become indebted to that being; that debt will have to be paid with interest that is many many times over. Thinks about the following:

- When we get a loan, we have to pay back the loan with interest. If we promise to pay back and do not fulfill that commitment, we will have to pay it with interest sometime in the future. Imagine how much interest we would have to pay on a $\$ 1000$ loan at $6 \%$ interest over, say just 200 years, which is insignificant in the sansāric time scale. You can use the " 72 rule." That means if you do not make any monthly payments, the amount you have to pay will double every ( $72 /$ interest rate) years. In this case, it will double every 12 years. It will double again in another 12 years, i.e., after 24 years you will have to pay $\$ 4000$. After only 40 years, the amount will be $\$ 10,000$. Only after 200 years it will a billion dollars!
- Can you imagine how much money we may have to pay to settle even small that we took a long, long time ago?
- We have to pay back not only monetary transactions. Imagine how much would it cost to bring up a child, as a mother does? It is unimaginable over long times.
- When we have such debts, nature has set up many ways to pay off such debts. Many times the same group of people is born to the same families, paying back "old debts." Or one may become a servant for another.
- Many relationships that we have in this life arise from "long-term debt" from many lives in the past. For example, people are born in the same family, same community, or same geographical locations, for many, many lives. That is for just paying back debts and for claiming old debts. In Sinhala, relationships are called "sanbandha" (="san" + "bandha" where "san" is defilement (sañkhāra), and "bandha" is a connection; thus connection due to sañkhāra). Sometimes old creditors come back even in the form of annoying mosquitoes, ants, bugs, etc.
- Now if one takes another's life, one may have to sacrifice one's own life many times over. That is scary stuff, but we need to know that our actions will have consequences.

5. Instead of paying off such "old debts" that way, there is another way to pay back old debts. When one does a good deed, one could transfer the merits of that good deed to old creditors called "pattidāna" (this is commonly called "pиñ̃̃a anumodana"; see, "Transfer of Merits (Pattidāna)- How Does It Happen?").
6. In this beginning-less saìs āra, we have been indebted to unbelievably many beings. Thus we transfer the merits to all beings. We think in our mind, "May the merits of this good deed be shared by all beings."

- If one does this genuinely, it will be quite beneficial in the long term. The Buddha said that this is the most efficient way to pay back old debts. However, one needs to do this with sincerity, truly understanding the suffering caused by one's actions to others.living

7. One could accrue good merits not only by good deeds but also with insight meditation. The Buddha stated that if one cultivates vipassana meditation on anicca, dukkha, anatta, that leads many more merits compared to even donations or giving. After the meditation session, one transfers the merits to all beings.

- The nice thing is that one does not "lose any merits" either. Giving merits itself is meritorious. Also, one should forgive old debts from other beings. The mind is very powerful. If done with right intention, also these thoughts will have beneficial consequences for oneself and other living beings.

8. Therefore, we must try to alleviate the kamma vipāka from past kamma by using the mentioned methods above. But the main purpose of such methods is actually to purify one's mind.

- We can pay off past debts gradually this way. However, bigger chunks are paid off by attaining Sotāpanna, Sakadāgāmī, Anāgāmī, and Arahant stages of Nibbāna. (Actually, the Buddha has said that if one does the Ariya mett $\bar{a}$ meditation frequently, one could pay off the debts associated with the kāma loka (first 11 realms). See, " 5 . Ariya Mettā Bhāvanā (Loving Kindness Meditation)."
- When one attains the Sotāpanna stage, all those kamma vipāka that could have given rebirth in the lowest four realms (apāyā) become nullified. When one reaches the Arahanthood, only those kamma vipāka that get a chance to come to fruition during the remaining time in that life will be paid off. Since there is no more rebirth, all remaining kamma vipāka do not get a chance to come to fruition.

9. The first step in purifying one's mind is to avoid dasa akusala; see, "Ten Immoral Action (Dasa Akusala)." One does not need to try to do all at once (especially for those who are new to Buddha Dhamma).

- It is a life journey, and one can start slowly. First, trying to avoid bad actions, and then do things that can be done without much stress. See the posts in the "Bhāvanā (Meditation)" section and in particular, "ِ. The Basics in Meditation."
- There is no one watching, and only you know what your intentions are: whether they are moral or immoral.
- You will feel the benefits in terms of a less-stressed mind over time. It takes time, especially in the beginning. Then it will accelerate when one starts seeing the benefits. When one starts understanding that micchā ditt hi (wrong views) play a big role in one's tendency to do some immoral acts will automatically reduce. see, "Wrong Views (Micchā Ditthi) - A Simpler Analysis."

10. The Buddha said one could become indebted in four ways:

- Engaging in dasa akusala (10 unwholesome actions).
- Getting someone else to do such acts.
- Helping another in carrying out such acts.
- Praising someone who is doing such acts.

Thus one can become indebted in 40 ways. By avoiding all that will make one joyful (adhimokko or sense of well being). That will give impetus to accelerate one's efforts. Also, see, "Habits and Goals," and "The Four Bases of Mental Power (Cattāro Iddhipāda)."

Another more in-depth analysis at, "Difference Between Giving up Valuables and Losing Interest in Worthless",

### 7.2.6 How do we Decide which View is Wrong View (Diṭ̣hi)?

## Revised July 3, 2022

More than $99 \%$ of one's immoral acts have their causes in micchā ditṭhi (wrong views); see, "What is the only Akusala Removed by a Sotāpanna?." Thus, it is critical to understand what wrong views are.

- A simpler, yet fundamental, analysis of wrong views can be found in, "Wrong Views (Micchā Ditthi) - A Simpler Analysis."

1. We all have our views about different things: politics, religions, sports, lifestyles, etc. And most times it is fun to talk about and debate whose views are the correct ones. But each one of us has views based on limited knowledge about only a fraction of "this world."

- A good way to figure out whether one view is better than another is to see whether that view provides more insight AND has more explanatory power about the world.
- In fact, that is the only way. Because anybody can just say, "my view is better than yours."

2. When I refer to "ditthi" or wrong views, these are the wrong views per Buddha. It must be noted that "ditṭhi" means views, but in Pāli literature it has been common to call "micch $\bar{a}$ ditthi" (pronounced "michch $\overrightarrow{\boldsymbol{a}}$ ") or wrong views as just "ditthi." It is critical to have the "right views" because otherwise we may be taking wrong decisions, and that could have very bad outcomes for billions of years to come. In order to make the right decisions we need to "see the whole picture" or the world view of the Buddha.

- Of course, one is entitled to have his own views. It is just that according to Buddha Dhamma certain views are not only wrong, but could lead to disastrous outcomes, and those are micchā ditthi. One either accepts this fact or rejects it. It is a good idea to look at the "big picture" of the Buddha and THEN decide whether it makes sense or not. First, let us see why one should even go through this exercise of looking at the big picture.

3. When one does not have a clear overall picture, one makes bad decisions. For example, a fish does not see the string or the hook, only sees the worm, and gets into trouble. If it saw the whole picture, with the string and the hook, it may realize that there is something wrong and would not try to grab the worm. If it saw the man standing on land holding the pole, that would have been another clue; but the fish can only see its "domain." Just like that we can only see "our domain" within the wider 31 realms, and we do not see the level of suffering in other lower realms.

- We are inherently incapable of seeing the "whole picture" because our sense faculties are formed by our kamma to be aware of only a part of whole existence; you may get an idea of what I am referring to in the post, "Consciousness Dependence on Number of Dimensions." Therefore, no matter how smart each of us is, we cannot even imagine this whole picture by ourselves. It takes a very special, very pure mind to see the whole picture, the mind of a Buddha; see, "Power of the Human Mind - Introduction," and follow-up posts.

4. The Buddha described this in the parable of the "elephant and the six blind men." Each blind man is feeling or exploring a different part of the elephant and comes up with his view of what an elephant is: The one examining the tail says the elephant is like a rope, one examining a leg says the elephant is like a pillar, etc.

- The person holding the tail is certain that the elephant is like a rope "because I know what I experience; you cannot tell me it is not like a rope." He just does not realize that he is experiencing only part of the whole elephant.

5. Until a Buddha comes to this world, any human can only see a very small part of the whole picture. Like the little girl in the video being able to see the whole elephant, only a Buddha can see the whole picture of our true existence.

- Mathematician Kurt Gödel proved this mathematically in his Incompleteness Theorem, which says that it is not possible to discover the complete truth of a closed system within that system; see, "Gödel's Incompleteness Theorem." Thus science will NEVER be able to discover a COMPLETE set of laws about nature. It can only uncover parts and the parts that have been discovered are totally consistent with Buddha Dhamma.

6. According to the Buddha, ditṭhis are like that: some people say there is a rebirth process, and some say not. Some say when we die we will either go to hell or heaven. Some say, things really exist in a permanent way, and others say it is all a mirage. All these are dittthis because none of these fit the WHOLE PICTURE. None of these can explain the vagaries of life; see, "Complexity of Life and the Way to Seek "Good Rebirths"."

- For example, we can only see two of the 31 realms of existence: animal and human realms. We are not aware that most beings are trapped in the lowest four realms where there is much more suffering than we can see in the human and animal realms. We do not realize that our immoral actions from this life, AND from our past lives (that we are not aware of) could give us rebirth in those lower four realms; this is the "laws of kamma" another part of the "big picture." There is evidence for rebirth; see, "Evidence for Rebirth."

7. Buddha Dhamma cannot be fully understood without having learned of that "big picture" from a Buddha or from a person who has learned the correct version of it. Now, since the Buddha is not here and there are many versions of Buddha Dhamma, the question is how do we figure out which version to believe. The Buddha gave a solution to this problem: Find the version that satisfies the following conditions:

- All aspects should be consistent with the Suttā and Vinaya (and thus Abhidhamma); these were transmitted orally for about 500 years and then written down in the Pāli Tipiṭaka about 2000 years ago (Pāli Tipitaka).
- And all three descriptions in the Tipitaka (Sutta, Vinaya, Abhidhamma) must be consistent with each other.

8. This second requirement is there to catch any mistakes made in the (especially oral) transmission from the time of the Buddha. It must be kept in mind that all three sets were formulated for easy oral transmission. I know several suttā by heart which I learned when I was little; they have been formulated to be easily remembered. And there were different groups of Bhikkhus assigned the responsibility for different sections during the time of oral transmission. Also see, "Preservation of the Dhamma."
9. In a series of posts I have provided evidence that many versions of "Buddhism" being practiced today do not pass the above tests. All Mahāyāna versions are in blatant contradiction to the teachings in the Tipiṭaka, and some key concepts taught in Theravāda are also inconsistent with Tipitaka; see, "Why is it Critical to Find the Pure Buddha Dhamma?," and the follow-up posts.

- Once one finds the key Dhamma concepts that are self-consistent, then one can easily figure out what is ditṭhi and what is not. If anyone can point out anything on this website that is not internally consistent, I would appreciate it. Because my goal is genuine: to find and document the original teachings of the Buddha.

10. Thus it is important to realize that ditthi is an established view (a view one is not even willing to rethink) about the world, that is inconsistent with Buddha Dhamma. Let us take a few examples:

- Two good examples are the two views of 'there is a self" and "there is no self"; see, "Ditthi (Wrong Views), Sammā Ditthi (Good/Correct Views)." Both are wrong views according to the Buddha: there is only an ever-changing lifestream that progresses according to cause and effect (Paticca Samuppāda); see, "What Reincarnates? - Concept of a Lifestream."
- Another ditthi many people have is that there is no rebirth process, or that there is a rebirth process but we will never be born as an animal because we have not done anything bad in this life. It is just a belief, there are no supporting evidence to back that up. On the other hand, the rebirth process involving all 31 realms and the natural law of kamma, together with Paticca Samuppāda, and other key concepts like Tilakkhana can explain EVERYTHING that we experience. What needs to be understood is that ALL THOSE PIECES MUST BE THERE to complete the whole picture.

11. Just like a blind man holding onto a leg of the elephant and saying "This is what I experience and the elephant is like a pillar. I know what I experience, and I am right", we hold onto ditthis that are inconsistent with the nature's laws. Once one hears the message of a Buddha, one should at least examine the credibility of that message by looking at the evidence he presented. Ultimately, one has to make the decision to accept Buddha's message or not. This is why no one can lead anyone else to salvation. It is all in one's own mind.

- Let me give an example of how limited our worldview had been even two hundred years ago. People believed that Earth was the only planet with the Sun going around the Earth. So, when the Buddha said there are innumerable world systems with other Suns and Moons, people thought that was a loony idea. There are many such ditthis that have been proven to be wrong by science over the past hundred years or so; see, "Dhamma and Science - Introduction."

12. Some of the views we have are deeply ingrained, and not easy to get rid of. The main thing is NOT to take a firm stand on things that the Buddha called dittthi and say, "I know this to be true, and only this to be true" and to cling to them. Even a Sotāpanna may not be fully convinced that, for example, there is a arūpa loka, but he/she has not ruled that out, i.e., does not have a ditṭhi. Only an Arahant has "complete" Sammā Ditṭhi.

- As one learns pure Dhamma, one will have more and more confidence in the world view of the Buddha and will get rid of the wrong views. Since the mind cannot be forced to accept anything, this "change of vision" comes only through learning the pure Dhamma and through the enhanced life experience, which means purifying the mind; see, "The Importance of Purifying the MInd."
- We cannot pick and choose parts of Buddha Dhamma that we like if we want to reap the full benefits. Of course one could decide to "live with" parts of Dhamma that one is comfortable with. The Buddha said to accept his teachings only if they make sense. To make sense though, one needs to look at the whole picture too. Otherwise, it will be like a blind man examining only the leg of an elephant and saying it really feels like a pillar.

13. Ditthi is one of 14 akusala cetasika and one of the ten kilesa; see, "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)," and "Ditthi (Wrong Views), Sammā Ditthi (Good/Correct Views)." Ditt thi have been described in many ways by the Buddha. At the Sotāpanna stage, those ditṭhis that could lead to rebirth in the apāy $\bar{a}$ (sakkāya ditṭhi, vicikicchā, sīlabbata parāmāsa) are permanently removed; see, "Akusala Citta - How a Sotāpanna Avoids Apāyagāmi Cittas."

- Thus it is important to realize that the Sotāpanna stage CANNOT be reached until niyata micch $\bar{a}$ dittthi or ESTABLISHED wrong views are removed. For example, one should not hold on to a firm belief that there is no rebirth process; one should at least keep an open mind.
- Stated most succinctly, micchā ditṭhi is the wrong perception of nicca, sukha, atta, i.e., things can be maintained to one's satisfaction, thus lasting happiness is possible, and thus it is fruitful to stay in this world of 31 realms. One attains the first stage of Sammā ditṭhi when one comprehends anicca, dukkha, and anatta to a certain extent at the Sotāpanna stage.

14. The Buddha said his Dhamma is hard to understand, and it is not like anything that anyone taught before, except for another Buddha: It is "Pubbe ananussutesu Dhammesu," "A Dhamma that has not been heard before." This is why the Buddha worried just after the Enlightenment whether he will be able to teach this difficult Dhamma to normal human beings. It takes a real effort to glean the message of the Buddha. [Pubbe
ananussutesu Dhammesu：see WebLink：suttacentral：Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta（SN56．11） ananussuta：a．［an－anussuta］未聞的，未曾聞的，不隨聞的．］
－Most of us have different types of dittthis；see，＂Why Do People Enjoy Immoral Deeds？－Ditthi Is Key．＂
－For a description of the ten micchā dittthi，see，＂Three Kinds of Ditthi，Eightfold Paths，and Samādhi．＂

## 7．2．7 Three Kinds of Ditṭhi，Eightfold Paths，and Samādhi

Buddha Dhamma explains how three kinds of worldviews lead to three types of samādhi（basically mindset） via three different paths．All these are discussed in detail in other posts，but here we summarize them．You can use the Search box on top right to find relevant posts．

1．Have you ever wondered how some people have any＂peace of mind＂while engaging in abominable actions day in and day out？It is easier to excuse someone who commits a bad act in a＂moment of fury＂，i．e， when such action was not pre－planned（and the common law accommodates for that）．
－But some people（think Hitler，Pol Pot in Cambodia）plan evil acts for years，and they seem to thrive doing it；they do not feel any remorse；rather they enjoy what they do．This is because just like facilitating a journey towards Nibbāna for someone who embarks on the Noble Eightfold Path，the nature also lets someone go in the opposite direction too．＂Dhammo ha ve rakkhati dhammacari＂applies to both kinds of＂Dhamma．＂
－Dhamma is what one＂bears．＂If one＂carries good Dhamma＂，one will be guided in the＂good direction＂ by nature．In the same way，one who＂carries bad Dhamma＂will be guided in the opposite direction． Both can get into＂samādhi＂doing it．

2．Samādhi（＂sama＂＋＂adhi＂where＂sama＂means＂same＂and＂adhi＂means＂dominance＂）means the object becomes the priority and the mind gets focused on it；as we discussed in many posts，when the mind becomes focused on one object（ärammana），no matter what the object is，the ekaggata cetasika takes over and make the mind latched＂on to it．＂
－When the minds gets to samādhi，the mind feels calm because it is stopped from jumping back and forth among many thought objects（ārammaṇa）．
－This is how one gets to not only samādhi but also anāriya jhāna（a jhāna is a deeper state of absorption or samādhi）using breath meditation，just by focusing the mind on the breath．
－Thus，a master thief gets to micch $\bar{a}$ samādhi when intently focusing on the plan of a grand robbery in minute details．Not only does he get a joy out of it，his mind helps him work out the fine details；but someone with micchā samādhi can never get into a jhāna．
－It does not matter what the focus is，nature helps get it done if one really sets his／her mind to it．This is why＂Dhammo ha ve rakkati dhammacari＂can work in any situation．The human mind is very powerful，but it can be used in all three directions．

3．However，that does not change the fact that outcomes of＂bad actions＂will ALWAYS be bad in the long run．This is a universal law called＂bīja niyama＂which is one of five natures＇primary laws called ＂niyama＂（＂niyama＂in Pāli or Sinhala means＂fixed＂，＂unchangeable＂）；even though most times it is pronounced＂niyāma＂，the correct pronunciation is＂niyama．＂
－Bad kamma result in＂bad kamma bīja＂which will ONLY bear＂bad fruits＂；also，the consequences will be proportional to the＂size＂of the kamma bïja（kamma seed）．And the same holds true for good kamma seeds．

4．Now，when someone gets on the＂wrong track＂mostly through bad associates or bad environment，one has the＂ten types of micch $\bar{a}$ dittthi＂，and one could get into the＂micch $\bar{a}$ eightfold path．＂The ten types of micchā diṭthi are：

1. giving (dana) has no merits,
2. being grateful and responding in kind (for what others have done for oneself) has no merits,
3. respecting and making offerings to those with higher virtues has no merits,
4. what we enjoy/suffer in this life is not due to kamma vipāka but they "just happen",
5. this world does not exist, there are no other worlds than the one we can experience,
6. when one dies it is not possible to be born in para loka (netherworld),
7. mother is not a special person,
8. father is not a special person,
9. there are no instantaneous (opapathika) births,
10. there are no samanabrahmana (basically Ariy $\bar{a}$ or yogis) who have cultivated their minds to be free of defilements and thus can can see other realms and previous births.

- See, "Hidden World of the Gandhabba: Netherworld (Paraloka)" for a discussion on para loka.

5. When one has unshakeable or niyata micch $\bar{a}$ ditṭhi one gets on the micch $\overline{\boldsymbol{a}}$ eightfold path; now one's mind is

- Since these factors feed on each other, once one gets into micchā eightfold path, it is difficult to break out of it. The key is micch $\bar{a}$ dittthi: "Wrong vision" is hard to break, when it is continually being reinforced by wrong speech, actions, etc. Thus it is inevitable that one keeps strengthening one's "bad gathi" or behavior. Then it is increasingly easier to get to "micchā samādhi."

6. The Buddha said that Sammā Ditṭhi is two-fold: there is a mundane (lokiya) Sammā Ditthi and an Ariya Sammā Diṭṭhi. When one has mundane Sammā Ditṭhi, one rejects the ten types of micchā diṭthi mentioned above, and one strives to be born in human or higher realms. One knows that bad actions will lead to birth in the apāy $\bar{a}$ (lowest four realms).

- Thus one with mundane samma ditṭhi will develop mundane versions of sammā sankappa (good thoughts), samm $\bar{a}$ vaca (abstain from lying, gossiping, etc), samm $\bar{a}$ kammanta (engages only in moral acts), and so on and then it is easier for one to get to mundane samm $\bar{a}$ sama $\bar{a} d h i$. This is the mundane sammā eightfold path.
- However, while someone following the micchā eightfold path cannot attain any jhāna, one on the mundane sammā eightfold path can attain anāriya jhāna; see, "Power of the Human Mind - Anariya Jhāna."

7. The critical difference between mundane sammā ditthi and Ariya Samm $\bar{a}$ Ditt hi is that while one with mundane samma ditthi rejects immoral behavior based on one's fear of rebirth in the apāy $\bar{a}$ and one's hope for rebirth in comfort-filled deva or brahma worlds (or even because it makes one feels good about the act), one ATTAINS Ariya Sammā Diṭthi when one comprehends anicca, dukkha, anatta at least to a significant extent, i.e., one becomes a Sotāpanna.

- Thus one starts on the Path by following the mundane sammā eightfold path, and at some point enters the Ariya Sammā Eightfold Path when attaining the Sotāpanna stage.
- At that stage, one's mind automatically rejects immoral acts because one's mind sees the futility as well as the danger of such acts. What is the point of having some sense pleasure if it lasts only a short time AND could lead to much misery in the future for long times?

8. The critical point is that when one becomes a Sotāpanna, one's mind (and the brain) will be changed so that one will not act even impulsively, let alone capable of pre-planning an act that could yield rebirth in the apāyā.

- Scientists do confirm that there are significant changes in the brain just due to breath meditation alone; see, "Truine Brain: How the Mind Rewires the Brain via Meditation/Habits."
- Such future brain studies on people engaged in the correct $\bar{a} n a ̄ p a ̄ n a ~ m e d i t a t i o n ~ c a n ~ b e ~ e x p e c t e d ~ t o ~ y i e l d ~$ profound changes in a brain when a person attains the Sotāpanna stage.

9. Thus one becomes a Sotāpanna (enter the stream) from the mundane sammā ditṭhi stage by comprehending the true nature of the world (i.e., it is fruitless to be born ANYWHERE in the 31 realms) by learning the meanings of anicca, dukkha, anatta from a Buddha (who discovers them), or from a true disciple of the Buddha.

- Once one becomes a Sotāpanna, the Path to Nibbāna becomes clear, and one does not need any more help. One will cultivate the next six steps and get to Ariya Sammā Samādhi and to the Arahant stage of Nibbāna.

10. I need to re-emphasize the difference between "living a moral life" which is promoted by most of world's major religions, and the emphasize on "purifying the mind" and "comprehending the true nature of the wider world of 31 realms" in Buddha Dhamma.

- One needs to approach this extra step first by being "moral", i.e., by following the mundane samm $\bar{a}$ eightfold path and getting rid of some of the five hindrances. Then one's mind is purified to an extent to be able to "see through the fog of ignorance" and comprehend anicca, dukkha, anatta.
- Buddha's message about the "suffering hidden in the midst of apparent sense pleasures" is indeed a "Dhamma that has never been known." It could be contrary to one's instincts, because all we have known from the beginningless time is about enjoying the sense pleasures.

Note: The three kinds of eightfold paths, micch $\bar{a}$ diṭthi, and micch $\bar{a} s a m \bar{a} d h i$ are described in the Mah $\bar{a}$ Chattareesaka Sutta; see, "Mahā Cattārīsaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty)."

## Implications of the Rebirth Process in Daily Life and in Society

## Revised August 23, 2022

1. Unless one develops abhiñ̃̃̄a powers via meditation, the rebirth process cannot be "proven" with certainty. Yet, mounting evidence for it cannot be ignored either, see "Evidence for Rebirth."

- Putting that question aside, let us look at some mundane implications IF the rebirth process, as described by the Buddha, is correct.

2. The first thing to realize is how short this life of 100 years or so is. It is unimaginably small. Scientists say that our universe has been there for about 14 BILLION years. But the Buddha taught that life has no beginning. Either way, 100 years is a blip in the cosmic time scale.

- Looking at world history, most calamities of war could have been prevented if people understood how short this life is. Where are those emperors and kings today who sacrificed so many human lives to capture another country or to maintain their powers?
- Because of their atrocities, they are most likely to be in the lowest of the apayy $\bar{a}$.
- For the briefest time of enjoyment and power, they accumulated so much bad kamma to spend billions of years in total misery.
- What significance would race, color, ethnicity, religion, beauty, money, etc., have in one's actions if one understood that all those are not only temporary, but one could be on the other side in the next life? This is a topic that is worth contemplating a lot.

3. Let us take the struggle between the Palestinians and the Israelis because it is making headlines these days; one could take any other conflict. According to Buddha Dhamma, two effects come to play here.

- One in either camp will develop a mindset to hate the other side, take revenge for some action, etc. If they have any kammic energy for the human "bhava," they will come back to the same place with matching "gati," looking for revenge; see, "Paticca Samuppāda - "Pati + ichcha" + "Sama + uppada."
- The other aspect is for any bad action one does in such a conflict is going to have consequences RELATED to that act. When person A kills or harms another person B, A becomes indebted to B. One way to "pay back this debt" is for B to be born as a child to A; see, "Kamma, Debt, and Meditation." Isn't that the biggest irony of all? A Palestinian (Israeli) becoming the child of an Israeli (Palestinian)?
- Either way, the conflict will continue for a long time unless both sides realize the folly of it all.
- This is true for many other conflicts that have been going on for generations. Most of the characters involved have likely been the same. They are too much "involved" in the conflict and cannot free their minds from it.

4. Let us take another example of a slave owner in the old days. That person made a lot of wealth by exploiting those slaves, but for how long? At most 100 years. Where are those slave owners now? They would either be in one of the lowest four realms OR could be a slave himself somewhere, possibly to a former slave.

- It is easy to extend this analysis to many other cases; it is a good idea to contemplate such things. It makes one understand the true meanings of anicca, dukkha, and anatta. That is unfruitful to do immoral things to achieve a brief moment of sensory pleasure, where the consequences can play out for much longer in a future birth.

5. Yet we strive for a quarter of our lives to go through the basic educational process (which is the only part that makes any sense in the long term) and the rest of our life to "accumulate things and prestige."

- We do not stop and think about how the last years of our life will be, let alone about future lives. By the time we get to such accomplishments, our senses start degrading. No matter how much money we have, we will never be able to maintain our physical appearance or the level of sensory pleasures to our liking.

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WebLink: YOUTUBE: Done Got Old
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- The problem is that we are too busy to contemplate such issues because we are in a frantic struggle to "make money for survival." Whatever vacation time we get, we would not want to spend that time for contemplation. Instead, we go on a trip or do some such activity to "enjoy ourselves." But when one returns from a vacation, it feels like one needs another to recover from those hectic activities.

6. There is another reason that people do not want to even think about such things; it could be depressing. But I can say with conviction that once one understands the "true nature of this world," it WILL lead to a peaceful state of mind. It will also be easier to get into samādhi and $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$.

- The reason is that as one understands anicca, dukkha, and anatta (the futility of doing immoral things to gain sensory satisfaction in a world that is INHERENTLY not setup for that), one GRADUALLY loses attachment to worldly things, and this makes the mind peacefui; this is the root cause of nirāmisa sukha; see, "Three Kinds of Happiness - What is Nirāmisa Sukha?."
- Nibbāna or "Nivana" or "cooling down" is not like any sensory pleasure. Rather, it is a relief. A good analogy is the following: suppose someone has a migraine headache; then the day that headache disappears, that person will get a HUGE sense of relief. It is not a sensory pleasure but a feeling of wellbeing that is hard to express.

7. I can give one example to make this point. Many people who start understanding anicca, dukkha, and anatta, realize that they do not watch TV or go to entertainment events as much as they used to. This is not something they do deliberately, it just happens. They would rather enjoy a meditation session at home or $\mathrm{read} /$ listen to Dhamma. It may be already happening to some of you.

- The mind cannot be forced. It just takes the better path, but the mind has to be exposed to the better, correct path. This is why giving true Dhamma is the best giving.


## What Does Buddha Dhamma Say about Creator, Satan, Angels, and Demons?

Revised February 20, 2019; August 21, 2019; April 24, 2022; August 28, 2022

## Unseen Beings

1. While the concept of a Creator God is absent in Buddha Dhamma (Buddhism), some living beings fit into some conventional ideas on satan, angels, and demons, such as "Seth" and "Ramtha." Since some readers may not be familiar with "Seth" and "Ramtha," let me first provide some background.

- Jane Roberts wrote a series of popular books based on "Seth," a being who could "possess" her body with her permission and spoke to her husband about various things about the world; see, for example, "Seth Speaks" by Jane Roberts (1994). Seth commented on diverse issues and made many predictions too. I am not sure how those "predictions" worked out, but I am sure the success rate must be no better than any human making such predictions.
- Then there is "Ramtha," who speaks through J. Z. knight; see, for example, "Ramtha -The White Book" by J. Z. Knight (2005). He is very benevolent, providing honest advice on living a better life. As I understand, there is a significant following for Ramtha.


## Creator God and Other Unseen Beings

2. Therefore, there are two issues (or concepts) to be discussed:

- First, there is the predominant belief in a "Creator God" in many religions. That concept is, of course, in direct contradiction with not only Buddha Dhamma but also with modern science. The principle of Causality is the basis of both Buddha Dhamma and modern science. There must be a cause(s) for every effect.
- On the other hand, modern science does not believe in "unseen beings." Science does not attempt to tackle phenomena not measurable with physical instruments. However, the Buddha taught that there are numerous "unseen living beings."
- We will discuss both the concept of a creator and also possible influence of unseen living beings.


## Can there be a Creator God?

3. In my early stages of learning about other religions, I read various books such as "Mere Christianity" by C. S. Lewis and "The Language of God" by Francis Collins (2007).

- They attempt to provide a "case for the Creator God." See my review, "The Language of God" by Francis Collins."

4. As I understand, one reason for those two authors to believe in a Creator is the existence of Moral law. How can we know and feel the truth of the Moral laws unless God instilled those in us?

- On the other side, both authors struggled with the issue of Satan (or Devil) and why there is suffering.
- Why would God allow the existence of Satan and the associated immoral behavior by people? The main conclusion was that God chose to give man free will, and man abused it. But why didn't God create a perfect man?
- Lewis, in particular, worried about the existence of suffering. Why would God allow that?


## One Is One's Own Creator!

5. Now, let us see what Buddha Dhamma says about those two issues:

- Of course, in Buddha Dhamma, there is no Creator. Everything happens due to (multiple) causes. By definition, there is no first cause (i.e., a Creator). The "world" has existed as far as one (with supernormal powers or abhiñ̃̄ $\bar{a}$ ) can see; for details, see "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma."
- In a way, one is one's Creator! The basic idea of Paticca Samuppāda is that one creates one's future lives via one's actions; see the reference in \#6 on Pațicca Samuppāda.
- Even people without abhiññā powers can remember one or a few past lives; see, "Evidence for Rebirth." In some exceptional cases, some can recall multiple past lives under hypnosis; see the book "Many Lives, Many Masters" by Brian Weiss, a psychotherapist.


## Good and Bad Co-exist

6. In Buddha Dhamma, "the good" and "the bad" in this world are all built into nature's laws. Any sentient being experiences "the world" with its sense faculties, and that experience comes in the form of thoughts (citta).

- Based on those sense inputs AND one's gati AT THAT TIME, one generates various "good" and "bad" responses. These responses manifest as thoughts, but we may act on them through speech and bodily actions.
- There are 52 mental factors (cetasika) that include both "good" characteristics (such as kindness, generosity, fear, and shame of wrong, etc.) and "bad" traits (such as greed, hate, shamelessness and fearlessness of wrongdoing, etc.). See "Abhidhamma" and "Tables and Summaries" sections.
- Until one becomes one of the "attha purisa puggala" (eight Noble Persons), one WILL have both good and bad gati. Those can lead to rebirths in the "good realms" and the apāyā, respectively.
- One overcomes the engagement with the rebirth process by comprehending the Four Noble Truths/Paṭicca Samuppāda/Tilakkahaṇa. See "Paticca Samuppāda, Tilakkhana, Four Noble Truths."

7. Thus, there is no "Creator God" or a "Satan." Each person acts of their own free will and commits moral or immoral acts. What a person today is the "cumulative result" of all one's actions in the deep past. These manifest as our character (or "gati" or "gathi") or samisāric habits (or "āsavas"). Many posts on this issue on the site, starting with "Habits, Goals, and Character (Gati)."

- And these gati and āsavas are in constant flux; thus, one could be a murderer one day, but then through sheer willpower, can decide to be a "better person."
- There is no "soul" or a fixed "self." One cannot say there is "no-self" either, because one's "gati" or "āsava" are unique characteristics and are "one's own"; see, "What Reincarnates? - The Concept of a Lifestream."

8. And no one else can make that change but oneself. Even the Buddha can only show how to change, i.e., how to change these "gati" and the "āsavas" for the better. When one follows that path, one can feel the "cooling down" or 'niveema" or the nirāmisa sukha. That is the real goal of Buddhist meditation; see "1. Introduction to Buddhist Meditation."

- The "moral code" comes naturally out of this big picture. One can lead a peaceful life by practicing "dasa kusala" (ten moral acts) and avoiding "dasa akusala" (ten immoral acts); see "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)" and the follow up post.


## Demons and Angels

9. Let us also briefly discuss "demons" and "angels" (or other gods). Most Creator-based religions have such entities. And they are supposed to be able to influence humans. Are there beings like that according to Buddha Dhamma?

- Yes. In Buddha Dhamma, the world is much more complicated than with just demons and angels. We can see and experience only two realms (human and animal) out of 31 possible realms in this world; see "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma."
- If someone develops $a b h i n ̃ \tilde{n} \bar{a}$ powers (see "Power of the Human Mind - Introduction" and follow-up posts), depending on the level attained, one could "see" some or many of these other beings. Some people can do this at present.

10. However, even the majority of people with abhiñ $\tilde{n} \bar{a}$ power can only "see" some inhabitants in the lowest 11 realms or "kāma loka." That includes the six deva loka with "less dense" bodies than ours.

- The beings in the rūpa loka and the arūpa loka have "bodies" even less dense than those in the deva realms, and it is even more difficult to "see" them.
- According to the Buddha Dhamma, the six realms in the deva loka are closest to a "heaven." Those beings have bodies free from physical illnesses, and there is much more happiness there than in the human world. And they have long lifetimes. However, any being in any higher realm can end up in the lowest four planes (ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a})$ in the future unless they reach at least the Sotāpanna stage of Nibbāna.

11. Some of these beings can communicate with humans with or without abhiññā powers. Some of these beings are benevolent, and others are evil. As pointed out in the posts on "gati"," a being communicates typically with a human with a similar "gati" or character.

- Thus an evil/malevolent being (we could say "a demon") typically tries to communicate with a human with similar lousy character. They may try to impress the human and get their agenda fulfilled.
- A benevolent being (we could say "an angel" or "a god") is usually a deva from the six deva realms. They like to help out people with good character but do not try to communicate directly. Typically, the person may not even know about it.

12. Therefore, many such beings like to "show off" and genuinely try to help people live better lives. But those beings themselves are "travelers of sainsāra" who happen to have a good birth for a more extended period.

- Then some beings are evil or with bad intentions. I am unaware of prominent cases like those mentioned in \#1 above. However, there are many reports on "hearing voices" and even committing crimes based on the instructions through such voices.


## Law of Attraction

13. Those beings with bad intentions cannot influence us if our mindsets are NOT COMPATIBLE with theirs. That is a crucial point to understand! See "The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Āsavas)."

- One is ALWAYS responsible for one's actions. If an "unseen evil being" influences one, that is also due to one's lack of morality (one has cultivated bad " $\mathrm{gati}{ }^{6}$ ).
- As in common law, ignorance of Nature's laws is not an excuse.
- The reason for being trapped in this suffering-filled rebirth process is simple. We had not been able to understand Nature's laws. Only a Buddha can understand those, and we should be thankful that we live in a time when that message is still available.
- We must learn Dhamma, eliminate bad gati, and cultivate good gati. That will pave the way to becoming a Noble Person and thus be free of all future suffering!

14. There is an exception, though. Sometimes a kamma vipāka can allow one to be influenced by a "malevolent being" even if one is living a moral life.

- That is normally due to an "unfulfilled debt" from a previous life. See "Kamma, Debt, and Meditation."
- In such a case, it is a good idea to make offerings to the bhikkhus and those who are in need and ask any such beings to accept the merits. The cultivation of Metta Bhāvanā is another. See "Transfer of Merits (Pattidāna) - How Does it Happen?."


## It Is a Complex World

15. This world is very complex, and we perceive only a tiny part. But the point is that there is no place anywhere in the $\mathbf{3 1}$ realms that can provide permanent happiness.

- There is no point in pursuing such demons or angels. They are in the same predicament, or worse, compared to us. Those benevolent beings will help us, even without seeking help, if they see us as good.
- As humans, we have the unique advantage of learning the truth about the dangers of this rebirth process (sainsāra) and working towards getting out of it by seeking Nibbāna or "cooling down." That was THE message of the Buddha.


## Paṭisandhi Citta - How the Next Life is Determined According to Gati

## Revised September 7, 2016; revised \#2 on March 15, 2018; September 7, 2019

1. The transition of a lifestream from one existence (bhava) to another takes place during the last citta vithi of the present bhava. For example, when a human is reborn an animal or a deva. For a fundamental description of this process, see, "Cuti-Patisandhi - An Abhidhamma Description."

- But here let us look at how different types of kamma, as well as one's "gati" (pronounced "gathi"), lead to corresponding rebirths in different realms.

2. As discussed in "Akusala Citta and Akusala Vipāka Citta," all ten types of akusala kamma are done with 12 types of akusala citta.

- Only those five akusala cittā with wrong views (micchā ditṭhi) or vicikicchā can lead to rebirth in the apāy $\bar{a}$ (four lower realms). Those akusala cittā lead to just one pațisandhi vipāka citta, and it is called the "akusala vipāka upekkhā santīraṇa citta." That is the type of citta $\bar{a}$ that comes to the mind of the dying person destined for the apāy $\bar{a}$.
- The two dislike-rooted (patigha) cittā do not arise at the Anāgāmi stage. The remaining five akusala cittā do not occur only in Arahants; see, "Akusala Citta and Akusala Vipāka Citta."

3. That one pattisandhi citta can lead to rebirth in an uncountable number of "bhava" in the four lowest realms. In the animal realm itself, there is an uncountable number of varieties.

- Thus what determines the actual "place of birth" in the four lowest realms is one's "gati." Once the fate is determined to be born in one of the four lowest realms due to an akusala kamma, the next step for nature is to match "gati to gati." A greedy person is likely to be matched with a birth in the peta realm (hungry ghosts). A vicious person is expected to be destined to the hell (niraya); see, "How Character (Gati) Leads to Bhava and Jāti."

4. Now let us look at how rebirth takes place according to one's kusala kamma. The merits of a kusala kamma are ENHANCED when done without moha, i.e., without micchā ditṭhi (or with at least mundane sammā ditthi). That is discussed in the post, "A Simple way to Enhance Merits (Kusala) and Avoid Demerits (Akusala)."

- Thus out of the eight mahā kusala kamma (great meritorious actions), four are done with knowledge. They, of course also hace alobha and adosa, i.e., generosity and loving-kindness. Since they have all three kusala roots, they are "tihetuka" births ("thi" means three and "hethu" means roots). They lead to the best kind of rebirths. Those are "tihetuka patisandhi" or "rebirth with three roots."
- The other four mahā kusala kammā have generosity and loving-kindness, but without mundane or lokuttara sammā diṭthi. Thus the resulting kamma vipāka lead to "dvihethuka paṭisandhi" or "rebirth
with two roots." They also point to birth in the realms 5 through 11 (i.e., in the human and deva realms), but they will have less kammic power for that birth.

5. It is only those with tihetuka pattisandhi who can attain magga phala and attain Ariya jhānā in this life. Those with "dvihetuka patisandhi" lack in necessary wisdom (but this is NOT book-knowledge); they can make progress and acquire the essential merits to have a future tihetuka patisandhi. But it is impossible to say who has a tihetuka or dvihetuka patisandhi; only a Buddha is capable of that.

- There is one more pațisandhi citta that is possible from a lower grade mahā kusala kamma. That is a kamma done without knowledge and with less enthusiasm. It involves a kusala vipāka upekkhā santīrana citta, and is a "rebirth with no good roots." That is an "ahetuka patisandhi." Note that here even though there are two roots present technically, they are very weak due to the absence of enthusiasm. For example, some people participate in exemplary work just because others do it, or because they did not have a choice.
- Such an "ahetuka patisandhi" can leads to births only in the human or the lowest deva realm. Such a birth is comparatively easy to recognize (but not always). People with ahetuka patisandhi have low IQ, could be blind or deaf at birth,. Or they are severely handicapped in other ways.
- However, such deficiencies COULD occur due to problems encountered in the womb (if the mother is a drug addict or had an ailment during the pregnancy). That is why, in some cases, we see people with the above characteristics, but are smart. They are not born with an ahetuka patisandhi and could learn Dhamma and attain $j h a \bar{n} \bar{a}$.

6. Thus we see that there is only one pattisandhi citta due to the ten akusala kamma (from 12 akusala citta). There are nine possible patisandhi citta due to the eight mahā kusala kamma.

- The remaining patisandhi citta lead to rebirth in the Brahma loka (16 rūpa loka and four arūpa loka). These rise due to jhānic states: rebirth in the rūpa loka are due to the five $r \bar{u} p a j h a \bar{a} \bar{a}$ and rebirth in the four arūpa loka are due to the four arūpa jhānā.

7. Therefore, only 19 patisandhi citta that lead to rebirth anywhere in the $\mathbf{3 1}$ realms. As we have discussed, there is an uncountable number of species (we ourselves can see numerous animal species). What differentiates different species is the "gati." You can see that each species has its own "character": Even within a given species, there are differences in "gati." If you look at dogs, there are some who are vicious, and then there are cuddly ones (poodles).

- In the days of the Buddha, when someone dies, relatives of the deceased usually ask the Buddha "what the $j \bar{a} t i$ is, and what the gati is" for the new birth. These days we don't have the Buddha to clarify that for us. But we can sort of guess what "gati" we have and make sure to change them for the better.
- When one attains the Sotāpanna stage, any "gati" matching those in the apāyā is permanently removed. That means hate, greed, ignorance at the highest levels.
- At the Sakadāgāmī stage, one's liking to a "dense body" to enjoy sense pleasures is no longer there. Such a "dense body" is one that can get diseases. Thus a Sakadāgāmī is never born in human or lower realms where sickness and body aches are a fact of life.
- Then at the $A n \bar{a} g \bar{a} m \bar{\imath}$ stage, one loses cravings for enjoying pleasures with the nose, tongue, and the body. Then one can find matching "gati" only in the rūpa and arūpa loka.
- At the Arahant stage, one loses the craving for any sensory pleasure associated with even a trace of solid matter. At that stage, the mind attains the true freedom; no more "gati" left.


### 7.3 Seeking Nibbāna

1. This section is for those who are interested not merely in pursuing a good life or seeking better lives in future births. Other religions can also provide guidance for those goals to a certain extent. The uniqueness in the Buddha's message is that there is perpetual suffering in the unending cycle of rebirths in "this world", the root causes for that suffering, that there is possible release from that suffering (Nibbāna), and there is a way to attain Nibbāna.
2. The first stage of attaining Nibbāna is the Sotāpanna (Stream Entry) stage. In order to reach this stage, one needs to have a complete understanding of Buddha Dhamma (or the laws of nature). Since only a Buddha can discover these laws, it is not possible for anyone (no matter how intelligent) to discover these laws by oneself.
3. Once the Sotāpanna stage is attained, one knows what to do next. Thus there is no need to get further information from anywhere else. My goal with this site is to provide necessary information to attain the Sotāpanna stage.

Sotāpanna Stage of Nibbāna subsection has a number of posts describing the Sotāpanna stage.

## Posts in this section:

- Attha Purisa Puggalā - Eight Noble Persons
- Gathi (Gati), Anusaya, and Āsava
- The Way to Nibbāna - Removal of āsavas
- Kanha (Dark) and Sukka (Bright) Kamma and Kammakkhaya
- Dasa Samyojana - Bonds in Rebirth Process
- The Cooling Down Process (Nibbāna) - How the Root Causes are Removed
- Why is Correct Interpretation of Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta so Important?
- How to Cultivate the Noble Eightfold Path Starting with Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta
- Akusala Citta - How a Sotāpanna Avoids Apayagami Citta
- Difference Between Giving Up Valuables and Losing Interest in Worthless
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### 7.3.1 Atṭha Purisa Puggalā - Eight Noble Persons

March 4, 2019; revised \#9 on March 6, 2019; October 5, 2019 (\#11)major revision August 29, 2022

## Introduction

1. Many suttā describe various characteristics of Ațtha Purisa Puggalā or Ariyā (eight Noble Persons: Sotāpanna Anugāmi through Arahant). See "Sotāpanna Anugāmi - No More Births in the Apāyā." We will discuss some key features in this post, especially regarding the maximum time taken to attain Arahanthood.

- There are likely several ways Noble Persons are defined in the Tipitaka. Here we will start by considering a categorization based on the state of development of pañca indriya in a set of suttā in Saìyutta Nikāya 48.
- The "WebLink: suttacentral: Suddhika Sutta (SN 48.1)" states what the pañca indriya are: Saddh $\bar{a}$ indriya, vīriyiya indriya, sati indriya, samādhi indriya, pañ̃̃ā indriya.

2. The "WebLink: suttacentral: Pathama Vibhañga Sutta (SN 48.9)" explains what those five indriya are. I will just provide a short translation to get the idea.

- Saddhā indriya is optimized when one truly realizes the truth of the virtues of the Buddha (itipi so bhagava...": "That Blessed One is an Arahant, perfectly enlightened, accomplished in true knowledge and conduct, perfectly purified, knower of the wider world (of 31 realms), unsurpassed in virtue, teacher of devas, Brahmā, and humans, the Enlightened One, the Blessed One." This is about the Buddha as a person AND even more importantly, the comprehension of the concept of Buddha as "bhava uddha"; see, "Supreme Qualities of Buddha, Dhamma, Sangha." [Buddha = bhava + uddha: one who figured out how to stop existences (bhava) from arising. uddha is rooting out]
- Viriya indriya represents one's effort in cultivating kusala and discarding akusala.
- Sati indriya represents one's ability to be mindful of one's thoughts, speech, and actions.
- Samādhi indriya indicates one's ability to focus on Nibbāna and to get to samādhi.
- Paññā indriya represents one's comprehension of the Four Noble Truths about sam̈sāric suffering.


## Categorization Based on Pañca Indriya

3. WebLink: suttacentral: Dutiyasañkhitta Sutta (SN 48.13) states, "Imesam kho, bhikkhave, pañcannain indriyānawin samattā paripūrattā arahain hoti, tato mudutarehi anāgām̄̄ hoti, tato mudutarehi sakadāgāmī hoti, tato mudutarehi sotāpanno hoti, tato mudutarehi dhammānusārī hoti, tato mudutarehi saddhānusārī hoti. Iti kho, bhikkhave, indriyavemattatā phalavemattatā hoti, phalavemattatā puggalavemattatā"ti.

- Translated: "Bhikkhus, one who has fulfilled pañca indriya is an Arahant; one who has developed them to lesser levels are Anāgāmī, Sakadāgāmi, Sotāpanna, Dhammānusāri, and Sadhhānusāri. Bhikkhus, that is how different levels of indriya development determine the level of progress."
- As we know, Dhammānusāri and Saddhānusāri are Sotāpanna Anugāmis.


## Two Kinds of Sotāpanna Anugāmi

4. There are 10 sutt $\bar{a}$ in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Okkantika Sainyutta (SN 25)" that focus only on the two kinds of Sotāpanna Anugāmis: Dhammānusāri and Saddhānusāri. These are important because they emphasize the need to comprehend the anicca nature of the five aggregates (pañcakkhandha).
"WebLink: suttacentral: Cakkhu Sutta (SN 25.1)" states: "Cakkhumं, bhikkhave, aniccain viparināmi añ̃athābhāvi; sotain aniccam viparināmi aññathābhāvi; sota..ghānami.. jivhā .. kāyo .. mano anicco viparinām̄̄ aññathābhāvı̄. Yo, bhikkhave, ime dhamme evaì saddahati adhimuccati-ayaì vuccati saddhānusārī, okkanto sammattaniyāmaì, sappurisabhūmim okkanto, vītivatto puthujjanabhūmim; abhabbo taì kammaì kātuí, yaí kammaí katvā nirayaì vā tiracchānayonim vā pettivisayamं vā upapajjeyya; abhabbo ca tāva kālaím kātum yāva na sotāpattiphalaì sacchikaroti."

- Translated: "Bhikkhus, the eye is of anicca nature, bound to be destroyed, and is subject to unexpected change during its existence." The ear... nose... tongue... body... mind... Bhikkhus, one who has conviction and belief that these phenomena are this way is called a faith-follower (Saddhānusāri): one who has entered the Noble Path (sammattaniyāma), has entered the plane of integrity (sappurisabhūmi), has transcended the plane of the run-of-the-mill (puthujjanabhūmi). He cannot do any deed by which he might be reborn in hell, in the animal womb, or in the realm of hungry shades. He is incapable of passing away (from this Ariya birth) until he has realized Sotāpatti phala.
- Then the same verse is repeated for the Dhammānusāri with the following replacement for the part marked in red above for the Saddhānusāri: "one who, after pondering with insight, has accepted that these phenomena are this way is called a Dhamma-follower (Dhammānusāri).


## Maximum of Seven More Bhava For a Sotāpanna and Seven More Ariya bhava For a Sotāpanna Anugāmi

5. It is important to realize from \#4 above that a Sotāpanna Anugāmi will never "die" from the Ariya birth, and that no time limit is given. Only upon getting to the Sotāpanna stage will one have a limited number of births; see below.

- However, a Sotāpanna Anugāmi will have only 7 more Ariya bhava left (Sotāpanna, Sakadāgāmi Anugāmi, Sakadāgāmi, Anāgāmī Anugāmi, Anāgāmī, Arahant Anugāmi, and Arahant).
- Thus, it appears that is what is stated in the Ratana Sutta as, "Na te bhavain atthamamādiyanti" (7 types of Ariya Bhava left) for eight types of Noble Persons (Ariyā).

6. The other nine suttā in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Okkantika Sairyutta (SN 25)" go through the same descriptions for Dhammānusāri and Saddhānusāri in terms of the six types each of rūpa, viññāna, samphassa, samphassajā vedanā, rūpasañn̄a, rūpasañcetanā, rūpatanh $\bar{a}$, dhātu, and the five types of khandha (i.e., pañcakkhandha).

## Time Limits for other Noble Persons to Attain Arahanthood

7. The time limits for the other Noble Persons are given in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Saupādisesa Sutta (AN 9.12)."

- There are five kinds of Anāgāmis (see \#10 below), and they all have overcome the first five samyojana of sakkāya diṭthi, vicikicchā, and sīlabbata parāmāsa, kāma rāga, paṭigha.
- Some of them will be born in a Brahma realm reserved for the Anāgāmis, will remove the remaining samiyojana of rūpa rāga, arūpa rāga, māna, uddhacca, avijjā, and attain Parinibbāna there.
- Others would have already removed two more samyojana of rūpa rāga and arūpa rāga, and thus will not be born in any realm, and thus will remain in the gandhabba state until the kammic energy runs out. This is called antarāparinibbāna ("Parinibbāna in between realms"). This was discussed at the forum: "WebLink: Pure Dhamma Forum: Antara Parinibbāna."

8. Then there is the Noble Person with the Sakādāgāmī phala (including those Anāgāmi Anugāmis). "WebLink: suttacentral: Saupādisesa Sutta (AN 9.12)" states that, "So tiṇnà் sam̀yojanānaì parikkhayā rāgadosamohānaì tanuttā sakadāgāmī hoti, sakideva imaí lokaì āgantvā dukkhassantà̇ karoti."

- Translated: "With the ending of three fetters (samiyojanā), and the weakening of greed, hate, and delusion, a Sakādāgāmī will come back to this world only once to deva realms."


## Three Types of Sotāpanna

9. Then there are three types of Sotāpanna:
"So tiṇ̣aì sam̀yojanānaì parikkhayā ekabī̀jī hoti, ekaminyeva mānusakain bhavain nibbattetvā dukkhassantam karoti."
"So tiṇnam samyojanānaín parikkhayā kolañkolo hoti, dve vā tīni vā kulāni sandhāvitvā saminaritvā dukkhassantam karoti."
AND "So tiṇ̣ám samiyojanānamं parikkhayā sattakkhattuparamo hoti, sattakkhattuparamaím deve ca manusse ca sandhāvitvā samisaritvā dukkhassantaì karoti."

## Translated:

"With the ending of three samiyojanā, an ekabījī will be reborn just one time in human existence (bhava), then make an end of suffering."
"With the ending of three samyojanā, a kolañkolo will be two or three bhava then make an end of suffering."
"With the ending of three samyojanā, a sattakkhattuparamo has most seven bhava among devas and humans and then make an end of suffering."

- The fact that they are all Sotāpannas becomes clear in \#10 below.
- It is also important to note that there is no mention in this sutta of the Sotāpanna Anugāmis. This sutta is about those who have "seen" Nibbāna. A Sotāpanna Anugāmi - in the language of Abhidhamma - has only transcended the "anāriya" level and made it to the "gotrabu" stage. In the future, they will attain the Sotāpanna stage when they get to the magga and phala citta. See the end of the post, "Citta Vithi - Processing of Sense Inputs," where magga phala citta vīthi is discussed.


## Summary in Puggalapañanatti

10. The above descriptions are confirmed by "WebLink: suttacentral: Ekakapuggalapaññatti" in Abhidhamma, where 54 types of persons are listed. We will mention just those categories that are of interest here.

- Katamo ca puggalo sammāsambuddho? Idhekacco puggalo pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu sāmaì saccāni abhisambujjhati; tattha ca sabbaññutaì pāpuṇāti, balesu ca vasībhāvaìm-ayaì vuccati puggalo "sammāsambuddho."
- Katamo ca puggalo paccekasambuddho? Idhekacco puggalo pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu sāmaì saccāni abhisambujjhati; na ca tattha sabbaññutaì pāpunāti, na ca balesu vasībhāvaínayaì vuccati puggalo "paccekasambuddho."

The rest belong to two categories: "Atṭha ariyapuggalā ariyā. Avasesā puggalā anariyā."

## Here are the 8 Noble Persons or ariyā (attha ariyapuggalā):

Tinṇaí sam̀yojanānamं pahānāya paṭipanno puggalo sotāpattiphalasacchikiriyāya paṭipanno (Sotāpanna Anugāmi). Yassa puggalassa tīni samyojanāni pahīnāni-ayaì vuccati puggalo "sotāpanno."

Kāmarāgabyāpādānaì tanubhāvāya patipanno puggalo sakadāgāmiphalasacchikiriyāya paṭipanno. Yassa puggalassa kāmarāgabyāpādā tanubhūt̄̄-ayamं vuccati puggalo "sakadāgāmī."

Kāmarāgabyāpādānaì anavasesappahānāya paṭipanno puggalo anāgāmiphalasacchikiriyāya patipanno. Yassa puggalassa kāmarāgabyāpādā anavasesā pahīnā-ayaỉ vuccati puggalo "anāgāmī."

Rūparāgaarūparāgamānauddhaccaavijjāya anavasesappahānāya pațipanno puggalo arahattaphalasacchikiriyāya paṭipanno. Yassa puggalassa rūparāgo arūparāgo māno uddhaccaì avijjā anavasesā pahīn̄̄-ayaì vuccati puggalo "arahā."

Sotāpanna Anugāmis fall into 2 categories:
Yassa puggalassa sotāpattiphalasacchikiriyāya patipannassa paññindriyaì adhimattaí hoti, paññāvāhim paññāpubbañgamaí ariyamaggaì bhāveti-ayaí vuccati puggalo "dhammānusārī."

Yassa puggalassa sotāpattiphalasacchikiriyāya paṭipannassa saddhindriyaì adhimattaì hoti, saddhāvāhim saddhāpubbañgamaì ariyamaggaì bhāveti-ayaì vuccati puggalo "saddhānusārī."

- Note that there is no time limit given for a dhammānusārī and a saddhānusārī.

Sotāpannas fall into 3 categories:

Idhekacco puggalo tiṇ̣am samyojanānaì parikkhayā sotāpanno hoti avinipātadhammo niyato sambodhiparāyano. So sattakkhattum deve ca mānuse ca sandhāvitvā samisaritvā dukkhassantaì karoti- ayaì vuccati puggalo "sattakkhattuparamo."

Idhekacco puggalo tị̣nam samyojanānam parikkhayā sotāpanno hoti avinipātadhammo niyato sambodhiparāyano. So dve vā tīni vā kulāni sandhāvitvā saìsaritvā dukkhassantaì karoti-ayaì vuccati puggalo "kolamkolo."

Idhekacco puggalo tiṇnaì sam̀yojanānaì parikkhayā sotāpanno hoti avinipātadhammo niyato sambodhiparāyano. So ekainyeva mānusakain bhavaì nibbattetvā dukkhassantaim karoti-ayaì vuccati puggalo "ekabījī."

- Here, a sattakkhattuparamo seems to have seven "births" (jāti) or "bhava" among the humans and devas. It is not clear whether it is seven $j \bar{a} t i$ or bhava.
- A kolamkolo seems to have two or three births (kula means born into a certain caste or clan); but it is possible that it could mean two or three bhava.
- An ekabījī has one bhava as a human.

Anāgāmis fall into five categories and they have essentially one existence after death as a human, either born in a Brahma realm or the gandhabba state; see \#7 above (I will just state the categories):
antarāparinibbāȳ̄, upahaccaparinibbāȳ̄, asañkhāraparinibbāȳ̄, sasañkhāraparinibbāȳ̄, uddhamisoto akaniṭ̣hagām̄̄.

Arahants fall into two categories they, of course, are not reborn (I will just state the categories):
ubhatobhāgavimutto, paññ̄āvimutto.

## Sotāpanna Anugāmi - At Least a Trace of Understanding of Tilakkhaṇa

11. "WebLink: suttacentral: Alagaddūpama Sutta (MN 22)" also provides similar information and provides another description of Sotāpanna Anugāmis. At the end of the sutta, it describes the types of Noble Persons as above, and at the very end states, "Evaì svākkhāte, bhikkhave, mayā dhamme uttāne vivate pakāsite chinnapilotike yesam mayi saddhāmattaim pemamattaí sabbe te saggaparāyanā"ti."

- Translated: "those who have even a trace of faith and liking for me (saddhāmattaí pemamattain; mattaì means a "trace"), are all headed for deva realms (saggaparāyanā)."
- When one has removed the ten types of micchā ditṭhi, and starts comprehending Tilakkhaṇa, one becomes a Sotāpanna Anugāmi. They are also released from the apāyā. See, "Sotāpanna Anugāmi No More Births in the Apāyā."


## Arahanthood - Not Annihilation But End of Suffering

12. There is also this important verse towards the end of the "WebLink: suttacentral: Alagaddūpama Sutta (MN 22)": "Yathā cāhaí na, bhikkhave, yathā cāhaiं na vadāmi, tathā mai̇ te bhonto samaṇabrāhmaṇā asatā tucchā musā abhūtena abbhācikkhanti: 'venayiko samaño gotamo, sato sattassa ucchedain vināsam vibhavain paññāpetīti. Pubbe cāhaim, bhikkhave, etarahi ca dukkhañceva paññāpemi, dukkhassa ca nirodhain."

- Translated: "..Bhikkhus, I have been baselessly, vainly, falsely, and wrongly misrepresented by some recluses and brahmins thus: 'The recluse Gotama leads people astray; he teaches the annihilation, the destruction, the extermination of an existing being.' ..Bhikkhus, both formerly and now what I teach is suffering and the cessation of suffering."
- Many people today have this wrong perception. It could arise until one gets at least to the Sotāpanna Anugāmi stage and starts removing Sakkāya Ditṭhi. It is the belief that there is an "existing person" that
can enjoy things the world has to offer. They do not realize that there is much more suffering in this world. Even though there are short-lived pleasures, there is unimaginable suffering especially in the rebirth process.
- It is only at the Arahant stage that the perception of a "me" (asmi māna) goes away; see, "Sakkāya Ditthi is Personality (Me) View?."

13. Different types of persons are listed in the "WebLink:suttacentral: Ekakapuggalapaññatti" of the "WebLink:suttacentral: Puggalapaññatti" in Abhidhamma.

### 7.3.2 Āsava, Anusaya, and Gati (Gathi)

Revised March 31, 2017; August 26, 2017; October 7, 2019; re-written on October 28, 2020; revised August 6, 2022

## $\bar{A} \boldsymbol{A} a v a$ Removal Is Nibbāna

1. Nibbāna is reached by "āsavakkhaya" or removing āsava (cravings). As we will see below, that involves removing anusaya (hidden defilements) by removing bad gati (character/habits.)

- We will tie up a series of posts that I have posted on gati and $\bar{a} s a v a$ with this post. See, "Habits and Goals, and Character (Gati)," "The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Āsava)," "Samsāric Habits, Character (Gati), Cravings (Āsava)."
- Finding English translations for some of the Päli words that the Buddha used is difficult. But the key is to grasp what is meant by those terms. Once the idea sinks in, that is all that matters. One could even just use the Pāli term and KNOW what it means. It is like learning the meaning of the word "dollar" or "car." Different languages use the same words, but everybody understands what those words mean.


## $\overline{A s} a v a$ Come Up Due to Anusaya

2. Anusaya is usually translated as "latent tendencies" or "mental fermentations." Āsava is the cravings. The word "gati" is hardly mentioned in current texts but is a critical concept in Buddha Dhamma.

- Anusaya is indeed "mental fermentations" that lie deep down in us. That is comparable to mud sitting at the bottom of a glass of water.
- If that glass of water is disturbed with a straw, some of that mud comes to the surface. That is like āsava bubbling up when we are disturbed by a strong sensory event. We display our real character/habits or gati (gathi) when that happens.
- In other words, some gati and āsava lay hidden (sleeping) and are called "anusaya." With a strong enough "trigger," an ingrained anusaya can be brought to the surface. Anusaya are the hardest to get rid of.


## Pada Nirutti for Anusaya and Āsava

3. In both Pāli and Sinhala, "saya" means a storage place: "jalāsaya" means a water reservoir; "āmāsaya" means the stomach where the food we eat goes; "gabbāsaya" is the womb where the unborn baby is kept and nurtured until it is ready to come out, etc. [pada: [nt.] foot; foot-step; a word; position; place; reason; cause; a line of stanza; the final rest. nirutti : [f.] language; philology; explanation of words, grammatical analysis, etymological interpretation; pronunciation, dialect, way of speaking, expression.]

- "Saya" also means "sleeping" (as in "sayanaya" or चs๘bc in Sinhala). "Anu" indicates "food" or "defilements" in most cases. Therefore, "anusaya" means "sleeping" or "in storage" with some dominant characteristics.
- When they are disturbed by an ārammaṇa (a sensory input), they come to the surface as "āsava" or "cravings/likings." The word ārammaṇa is explained in detail in "Chachakka Sutta - Six Types of Vipāka Viññāna."
- As mentioned above, $\bar{a} s a v a$ are four main types. Within each class, there can be an infinite variety. For example, "kāmāsava" will include āsava for sense inputs coming through five physical senses with an endless variety.


## Anusaya Awakened By Triggers (ATrammana)

4. When such a trigger awakens an "anusaya," it is out as an "āsava," and one will display it through actions. Then, we also say one has that type of cravings or "gati." These triggers are ārammaṇa; See "Vipāka Vedanā and "Samphassa jā Vedanā" in a Sensory Event."

- For example, seeing a beautiful woman matching "his gati" could trigger kāmāsava in a calm person. He may get agitated upon seeing that woman. But he may not be "triggered" by seeing another woman, even if beautiful. That is a bit complex, but I am sure we all know this to be true.
- And if he keeps thinking about that woman, that anusaya will ferment and grow (condense). Thus the name "mental fermentations."
- How much one gets "agitated" depends on one's āsava and sensory input strength. Rapes, for example, occur when both are strong.


## An Analogy for Anusaya

5. Anusaya is like active gun powder in a matchstick. The matchstick is harmless by itself and will cause no fire. But the POTENTIAL to create a fire is there.

- When the matchstick strikes a rough surface, the heat generated causes the gun powder to ignite and create fire.
- Similarly, a robust sensory input can "awaken" and "fire up" the sleeping anusaya.
- One's gati becomes strong with repeated use, and one's āsava depends on both anusaya and gati.
- An Arahant has removed all types of anusaya, gati, and hence $\bar{a} s a v a$. No matter how strong a sensory input comes in, he/she will not be "triggered" by it. A matchstick with no active gun powder cannot catch fire, no matter how hard a march strikes.
- An Arahant may still have gati devoid of defilements. They are just habits without kammic consequences. For example, there is an account in the Tipitaka of a young Arahant who tended to jump over mud puddles.


## Seven Types of Anusaya

6. There are 7 types of anusaya: ditthannusaya (wrong views), vicikicchānusaya (tendency to do the unwise), kāmarāgaanusaya (temptation for sense pleasures), patigha anusaya (temptation for hatred), bhvarāganusaya (craving for existence), mānanusaya (sense of "me"), and avijjānusaya (ignorance); see, for example, "WebLink: suttacentral: Dutiva Anusaya Sutta (AN 7.12)."

- There are four broad categories of āsava: Ditṭhāsava, Kamāsava, Bhavāsava, and Avijjāsava; see, "WebLink: suttacentral: Āsava Sutta (AN 6.58)."


## Four Types of $\overline{A s} \boldsymbol{s} \boldsymbol{v a}$

7. $\bar{A} s a v a$ are four main types: diṭthāsava (ditthi āsava), kāmāsava (kāma āsava), bhavāsava (bhava $\bar{a} s a v a)$, and avijjāsava (avijjā āsava).

- Ditṭhāsava is the craving or attachment to wrong views. That is why sometimes it is hard to accept or even consider other viewpoints. Again, there are views on numerous topics: religion, philosophy, politics, and combinations thereof. Comprehension of anicca, dukkha, and anatta automatically leads to getting rid of ditṭhāsava.
- Kāmāsava induces a craving for indulging in sensory pleasures via the five physical senses. Within this broad category. Each person will have their cravings-some like music more than food, food more than reading, etc. The combinations are endless.
- Bhavāsava is craving for existence. No matter where in the 31 realms one is born, one always wants to live. Again there are many possibilities. Most prefer kāma loka with all five senses. Some who enjoy $j h a \overline{n i c}$ pleasures may prefer birth in an arūpa loka with just the mind, etc.
- Avijjāsava is the root cause for all āsavas: not knowing the real nature of this world, i.e., not comprehending anicca, dukkha, anatta, and thus not understanding the Four Noble Truths.


## Relationship Between $\overline{A s} a v a$ and Anusaya

8. The seven types of anusaya can give rise to four types of āsava.

- Dițthānusaya and vicikicchānusaya give rise to diṭthāsava.
- Kāmarāganusaya and patighanusaya lead to kāmāsava.
- Bhvarāganusaya gives rise to bhavāsava.
- Avijjānusaya and mānanusaya lead to avijjāsava.
- One cannot REMOVE the other three āsava until one removes diṭthāsava at the Sotāpanna stage.


## Kāmāsava Is Absent In Rūpa and Arūpa Loka

9. What type of āsava "can be triggered to come up" depends on the bhava one is in.

- In kāma loka, all āsava are "in play," i.e., can be triggered by a sense event.
- In rūpa or arūpa Brahma loka, kāmāsava remain dormant since there are no enticing ārammaṇa in Brahma realms. But unless one is an Anāgāmi, one still has kāmāsava, and that will "come into play" when one is reborn in kāma loka.
- Thus, one will not have kāma anusaya bubbling up when in rūpa or arūpa realms. Therefore, one will also not display any "kāma gati" that one has while in rūpa/arūpa realms.


## Human Bhava - Ability to Remove All Anusaya

10. As a given sentient being traverses the "saimsāra" or the "rebirth process," one makes transitions from "bhava to bhava," but within a given human (or animal) bhava, one may be born numerous times as a human (or the same animal); see, "Bhava and Jāti - States of Existence and Births Therein."

- Through all these, the physical appearance will change drastically, especially when bhava is changed. Thus, it transitions from being a deva to a human or a human to a dog. There is no resemblance to a continued "soul."
- However, our anusaya remains with us through the samisāric journey. Of course, anusaya can change during a given bhava. Most changes in anusaya occur during human bhava. A human can even remove all anusaya and attain Nibbāna.

11. That is another reason why the Buddha rejected both "self" and "no-self." What character or quality is displayed in a given bhava could be very different from another bhava. On the other hand, an ever-changing set of anusaya remains with a given lifestream.

- I call a lifestream a "dynamic self": "What Reincarnates? - Concept of a Lifestream."
- Now let us examine the roots of the words anusaya and $\bar{a} s a v a$ (āsaya); "āsava" is a synonym for "āsaya."


## Removal of Āsava and Anusaya

12. These seven types of anusaya and four āsavas go away step-by-step as one goes through the four stages of Nibbāna.

- A Sotāpanna has removed Dițthāsava. Kamāsava is lessened at the Sakadāgāmi stage and removed at the Anāgāmi stage. The other two reduce at each stage also and go away only at the Arahant stage.
- When anusaya and gati go away, then, of course, āsava disappears without a trace. One will not crave anything. One is then unperturbed by anything. That is the ultimate state of "cooling" or Nibbāna.


## Gati (Character/Habits) Related to Āsava and Anusaya

13. Gati denotes a mixture of one's character and habits. Of course, one's character depends on one's gati and vice versa.

- It should be evident that our character (gati) is related to anusaya and āsava.
- All three, āsava, anusaya, and gati, reinforce each other. One has a particular type of character because of the set of āsava and anusaya he/she has. On the other hand, none of the three will change unless one's character and habits change. That change is WILLFUL.
- And there is the fourth parameter of habits (called "gathi purudu" in Sinhala), which lies at the very bottom of the hierarchy. Some people talk rough, even when they are not mad. It is just a habit.
- Getting rid of bad habits and cultivating good habits is the first step in controlling one's āsava (temptations) and eventually getting rid of anusaya.
- "Immoral gati" due to anusaya makes the akusala-mūla Pațicca Samuppāda take place and creates "bhava" for the sansāric process. These "immoral gati" are the "san gati" in "tinṇam sañgati phasso"; see, "Tanhā - How We Attach Via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance."


## Removal of Bad Gati and Cultivating Good Gati

14. There are two critical aspects in dealing with changing one's habits:

- One needs to be mindful of bad habits' negative and positive consequences of good practices. That is Satipaṭthāna.
- And, one needs to avoid bad habits WILLFULLY and WILLFULLY engage in ethical and moral practices. That is $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p a \overline{n a}$.
- One would engage in all those activities in Satipatthāna/Ānāpāna.
- One can use the "search" box on the top right to find relevant posts on Satipaṭthāna and Ānāpāna. A practical, systematic way to do both is discussed in the "Living Dhamma" section.

15. That is the path advocated by the Buddha. One could proceed a little on the Path and achieve a "sense of peace." One could go further to make the future lives better, or one could go all the way and remove all four āsava, thus attaining the Arahantship.

- That is why "āsavakkhaya ñāna" or the "way to remove $\bar{a} s a v a "$ is the critical knowledge that the Buddha developed on attaining Buddhahood. And that knowledge is in the Four Noble Truths, and the way to achieve "āsavakkhaya" is the Noble Eightfold Path.


## Bigger Picture

16. We are fortunate to live in a time when science provides further evidence and ways to understand this process. There is a series of posts in the 'Dhamma and Science" section starting with, "Truine Brain - How the Mind Rewires the Brain via Meditation/Habits" and in the "Meditation" section starting with "Key to ānāpānasati - How to Change Habits and Character (Gati)."

- Finally, where are these anusaya in "storage"? They are in the kamma bhava, the nāma loka or the "immaterial world."
- We have two "worlds": one is the rūpa loka that we access with our five physical senses. The other is the above-mentioned nāma loka.
- The nāma loka has our memories or nāma gotta and anusaya related to kamma bija. This "immaterial world" is accessed with the mana indriya. Details at "Our Two Worlds - Rūpa Loka and Nāma Loka" and "What are Dhamma? - A Deeper Analysis."

Next, "The Way to Nibbāna - Removal of Āsava",

### 7.3.3 The Way to Nibbāna - Removal of Āsavā

Revised November 19, 2018; February 11, 2020; August 7, 2022; October 14, 2022 (\#10)

## Introduction

1. The night the Buddha attained the Buddhahood, three unique pieces of knowledge (tivijj $\bar{a}$ ) arose in him, namely:

- The unique vision with which he was able to recollect innumerable former human existences (pubbenivāsānussati ñāna.)
- The ability to see beings passing away and reborn according to their kamma (cutupapāda ñāna.)
- The unique vision to see how to eliminate all kilesa (āsava) or defilements (āsavakkhaya ñāna.)


## Asavakkhaya Nāṇa

2. With the attainment of the $\bar{a} s a v a k k h a y a ~ n ̃ a ̄ n a$, ascetic Siddhartha became Buddha Gotama. That was the final step in purifying the mind. That was the fruit of all his efforts, the Path to attaining Nibbāna for any being. Āsavakkhaya ( $\bar{a} s a v a+k h a y a ~=~ c u t t i n g ~ o f f ~ a l l ~ t h e ~ \overline{a s a v a ~} \bar{a}$ or mental fermentations). Thus
 generate any defilement.
 association with." Thus those habits ("gati") that one keeps associating with come even closer. As one continues and feeds those habits through successive rebirths, they become āsavā. See, "Āsava, Anusaya, and Gati (Gathi)."

- Āsava (in Pāli, Sinhala, and Sanskrit) also means a distillation to get an extract or essence. Some medicinal concoctions are fermented by keeping a mixture of ingredients underground for many months.
- We have cultivated (or fermented) some habits ("gati") over innumerable lives, and that is why they are hard to remove. Only through learning pure Dhamma and persistence in one's efforts can one break such bad habits and thus eventually remove $\bar{a} s a v a$. There are four types of $\bar{a} s a v a$, each is associated with a corresponding bad habit.


## Connection to Paṭicca Samuppāda

3. The doctrine of Paticca Samuppāda, which has twelve factors, namely, avijjā, sañkhāra, viñ̃̄āna, nāmarūpa, saḷāyatana, phassa, vedanā, taṇhā, upādāna, bhava, jāti, jarā-maraṇa became clear to him.

- Going over this Doctrine of Paticca Samuppāda in forward and reverse order repeatedly, he attained the Eightfold Noble Path, Ariya Magga, which is also known as Yathābhūta Ñānadassana.

4. Pațicca Samuppāda clarifies how ignorant beings accumulate defilements (and $\bar{a} s a v \bar{a}$ ), and get trapped in the round of rebirths (saysāra.) Those $\bar{a} s a v \bar{a}$ are generated and fermented via repeated use of bad habits ("gati").

- The Noble Eightfold Path is the way to remove those "gati" (and thus āsava) from a mind.


## Four Stages of Nibbāna Related to the Four $\bar{A} s a v \bar{a}$

5. We all have four significant types of $\bar{a} s a v \bar{a}$, even though there are uncountable minor varieties:

- Diṭthāsava (diṭthi āsava) is the category that is due to all kinds of false beliefs (micchā dittthi): for example, if someone does not believe in rebirth, there may be cravings such as "I need to enjoy life to the fullest before I die."
- Kāmāsava (kāma āsava) is associated with craving sensory pleasures.
- Bhavāsava (bhava āsava) is the craving for a particular kind of existence, say as a human, deva, or Brahma. Any living being, in any realm, craves for life to live.
- Avijjāsava (avijjāāsava) is all cravings that arise due to ignorance. That is the ignorance of the Noble Truth of Suffering (which is NOT merely suffering itself) and the other Noble Truths.

6. The four types of $\bar{a} s a v \bar{a}$ go away step-by-step as one proceeds on the Path. One can reduce them even before the Sotāpanna stage, but those reductions may not hold in future lives.

- When one attains the Sotāpanna stage, all four types of āsavā that could trigger "apāyagāmi" actions go away from one's mind, i.e., one will never be reborn in the four lowest realms. Ditṭhāsava (those due to wrong views) disappear entirely.
- At the Sakadāgāmi stage, kāmāsava and bhavāsava reduce, and a Sakadāgāmi will be born only as a deva or above in future lives; avijjāsava also reduces.
- Kāmāsava completely goes away at the Anāgāmi stage. Thus one will never be reborn in the kāma loka (including the deva realm) again. Bhavāsava and avijjāsava also reduce.
- Bhavāsava and avijjāsava disappear without a trace at the Arahant stage. Thus āsavakkhaya becomes complete.

Removal of $\bar{a} s a v a \bar{a}$ starts with the removal of bad habits and cultivating good habits; see "Habits and Goals," "The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Āsavas)," and "Sansāric Habits and Āsavas."

## Is there a Connection Between Nibbāna and Kamma?

7. Many incorrectly believe that "one needs to deplete all kamma vipāka" to attain Nibbāna. First, kamma vipāka are the results of previous actions (either in this life or in previous lives.) Those are kammic energies created and wear away (slowly) only with time. Thus, even an Arahant would still have all such kamma vipāka waiting to bear fruit.

- None of such kamma vipāka can bring rebirth to an Arahant, as explained in \#10 below.
- However, they can bring vipāka to any physical body until its death. Even the Buddha experienced back pains and was injured by Devadatta. There were eleven such kamma vipāka that he experienced. Those were unavoidably strong kamma for insulting a Buddha in a previous life.


## Reducing Bad Kamma Vipāka

8. Mettā Bhāvanā can remove some of the kammic power associated with the previous kamma. However, some kamma bīja or kamma seeds (both good and bad) due to the past kamma may still be there at the time of the attainment of Nibbāna. See " 5 . Ariya Metta Bhāvana (Loving Kindness Meditation)."

- To get rid of a kamma seed associated with a given kamma, the other party related to that kamma seed needs to be able to receive the merits of Metta Bhāvana . That person must have a state of mind with alobha, adosa, and amoha. But some of those beings may be trapped in the niraya for long times and may not even have a moment of "relief" to receive such merits. That concept is discussed in "Transfer of Merits (Pattidana) - How Does it Happen?."


## "Everything Happens Due to Kamma" is a Misconception

9. "Everything happens due to kamma" is a misconception. That is a Vedic concept, and is not in Buddha Dhamma; see, "Sañkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka."

- We can reduce many previous kamma from bringing their fruits (vipāka) by acting with mindfulness/foresight. Kammic energies cannot bring their vipāka if suitable conditions are not there. For details: "Anantara and Samanantara Paccayā."
- For example, an apple seed has the potential to give rise to an apple tree. However, it will not germinate until we plant it in fertile soil and provide water and sunlight. In the same way, a kamma seed (good or bad) can lay dormant for a long time until conditions become suitable for it to germinate.
- Thus, if we act with mindfulness (not to set up conditions for possible bad kamma vipāka to bear fruit,) we can avoid many kamma vipāka. For example, going to a bad neighborhood at night could have bad consequences because a bad neighborhood is a fertile ground for bad vipāka to bear fruit.


## How an Arahant Avoids Rebirth?

10. What happens is the following. Since an Arahant has removed all $\bar{a} s a v \bar{a}$, the "vedana paccaya $\bar{a} \tanh \bar{a} \vec{a}$ " step in Paticca samuppāda will not take place. Thus, the akusala-mūla Pațicca samuppāda will NOT operate for an Arahant. Furthermore, since there are no akusala to get rid of, kusala-mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda will also not operate.

- When an Arahant dies, there is no "bhava" grasped by the mind. Therefore there is no " $j \bar{a} t i$ " or birth.
- Thus an Arahant could have many unspent kamma bïja (both good and bad) left, but his/her mind has lost the craving (āsava) to grasp any of them.

Next, "Why is Correct Interpretation of Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta so Important?",

## Kaṇha (Dark) and Sukka (Bright) Kamma and Kammakkhaya

June 11, 2018; revised January 21, 2019; July 26, 2020; August 27, 2022

## Kaṇha/Sukka Kamma Same as Pāpa/Puñña Kamma

1. Kaṇha (dark), sukka (bright), and kammakkhayāya kamma are important terms discussed briefly in the Kukkuravatika sutta (in the niddesa version). In this post, we will clarify these terms before discussing that sutta in the second post published today, "Kukkuravatika Sutta (Majihima Nikāya 57) Kammakkhaya." June 19, 2018: Siebe has sent me more suttā from Ańguttara Nikāya that discusses these terms: AN 4.232- AN 4.238. Thanks, Siebe!

- Kanha and sukka kamma are nothing but pāpa and puñña kamma discussed in the post, "Kilesa Relationship To Akusala, Kusala, And Puñña Kamma."
- Kaṇha means "dark" and refers to pāpa (or bad) kamma; sukka means "bright" or "white" and refers to puñña (or good) kamma. The King of Gods is named "Sakka" because he is engaged in sukka (puñña) kamma.
- Both are different from kusala kamma. Intention plays a significant role here; see, "Kamma, Sañkhāra, and Abhisañkhāra - What Is "Intention"?"
- This post is critical for understanding the concept of Nibbāna, so I am posting it in the "Seeking Nibbāna" subsection.


## Kammakkhayāya Kamma Same as Kusala Kamma

2. The term kammakkhayāya kamma means the same as kusala kamma.

- Kammakkhayāya kamma means "kamma that will lead to nullify or overcome the effects of existing kamma vipāka." It is important to note that we cannot take the literal meaning of "kammakkhaya" as "removing kammalkamma vipāka."
- Note the difference between the words kammakkhayāya and kammakkhaya.
- The Kammakkhaya stage is reached by purifying one's mind by doing "Kammakkhayāya kamma," or kamma that leads to kammakkhaya. These are the same as kusala kamma.


## Kammakkhaya Means Cultivating Paññā

3. With a kamma done, its energy will be there for a long time until naturally worn out. But one can REMOVE the CONDITIONS under which that kamma can bring its vipäka. That is what is meant by "kammakkhaya."

- For example, Añgulimāla killed 999 people. Those actions created kamma bīja (energies that could bring appropriate vipāka), and some of those energies may still be out there.
- However, within a couple of weeks of meeting the Buddha, Angulimāla attained Arahanthood. At that point, Ven. Angulimala's mind became pure and would not EVER make suitable conditions for such kamma bïja to be "germinated."
- Just like seeds kept in a cool, dry place for millions of years will eventually become "duds" (will no longer germinate), Angulimala's kamma bïja will one day become real duds.
- Even though Ven. Angulimala's kamma bïja were potent (active) when he died, they could not be "germinated in his mind" at his death (i.e., at the cuti-patisandhi moment). Therefore, they had become "effectively duds." That is what is meant by "kammakkhaya."


## Without Upādāna Kamma Bīja Cannot Bring a New Bhava

4. One's mind is where various kamma bīja germinate. It is fair to say that ANY average human will have many kamma bīja suitable to bring rebirth in the apāy $\bar{a}$ from previous lives, if not from this life. But just having such kamma vipāka does not necessarily mean they will bring vipäka.

- The key here is that a purified mind (like Ven. Angulimala's) will not grasp (upādāna) bad kamma vipāka. Of course, his physical body endured kamma vipāka until death.

Let me take a different analogy to see why a purified mind will not grasp kamma būja. Visualize the mind being a ball with a hook attached to it. The size of the hook is proportional to how corrupt or defiled the mind is.
And we can think about kamma bīja as rings of various sizes: rings of a wide variety of sizes ranging from very tiny to large (representing small to large kamma bīja that can bring kamma $v i p a ̄ k a)$.

- We will keep returning to this analogy in the future, so please ensure it is understood. That will make it easier to comprehend many other concepts like āsava, anusaya, and gati.


## Upādāna is Like a Hook

5. Imagine a highly defiled mind (i.e., with a large hook attached to it.) Also, imagine an area with many kamma bīja of various magnitudes (many rings of different sizes).

- The hook is likely to pick up a ring of similar size: it cannot pick up small rings, and it cannot pick up too large rings.
- In the same way, a highly-defiled mind will pick up a large kamma bïja, and a less-defiled mind will pick up only a smaller kamma bïja.
- That is the same as saying that one's mind will grasp a bhava (kamma bī̀ja) that matches one's gati. One who has killed other humans will grasp a bhava in the hell (niraya) corresponding to a "large ring." It will not grasp a bhava in the human or deva realms, which would be too small to be entangled in the large hook (highly defiled mind).
- That is also what is meant by "changing CONDITIONS in one's mind, in \#3 above. A fully-purified mind will have no "mental hooks"; that mind's conditions have changed.

6. What happens when one follows the Noble Path of the Buddha is that one's "mental hook" will get smaller in size, in this analogy. That means growing pañña.

- One does this by doing kusala kamma. Kusala means removing defilements from one's mind ("ku" + "sala," where " $k u$ " is defilements and "sala" means "removal").
- A kusala kamma does not directly affect the existing bad or good kamma bïja. A kusala kamma only purifies the mind, and in the present analogy, "wear out (or shrink) the mental hook" can grasp various good and bad kamma bïja rings.
- Therefore, kammakkhaya means shrinking of the mental hook in this analogy.
- By the way, the biggest akusala kamma is micchā ditt


## Reduction of Upädāna

7. Even before reaching the Sotāpanna Anugāmi stage, one's mental hook may keep decreasing size, but not that significantly. Of course, the kamma bïja or rings will remain almost the same.

- When one attains the Sotāpanna stage, the mental hook will become drastically smaller in one thoughtmoment (at the Sotāpanna phala moment), just by comprehending the unfruitful and dangerous nature of this world, in particular the dangers in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$.
- One's avijja will drop by orders of magnitude. That is a difficult point to understand for many. But that can be experienced. One may not realize it at that time, but one can see the change within days or weeks by comparing one's change in behavior.
- The mind of a Sotāpanna will no longer be able to catch large rings corresponding to potent kamma $b \bar{j} a$ that can give rebirth in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$.
- One becomes a Sotāpanna by removing the second layer of micchā dittthi via comprehension of Tilakkhaṇa.

8. As one goes through the Sakad $\bar{a} g \bar{a} m \bar{u}$, and $A n a \bar{a} \bar{a} m \bar{u} \bar{~}$ stages, the mental hook will shrink in size. At the Arahant phala stage, the hook will disappear with avijija wholly removed, and pañ $\tilde{a} \bar{a}$ (wisdom) peaked.

- So, you can see that "kammakkhaya" does not mean getting rid of kamma bīja. One is just reducing one's āsava (or gati); thus one's mind will not grasp "bad bhava" corresponding to large kamma bïja.
- In the case of Ven. Angulimāla, all his rings (including those large ones for killing people), were there at the time of his death. It is just that his mind got purified, and the "mental hook" disappeared. His mind could not grasp any bhava in the 31 realms at his death.
- Therefore, wearing the "mental hook" is the same as reducing āsava and anusaya and getting rid of gati. As one keeps doing that, at one point, the "mental hook" will disappear (and lead to āsavakkhaya or Arahanthood).


## Kusala Kammā Do Not Remove Existing Kamma Bīja

9. Khammakkhayāya kamma (or kamma that lead to kammakkhaya) or kusala kamma do not directly remove existing kamma bij$a$. They lead to a state of mind where existing kamma bija are UNABLE to bring vipāka. That is a VERY IMPORTANT point to understand. Please come back and read this post as many times as needed to comprehend this point (and ask questions at the discussion forum).

- This is based on "Anantara and Samanantara Paccaya."
- As one keeps doing kusala kamma, one's wisdom (pañ̃̃̄ $\bar{a}$ ) will grow and become increasingly capable of comprehending the true nature of this world (the unsatisfactory nature) or Tilakkhana. That will lead to kammakkhaya in four stages of Nibbāna.
- Kammakkhaya via kusala kamma will lead to the shrinking of the "mental hook" ( $\bar{a}$ sava/anusaya/gati) and therefore more and more kamma büja (rings in our analogy) will become "effectively duds"; see \#4 and \#5 above.
- In terms of our analogy, the following happens. Even though all the "rings" are still there, more and more of them will not get "entangled" in the shrinking "hook."

10. Therefore, kammakkhaya happens at various levels.

- Those that can bring rebirths in the apāyā become "effectively duds" at the Sotāpanna stage. At this stage, one's mind has clearly understood the dangers of akusala kamma that can lead to rebirth in the apāyā. It is a "drastic change in one's mindset," a different "world view."
- Those that can bring rebirths in the human realm become "effectively duds" at the Sakadāgāmī stage. One would not doubt that "owning stuff that gives sense pleasures" is unnecessary and dangerous.
- Those that can bring rebirths anywhere in kāma loka become "effectively duds" at the Anāgāmī stage. Now, one knows "deep inside" that sense pleasures ARE dangerous.
- Those that can bring rebirths anywhere in 31 realms become "effectively duds" at the Arahant stage.


## Puñña and Pāpa Kamma

11. Now, let us look at the meanings of puñ̃a and pāpa kamma. To clarify what puñña (sukka) kamma and pāpa (kaṇha) kamma are, we need to understand how births in various realms arise.

- There are six roots causes that give rise to bhava (and therefore $j \bar{a} t i$ ) in the 31 realms: lobha (greed), dosa (hate), moha (ignorance), and alobha (non-greed), adosa (non-hate), amoha (without ignorance).

It is important to note that amoha does not mean pañ $\tilde{n} \bar{a}$ (wisdom); it just means one is acting without being foolish or morally blind.

- When one acts with any combination of the three "bad roots" (lobha, dosa, moha), one is doing pāpa kamma. They are also called kanha ("dark") kamma. Only asobhana cetasika (bad or dark mental factors) can arise in these thoughts. They are also akusala kamma. These lead to births in the apāyā (dugati).
- When one acts with any combination of the three "good roots" (alobha, adosa, amoha), one is doing puñ̃a kamma. They are also called sukka ("bright") kamma. Only sobhana cetasika (good or bright mental factors) can arise in these thoughts. These lead to births in the "good realms (sugati) until one attains Arahanthood.
- A purified mind of an Arahant would have maximized sobhana cetasika, including pañña (wisdom). Then one would not grasp any bhava at the cuti-patisandhi moment, since one has fully comprehended the futility of any existence in the 31 realms.

12. Now, puñ̃̃a (sukka) kamma generate "good kamma bïja" that can give rise to rebirths in the good realms (at and above the human realm). They also can bring "good vipāka" during a lifetime.

- Pāpa (kaṇha) kamma generate "bad kamma bïja" that can give rise to rebirths in the bad realms (those below the human realm, i.e., apāy $\bar{a}$ ). They also can bring "bad vipāka" during a lifetime.
- As we discussed in the post, "Kilesa - Relationship To Akusala, Kusala, And Puñña Kamma," there are also kamma (or actions) that lead to both pāpa (kaṇha) and puñña (sukka) kamma bïja. The Buddha called them "kanhasukka" kamma and their vipāka "kanhasukka vipāka" in the Kukkuravatika sutta. Such "kanhasukka vipāka" give rise to both good and bad vipāka in some realms (human, deva, and vinipata realms), see, "Kukkuravatika Sutta (Majihima Nikāya 57) - Kammakkhaya."
- An example is when one prevents a snake from catching a frog. One is doing a puñ̃̃a kamma by saving a frog's life, but one is also doing a pāpa kamma by preventing the snake from its meal.


## Kusala/Puñña Kamma Not Possible in $A p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$

13. Another critical point to understand is that one will not be able to do any kusala kamma and wear out the "mental hook" when is born in the apāyā (beings in the four realms of the ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$ are incapable of doing kusala kamma and are hardly capable of doing puñña kamma too).

- This is why it is important to do puñna kamma and stay away from pāpa kamma. This is critically important to be born in a good realm and to work towards Nibbāna.
- It is important to contemplate and understand this. Even though puñña (sukka) kamma leads to rebirth, that will be in a "good realm" where one can work towards Nibbāna, i.e., do kusala kamma and wear out the "mental hook."
- Furthermore, puñ̃̃a kamma sets the necessary background (āyu, vaṇna, sukha, bala, paññā; see, "Two Versions of 37 Factors of Enlightenment"). Not all in the human realm have those: if one is born extremely poor, unhealthy, etc., one will not have the right mindset to comprehend Dhamma.

14. The above explanation is a condensed (niddesa) version of the Kukkuravatika Sutta (MN 57). A patiniddesa or a detailed analysis is realized by this post AND the accompanying post, "Kukkuravatika Sutta (Majjhima Nikāya 57) - Kammakkhaya."

- For an explanation of niddesa and patiniddesa, see "Sutta Interpretation - Uddesa, Niddesa, Patiniddesa."


### 7.3.5 Dasa Samyojana - Bonds in Rebirth Process

August 6, 2017; revised February 14, 2018; February 10, 2020; May 24, 2022; August 7, 2022

## Samyojana Are Bonds in The Rebirth Process

1. Samyojana (or sayyojana) is translated into English as "fetters," which is not bad. Even though "fetter" is not commonly used, it means "a chain used to restrain or bind someone."

- Dasa samiyojana are the ten "chains" or "bonds" that bind one to the rebirth process (with samsāric bonds.)
- For example, as long as the first three samyojana are there, the possibility of rebirths in the four lowest realms (apāyās) will be there.

2. Samiyojana comes from the three roots ("san," "yo," and "ja" respectively, meaning "defilements," "bind," and "birth"). It can be pronounced either as "sanyojana" or, as is the common practice with many words involving "san," as "samiyojana."

- Therefore, samyojana means "bonds that bind one to "san" and thus keep one in the rebirth process; see, "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Samsāra)."
- When one systematically breaks these bonds - in four stages - one makes irreversible progress to Nibbāna (release from all suffering).
- For an explanation of many words with the root "san," see "List of "San" Words and Other Pāli Roots."


## Root Cause Is Craving

3. The "WebLink: suttacentral: Samyojana Sutta (SN 41.1)" clearly states that there is "san" or "craving (chanda rāga)" MUST be involved in samyojana: "Evameva kho, bhante, na cakkhu rūpānaì saìyojanaì, na rūpā cakkhussa saìyojanaì; yañca tattha tadubhayaì paṭicca uppajjati chandarāgo taì tattha samiyojanaì..."

Translated: "samiyojana arise not due to eyes just seeing objects ( $r \bar{u} p a$ ), but due to craving that arises due to that seeing..."

## Cravings Are Uncontrollable Due to Wrong Views

4. Many people do not realize that there is an essential step BEFORE one can start tackling dasa samyojana. This step is necessary to enter the Noble Path and break those bonds to the rebirth process. That is to get rid of the ten types of micchā ditthi (wrong views) about the world that we live in. See, "Micchā Ditthi, gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage."

- This essential pre-requisite or the pre-condition to "enter the Noble Path" was explicitly discussed by the Buddha in the "Mahā Cattārisaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty)."
- The reason is that unless one believes in the laws of kamma and the rebirth process, there is no way one can start working towards Nibbāna (to be released from the suffering-filled rebirth process).
- Striving to attain Nibbāna without belief in the rebirth process is useless. By definition, Nibbāna is the release from the rebirth process. Most people confuse Nibbāna with temporary relief from "day-today stresses of life."
- There are different ways to understand Nibbāna; see "Nibbāna."


## Need to Have a "Wider World View"

5. Buddha Dhamma is different from any other religion or philosophy. One first needs to understand the message of the Buddha before one can start on the Path prescribed by him. Many people waste time blindly pursuing things that have nothing to do with the Noble Path to Nibbāna.

- To understand the key message of the Buddha, one needs to realize that our world is much more complicated than seen by our eyes. One needs to 'see' with wisdom. This wisdom or "pañ̃̄$\vec{a}$ " can be cultivated only in steps, with an increasingly pure mind. Which means less greed, hate, and ignorance of the true nature of this world.
- In the early stage, when one is trying to get rid of the ten types of micchā dittthi, one may need to stay away from dasa akusala with determination. That may involve even going to the extent of sticking to a set of rituals (saying I WILL NOT break the five precepts).
- However, by abstaining from immoral actions and speech (pāpa kamma), one should be able to get rid of the ten types of micch $\bar{a}$ ditṭhi. Those are the "big eight" in " 3 . The Second Level - Key to Purify the Mind" in the Meditation section.
- At that stage, one's mind is clear enough (i.e., paññ̄a has grown enough) to start grasping the Tilakkhaṇa (anicca, dukkha, anatta). Of course, it is necessary to understand the correct interpretations: "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta."


## Sammā Ditṭhi Comes First

6. The first step in the Noble Eightfold Path is "Sammā Ditṭhi," which is not "something to be done." It is a vision or a "new way of looking at how our world works."

- This new way of looking at the world is through the world view that emerges from what is embedded in anicca, dukkha, anatta. That is how one breaks the first three samyojana of sakkāya ditṭhi, vicikicch $\bar{a}$, and sīlabbata parāmāsa.

7. One has to break those bonds in one's mind. One gains sammā ditthi - the correct view to becoming free of 'san' - by comprehending the true nature of this world of 31 realms.

Anicca - nothing in this world can bring permanent happiness in the long run.
Dukkha - despite our struggles, we will be subjected to much more suffering than pleasures if we remain in rebirth.

Anatta - therefore, one is truly helpless in this struggle to attain "something of the essence in this world." That is just an illusion.

## Our Tendency to Value Worthless Worldly Things

8. When one values a particular object, one can spend an extraordinary effort to get it. An average human has many things in this world (a beautiful/handsome partner, lovely house, nice car, etc.) that are very valuable.

- Many people are willing to commit murder, robbery, lying, cheating, etc. Then they get into trouble in two ways: If society catches them, they will pay consequences like going to jail. Even if they manage to avoid "getting caught," there is no way to prevent kamma vipāka, i.e., those actions will bring much harsher punishments in this life or future lives.
- By comprehending the ten types of micchā ditthi, one will be able to see that one will have to pay for immoral actions without exception and that depending on the severity of the activities, one may suffer for millions of years in the four lower realms (apāy $\bar{a}$ ). This first step of getting rid of the ten types of micch $\bar{a}$ ditthi will be quite beneficial in preventing one from getting into trouble.

9. However, grasping the Tilakkhaña will eliminate an even more potent type of wrong vision or micch $\bar{a}$ ditthi about this world, i.e., that there is NOTHING in this world that will bring a level of permanent happiness.

- When one first starts comprehending anicca and realizes a glimpse of this truth, one may still not be reasonably certain of the truth of that. But one will be compelled to believe that "it is not WORTH to commit strong bad kamma that COULD lead to rebirth in the ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$ (intense greed and strong hate).
- At this beginning stage on the Noble Path, one could see the dangers of being born in the apa $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$, and one's mind will AUTOMATICALLY start rejecting such actions. That does not happen by sheer willpower. The mind needs to see that with wisdom. In the Abhidhamma language, the "votthapana citt $\bar{a} "$ in a citta vith $h$ will make that decision within a billionth of a second.


## Sotāpanna stage Realized With That "Correct Vision"

10. So, it is essential to understand that getting rid of the first three samyojana involves nothing else but comprehending the anicca nature.

- In other words, at this stage, one will lose a significant fraction of HOW MUCH VALUE one will place on ANY MATERIAL THING in this world. For example, there is NOTHING in this world that is worth killing another human being via pre-planning with hate in mind.
- At this stage, one is a Sotāpanna Anugāmi, and one will get to the Sotāpanna stage without a doubt. One has become one of the eight types of Nobles (Ariyā); see "Sotāpanna Magga Anugāmi and a Sotāpanna."

11. Therefore, getting a release from rebirth in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$ depends on grasping the dangers of specific highlyimmoral actions that are not worth doing because NOTHING in this world can be that valuable. Put another way, nothing in this world is worth taking the risk of paying back with a rebirth in the ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$.

- The Buddha characterized dukkha as "dukkham bhayatthena," i.e., "dukha is another name for danger." We should be afraid of committing new kammā leading to future suffering. Any suffering that one feels now is due to past $\mathrm{kamm} \bar{a}$.
- We have control over the CAUSES that lead to future suffering. Those are the immoral kamma $\bar{a}$ we do seeking sensory pleasures.
- We can stop future suffering by comprehending how different types of kammā (i.e., abhisañkhāra) lead to births in various realms. That means comprehending Paṭicca Samuppāda.


## Removal of Kāma Rāga Comes At Higher Stages of Nibbāna

12. The next step towards Nibbāna involves getting rid of two more bonds or samyojana, i.e., kāma rāga and patigha. That is done in the Sakadāgāmī stage and the $A n \bar{a} g \bar{a} m \bar{\imath}$ stage.

- In a way, these two bonds are harder to break because all through this beginning-less rebirth process, we have spent probably $99 \%$ of the time in the kāma loka. We are so attached to sense pleasures (kāma rāga) that it is almost impossible for an average human to grasp the anicca nature in kāma loka.
- As we discussed above, it is easier to see the adverse consequences of highly-immoral actions that could lead to rebirth in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$. And it is also easier to see the dangers of birth in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$ (the Buddha has described such unimaginable suffering in many suttā; see, for example, "WebLink: suttacentral: Devaduta Sutta (Majjhima Nikāya 130)."


## Apāyagāmī Deeds Are Done With Wrong Views

13. It is harder for an average human to see that things we value highly are not only worthless but dangerous.

That is because they can lead to future suffering via kamma vipāka.

- Most "moral people" believe that if one lives a moral life without harming others, then one will not be subjected to suffering in the future. Even if one had comprehended Tilakkhana to a level of a Sotāpanna, that could still be the impression.
- That is why Buddha's foremost female lay disciple Visākā attained the Sotāpanna stage at age seven and went on to marry and have 22 children. If Visāka had understood the consequences of kāma rāga, she would not have done that.


## My Experience

14. Therefore, getting rid of the samiyojana of kāma rāga (attachment to sensual pleasures) is much more challenging. That is why it took me over three years to START comprehending the worthlessness of sense pleasures AND the dangers of being attracted to sense desires.

- Even though I knew the criteria for one to become an $A n \bar{a} g \bar{a} m \bar{l}$, I did not realize that I would have to "see the dangers" in staying in the kāma loka, to strive for it.
- I had written about the importance of removing kāma rāga in the following section: "Assāda, Ādinnava, Nissarana - Introduction." Those posts were written before October 2015 and have been since revised.

15. I had known the "theory" part of it. But I had not cultivated my pañña or wisdom enough to see the possible dangers of sense pleasures!

- It needed a trigger for my mind to finally realize the "worthlessness" and "dangers" of REMAINING in the kāma loka. I will write more about how it got triggered, but I am still working on trying to see the dangers of sense pleasures and thereby making a convincing case that all we perceive as "pleasures" in the human and deva realms are, in fact, CAUSES for future suffering.
- The point here is that one needs to keep striving as long as it takes for the mind to come to a stage to be "triggered" by some event (mine was not a significant event). As long as one keeps striving, it is bound to happen. It came as a shock to me. But I will discuss those details in another post (I am not there yet anyway).


## Difference Between Magga Phala and Jhāna

16. By the way, it is becoming clearer to me about the difference between magga phala and jhāna. While $j h a ̄ n a$ can help, jhānā are not NEEDED to attain magga phala. It is sīla, samādhi, pañña, and NOT sīla, $j h a ̄ n a, ~ p a \tilde{n} \tilde{n} \bar{a}$. I will write about this in detail, but many people seem discouraged that they cannot get to jhāna.

- There may be people with magga phala and without any jhāna; with anāriya jhāna and without magga phala; and also with anāriya jhāna and with magga phala. Those with Ariya jhāna MUST be at least an $A n \bar{a} g \bar{a} m \bar{l}$, i.e., one who has REMOVED kāma rāga completely.
- The problem is that it is virtually impossible to distinguish between Ariya and anāriya jhāna. One thing is quite clear: One cannot attain Ariya first jhāna without REMOVING (ucceda pahāna, not just vikkhambana pahāna) of kāma rāga, i.e., kāma anusaya must be removed, not only suppressed.
- But the "jhānic effect" is the same in both cases. The body and the mind have very similar sensations.
- If a Sotāpanna can get into the first Ariya jhāna, then he/she will never be born in the human world again. But we know that a Sotāpanna can be reborn in the human realm. Thus a Sotāpanna would not have the first Ariya jhāna. Whatever jhānā that I had were not Ariya jhāna.
- I slowly reached this conclusion over time; see "Difference Between Jhāna and Stages of Nibbāna." Information in that relatively recent post is correct. I had forgotten to update the old posts. Another point is that it is Sammā Samādhi (not necessarily jhāna) that takes one to Sammā Nāna and Sammā Vimutti to become an Arahant in the Noble Path.


## Stopping Rebirths in Kāma Loka

17. Let us get back to the main discussion. Once one overcomes those two samiyojana of kāma rāga and paṭigha, one will be free of rebirths anywhere in the käma loka (lowest 11 realms, including the human and deva realms).

- Only then can one be said to become healthy (not subject to illnesses) and free of the three sets of senses of smell, taste, and body touches. It is only the human body that is subject to diseases. A Sakadāgāmī would not be reborn in the human realm and thus free of diseases.
- When one attains the Sakadāgāmī stage by REDUCING kāma rāga and paṭigha, one could be born only in the deva realms of the käma loka. At this stage, one would have lost the desire to OWN objects that bring sense pleasures (vatthu kāma), but has not yet lost the URGE TO ENJOY sense pleasures.
- As one progresses, the two bonds of kāma rāga and patigha will be completely broken. One will attain the Anāgāmī stage, never to be born in any realm of kāma loka.


## Breaking Bonds to Rūpa loka and Arūpa Loka

18. An $\operatorname{An} \bar{a} g \bar{a} m \bar{m}$ would still be bound to the rebirth process via five more bonds or saimyojana: rūpa rāga, arūpa rāga, māna, uddhacca, avijjā.

- The first five types of samyojana are called orambhāgiya-samyojana or "lower bonds." The higher five are called uddhambhāgiya-samyojana or "higher bonds."
- If a person has removed the first seven samiyojana but still has the last three of māna_uddhacca, amd avijjā, one's mental body (gandhabba) would come out of the dead body at death. One will be in that state until the kammic energy for the human bhava is exhausted. Parinibbāna will happen at the cutipaṭisandhi moment since one has lost upādāna for all 31 realms and thus cannot be born anywhere. So, the gandhabba would be in the antarā Parinibbāna state. That is presumed to have happened to Waharaka Thero; see "Parinibbāna of Waharaka Thero."
- As one progresses to higher stages, it becomes harder to remove the higher bonds (from the perspective of lower levels). As we saw, it is easier for an average human to understand the dangers of the ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$ but harder to see the dangers of kāma loka. One cannot even imagine the dangers of ru$p a$ and arūpa loka. One has to proceed step-by-step.
- When an Anāgāmī removes rūpa rāga, they will be never again born in any realm in the rūpa loka. Similarly, removing the samyojana of arūpa rāga would make one free of birth in the arūpa loka.


## There Is No Safe Realm Anywhere In The Thirty-One Realms

19. Once, the Buddha saw that a Bhikkhu had started 'taking it easy" after attaining the $A n \bar{a} g \bar{a} m \bar{\imath}$ stage and asked him why he was not striving hard as he used to. The Bhikkhu replied that he had reached the Anāgāmi stage and thus thought that he was out of danger.

- The Buddha asked him to consider the following. If one had touched feces and had just wiped it off, one might not see it anymore. But wouldn't that remaining traces still smell bad? The Bhikkhu realized that one would not be free of ALL suffering until one is released fully from all 31 realms. It is harder to see the dangers at finer levels until something makes one aware of such "hard-to-see" dangers.
- Whichever stage we are "stuck at," we should continue the effort without getting complacent. Results will follow (possibly triggered by some unexpected event).
- Sometimes such triggers lead to moments of "insights" ("ahā" moments) directly leading to magga phala. There are many such examples in the Tipitaka.


## Summary

20. Finally, the ten samyojana are removed via different methods:

- Sakkāya ditṭhi, vicikicchā, and sīlabbata parāmāsa are removed via "correct vision" or "correct understanding." And that happens when one is listening to a desana $\bar{a}$ by an Ariya or a Noble Person.
- Kāma rāga and paṭigha are removed via meditation.
- The five higher samyojana are removed with wisdom (paññā).


### 7.3.6 The Cooling Down Process (Nibbāna) - How the Root Causes are Removed

Revised June 25, 2020 (\#1 and \#2 revised); May 28, 2022; August 31, 2022

## Introduction

1. The rebirth process (and suffering) continues because of the six root causes: lobha, dosa, moha, alobha, adosa, and amoha. Even though we may have bouts of happiness, we suffer much more than imaginable in the rebirth process because of these six causes.

- If there are six root causes, why did the Buddha say, "rāgakkhayo Nibbanan, dosakkhayo Nibbanan, Mohakkhayo Nibbanan"? Why are there only three causes to be removed to attain Nibbāna? (By the way, lobha is a stronger form of rāga, and thus rāgakkhaya means removing lobha).
- While lobha, dosa, and moha lead to rebirths in the apāyās (or 'bad realms, including the animal realm,) mundane versions of alobha, adosa, and amoha lead to rebirths in the "good realms."
- However, one must overcome rebirth in ALL realms to be guaranteed no rebirths in the apāy $\bar{a}$. See "Six Root Causes - Loka Samudaya (Arising of Suffering) and Loka Nirodhaya (Nibbāna)."
- Furthermore, one needs to cultivate alobha, adosa, and amoha to get started on the process of removing lobha, dosa, and moha.
- As wisdom (pañ̃ña) grows, lobha, dosa, and moha (as well as mundane versions of alobha, adosa, and amoha) will fade away gradually, and one will get to Nibbāna (where suffering is absent.)


## Noble Truths, Paticca Samuppāda, Tilakkhaṇa - Interrelated

2. Buddha Dhamma is about eliminating suffering associated with the rebirth process. Before following the Noble Eightfold Path, one must understand the First Noble Truth. See "Buddha Dhamma - Noble Truths, Paticca Samuppāda, Tilakkhana."

- Once one comprehends Tilakkhana, one would have a deeper level of alobha, adosa, and amoha.
- A Sotāpanna starts on the Noble Eightfold Path with that more profound level of alobha, adosa, and amoha. Wisdom (pañña $\bar{a}$ ) peaks at the Arahant stage. At that point, one would not be seeking rebirth anywhere in the 31 realms with lobha, dosa, and moha OR alobha, adosa, or amoha.
- See, "Sila, Samādhi, Paññā to Pañ̃̄̄ā, Sila, Samādhi" and "Buddha Dhamma - In a Chart" and references therein.
- Here is another way to see it. When one is on the mundane path, their level of amoha is not complete. That amoha still has avijj $\bar{a}$ or the "ignorance of the Noble Truths." That is the same as having sakkāya ditṭhi goes away. At the Sotāpanna stage, sakkāya diṭthi goes away by comprehending the Four Noble Truths/Paṭicca Samuppāda/Tilakkhaṇa.


## Lobha is Extreme Greed

3. Lobha is the extreme of greed.("lo" + "bha" where "lo" is for the lokaya or world and "bha" is for "bihiveema" (arise or establish) is the main reason how the material world is created and sustained with greed.

- Because of lobha, kāmacchanda (one of the five hindrances) arises. One "loses one's mind" when acting with kāmacchanda which comes from "kāma" + "icca" + "anda" where "ichcha" means liking and "anda" is becoming blind. Thus, kāmacchanda means blinded by attachment to sensual pleasures.
- When blinded by kāmacchanda and when obstacles arise in the way, one develops dosa or dvesa ("dvi"+"vesa" or second manifestation of greed; see "Pāli Glossary (A-K) and Pāli Glossary (L-Z)" for the pronunciation key), i.e., hate for whatever gets in one's way.
- And one has lobha because one cannot see the truth about this world, i.e., because one has moha: Moha comes from "muva" + "h $\vec{a} "$ or literally "closed mouth." The analogy is that if there is a vessel whose mouth or opening is closed, one cannot see what is inside. Thus when one has moha, one is ignorant about the true nature of this world, and thus acts blindly and foolishly, based on outward appearances.


## Total Ignorance (Moha) is the Root Cause

4. One who has not heard about the Buddha's worldview is likely to act with moha and, thus, has both lobha and dosa.

- However, many people do not have strong versions of lōbha, dōsa, and mōha. Most "moral people" have avijja, a milder version of moha, as discussed in \#2 above.
- They will likely carry over such habits (gati) compatible with alobha, adosa, and amoha. ANYONE is likely to have been exposed to Buddha Dhamma sometime in the deep past. But the more time lag there is, one will likely lose those qualities.
- It is clear that if and when one has kāmacchanda (strong cravings for sensual pleasures), one may be tempted to do immoral deeds. We all have had kāmacchanda taking over, anyone can remember cases where "the ability to reason out" got lost, at least for a brief time.


## Lobha (Greed) Leads to Dosa (Anger/Hate)

5. Long-lasting hateful situations (dosa) arise because of kāmacchanda. If something gets in the way of one's sensual pleasures, one can become angry/hateful.

- That is why dosa (or dvesa) is the second manifestation of greed. At this extreme, dosa brings out the second of the five hindrances, vyāpāda. This word comes from " $v \bar{a} y a "+" p \bar{a} d a$ ", where " $v \bar{a} y a$ " means decline and "pāda" means to "walk towards." Thus vyāpāda means one is on a (morally) declining path.
- When one gets extremely angry, one again loses control, which could be even worse than kämacchanda; one can kill another human being in a moment of rage. When one habitually gets angry, one could be in a state of $v y \bar{a} p \bar{a} d a$ for longer times, becoming a "normal" state of affairs i.e., becoming a "gati." We can see people get into the "vyāpāda mode" during (political) debates on television or during arguments.
- All five hindrances arise from not seeing the futility of craving or hate. This "getting attached to things in this world" via greed and hatred is called taṇh $\bar{a}$; see "Tanh̄̄ - How We Attach Via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance"


## Avijjā and Taṇhā Go Together

6. Avijjā (ignorance) and tanhh $\bar{a}$ feed off each other, but it is $a v i j j \bar{a}$ that one needs to tackle first. That is because unless one's mind sees the dangers hidden behind tanh $\bar{a}$, it is not possible to reduce taṇh $\bar{a}$.

- When one starts learning Dhamma, one begins to understand the nature of the broader world of 31 realms: Living beings move from birth to birth; they suffer mightily in the lowest four realms.
- All actions have consequences. In the long run, it does not make sense to act immorally to satisfy one's immediate urges (that is the concept of anicca; see, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta - Wrong Interpretations," and follow-up posts.)


## Lobha and Dosa Permanently Reduced with Sammā Diṭthi

7. Most people make the mistake of trying to get rid of greed and hate, either wilfully or with 'breath meditation." That is NOT POSSIBLE. One needs to engage in the correct version of "ānāpāna" meditation; see, "6. Ānāpānasati Bhāvanā (Introduction)."

- As long as one has a wrong worldview and does not see the danger in having thoughts of excess greed and hate, it is not possible to FORCIBLY get rid of greed and hatred; see, "Difference Between Giving Up Valuables and Losing Interest in Worthless."
- That is why Sammā Dittthi, or the correct worldview, comes first in the Noble Eightfold Path.
- After comprehending the Four Noble Truths/Paṭicca Samuppāda/Tilakkhaṇa, there is no need to suppress lobha and dosa. That will happen automatically due to wisdom (pañ̃̃ā.)


## Progress After Comprehending the Four Noble Truths/Paṭicca Samuppāda/Tilakkhana

8. When one attains the Sotāpanna stage, one's lobha is reduced to the kāma rāga level, and dosa reduced to the patigha level PERMANENTLY; That also leads to the removal of the other hindrances. Paṭigha is a lower strength of vyāpāda: "pati"" + "gha" means bonding via friction or dislike; thus, taṇhā can arise due to patigha. [pati means bonding; gha means friction of dislike.]

- One can see now why a Sotāpanna is incapable of doing extremely immoral acts that can result in a birth in the four lowest realms (ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a})$; one has removed vicikicch $\bar{a}$ hindrance permanently, and one always acts with mindfulness. This higher level of Samma Ditthi or the correct worldview is deeply ingrained in their minds, even in a future birth, that will not change. But one can still act with greed and hate to a certain extent.

9. When one attains the next level of Nibbāna, the Sakadāgāmī level, one permanently REDUCES kāma rāga and patigha.Because of this advancement, one will never be reborn in a realm where the physical body can be subjected to ailments, diseases, and old age. Thus, one will be reborn above the human realm, which is the fiffh realm.
10. At the $A n a \bar{a} \bar{a} m \bar{\imath}$ stage, $k \bar{a} m a$ rāga and patigha will not arise in mind. Thus by the Anāgāmī stage, one has completely removed any form of dosa, the second root cause. One does not get angry or hateful under any circumstance, and the dosa cetasika will be absent. Since kāma rāga also goes away, now one has no desire to be born in any realm in the kāma loka, including the deva worlds.

- Thus an Anāgāmī has only rūpa rāga and arūpa rāga. That is mainly due to the desire of an Anāgām $\bar{l}$ to listen (and read) and contemplate Dhamma concepts; there is no desire left for sense pleasures. Thus the lobha cetasika is reduced to a very low level.
- As for the moha cetasika, only a low strength remains as avijjā.


## Progress in Terms of the Ten Samyojana

11. There are ten samyojana (or Sainsāric bonds) keep us bound to the rebirth process. Out of the ten sam̀yojana or sanyoga ("san" + "yoga" or bound via "san"), sakkāya diṭthi, vicikicchā, sīlabbata parāmāsa (all due to strong avijjā) are removed at the Sotāpanna stage.

- That is an important point: One just needs to comprehend the true nature of this world via understanding anicca, dukkha, and anatta (Tilakkhanna) to become a Sotāpanna.
- Just with this understanding, one removes kāmacchanda, vyāpāda, and vicikicchā. That is why a Sotāpanna is said to be "one with the vision" or "dassanena sampanno."
- Once, the Buddha took a bit of soil to his fingernail and asked the bhikkhus, "if all the soil on this Earth can be compared to the defilements one needs to get rid of, a Sotāpanna has left in him/her only an amount compared to this bit of soil on my fingernail."
- That may sound astounding to some. But it is critical to understand that most heinous immoral acts are done because of one not having Sammā Diṭthi at least to a significant level.
- Of the remaining sanyojana (sanyoga), kāma rāga and paṭigha are reduced at the Sakadāgāmī stage, and removed at the Anāgāmì stage. The rest of the sanyoga (rūpa rāga, arūpa rāga, māna, $u d d h a c c a$, and avijjā) go away at the Arahant stage.


## Progress in Terms of Abandoning "Denser Realms"

12. As the attachment to sensual pleasures from "dense matter" decreases, rebirth in the "denser worlds" is progressively eliminated.

- At the Sotāpanna stage, the coarse forms of suffering in the lowest four realms stop. After the Sakad $\bar{a} g \bar{a} m \bar{\imath}$ stage, rebirths do not occur even in the human realm, where physical pain and diseases prevail. An Anāgāmī is born only in the suddhāvāsa rūpa loka, where there are only subtle bodies allowing vision, hearing, and mind only. An Arahant will never be reborn anywhere in the 31 realms which have "some connection to matter"; see, "What Are Rūpa? (Relation to Nibbāna)." [Suddhā̄$\overline{\boldsymbol{v}} \overline{\mathrm{a}} \boldsymbol{a} \overline{\boldsymbol{a}}$ : The "Pure Abodes"; a name given to a group of Brahma-worlds - the five highest Rūpa worlds consisting of Avihā, Atappā, Sudassā, Sudassī and Akanitthā.]
- Thus at the passing away of an Arahant, the mind is released from any attachment to the material world consisting of the 31 realms; no more suffering from physical pains, mental pains, or death. One has attained Nibbāna or the "deathless state."
- That is a summary. See "Body Types in 31 Realms - Importance of Manomaya Kaya."


## Citta Analysis

13. Another way to analyze the steps to Nibbāna is to look at how the 12 akusala citta ceases to arise stage by stage. See, "Akusala Citta - How a Sotāpanna Avoids Apāyagāmi Citta."

- Therefore, the four stages of Nibbāna can be characterized in different ways. With the number of samiyojanā left, "density of matter," types of akusala citta, and many other ways. They are all interrelated and self-consistent.


### 7.3.7 Why is Correct Interpretation of Anicca, Dukkha, Anattā so Important?

## Revised March 14, 2021

One cannot strive for the Sotāpanna stage without understanding the true meanings of the three characteristics of nature: anicca, dukkha, anatta. The correct meaning of anicca, dukkha, anatta are explained under the top menu, "Key Dhamma Concepts."

1. Anicca, dukkha, anatta describe the true nature of "this world" of 31 realms; see, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma." Nowhere in the 31 realms can one maintain anything to one's satisfaction over the long term (anicca); thus one gets depressed, unfulfilled, and distraught (suffering or dukkha is the net result). Thus one becomes helpless (anatta).
2. A good analogy is someone attempting to fill a leaky vessel at home by carrying water to it from a nearby river. He makes a trip back from the river, fills the vessel, and is glad to see that it got filled halfway. But
soon enough, he sees that water is running out and thus needs to make another trip to the river to bring more water.

- If he spent a bit of time examining the vessel, he would have discovered the leak and could have fixed it. We are too much involved in the struggle to maintain illusory happiness. We do not take enough time to contemplate whether it makes sense to struggle against a system that is INHERENTLY unsuitable for providing lasting happiness.

3. Before retirement, I was basically working seven days a week. I had deadlines to meet and responsibilities to fulfill, and there was no time even to think whether I should take some time off and contemplate the sensibility of such a hectic life.

- Whatever vacation time that I had, I wanted to plan a "relaxing vacation." But I did not realize that I was spending more time planning the vacation and then spent whatever energy that I had on sightseeing. When I got back from the vacation, I was exhausted from the trip itself. The early retirement decision was the best decision that I ever made in my life.

4. If this existence is inherently flawed in the sense that it is not capable of sustaining stability, then all the struggles that we make are in vain. The Buddha discovered that everything in "this world" changes (see "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma'). It is INHERENTLY impossible to achieve lasting happiness.

- Now the question is, how do we know whether this axiom in Dhamma is correct? This is where it takes a bit of time to look at the evidence. I have done a lot of work within the past several years, and hopefully, this website will help you cut down on that research.
Actually, scientists also now acknowledge that the universe is "running down." We need to constantly spend energy to keep chaos and instability out of the way to maintain some stability (in Buddha Dhamma, this is called "sañkhāra dukkha"); see, "Second Law of Thermodynamics is Part of Anicca!."

5. After looking at the evidence, if one decides to spend a bit more time carefully examining the three characteristics (anicca, dukkha, anatta), one may see that there is some truth that will set one off on the Dhamma Path.

- If there is nothing substantial or long-lasting to be had by harming other living beings, stealing from them, lying to them, indulging in excess sense pleasures, or not being intoxicated with power, money, or position, one's life will automatically change for the better.
- The five precepts or eight precepts are NOT to be just mechanically followed. The mind needs to SEE the benefit of following them.

6. This is why one MUST spend some time examining the evidence for the Buddha Dhamma's validity. The first stage of Nibbāna, the Sotāpanna stage, is attained just with the clear understanding of the true nature of "this world," i.e., anicca, dukkha, anatta.

- When one realizes the futility of the struggle for long-lasting happiness in a world that is inherently not capable of providing it, one will automatically start moving away from clinging to "things in this world." For example, one will say to oneself, "what is the point of stealing this from another person? Can longlasting happiness can be gained? Rather my mind will be in an agitated state if I do that."
- There is no need to force oneself to obey the precepts. Moral behavior (sila) will automatically follow the true understanding of anicca, dukkha, anatta. Then, when one starts feeling a bit of nirāmisa sukha, there is no turning back, because one can see for oneself the benefits of moral life.

7. Thus Sammā Ditthi (san $+m a+$ ditṭhi $=$ vision to get rid of defilements) is none other than the true comprehension of the three characteristics: anicca, dukkha, anatta.

- When one gains a bit of Sammā Ditthi (vision), it will try to prevent one from having defiled thoughts (micchā sañkappa), uttering false speech (micch $\bar{a} v \bar{a} c \bar{a})$, doing wrong things (micchā kammanta), pursuing wrong lifestyles (micchā ajjīva). One will also make efforts (Sammā vāyāma) to be on the

Path, which will lead to be constantly be mindful (Sammā Sati), thus leading to Sammā Samādhi (peaceful and focused state of mind).

- But it is important to see the distinction between just "good speech" and Sammā Vācā. That is to be understood in the context of anicca, dukkha, anatta. One abstains from "wrong speech" not merely because one does not want to face bad consequences. One abstains from it because one can ALSO see the futility in it. The same holds for all eight. This is worth a lot of contemplation.
- This is why the Buddha said, "Dhammo ha ve rakkhati dhamma cāri," or, "once one sees the Dhamma, Dhamma will guide, protect, and direct."
- Thus, gaining Sammā Dittthi via contemplating anicca, dukkha, anatta will automatically direct one on the Noble Eightfold Path. This is why removing micchā ditthi via a true understanding of anicca, dukkha, anatta is so important.

7. When one proceeds in this manner, one will attain the Sotāpanna stage of Nibbāna, as these three basic concepts take hold in mind. At that point, the mind will automatically reject doing things that will result in rebirth in the lower four realms.

- Those are the four greed-based cittā that arise due to micchā ditthi (wrong vision), and the delusionbased citta that arises due to defiled viññāna (vicikicchā). This is why a Sotāpanna is prevented from rebirth in the lower four realms forever; see, "Akusala Citta- How a Sotāpanna Avoids Apayagami Citta."

8. When one attains the Sotāpanna stage, one may still have greed, hate, and delusion left in him/her. But a Sotāpanna KNOWS about them and KNOWS how to get rid of them. Then it is just a matter of time before getting rid of those defilements and attaining the other three stages, culminating in ultimate peace and permanent happiness, Nibbāna.
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Next, "The Sotāpanna Stage", ......
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### 7.3.8 How to Cultivate the Noble Eightfold Path starting with Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta

Anicca, dukkha, anatta describe the true nature of this world with 31 realms. Thus one needs to comprehend these "three characteristics of nature" in order to "see" the path to Nibbāna before starting to follow it.

1. Before one starts on a journey one needs to decide why one should take the journey, exactly where one is going to, and the correct path towards that destination. Thus it is worthwhile to examine why the Buddha said our goal should be to move away from this world towards Nibbāna, why he said that, why one should believe that to be true, and what the correct path towards that goal is. The Buddha himself recommended that approach:

- One starts on the Noble Eightfold Path with Sammā Dittthi, which means the needed "vision" on why, what to expect at the end, and an idea about the path to achieve it.
- Out of the twelve akusala cittā, five are permanently removed when one attains the Sotāpanna stage: the four greedy cittā that arise with wrong view ("dittthi sahagatha"), and the delusion citta based on vicikicchā. All five of these citt $\bar{a}$ arise because one does not know the true nature of the world; all kamma that lead one to rebirth in the ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$ are done with these five citt $\bar{a}$. Thus when they are removed by partially completing Sammā Ditṭhi at the Sotāpanna stage, one is permanently prevented from accumulating kamma that destines one to a rebirth in the lowest four realms (ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$ ).
- Furthermore, any such apāyagāmī kamma seeds previously accumulated are prevented from proving a potent enough nimitta at the moment of death; thus birth in the apāyā is automatically prevented.
- Looking at it from another angle, out of the 10 samyojanas (those that binds one to samsāra), three are removed at the Sotāpanna stage: sathkaya ditṭhi (the idea that all actions one does with the six sense bases to achieve amisa sukha are beneficial), vicikicchā (distorted mindset), and silabbata paramasa (the idea that Nibbāna can be attained just by following precepts, without purifying one's mind). All three are due to not having Sammā Ditthi, or not knowing the true nature of the world: anicca, dukkha, anatta.
- In the Sabbasava Sutta, there are seven recommended methods for removing defilements for anyone starting on the Path. The first item on the list describes how one can get rid of a bulk of defilements just with correct vision of "this world", i.e., "dassanena pahathabba"; this is what was discussed above.
- Once one understands the true nature of "this world" and understands how to remove the rest of the defilements, then the other six steps are taken, of which "bhavanaya pahathabba" (i.e., removal by meditation) comes last. Today, most people start meditating without clearly understanding what to meditate about.

2. Thus, first one needs to understand why we need to escape from "this world."

- The three characteristics of "this world" (see, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta") tell us that we can NEVER achieve AND maintain whatever we desire (characteristic of anicca), thus we mostly end up with suffering (dukkha), and thus one is not in control and becomes helpless (anatta). The Buddha merely DISCOVERED this true nature of the world. Many people take Buddha Dhamma to be pessimistic, but Buddha was just a messenger.
- Moreover, the Buddha gave us an optimistic message too. For those who are willing to examine the true nature of the world, there is a better version of happiness that comes from moving away from "this world", i.e., by voluntarily giving up craving for things in this world. This is the nirāmisa sukha of Nibbāna (see, "Three Kinds of Happiness - What is Nirāmisa Sukha?), which increases as one starts on the Path and becomes complete and PERMANENT at the Arahant stage. Even if one does not get to the first stage of Nibbāna, the Sotāpanna stage, one could experience this nirāmisa sukha, and may help shorten the path to Nibbāna in the upcoming lives.

3. Therefore it is CRITICAL to understand anicca, dukkha, anatta, before we proceed further here. If you have not done so, please spend some time critically examining and contemplating on these concepts described under many posts on this website, in particular, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta," "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma" and the links following that on "Sansāric Time Scale," and "Evidence for Rebirth," and "Why is Correct Interpretation of Anicca. Dukkha, Anatta so Important?." It may be even helpful for many to scan through many other posts before reading those posts.

- That is a lot of reading. But "this world" of 31 realms is very complex. Please keep re-reading all posts until you understand the message. Most of these concepts have been hidden for thousand years, and have been badly distorted, especially anicca and anatta. Think about the fact that all biological matter is constituted from just four bases of DNA, and all computer codes are based on two units, $\mathbf{0}$ and 1 . Thus, one could see how complex the "whole existence" with 31 realms is when there are 28 types of $r \bar{u} p a, 89$ types of citt $\bar{a}$ and 52 types of cetasikas are involved!

4. The main conclusion from anicca, dukkha, anatta is "asarattena anatta," i.e., "anatta in the sense of it is fruitless to crave for anything in this world." Thus the Buddha said, "anissitoca viharathi, na ca kinci loke upadiyathi," i.e., "There is nothing in this world that is fruitful, there is nothing to be craved."

- People "behave badly" in order to "get what they perceive to be valuable." All immoral acts are done to "get what we want." We crave for something and greed arise, and then when we don't get what we wish for, we get angry and hate arises. We first think bad thoughts (mano sañkhāra), then follow through with bad words (vacī sañkhāra), and bodily action (kaya sañkhāra). We do all this because we do not have an understanding of the true nature of the world, i.e., anicca, dukkha, anatta, and related facts: knowledge of the rebirth in a wider world of 31 realms with suffering. Thus we do all other bad acts with established wrong views (niyata micchā ditṭhi); see, "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)."

5. Now let us see what happens when one starts learning the true nature of the world including anicca, dukkha, anatta, and ALSO the consequences of immoral actions: Then one thinks, "Is it worthwhile to steal from someone to get what I want, which in the end will do me more harm than good (because those will not provide any permanent happiness, AND one has to pay the price of an immoral action if not in this life but in upcoming lives?)."

- Same for any other immoral act: to hurt someone by, uttering false, slandering, harsh, or frivolous speech; stealing, killing, or engaging in sexual misconduct (hurting other parties involved). AND all those start with covetousness, ill-will, and all those are done because of established false views that fruitful things can be had in this world by hurting others without any bad consequences for oneself.

6. Thus when one is about to think of doing such a bad deed or having bad thoughts, this "clear vision" or samm $\bar{a}$ ditṭhi will help get rid of such thoughts and instead think, "this person is in the same boat, struggling to survive in a world setup for failure." Thus instead of bad thoughts one will have thoughts of fellowship and compassion for other beings.

- Also one will be working to learn more Dhamma and will be constantly thinking about Dhamma concepts like anicca, dukkha, anatta; the joy from deeper understanding will provide incentive to dig deeper on concepts that are not clear. Thus Sammā Ditṭhi leads to the next step in the Noble Eightfold Path: Sammā Sañkappa.

7. With such a mindset one will avoid the four forms of bad speech (lying, slandering, vicious talk, vain talk), because one realizes that such acts will only lead to loss of peace of mind as well as hurting others. Thus one will start living with Sammā Vaca; also see, "Right Speech - How to Avoid Accumulating Kamma."
8. Similarly, one will clearly see that there is no point in engaging in immoral bodily acts (killing, stealing, and sexual misconduct) in order to get some temporary satisfaction, which in the end will come back to haunt oneself with magnified bad consequences. This will AUTOMATICALLY guide one to act in a moral fashion, i.e., one will have Sammā Kammanta.
9. In standard texts, it says one will not undertake the five lifestyles that are to be avoided:
(a) Dealing and killing animals for meat trade.
(b) Dealing in poisons.
(c) Dealing in weapons and arms.
(d) Dealing in slave trade and prostitution.
(e) Dealing in intoxicants or liquors and drugs.

- Sammā ajiva is more than that. Thus one's lifestyle will automatically change to not only moral living, but also to avoid any kind of act which will be harmful to oneself and/or others. One will take care of one's responsibilities towards one's family and the society, because otherwise one will get in deeper debt, and will not have the mindset to contemplate; see, "Kamma, Debt, and Meditation."
- Following the Path is much more than just abandoning everything and becoming a bhikkhu or just following some guidelines or precepts. It needs to be done with wisdom gained through learning Dhamma. This is Samma ajiva.

10. As one feels the benefits of such a lifestyle, one will start feeling the nirāmisa sukha (see, "Three Kinds of Happiness - What is Nirāmisa Sukha?)." Then one will be motivated to stay on that Path, and also to learn more about the Buddha Dhamma and to contemplate more on the Three Characteristics (one is said to have a complete understanding of anicca, dukkha, anatta only when one reaches the Arahanthood or full NIbbana). This renewed effort is Sammā Vayama.
11. The above six factors will make one's mind purified and one will start "seeing" better. One will start working with "yoniso manasikara" (clear vision). It is more than clear thinking; even a master thief plans his work with clear thinking (on the wrong side).

- Here what it means is one always looks at any issue with anicca, dukkha, anatta in the mind: that it is not possible to maintain things to our satisfaction in the long run; that the more we attach either via greed or hate, the more we will suffer; that it is unwise to do immoral things for temporary happiness to become helpless at the end. This is Samma $\operatorname{Sati}$.

12. When one starts meditating (and this does not have to be last; one can start slowly from the beginning), one will be easily able to get to Sammā Samādhi, focused attention (ekaggata). The more one proceeds on the Path (i.e., the more the mind becomes purified), easier samādhi starts to grow in oneself;; one starts feeling a "lightness" even when not doing formal meditation.

- If one works on developing $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$, one will be able to get to Ariya jhānā. Whether one will be using meditation on the Three Characteristics, Satipatthāna, or any other other type of meditation, that will eventually lead to the four levels of Nibbāna.

13. It is important to realize that "Samma" in all these eight steps means "san" (adding things to perpetuate the suffering/rebirth process) + "ma" (remove or get rid of). Thus Sammā Ditṭhi is the vision (anicca, dukkha, anatta) that helps removing "san"; Sammā Sañkappa are the thoughts that help remove 'san"; Sammā Vācā is the kind of speech that helps remove 'san," etc.

- Thus, one adheres to the eight steps through the UNDERSTANDING of anicca, dukkha, anatta, and not merely for the sake of following some guidelines or precepts. One understands the futility of continuing this rebirth process.

Next, "Akusala Citta - How a Sotāpanna Avoids Apayagami Citta",

### 7.3.9 Difference Between Giving Up Valuables and Losing Interest in Worthless

1. As long as one considers something to be valuable, it is not easy to give it up, It does not matter what ANYONE ELSE says. One will go to much effort and expense to make sure it stays with oneself.

- But if one's own mind sees that something is useless and worthless, then what is the point of keeping it? One will gladly get rid of it.
- One's perception of the "world out there" and "what is valuable and what is not" depends on one's mind. Even though we look at a pile of feces with disgust, a dog or a pig may eat it with relish. And a dog does not have any cravings for gold or money.
- While some people gain pleasure by torturing animals, most are disgusted by such acts. It depends on the level of understanding. A purified mind will see things in a better perspective.

2. The common thinking about Buddhism goes like this: "The Buddha said that this rebirth process is full of suffering, and to stop the rebirth process we need to give up everything in this world to detach from it. But that is not easy to do. I like the stuff that I have and I enjoy life. May be I can attain Nibbāna in a future life."

- That is not a correct interpretation of what the Buddha said. The Buddha did say that "this rebirth process is full of suffering." He never asked anyone to give up anything that they had. His only advice was "learn the true nature of this wider world of 31 realms that is characterized by anicca, dukkha, anatta and realize the dangers in staying in it."
- If one truly understood the true nature of the world one's own mind will see the futility of hanging onto worldly things. Nekkhamma or "giving up" is not done forcibly, IT JUST HAPPENS when one comprehends the true nature of "this world."

3. If one understands the above few paragraphs, then one knows more about Buddha Dhamma compared to $90 \%$ of the "Buddhists." Even many Theravāda bhikkhus say, "May you attain Nibbāna after enjoying future lives in Deva realms", or "May you have much worldly pleasures and attain Nibbāna when the next

Buddha [Maitreya (Sanskrit), Metteyya (Pāli), Maithree (Sinhala)] appears in the world." They apparently do not comprehend the dangers in staying in the rebirth process.

- This is in sharp contrast with Buddha Gotama's last words, "appamadena sampadeta" or "strive diligently and comprehend "san" (and attain Nibbāna)", because this rebirth process is wrought with unimaginable dangers. Even if we live perfectly moral lives, we do not know what kind of kamma that we have done in past lives, and thus there is no way to guarantee a good rebirth unless one attains the Sotāpanna stage and makes those worst kamma bïja ineffective.
- This life of about 100 years is just a "blink of an eye" compared to trillions of years in future lives (unless one attains Nibbāna); but it is also unimaginably precious because we very rarely get a chance to be born human and most living beings are in the lowest four realms; see, "Rebirth - Connection to Suffering in the First Noble Truth."

4. Buddha Dhamma is all about PURIFYING one's mind so that the mind can grasp the true nature of this world. The only actions one needs to take are to live a moral life, gradually adhere to a lifestyle that avoids the ten defilements (dasa akusala), AND learn Dhamma, in particular truly understand anicca, dukkha, anatta. Everything else will fall into place.

- When one purifies one's mind, it becomes clear that the things that one believes to be valuable are not valuable at all, AND such cravings can bring so much suffering in the future. But one cannot take that advice coming from even a Buddha and act on it forcibly; ONE'S MIND HAS TO SEE IT.
- One may take many precautions to safeguard a "gem" that one thinks has much value. But if the gem is assessed by an expert and is found to be worthless, then one will no longer have the same "attachment" for the "gem" and may throw it away. But until the perception is there in the mind that the "gem" is valuable, one will not part with it.

5. There is another aspect of this forcibly giving up. In addition to the fact that one will be under stress if one tries to do that, one may be accumulating bad kamma vipāka if one acts irresponsibly. For example, if one decides that he needs to become a bhikkhu and abandons his kids and wife, that is an unwise thing to do.

- We have to act mindfully and with wisdom, making sure that we do not hurt ourselves, our families, or anyone else. Buddha Dhamma is all about the mind, and not about mechanically doing meaningless rituals. As we discussed in several posts, it is the intention and the enthusiasm for doing good, that really matters.
- One can progress all the way up to the $A n \bar{a} g \bar{a} m \bar{l}$ stage of Nibbāna as a "householder", i.e., while fulfilling one's responsibilities as a husband/wife, parent, etc. While one should certainly give to charity, one needs to make sure that there is enough left to support one's family. And it is not possible to contemplate or meditate if one has to worry about the next meal or a place to stay.

6. As one makes progress, giving up will happen automatically at the level of one's understanding, and as needed. One does not have to make plans in advance about what to give up or anything like that: "Dhammo ha ve rakkati dhamma cari", or "Dhamma will guide and protect those who follow the Path." As the mind becomes clear of the hindrances, one will make better decisions, and will not hurt anyone in the process.
7. About 20 years after the Buddha attained Enlightenment, he had to start adding "vinaya rules" for the bhikkhus. When Buddha Dhamma started flourishing, many unscrupulous people started to enroll as bhikkhus to enjoy "a good life." The Buddha admonished that such bhikkhus accumulate much bad kamma by getting indebted to those people who make offerings out of saddhā.

- Vinaya ("vi"+"naya" where "naya" means debt) means stay free of debts. The bhikkhus can do that by diligently pursuing Nibbāna and also by explaining Dhamma to those people, while making sure not to abuse their privileged life where they are honored for these very acts.

8. Getting to debt is bad for lay people too. All our current responsibilities have their origins in the past where we became indebted to others. It may take a while to comprehend this, but we are really paying off debts to
even our kids. And if we do not do a good job of it, we WILL have to do it in future lives. Any other relationship is the same way; see, "Kamma, Debt, and Meditation."

- One time a bhikkhu started sharing his food from the alms round with his parents, and other bhikkhus complained to the Buddha. The Buddha asked why he did that he said his parents had become beggars and that is why he did that. The Buddha praised that Bhikkhu and officially endorsed it as a vinaya rule, that bhikkhus can take care of their parents if the need arose. Even as a Bhikkhu, one is obliged to take care of one's parents.

9. When someone gets help from another, it is the obligation of the receiver to show his/her gratitude for that kindly act, by doing a pattidana or "giving merits" to that person; see, "Transfer of Merits (Pattidana) - How does it Happen?." If the receiver becomes able to pay back in kind, that should be done too.

- When we deal with people in everyday life, we are engaged in paying back debts even unknowingly. Thus it is a good idea to fulfil one's responsibilities to the best of one's ability. This applies to most everyday things we do. Our employment responsibilities needs to be done to the best of our ability. When we do not fulfil our responsibilities anywhere, we stay indebted and accumulate more debt with interest.
- When doing transactions, we need to make sure that everyone is compensated adequately; otherwise, such debts will have to be paid in the future. Again, intention and the "state of mind" are key factors: We may be able to fool other people, but we cannot fool our own minds.
- We have enemies because we have had conflicts with them before. And someone has to break that vicious cycle. This is why the Dhammapada verse, "na hi verena verani...." says: "Hatred never ceases through hatred, but through love alone they cease." This is an eternal law.

10. Beings in the lower four realms DO NOT HAVE an advanced mental state to affect their future even short term, i.e., in this life; they are simply paying off debts and paying for their immoral acts in the past . They just "go with the flow" spending kammic energy that has been accumulated; unless they are fortunate to receive the benefits of a "good kamma beeja" from the past (when they were in higher worlds) at the time of death, they are stuck in the lower realms.

- On the other hand, HUMANS CAN totally change their future, within this lifetime (mundane progress), but also affect the future lives: If one wants to avoid the niraya (hell) one needs to remove the causes that could cause rebirth in niraya, i.e., deep hate. If one wants to avoid rebirth as a hungry ghost (peta loka), then one need to remove causes for that, i.e., excessive greed. If one does not want to be reborn an animal one needs to remove both greed and hate. To avoid birth as an asura, one needs to take care of oneself, and not depend on others.

11. Buddha Dhamma is a complete theory on existence. EVERYTHING can be explained in a systematic way. If everyone can grasp the basic message of the Buddha, our world will be much safer place.

- When a tree is growing all we need to do is to water it, provide nutrients, and generally take care of it; the fruits from the tree will come out naturally. No amount of praying or wishing is going to get the tree to give more fruits. In the same way, when we follow the Path correctly, everything else will "fall into place." There is no need to pray or to make wishes or do anything else.
- This world, for all its drawbacks, plays by the rules. Things just do not happen; they happen due to causes. When one understands the causes for bad outcomes, one can work to stop such causes and make sure bad outcomes NOT TO ARISE in the future; this is the meaning of the "nirodha" (="nir" + "udā," where "nir" is stop and "udă" is arising; thus "stop from arising").

12. The real message of the Buddha is that spending one's whole life in making mundane progress is really insignificant in the sansäric time scale; why spend all that time to achieve a high status, earn a billion dollars, or anything else mundane if one has to leave all that behind within $\mathbf{1 0 0}$ years? We have done this over and over countless times. This rebirth process can run into many more trillions of years into the future and this larger world of 31 realms is wrought with unimaginable dangers.

- The ultimate solution is to stop the rebirth process (eliminate causes for future rebirths), and to release the mind from the material body that leads to much suffering.
- Thus the key message of the Buddha was to "attain the suffering-free Nibbāna by eliminating the causes for rebirth: greed, hate, and ignorance."
- But that message itself can only be grasped via purifying one's mind to a certain extent by learning about the true nature of the wider world of existence: anicca, dukkha, anatta.

Also see, "The Way to Nibbāna - Removal of Āsavas," "Nibbāna - Is It Difficult to Understand?," and "What are Rūpa? (Relation to Nibbāna)."

### 7.4 Sotāpanna Stage of Nibbāna

The first stage of Nibbāna - the Sotāpanna stage - is also called the Stream Enterer in English and Sovān in Sinhala.

- The Sotāpanna Stage
- Why a Sotāpanna is Better off than any King, Emperor, or a Billionaire
- Myths about the Sotāpanna Stage
- Anuloma Patiloma Paticca Samuppāda - Key to Sotāpanna Stage
- Sotāpanna Anugāmi and a Sotāpanna
- Sotāpanna Anugāmi - No More Births in the Apāyā
- Four Conditions for Attaining Sotāpanna Magga/Phala
- Sotāpatti Anga - The Four Qualities of a Sotāpanna
- Sammā Ditthi - Realization, Not Memorization
- How Does One Know whether the Sotāpanna Stage is Reached?
- Assāda, Ādīnava, Nissarana
- Assāda, Ādīnava, Nissarana - Introduction
- How Perceived Pleasures (Assāda) lead to Dukkha
- Kāma Guna, Kāma, Kāma Rāga, Kāmaccandha
- Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways
- Feelings: Sukha, Dukha, Somanassa, and Domanassa
- What is "Kāma"? It is not Just Sex
- Kāma Āsvada Start with Phassa Paccaya Vedanā or Samphassa Ja Vedanā
- Sakkāya Ditthi is Personality (Me) View?
- Akusala Citta - How Does a Sotāpanna Avoids Apayagami Citta
- What is the only Akusala Removed by a Sotāpanna?
- Udayavaya Ñāna
- Udayavaya (Udayabbaya) Ñāna - Introduction
- Nibbatti Lakkhana in Udayavaya Ñāna
- Āhāra (Food) in Udayavaya Ñāna
- Udayavaya Ñāna - Importance of the Cittaja Kaya


## Topics belonging to other section:

- Micchā Ditthi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage - (in the "Mental Body - Gandhabba" section).
- 12. Key Factors to be Considered when "Meditating" for the Sotāpanna Stage (in the "Bhāvanā (Meditation)" section).
Also, see the following posts in the Abhidhamma section for more details (these could be helpful
even if you have not studied Abhidhamma):
- Why do People Enjoy Immoral Deeds? - Ditthi is Key
- Key to Sotāpanna Stage - Ditthi and Vicikicchā


### 7.4.1 The Sotāpanna Stage

Revised February 24, 2020; August 15, 2020; major revision October 21, 201
It is imperative to learn the correct Dhamma from an Ariya to attain the Sotāpanna stage (one of the four requirements). See, "Four Conditions for Attaining Sotāpanna Magga/Phala." We will discuss an analogy for the Sotāpanna stage in that regard. We will briefly discuss Sabbāsava Sutta to show the importance of removing wrong views to get to the Sotāpanna stage.

## Upaddha Sutta (SN 45.2) - Need to Know the Correct Buddha Dhamma From a Noble Friend

1. According to the "WebLink: suttacentral: Upaddha Sutta (SN 45.2)" once, Ven. Ananda told the Buddha that he thinks half ("upaḍ̣hamidamं..") of the factors contributing someone getting to Nibbāna (by completing the brahmacariya) can be attributed to association with a Noble Friend (kalyānamittā.) Here, "kalyāna" means to "help remove defilements," and "mitta"" is a friend.

- But the Buddha explains that not just half, but the FULL contribution ("sakalamevidaim..") comes from a kalyānamittatā. Of course, the Buddha is the best kalyānamittā.
- The reason is clear. Buddha $\mathbb{D}$ hamma is never known to the world until discovered by a Buddha. An average human can learn about it ONLY from a Buddha or a true disciple of a Buddha who has also understood that Dhamma.
- However, the guidance is REQUIRED only to understand this "new worldview" that has never been known to the world. That means once getting to the Sotāpanna stage, a human would understand the Eightfold Noble Path and how to follow it to bet to the Arahanthood.
- That is why getting to the Sotāpanna stage is the same as getting to lokuttara Sammā Diṭthi, not just mundane Sammā Dittthi. Mundane Sammā Ditt thi would enable one to live a "moral life." In contrast, lokuttara Sammā Diṭthi enables one to attain Nibbāna. See, "
- Just by understanding the "new worldview," a large number of defilements (āsava/anusaya) are removed from the mind and that is referred to as "dassanā pahātabbä" (removal with vision) in the Sabbāsava Sutta (see below.)
- We can use the following mundane analogy to help explain the above idea.


## An Analogy for Sammā Ditṭhi (attaining the Sotāpanna Stage)

2. Suppose a man $(\mathrm{X})$ lives in an area usually full of sense pleasures. But there are occasional flooding, droughts, and also Earthquakes. When such calamities occur, he gets distraught, and thus, his mind is not at ease most of the time.

- Yet, he has accumulated some wealth, and he believes that "everything will be OK" in the long run in the back of his mind.

3. Then, one day, an old friend (who has been on travel for many years) comes back and tells him that the reason he left was to find a better place to live. The friend says that he did some research and found out that this land is inherently unstable, and within several years, an Earthquake will destroy this area.

- Furthermore, he says that he found a very prosperous place and that there are no worries about flooding, drought, or Earthquakes. But it is a long journey to that place.

4. X tells the friend that he had heard about such beautiful places from other people before. He had followed them at times, but every time came back after trekking for some time because he could not see any benefit. Plus, he says, "how do I know what you say is right? I know that everything is not perfect here, but can you show evidence for your theory that there will be a big Earthquake? Also, how can I believe you that this place you found is so wonderful?"
5. The friend shows him all the evidence that he had gathered why this area is unsuitable for living in the long run. He also shows evidence about the prosperity of the new place and also describes the travel path.

- The evidence is compelling, and X decides to follow the friend's advice and see what happens. That is analogous to becoming a Sotāpanna Magga Anugāmi.

6. X spends a lot of time reading about and contemplating all the evidence. Then he begins to realize that what the friend is saying is true. He decides to take an exploratory trip and makes suitable preparations, as suggested by the friend.

- Once in a while, he wonders whether all these preparations will be a waste of time. But as he keeps on assessing the evidence, he becomes more and more convinced that he needs to take that trip.

7. Then X starts on the trip and is encouraged by seeing some "landmarks" that the friend told him. Even though once in a while he thinks about all the "pleasures" he could have had if he stayed home, these "landmarks" encourage him to go further and then reaches one of the four "major stopovers" that the friend mentioned.

- At a certain point on the way, he becomes fully convinced about his friend's conclusions. Now there is no going back for him. That is like getting to the Sotāpanna stage.


## The Way to the Sotāpanna Stage

8. The key here is that without knowing about the Buddha's world view (31 realms of existence and the suffering in the four lower realms, see "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma"), one does not comprehend the "samsaäric suffering." Most suffering incurs when one is born in any of the four lowest realms. That is important because it is possible that (especially young and wealthy people) may not experience that much physical and mental suffering. And to have faith in the Buddha's worldview, one needs to spend some time examining the evidence for it.
9. When one sees why it is not fruitful to stay in "this world" of 31 realms, they have understood the true nature, the three characteristics anicca, dukkha, anatta, of "this world."

- Sammā Ditṭhi is the realization that there is nothing "substantial" to be had by staying in "this world." This clear vision concludes that there is no point in doing immoral things (those that cause rebirth in the four lower realms).

10. We strive to gain or own "things" in this world because we perceive that we can achieve happiness eventually; this is sakkāya ditṭhi or sathkāya ditṭhi (both "Sakka" and "sath" mean "good" or fruitful, and "kāya" means "kriya" or actions. Dittthi means views. Thus, sakkāya ditṭhi is our wrong idea that our efforts to acquire "things" or "seek happiness" are beneficial and fruitful.

- When one truly understands anicca, dukkha, anatta, this wrong view goes away. One realizes that nothing we do can lead to permanent happiness "in this world."

11. Furthermore, for one who has seen anicca, dukkha, anatta, the mind does not allow serious wrongdoings (vici+ ki+icca $=$ liking for wrong actions or things) that could lead to birth in the lower four realms.

- There is no doubt regarding the "world vision" that they realized. Thus vicikicchā, or the liking for unfruitful and harmful actions, is removed at the Sotāpanna stage.

12. Therefore, one needs to contemplate the true nature of the world. It is done by purifying the mind and cannot be done just by following certain rituals, such as just obeying precepts on certain days.

- Thus the idea of "silabbata parāmāsa" or "Nibbāna can be attained by following rituals" goes away at the Sotāpanna stage. One realizes what the Buddha said by "samivaraṭthena silam.."
- Unbreakable "sill" (or moral behavior) comes with the correct vision/view. That must be monitored at ALL TIMES, not by "observing precepts" for a day or several days.

13. For one who has become "dassanā sampanno" (one with clear vision), the mindset changes not by following formal procedures. The change of perspective comes by understanding the futility of breaking any precepts or wrongdoings. Even if one does a wrong act, he would immediately realize it and avoid it in the future.
14. This is not to discourage people from observing precepts as a formality. Even mechanically observing those precepts is good to do. It is also a good habit to instill in children. It is customary in Buddhist countries for whole families to go to the temple and observe "pañca sīla" (five precepts) or "aṭthañgika sìla" (eight precepts) on Poya (Full Moon) days.

## Key Points from the Sabbāsava Sutta (MN 2)

15. The key to attaining Nibbāna is to remove the $\bar{a} s a v \bar{a}$ (residue from the fermentation of immoral thoughts/habits over many samsāric births). In the Sabbāsava Sutta, the Buddha listed seven steps to remove the $\bar{a} s a v \bar{a}$ and to purify the mind, thus paving the way to Nibbāna. The seven steps are:
16. Removal by clear vision ("dassana pahātabbā," where dassana is vision and pahātabba $\bar{a}$ is removal). That is a clear understanding of anicca, dukkha, anatta.
17. Removal by the restrained use of the sense faculties ("saimvarā pahātabbā," where samivara is the disciplined use of the sense faculties: not to over-indulge in the senses).
18. Removal by good associations ("patisevanā pahātabbā," where sevana is an association: for example, with good friends and good deeds).
19. Removal by tolerance and patience ("adhivāsanā pahātabbā"). For example, even if tempted to steal because one is hungry, one should contemplate the consequences of stealing. There are ways to earn a living.
20. Removal by staying clear of "bad influences and environments" ("parivajjanā pahātabbā"). One needs to avoid bad friends, unwise locations for a living (due to floods, bad neighbors, etc.), avoid inappropriate times to go out, etc.
21. Removal by getting rid of certain things ("vinodanā pahātabbā"). One needs to get rid of immoral thoughts that come to mind, such as excessive sensory pleasure, hate, etc.
22. Removal by meditation ("bhāvanā pahātabb̄""). When one has a clear vision in \#1, it becomes apparent what to contemplate.

The clear vision is the first on the list. One should not undertake a journey without knowing the reason for the journey. Furthermore, one needs to understand how to get to the destination.

- In the same way, having a clear vision of the Buddha's worldview is a prerequisite for starting on the Noble Path. What is Nibbāna and how to get there? See, "Paticca Samuppāda, Tilakkhana, Four Noble Truths."
- There are four types of $\bar{a} s a v \bar{a}: k \bar{a} m a \overline{s a v a ~(c r a v i n g ~ f o r ~ s e n s e ~ p l e a s u r e s), ~ d i t ̣ t h a ̄ s a v a ~(c r a v i n g s ~ d u e ~ t o ~}$ wrong views), bhavāsava (craving for existence), and avijjāsava (cravings due to ignorance).

16. A Sotāpanna removes the diṭthāsava through clear vision. Once one understood the true nature of "this world" by contemplating anicca, dukkha, anatta, one would not commit any immoral acts to gain anything
in "this world." See, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta." That alone saves one from future rebirths in the lower four realms.

- A Sotāpanna still has the other three $\bar{a} s a v \bar{a}$ left. Those are removed mainly by the meditation on the Satta Bojjhañga (seven Bojjhañga.)
- After attaining the Sotāpanna stage, one sees the Path to Nibbāna (and how to MEDITATE to get to Nibbāna.) That is "bh $\bar{a} v a n \bar{a} p a h \bar{a} t a b b \bar{a} "$ " in \#7 above. Then he diligently follows the Path and reaches the following three stages, culminating in Nibbāna.
- As one can see, the other five steps (\#2 through \#6) listed in the Sabbāsava Sutta are common sense things to do AT ANY TIME. They make sense at any stage. Anyone can use those steps to enhance the quality of life and remove any bad habits-for example, alcohol/ drug use or even overeating can be bad for health.


## A Sotāpanna Knows "What to Meditate On"

17. Many people start "meditating" even before understanding "what to meditate on." Of course, if one is doing "breath meditation," there is nothing to learn. It is an insult to the Buddha. Buddha's meditations help one to stop future suffering from arising. For that, one must first realize the unfruitfuilness/danger in remaining in this world (via the rebirth process.) See, "Paticca Samuppāda, Tilakkhana, Four Noble Truths."

- The Mahā Satipatṭhāna Sutta covers all seven steps in \#15 above in a somewhat different fashion. The correct $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p \bar{a} n a s a t i ~ b h a \bar{a} v a n \bar{a}$ (not the breath meditation version) covers those in a general way.
- As stated in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Ānāpānassati Sutta (MN 118)": "Evamं bhāvitā kho, bhikkhave, ānāpānassati evaì bahulīkatā cattāro satipaṭthāne paripūreti" or "Bhikkhus, that is

- Can "breath meditation" fulfill the Satipațthāna Bhāvanā? One needs to be a Sotāpanna to properly cultivate Ānāpānassati or Satipaṭthāna Bhāvanā (i.e., to have optimum results.)


## Why a Sotāpanna is Better off than any King, Emperor, or a Billionaire

## Revised August 5, 2022

Attaining the first stage of Nibbāna (Sotāpanna stage) will remove suffering in the apāyā forever, which could be more than billions or even trillions of years. This is not an exaggeration since we have been in this rebirth process from an untraceable beginning; see "Evidence for Rebirth." Thus any achievement in this life of 100 years is no match.

- Most people think that Buddha Dhamma is a pessimistic "religion." It is neither a religion nor a pessimistic one. Let us discuss these two issues a bit first.
- In the "WebLink: suttacentral: Cakkavattirāja Sutta (SN 55.1)" the Buddha stated that a Noble Person (above the Sotāpanna Anugāmi stage) is better than an emperor ruling the whole Earth (rāj $\bar{a}$ cakkavattī.) Let us discuss what that would be so.

1. Buddha Dhamma describes the true nature of "this world," which is far more complex than most people think.

- A religion promises that if one abides by its tenets/doctrine and lives this life accordingly, one will be rewarded accordingly. In most religions, one is promised birth in heaven for eternity if this is kept.
- But a basic tenet in Buddha Dhamma is that this life of about 100 years is just a blip compared to the countless lives one has had in the past. Even if we live a perfect life during these 100 years, that does not guarantee anything about our future lives because we may have done kamma in PREVIOUS LIVES that could give rebirth in even the lowest four realms, the ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$, including the niraya (hell).
- The only way to GUARANTEE that one will NOT be reborn in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$ is to negate the causes (lobha, dosa, moha) that could give opportunities for all such bad kamma vipāka to come to fruition. And that is possible only via attaining the Sotāpanna stage. Even though attaining the Arahant stage of Nibbāna via complete removal of lobha, dosa, and moha (and thus the ten sanyojana or fetters) will do that too, attaining the Sotāpanna stage does not require all that. It just requires one to comprehend anicca, dukkha, and anatta to the extent that only three sanyojana (fetters) are removed.
- Removal of three (or ten) sanyojana cannot be achieved via following set rules/precepts. One needs to purify one's mind so that the true nature (anicca, dukkha, anatta) of this complex world of 31 realms is understood. That is why Buddha Dhamma is not a religion per standard definition.
- On the other hand, if one just wants to take what is helpful to lead to moral life and use Buddha Dhamma as a religion, there is nothing wrong with that. That would be much better than living an immoral life. Dhamma will become clearer as one proceeds, providing the incentive to "dig deeper."

2. Now to the second issue: Because the Buddha emphasized the "suffering in this world," many think Buddha Dhamma is pessimistic. The Buddha did not say that this current life is necessarily filled with suffering (even though it has more suffering than people realize); rather, most suffering is encountered in the lowest four realms of the 31 realms. Thus, this reality of suffering is to be understood in the context of this wider world view. The Buddha just discovered the true nature of the (more complex) world.

- Furthermore, he showed how to be free from this inevitable suffering in future births and to attain permanent happiness, Nibbāna.

3. Please re-read the above material on those two key points. It is important to look at this "wider world view" when assessing what we should strive for in this life. This analysis leads to a whole new perspective if there is evidence to believe the "wider world view" of the Buddha with repeated rebirths in 31 realms, including the four $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$ with unimaginable suffering.

- Does it make sense to spend 60 years of an 80-100 year life to accumulate wealth and fame if one is to lose most of one's sensory enjoyments over the last few decades (and possibly have a major disease or memory loss)?
- Does it make sense to accrue unimaginable suffering in the apāyā in future births by committing any of the dasa akusala (ten defilements) to make money, get a promotion, live in a big house, get a prestigious position, etc. (for less than 100 years)?
- The realities of old age, disease, and death hold for a king, emperor, billionaire, or famous film star just the same as for an average person. In old age, all these achievements become a mental burden because one constantly thinks about the "good old days" and become depressed about not being able to enjoy the sensory pleasures just because the whole sensory system is breaking down.
- Here is a video that summarizes what I tried to explain the above paragraph :


## WebLink: YOUTUBE: Aging Stars of the Golden Age

4. And this predicament is true for ANY being in ANY realm unless at least the Sotāpanna stage is attained. A deva or a Brahma could enjoy millions of years of pleasurable lives but WILL end up in the apa $\bar{y} \bar{a}$ at some point in the future unless at least the Sotāpanna stage of Nibbāna is attained. There are several incidents mentioned in the Tipitaka where the Buddha emphasized how important is the Sotāpanna stage compared to any existence in the 31 realms:

- One time the Buddha was crossing a paddy field with 500 bhikkhus where many cattle were grazing and smiled. A Buddha (or an Arahant) does not smile frequently, so Ven. Ānanda asked the Buddha why he smiled. The Buddha said, " each one of these has been the king of the devas at some in the past." Ven. Ānanda asked why that was a reason to smile. Then the Buddha said, "All these 500 bhikkhus, who are Sotāpannas or above, will never be born an animal. That is why I smiled."
- Another time the Buddha and Ven. Ānanda was walking and saw a piglet by the roadside, and the Buddha again smiled. Asked why, he said, "This piglet had been a princess in a life way back; she cultivated anāriya jhānā, attained the highest (eighth) jhāna, and had abhiñña powers. She was born in the highest Brahma world, but now she is just an animal. On the other hand, those who have attained the Sotāpanna stage in my sāsana will never be born in the apāyā." See "WebLink: tipitaka.net Dhammapada Verses 338 to 343 ." (Note that the background story uses "sow" for "piglet.")

5. Many people do not believe in rebirth. But having a belief will not help if it is a wrong view. Considering the possible dire consequences IF one gets this world view wrong, it makes a lot of sense to spend some time and critically examine the evidence for rebirth in particular (see "Evidence for Rebirth") and the wider worldview of the 31 realms in general (see, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma").
6. The niyata micchā dittthi (established wrong views) is one of the stronger ones of the dasa akusala that could lead to birth in the apāyā; the key word there is "niyata," or "established," ie., one firmly believes, for example, that there is no rebirth process. One could avoid this by at least having an open mind and NOT ruling out those possibilities. Even a Sotāpanna may not be truly convinced of some aspects of the wider world view (but not rebirth): for example, he/she may not have any strong conviction on the existence of deva worlds or may not even think about such matters.

- Another point to consider is how the standard world views have changed since the Buddha revealed his Dhamma about a complex world with no discernible beginning. Philosophers since that time (Socrates was a contemporary of the Buddha) put forth many world views that have been discarded one by one: WebLink: WIKI: Astronomy and cosmology
- Within the past 100 years, the Buddha's world view has gained much support from science and that pace is accelerating with the new string theories and quantum mechanics. With all these impressive advances science has made, it cannot account for $96 \%$ of the universe's mass; see WebLink: NASA: Dark Energy, Dark Matter and WebLink: WIKI: Dark matter. This is because there is so much that we cannot "see" with our eyes or even with the current scientific instruments; see, "Consciousness Dependence on Number of Dimensions."
- There are good reasons to believe that science will reveal more of these currently hidden aspects of the universe in the future. Just imagine that even a hundred years ago, scientists believed that the universe had only a few galaxies and was stable. Now we know that there are billions of galaxies in our universe, that there could be numerous universes, and all those are not stable, i.e., they are born and will perish in the future.
- Until recently, humans also had the wrong impression that the Earth is a special place in the universe. But now we know it is an insignificant "speck of dust" in a vast universe; see the video in "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma."

7. Please spend some quiet time contemplating these issues. These posts are not for reading pleasure; these are issues that have far more serious consequences than making a billion dollars. Some of my friends tell me I should "tone down" the content because the "realities of the world turn many people off."

But my goal is not to have a huge readership. Rather, if I could convey the Buddha's true message to even a few people, I would have accomplished my goal. There is ONLY ONE set of natural laws, and we cannot alter them, just like we cannot alter the laws of motion: If a car is headed to a brick wall, the car needs to be stopped, or the consequences will not be good. Let me give a few examples of how the Buddha assessed this situation:

- Some brahmins complained to the Buddha that he was not spending enough time debating them but would spend a lot of time with even a few of his disciples. The Buddha asked this question: "Suppose a farmer has three paddy fields: one is extremely productive, another is OK but requires considerably more time to yield a good harvest, and the third field is of such a poor condition it is impossible to get any harvest. Which field would the farmer put his efforts on? He will take care of the most productive field, disregard the third field, and spend whatever extra time he has on the second field. It is the same way
with me. I want to help those interested and capable of learning my Dhamma. Debating with those who have closed minds is a waste of time." See, "WebLink: suttacentral: Khettūpama Sutta (SN 42.7)."
- One day the Buddha and Ven. Ānanda walked for many miles to a village to deliver a discourse. Everybody gathered, and the Buddha sat there for a couple of hours without starting the discourse. Finally, a farmer who had lost a cow and was out in the forest looking for it found the cow, went home, took a bath, ate, and came hurrying to the event. The Buddha started the discourse right after he came in. When they were walking back after the discourse, Ven. Ānanda asked the Buddha why he kept everyone waiting until that one farmer came in. The Buddha said, "Ānanda, I walked all this way to give the discourse because of that farmer. I saw that he was capable of grasping the Dhamma, and he did attain the Sotāpanna stage."

8. The Buddha said, "This Dhamma is different from anything the world has ever seen." And that is true. It takes time to grasp the complexity of this world, much of which is hidden from us (and only a Buddha is capable of finding them; see "Dhamma and Science - Introduction"). There is no need to rush and embrace everything; one needs to spend time contemplating the validity of Buddha Dhamma.

- There are many introductory but critical posts in the "Moral Living and Fundamentals" section. That section is more about the basic concepts of Buddha Dhamma. I would encourage even those familiar with "Buddhism" to peruse that section because, without the correct basics, one cannot grasp more advanced concepts. And I am certain that $90 \%$ of "Buddhists" are not even aware of some of these basic concepts. Please comment on anything at this site and don't hesitate to point out incorrect concepts.

9. We can, in a way, compare this situation with the situation a parent faces with a teenager. The teenager wants to go out and have a good time with friends. But the parent says, "do not just think about the immediate pleasures. If you do not study well and get good grades at school, you will not have a good job when you grow up."

- It is the same here. We are trapped in a "rat race" to keep up with day-to-day pleasures and activities. The Buddha's message is that there is a much longer time to think about.
- This life is just a drop of water compared to the huge ocean that is the sansāric journey of rebirths. It is imperative to take some time and contemplate the "bigger picture." We may not get another chance of a human birth for millions or billions of years; this is NOT an exaggeration.

10. But the best part of the Buddha's message, which has been lost for over a thousand years, is that the nirāmisa sukha is better than any sensory pleasures. We are under the illusion that sense pleasures are to be pursued. If one can taste the happiness from staying away from sense pleasures, one will NEVER value the sense pleasures. Those who have experienced even anāriya jhānic experiences will have some idea of such nirämisa sukha.

- It is a feeling of huge release more than a pleasure in consuming tasty food, for example. And it is not temporary, especially if one can get to the Sotāpanna stage. Then that "base level" of relief is never lost, even in future births.
- When one starts on the Path by comprehending anicca, dukkha, and anatta, the sense of peacefulness, the release from stresses, is felt; that gives an incentive to stay on the Path even before attaining the Sotāpanna stage.
- The best part is the realization that one will never be born in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$. Any king, emperor, or billionaire, is not assured of that; on the contrary, the efforts to attain such temporary status may CAUSE one to be born in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$ if one engaged in dasa akusala to attain them.
- As Carl Sagan pointed out in the video in "The Pale Blue Dot........"," it is worthwhile to contemplate, "where are all those kings and emperors who gained fame through the suffering of so many people?." They will likely be in an apāya suffering for millions of years.

> Next, "Myths about the Sotāpanna Stage",

### 7.4.3 Myths about the Sotāpanna Stage

## Revised September 7, 2016; \#6 revised on December 2, 2016; September 28, 2018

There are many myths and misconceptions on who a Sotāpanna is, and what needs to be done to become a Sotāpanna. Here we discuss some of these misconceptions.

1. When I was growing up in Sri Lanka, I was under the impression that a Sotāpanna could fly through the air, and an Arahant could vanish and reappear as he/she wished. These were the "mythical" status assigned to Sotäpannas and Arahants. I guess that is due to the fact that such attainments are perceived these days to be impossible to be attained on the one hand and also a clear idea of what those attainments mean has been lost.

- One is unlikely to identify a Sotāpanna or even an Arahant if one has even been associating with that person.
- It is true that the attainment of even the Sotāpanna stage is not a trivial matter. And one cannot expect it to be trivial; see, "Why a Sotāpanna is Better off than any King, Emperor, or a Billionaire."
- A Sotāpanna is incapable of doing only six things: Killing mother, killing mother, killing an Arahant, injure a Buddha, Sañgha bheda (teaching adhamma as Buddha Dhamma), having niyata micchā diṭthi; see, "WebLink: suttacentral: Bahudhātuka sutta (MN 115)."

2. The attainment of supernormal powers such as flying through the air or to vanish and reappear is possible even by developing anāriya jhāna . Most of such attainments are lost at death (even though the ability to get them back will be easier if one is reborn human again).

- Attainment of various stages of Nibbāna are accomplished by cleansing one's mind and it has nothing to do with developing supernormal powers. Even though it will be much easier for an Arahant or a Sotāpanna to develop such powers, by the time one attains such levels of purity of the mind they are not enamored anymore with such supernormal powers. Most of the Arahants who had supernormal powers at the time of the Buddha had developed those before encountering Buddha Dhamma. For example, Ven. Sāriputta and Ven. Moggalana were vedic brahmins who had developed all anāriya jhānā and already possessed such powers before they met the Buddha.

3. Various stages of Nibbāna are attained by systematically removing the 12 types of akusala citta (immoral thoughts) or, put it in a different way, by removing the ten samyojana. There are other ways to describe those conditions too; see, "Conditions for the Four Stages of Nibbāna."

- The Sotāpanna stage is reached via removing the four lobha citta that are based on micchā dittthi (wrong vision), and the moha citta of vicikicch $\bar{a}$. It is important to note that the remaining 7 akusala citta including the two dosa-mūla citta are still with a Sotāpanna.
- The four lobha cittiā that a Sotāpanna removes are the ones that are responsible for vyāpāda, which is the strong version of anger that makes one eligible for rebirth in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$; see, "Akusala Citta How a Sotāpanna Avoids Apayagami Citta." The two dosa-mūla citta, which gives rise to milder versions of anger, are removed only that the $A n a \bar{a} \bar{a} m \bar{\imath}$ stage.
- Furthermore, kāma rāga (craving for sensual pleasures) is included in the other four lobha-mūla citta that are "ditṭhi vippayutta" or "not associated with wrong views." Thus craving for sensual pleasures is also removed only at the Anāgāmī stage.
- Therefore, attaining the Sotāpanna stage - while not trivial - is not as hard as many people think if one has a tihetuke upapatti. However, it is not possible to determine who has tihetuka or
 cannot attain magga phala or Ariya jhāna in this life, but still can make progress towards Nibbāna; see, "Patisandhi Citta - How the Next Life is Determined According to Gati."
- On the other hand, many people are focused on trying to get rid of the perception of "self." That is not something that can forced; it just HAPPENS at the Arahant stage. It is not possible to make that perception go away before that.

4. Turning to another myth, NO ONE ELSE can discern what magga phala one has attained: Sotāpanna or a higher stage of Nibbāna. Only a Buddha has that capability. Let me give an example to illustrate this point:

- One time, Ven. Sāriputta was giving instructions to a bhikkhu. The Buddha came along and told Ven. Sarputta that the bhikkhu had already attained the Arahantship and thus there is no need to give instructions to him. It turned out that the bhikkhu in question did not say anything to Ven. Sāriputta out of respect for him.
- Now, Ven. Sāriputta is only second to the Buddha in this Buddha Sāsana. He and Ven. Moggallāna were the two chief disciples: Ven. Sāriputta was second in knowledge to the Buddha and Ven. Moggallāna was second in psychic powers to the Buddha.
- Thus, if Ven. Sāriputta was not able to discern whether that bhikkhu was an Arahant, it is NOT possible for anyone living today to determine the stage of Nibbāna (Sotāpanna, Sakadāgāmī, Anāgāmī, Arahant) of any other person.
- One could be of any race or even religion and still be a jāti Sotāpanna (and, even that person may not be aware of it). If one had attained the Sotāpanna stage in previous life, he could in principle, be born anywhere in human or deva realms. Buddha Dhamma describes nature's laws; it applies to everyone the same way.
- Those people who attained various stages of Nibbāna during the early years had different religious beliefs. They sat down to listen to the Buddha and by the time the discourse was over, they had attained various stages of Nibbāna. Some people came to debate the Buddha and left as Sotāpannas. One does not need to formally become a "Buddhist" to realize the true nature of "this world."

5. This is why one has to be very careful when dealing with other humans, and not to offend anyone intentionally. It is very important to have at least some knowledge of the different weights of kamma; see, "How to Evaluate Different Weights of Kamma."

- Some people worry about inadvertently killing insects while cleaning the house, but do not think twice about saying a lie or a hurffil thing to a human. That is getting things backwards.
- The severity of the kamma depends on the "level of the being" that it is directed at. It is EXTREMELY difficult to get a human life; thus a human life could be millions times worth compared to any animal life. A Sotāpanna is at a more than thousand-fold higher level compared to a normal human, and the subsequent levels are even higher.
- There is no being in the 31 realms that is at a higher level compared to an Arahant. That is why killing an Arahant is a Anantariya pāpa kamma, i.e., it will bring extremely bad vipāka in the very next life. And it is not possible to say whether a given person is an Arahant by looking at that person, or even associating with him/her for a short time.

6. How does one discern whether one has attained, say, the Sotāpanna stage?

- A Sotāpanna does not attain Ariya jhānā coincident with the phala moment. There one's "lineage" (gotra) is changed from a normal human to a Sotāpanna at the gotrabu citta. A similar citta $v \bar{t} h i$ runs in attaining a $j h \bar{a} n a$, but in a jhāna one's lineage is changed only to a jhānic state at the gotrabu moment; see, "Citta Vithi - Processing of Sense Inputs."
- However, if one who just became a Sotāpanna had developed any anāriya jhāna previously, then that $j h a ̄ n a$ could be easily converted to an Ariya jhāna with some practice. Unlike an anāriya jhāna, an Ariya jhāna cannot be broken even if one forcefully tries to generate a sensual/hateful thought. Thus, for someone who has had jhānic experiences this may be a clue.
- Also, if one can get into the fourth Ariya jhāna, that means one is at least a Sotāpanna; probably an Anāgāmū.
- Another way is to contemplate whether one is capable of doing any acts that could lead to rebirth in the ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$ (the four lowest realms). If one has ingrained characteristics or habits (gathi) of an animal, then it is likely that person will be born animal of that character. If one has extreme hate, and is capable of plotting to bring harm to other people, then that person may be destined to the niraya. If one does not have any of such extreme greed, hate, and ignorance, then one may be free of the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$, i.e., one is likely to be a Sotāpanna.
- However, unless one is subjected to extreme pressures, it may not be possible to discern whether one has removed such "apāyagāmī gathi." It is easier to live a moral life when one has enough resources and when nothing unexpected happens. But there are instances when perfectly "moral people" commit murders in a moment of rage.
- The Sotāpanna stage is attained purely via attaining Sammā Ditthi, and removing 5 of the 12 possible akusala citt $\bar{a}: 4$ lobha citt $\bar{a}$ associated with micchā ditṭhi and the vicikicchā citta that arises out out ignorance of the true nature of "this world." All these 5 citta are removed via just comprehending anicca, dukkha, anatta to a certain extent; see, "Akusala Citta - How a Sotāpanna Avoids Apayagami Cittas."
- Thus if one has any ESTABLISHED (niyata) wrong views (see, "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala) ${ }^{\prime}$ ), then it is unlikely that one is a Sotāpanna. Attaining the Sotāpanna stage is not possible until one sees the "unfrutiful nature" of existence anywhere in the 31 realms; and that is not possible if one has ruled out rebirth or the existence of other realms; see, "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)."
- Also see, "How Does One Know whether the Sotāpanna Stage is Reached?" for more details.

7. Many people believe it is necessary to meditate a lot to attain the Sotāpanna stage. While it is beneficial to meditate, one can in principle be a Sotāpanna without doing any FORMAL meditation. I have given some examples from the time of the Buddha in \#4 above; however, such cases are rare these days.

- There are basically two steps to get rid of lobha, dosa, moha or to attain Nibbāna: "Dassanena pahathabba" (removal by vision or the "ability to see") comes first; that is what is necessary to attain the Sotāpanna stage.
- However, in order to accomplish "Dassanena pahathabba" or "to see clearly", one needs to realize what the Buddha meant by "suffering", which comes in two types. This is described in detail - starting with the first type of suffering that can be eliminated in THIS LIFE - in the "Living Dhamma" section.
- Various stages of Nibbāna are attained as lobha, dosa, moha are removed in stages. One attains the Sotāpanna stage via "dassanena pahathabba" ie., one removes those 5 akusala cittā associated with "wrong views" via discerning the true nature of "this world of 31 realms", i.e., anicca, dukkha, anatta.
- Then, a Sotāpanna can remove the remaining 7 akusala citta in three stages via meditation, i.e., "bhavanaya pahathabba" and attain the higher stages Nibbāna.
- Of course, it is good to meditate before the Sotāpanna stage; it will be beneficial to calm the mind and to contemplate on anicca, dukkha, anatta. But the "bhāvan $\bar{a}$ " or meditation that is needed for the Sotāpanna stage cannot be restricted to formal meditation because moral conduct or "sīla" sets the necessary environment for the mind to "clearly see" by reducing pancanivarana; see, "Living Dhamma."

Next, "Why a Sotāpanna is better off than any King, Emperor, or a Billionaire",

### 7.4.4 Sotāpanna Anugāmi and a Sotāpanna

Revised July 27, 2017; January 15, 2018; September 22, 2018; September 26, 2018; February 3, 2019; February 13, 2019; January 28, 2020; April 13, 2020; August 11, 2021; July 18, 2022 (\#5 added)

Here we discuss the difference between a Sotāpanna and one striving for the Sotāpanna stage. The latter is on the right path (a Sotāpanna Anugāmi).

## Who Belongs to the Sañgha

1. The word sangha nowadays refers to the bhikkhus. Yet Sangha is "say" + "gha," or those who have either gotten rid of or are on the way to getting rid of "say." By that definition, one does not have to be a bhikkhu to belong to the sañgha; see, "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra or Samisāra."

In the salutation to the sañgha, they are referred to as "attha purisa puggalā." See. "Supreme Qualities of Buddha, Dhamma, Sañgha." Here, "attha" is eight, "purisa" does not mean male, but one with higher virtues and "puggalä" is a person. Thus there are eight types of people belonging to the sañgha. Who are the eight?

- There are four who have started on the Noble Path/fulfilled the conditions for the four stages of Nibbāna: Sotāpanna Anugāmi, Sotāpanna, Sakadāgāmi Anugāmi, Sakadāgāmi, Anāgāmi Anugāmi, Anāgāmi, Arahant Anugāmi, and Arahant. Four of those are in the Anugāmi stages (working toward a given stage,) and the other four have reached their respective stage.
- A special kamma and kamma vipāka happens for Noble kammä (efforts toward a given stage.) Once "what needs to be done" is fulfilled, the vipāka follows in the next citta within a second. Thus when one gets into the Sotāpanna magga citta, for example, one receives the Sotāpanna phala in the next citta. Thus one becomes a Sotāpanna in two consecutive thought moments.
- However, when one starts grasping the Tilakkhana (anicca, dukkha, anatta), one becomes a Sotāpanna Anugami (one on the way to attaining the Sotāpanna stage). Thus one becomes free of the apāyā. In later commentaries, they are also called "Cūla Sotāpanna" or a "junior Sotāpanna."


## Abhidhamma Explanation

2. The citta vīthi for a magga phala is discussed at the end of the post, "Citta Vithi - Processing of Sense Inputs":

B B B "BC BU MD P U A G Pa Fr Fr" B B B
[(B) Upaccheda (Arrest Bhavañga), (MD) Manodvāra Āvajjana (Mind Averting), (P) Parikamma (Preparation), (U) Upacāra (Close Proximity), (A) Anuloma (Conformity), (G) Gotrabu (Change of Lineage), (Pa) Path (magga), and (Fr) Fruit (phala).
$\bar{a}$ vajjana : 'advertence' of the mind towards the object, forms the first stage in the process of consciousness (s.viññaña-kicca). If an object of the 5 physical senses is concerned, it is called 'five-door advertence' (pañca dvārāvajjana); in the case of a mental object, 'mind-door advertence' (manodvārāvajjana).
parikamma: [nt.] arrangement; preparation; preliminary action; plastering.
upacāra : [m.] neighbourhood; preparative or preliminary action.]

- A Sotāpanna Anugāmi is getting closer to the "change of lineage" or G. The earlier stages of P, U, A, may be reached gradually. Once that level of comprehension is complete, one makes that transition (G), completes the lokuttara kamma, and immediately receives the phala.
- In a strict sense, it may be better to call one a Sotāpanna Magga Anugāmi (one trying to get to the magga citta) rather than Sotāpanna Anugāmi.
- The eight Noble Persons (Ariyā) are listed in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Pathama Puggala Sutta (AN 8.59)" and in "WebLink: suttacentral: Puggala Sutta (AN 9.9)." In both suttā, Sotāpanna Anugāmi is listed as "sotāpatti phala sacchikiriyāya pațipanno." One on the way to become an Anāgāmi is "anāgāmi phala sacchikiriyāya paṭipanno," etc. In the second sutta, a average human is a "puthujjano."


## The Eight Noble Persons

3. Thus it is clear that "attha purisa puggalā" consists of the eight Ariyā (Noble Persons) listed in \#1. They are Sotāpanna Anugāmi, Sotāpanna, Sakadāgāmī Anugāmi, Sakadāgāmī, Anāgāmī Anugāmi, Anāgāmī, Arahant Anugāmi, and Arahant.

- A critical point to note is the change from being an "average human" (puthujjana) to the Noble Person (Ariya) status. That transition happens at the "gotrabu" ("gotra" is the clan or lineage) before the Sotāpanna magga/phala transition. See the "Citta Vīthi for Attainment of Magga Phala" section at the end of the post, "Citta Vithi - Processing of Sense Inputs." Also, see "Sotāpanna Anugāmi - No More Births in the Apāyā."
- The types of $\bar{a} s a v \bar{a}$ eliminated at each stage are discussed at "The Way to Nibbāna - Removal of Āsavā."
- How lobha, dosa, moha, and also the ten fetters (samyojana) removed at each stage are discussed in "Relinquishing Defilements via Three Rounds and Four Stages."
- Both a Sotāpanna Anugāmi and a Sotāpanna would have "Sotāpatti Anga - The Four Qualities of a Sotāpanna."


## The Stages of Magga Phala

4. A Sotāpanna Anugāmi/Sotāpanna is someone who has seen Nibbāna, not the full Nibbāna, but a glimpse of it. One becomes a Sotāpanna Anugāmi when one removes avijjā (ignorance) about the actual status of affairs in "this world of 31 realms"; see \#5 below. With that understanding, their mind is purified to the extent that it will not allow them to do an immoral act that could lead to a birth in the four lower worlds (apāy $\bar{a})$. Not only that, but one will also not "latch onto" a kamma vipāka resulting from such a robust immoral act in the past. Thus, an Ariya above Sotāpanna Anugāmi will never be born in an apāya again.

The other three stages have similar "demarcation thresholds."

- A Sakadāgāmī will never again be born in the human or lower four realms. They can still be born in the deva worlds (i.e., in kāma loka.) But those devas do not have "flesh and blood" bodies that lead to physical discomforts and diseases. In the deva loka, beings have subtle bodies that are not subject to old age and diseases.
- An Anāgāmī has overcome any desire to be born anywhere in the kāma loka, i.e., the 11 lowest realms. They have no kāma rāga (desire for sense pleasures) or paṭigha (hate).
- An Arahant has no desire to be born anywhere in the 31 realms and thus will never be reborn "in this world." They have attained full Nibbāna, full release.

5. Subsection 1.1.55. Āsavakkhayañānaniddesa (toward the end of the "WebLink: suttacentral: 1.1. Ñānakath $\bar{a}$ (Ps 1.1)" section) of the Tipitaka Commentary "Pațisambhidāmagga" describes three types of $\tilde{n} \bar{a} n a$ attained on the way to the Arahanthood: "Anaññātañnassāmītindriyaì kati ṭānāni gacchati, anñ̄indriyam̀ kati ṭhānāni gacchati, aññātāvindriyaì kati ṭhānāni gacchati? Anaññātañnassāmītindriyam ekà̀ ṭhānaì gacchati-sotāpattimaggaì. Añ̃̃indriyamं cha ṭhānāni gacchati-sotāpattiphalaì, sakadāgāmimaggaì, sakadāgāmiphalaì, anāgāmimaggaì, anāgāmiphalaì, arahattamaggaì. Añ̃̄̄̄tāvindriyam ekaì ṭhānaì gacchati-arahattaphalaì."

- It says the following. The first ñaña is Anaññātañnassāmītindriya attained at the Sōtapanna Anugāmi stage. The second one, Añ̃nindriya, is attained and optimized at the intermediate six stages (sotāpattiphala through arahattamagga.) The third one, Añ̃̄ātāvindriya, is attained at the Arahant phala moment.
- Thus, something definitive occurs when one gets to the Sōtapanna Anugāmi stage.


## It Is a Step-by-Step Process

6. One must first hear the Buddha's real message before one can fulfill the conditions to attain the Sotāpanna stage. Thus, they need to go beyond the mundane eightfold path; see "Buddha Dhamma - In a Chart."

- In particular, a Sotāpanna Anugāmi (or Sotāpanna Magga Anugāmika or Sotāpanna Magga Anugāmi) has heard about anicca, dukkha, anatta (Tilakkhana), or the "true nature of this world with 31 realms." Of course, those concepts must come from a Noble Person who has grasped the basic idea.
- That is why the association with a "kalyāṇa mitta" or "kalyāṇa mitra" (basically a "Noble friend," i.e., an Ariya) is a pre-condition for attaining the Sotāpanna stage; see, "Four Conditions for Attaining Sotāpanna Magga/Phala."
- Once attaining the Sotāpanna anugāmi, one becomes a Noble Person (one of the atttha purisa puggala), and thus is free from the apāy $\bar{a}$, see "Sotāpanna Anugāmi - No More Births in the Apāyāa."


## Difference Between Sotāpanna Magga Anugāmi and a Sotāpanna

7. Let us take a simile to see this "demarcation" between Sotāpanna Magga Anugāmi and a Sotāpanna.

- Suppose that a precious treasure is known to be at the peak of a mountain. But it is not generally known where that mountain is. That is pretty much the status of Buddha Dhamma today. Most people know that it is valuable but they do not know what the correct version among the many different versions put forth today.
- As the Buddha said in his first sermon, "my Dhamma has not been known to the world before." Thus one needs a Buddha or a true disciple of Buddha to show them what Nibbāna is and how to get to the Sotāpanna stage. That is an essential and critical point.
- Suppose someone gets directions to the correct mountain with the treasure. Then they know which country to go to and which geographic location in that country the mountain is. This person is like one on the path to becoming a Sotāpanna, i.e., a Sotāpanna Magga Anugāmi. They know exactly where to go and have a detailed map. And they have to get it from a Buddha or a true disciple of a Buddha. A true disciple has at least seen the mountain (a Sotāpanna), if not been to the top (an Arahant).
- Now they make the journey to the country and region where the mountain is. On the way there, they can verify the landmarks given by the "friend" (an Ariya). Similarly, a Sotāpanna Magga Anugāmi spends time contemplating the newly learned concepts of anicca, dukkha, anatta, Paticca Samuppāda, etc.
- Thus, with confidence, the person gets closer and closer to the mountain and starts seeing the mountain at some point. At that point, the person has "crossed the boundary" to become a Sotāpanna. They have seen a glimpse of Nibbāna for the first time. Now they can complete the journey without any help, even if the physical map is lost (i.e., even in a future life).


## An Analogy

8. Going back to the simile of the mountain with treasure, different versions of "Buddhism" identify the mountain as being in different geographic locations. So people travel long distances and much effort to reach various mountains. All these are in remote places, and the journey is hard.

- Many people are wasting their time and effort targeting the "wrong mountain." So, how does one know which "mountain" or version to pick? That is why it takes effort to weed out the wrong/incompatible versions of Buddha Dhamma; see, "Why is it Critical to Find the Pure Buddha Dhamma?."


## Grasping the Anicca (Unfruitful) Nature of This World

9. In technical terms, one gets to the Sotāpanna magga/phala when one understands anicca, dukkha, and anatta (the three characteristics of this world or Tilakkhana) to a minimum level, where one begins to realize that there is nothing in "this world" that can provide meaningful and unconditioned happiness.

- When one comprehends anicca, dukkha, and anatta to the extent that one can "see" this concept, one is said to have the "anuloma ñäna." Here, "anu" means "through the understanding of Tilakkhana," "lo" means "craving for worldly things," and " $m a$ " means "removal," and thus "anuloma" means "removal of craving for worldly things to some extent via the comprehension of Tilakkhana."
- We came across "anu" also in "anupassanā"; see, "4. What do all these Different Meditation Techniques Mean?." In a previous post, I also discussed how "lobha" comes from "lo" + "bha" or "immersed in craving for worldly things."
- Thus it makes a huge difference if one incorrectly interprets anicca as "impermanence" and anatta as "no-self"; see, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta - Wrong Interpretations."

10. Suffering is prevalent in the lower four realms (apa$y \bar{a})$. We can see at least one of those, the animal realm. Let us discuss one way to contemplate anicca, dukkha, and anatta using an example from this life.

- When young, it seems like one can get anything one wants by working hard. But we all have seen how our parents, grandparents, or even famous people spent their old age suffering from various ailments, and finally dying helplessly.
- They may have "accomplished" many things. But they spend their whole lives working hard to achieve those, and then they have to leave it all behind.
- One may have a beautifil body when young, but for how long? We can see how that old movie star ages now. Some of them commit suicide because it is depressing to remember the "good old days" when one had all the attention in the world, but now it all seems to be slipping away.
- That is anicca and anatta. No matter how much we try, whatever we gain in this world lasts only a short time (in the sansäric time scale), and one becomes helpless in the long run. At some point, one realizes this and becomes distraught.


## One Creates One's Own Future Suffering

11. When one comprehends the true nature of this world, such sad thoughts do not arise. People who follow the Path and even those who have wisdom from previous lives (gati) can realize that "all things in this world" are subjected to this arising/destruction process. Beings come to existence and die. But those existence are "created" by oneself. See, "Origin of Life - One Creates One's Own Future Lives."

- That understanding itself leads to ease of mind. A stronger version of this "ease of mind" is the "anuloma khanti" that one experiences when attaining the "anuloma ñana" (pronounced "anuloma gnana"). [anulomikāya khantiȳ samannāgata (being of gentle and forbearing disposition)]
- The key to attaining the "anuloma ñāna" is to realize the fleeting nature of anything in this world. The next post discusses this.


## Anuloma Nāạa and Sammatta Niyāma

12. With the "anuloma ñāna," one realizes that permanently getting rid of suffering is impossible anywhere in the 31 realms. It can be achieved only by attaining Nibbāna. By this time, one has felt the nirämisa sukha, and thus one needs to cultivate, "etaim santaim etaim paṇitam...." the release one has felt, and the value of Nibbāna. Then one truly embarks on the Noble Eightfold Path and is said to get to "sammatta niyāma" and to Sotāpanna phala. [""etaì santaì etai் pan̄̄̀taì yadidamं sabbasañkhārasamatho sabbūpadhipaținissaggo taṇhākkhayo virāgo nirodho Nibbānan'ti." WebLink: suttacentral: AN 9.36: Jhānasutta, WebLink: suttacentral: AN 10.6 : Samādhisutta, WebLink: suttacentral: AN 3.32 : Ānandasutta, WebLink: suttacentral: AN 11.8 : Manasikārasutta, WebLink: suttacentral: AN 11.7 : Saññāsutta, WebLink:
suttacentral: AN 10.60 : Girimānandasutta] [It is peaceful, it is serene, the expelling of all sañkhāra, breaking of bonds, removing greed and hate; Nibbāna] [sammatta: [abstr. fr. samm $\bar{a}]$ the 'state of rightness', are the 8 links of the 8 -fold Path.]

- Therefore, it is critical to realize BOTH the unfruitful nature of this world with "anuloma $\tilde{n} a \overline{n a}$," AND to realize the value and cooling down due to Nibbāna, i.e., "sammatta niyāma."
- Further details in the post, "Anuloma Khanti and Sammattaniyāma - Pre-requisites for a Sotāpanna."

13. Thus it is critical to understand that Nibbāna is "nicca, sukha, atta," after realizing that this world is "anicca, dukkha, anatta." A Sotāpanna has understood both.

- Anything in this world (except nāmagotta) is a sañkhata, i.e., it comes into being due to causes, stays in existence for a time, and then inevitably is destroyed. The arising of a sankhata is called " $u d a y a$ " in Pāli, and the destruction is called "vaya." Thus, "udayavaya ñāna" is the knowledge about that process.
- Nibbāna is the only asañkhata. Removal of all causes leads to Nibbāna.
- Many people have even attained the Arahanthood without actually having heard about these terms like "udayavaya" or "anuloma." Thus it is imperative to realize that just reading about these concepts does not get one anywhere. One needs to "see" the Tilakkhaṇa or the unfruitfulness of craving for sañkhata (through sañkhāra) by true meditation or contemplation.
- Thus a Sotāpanna has the udayavaya (sometimes called udayabbaya) ñāna; see, "Udayavaya Ñāna."

Next, "Four Conditions for Attaining Sotāpanna Magga/Phala",

### 7.4.5 Sotāpanna Anugāmi - No More Births in the Apāyā

## February 11, 2019; revised February 12, 2019; September 4, 2019; April 12, 2020; major revision August 29, 2022

A human who attains a magga phala will never be reborn in an apāya (one of the four lowest realms). An Arahant will not be reborn in any realm. An Anāgāmī will be reborn only in a Brahma realm. A Sakadāgāmī is born only in a deva realm. A Sotāpanna only in deva or human realm. A Sotāpanna Anugàmi is also free of the apa$y \bar{a}$. Here, we discuss the evidence from the Tipitaka that is indeed the case.

## Eight Types of Noble Persons

1. The "WebLink: suttacentral: Patipanna Sutta (SN 48.18)" describes the eight types of Noble Persons:
"Pañcimāni, bhikkhave, indriyāni. Katamāni pañca? Saddhindriyamं ... pe ... paññindriyaìm-imāni kho, bhikkhave, pañcindriyāni. Imesaì kho, bhikkhave, pañcannaì indriyānaì samattā paripūrattā arahamं hoti, tato mudutarehi arahattaphalasacchikiriyāya patipanno hoti, tato mudutarehi anāgām̄̄ hoti, tato mudutarehi anāgāmiphalasacchikiriyāya paṭipanno hoti, tato mudutarehi sakadāgāmī hoti, tato mudutarehi sakadāgāmiphalasacchikiriyāya paṭipanno hoti, tato mudutarehi sotāpanno hoti, tato mudutarehi sotāpattiphalasacchikiriyāya pațipanno hoti. Yassa kho, bhikkhave, imāni pañcindriyāni sabbena sabbaì sabbathā sabbaì natthi, tamahaì 'bāhiro puthujjanapakkhe ṭhito'ti vadāmī"ti.

## Translated:

"Bhikkhus, there are five indriya (faculties): Saddhindriya, vīriyindriya, satindriya, samādhindriya, pañnindriya. Someone who has fully cultivated them is Arahant. One who developed them less is an Arahant Anugāmi. One who has even less is an Anāgāmī,.. Anāgāmī Anugāmī, ..Sakadāgāmī, ... Sakadāgāmī Anugāmi, ...Sotāpanna, ...Sotāpanna Anugāmi. Those who have not yet begun to cultivate the five faculties are ignorant humans (puthujjanabhūmiim) who are unaware of the true nature (Tilakkhaṇa).

- One on the way to becoming an Anāgāmī is "anāgāmī phala sacchikiriyāya pațipanno," etc. One on the way to become a Sotāpanna (or Sotāpanna Anugāmi) is "sotāpattiphalasacchikiriyāya patipanno."
- The eight Noble Persons (Ariyā) are also listed in other suttā too including "WebLink: suttacentral: Pathama Puggala Sutta (AN 8.59)" and in "WebLink: suttacentral: Puggala Sutta (AN 9.9)."


## Sotāpanna Anugāmi is Dhammānusārī or Saddhānusārī

2. An important way of classification of the Noble Persons (Ariy $\bar{a}$ ) relevant to our topic is given in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Tativasankhita Sutta (SN 48.14)":
"Pañcimāni, bhikkhave, indriyāni. Katamāni pañca? Saddhindriyamं ... pe ... paññindriyaìm-imāni kho, bhikkhave, pañcindriyāni. Imesamं kho, bhikkhave, pañcannaì indriyānaỉ samattā paripūrattā arahamं hoti, tato mudutarehi anāgāmī hoti, tato mudutarehi sakadāgāmī hoti, tato mudutarehi sotāpanno hoti, tato mudutarehi dhammānusārī hoti, tato mudutarehi saddhānusārī hoti. Iti kho, bhikkhave, paripūraì paripūrakārī ārādheti, padesaì padesakārī ārādheti. 'Avañjhāni tvevāham், bhikkhave, pañcindriyānı̄̀ti vadām $\vec{\imath} t t i$.

## Translated:

"Bhikkhus, there are five indriya: Saddhindriya, vīriyindriya, satindriya, samādhindriya, paññindriya. One who has fully cultivated them is an Arahant. One who developed them less is an Anāgāmī,.. Sakadāgāmī, ...Sotāpanna, ..dhammānusārī, ...saddhānusār̄̄, ."
3. From \#1 and \#2 above, we can see that a Sotāpanna Anugāmi is either a dhammānusārī or a saddhānusārī.

- This is confirmed in the following sutta, which also confirms that one MUST start comprehending the anicca nature to become a Sotāpanna Anugāmi.


## More on Dhammānusārī or Saddhānusārī

## 4. From the "WebLink: suttacentral: Cakkhu Sutta (SN 25.1)":

"Cakkhumं, bhikkhave, aniccam viparin̄āmi añnathābhāvi; sotaì aniccam viparināmi añ̃athābhāvi; ghānaì aniccaì viparin̄āmi añnathābhāvi; jivhā aniccā vipariṇāmi añnathābhāvī; $k \bar{a} y o$ anicco vipariṇāmi aññathābhāvi; mano anicco vipariṇāmī añnathābhāvī. Yo, bhikkhave, ime dhamme evaì saddahati adhimuccati-ayaì vuccati saddhānusārī, okkanto sammattaniyāmaím, sappurisabhūmim okkanto, vītivatto puthujjanabhūmimं; abhabbo tai் kammai் kātu்̇, yai் kammaï katvā nirayaì vā tiracchānayonim vā pettivisayaì vā upapajjeyya; abhabbo catāva kālaì kātumं yāva na sotāpattiphalaì sacchikaroti.

Yassa kho, bhikkhave, ime dhammā evai் paññāya mattaso nijjhānai் khamanti, ayamं vuccati: 'dhammānusārī, okkanto sammattaniyāmaì, sappurisabhūmim okkanto, vītivatto puthujjanabhūmim; abhabbo taì kammaì kātum, yaì kammaì katvā nirayaì vā tiracchānayonim vā pettivisayam va upapajjeyya; abhabbo ca tāva kālain kātumin yāva na sotāpattiphalam sacchikaroti'.

Yo, bhikkhave, ime dhamme evaï pajānāti evaï passati, ayaì vuccati: 'sotāpanno avinipātadhammo niyato sambodhiparāyano'"ti.

## Translated:

"Bhikkhus, cakkhu is of anicca nature, will cease to exist and is subject to unexpected change during its existence (same for sota, ghāna, jivhā, kāyo, mano).

- One who belives these phenomena are this way is called a faith-follower (saddhānusār $\bar{r}$ ). $\mathrm{He} / \mathrm{She}$ has entered the Noble plane (sammattaniyāmaì), has entered the realm of Noble Persons (sappurisabhūmimi), and transcended the realm of the humans who are unaware of the true nature (puthujjanabhūmim). He is incapable of doing any deed by which he might be reborn in hell, in the animal womb, or in the realm of hungry ghosts. A saddhānusār $\bar{\imath} \bar{i}$ is incapable of dying (separating) from that Noble birth until he realizes the Sotappanna stage (and thus eventually gets to the Arahant stage).

After pondering with wisdom, one who has accepted that these phenomena are this way is called a Dhamma-follower (dhammānusār $\bar{\imath}$ )..." (The rest is the same as for a saddhānusār $\overline{\mathrm{I}}$ ).

One who knows and sees that these phenomena are this way is called a Sotāpanna. He is never again to be born in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$, headed for the Arahanthood."

- Notes that 11 suttā (AN 25.1 through AN 25.10) state the same in various ways.


## Sotāpanna Anugāmi Would Not "Die" From Ariya Birth

5. Therefore, from the above sutt $\bar{a}$, we can make the following deductions:

- A Sotāpanna is never again to be born in the apāyā and is headed for Arahanthood.
- A Sotāpanna Anugāmi is either a dhammānusārī or a saddhānusārī.
- In \#4 above: "A saddhānusārī (or a dhammānusārī) is incapable of "dying" (separating) from that Noble birth until he realizes the Sotāpanna stage." That does not mean a Sotāpanna Anugāmi will attain the Sotāpanna stage within that lifetime. Once "born as a Noble Person" one will not die from that Noble birth, i.e., one WILL get to the Arahant stage without ever getting a rebirth in the apāyā.
- So, a Sotāpanna Anugāmi may be born many times a human until getting to the Sotāpanna stage (may even have many human bhava, each with many human $j \bar{a} t i)$.
- Once getting to the Sotāpanna stage, there would be only seven maximum number of "bhava" left, within which one WILL attain the Arahant stage.


## Who Have Avecca Pasāda?

6. Another sutta that provides more information is "WebLink: suttacentral: Pathamasaranānisakka Sutta (SN 55.24)." It is a long sutta, and a reasonably good translation at, "WebLink: accesstoinsight.org: Sarakāni Sutta: Sarakāni (Who Took to Drink)."

Here are the relevant verses, which again describe the types of Noble Persons:
(1). 'Mahānāma, take the case of a person endowed with unwavering devotion (avecca pasāda) to the Buddha (heva kho buddhe aveccappasādena samannägato hoti,) the Dhamma, the Sangha, and has attained the Arahanthood. By the destruction of defilements he has gained release through wisdom, in this very life. The man is entirely released from the hell-state, from rebirth as an animal. He is free from the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$.
(2). "Take the case of another man. He has unwavering devotion (avecca pasäda) to the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sañgha. He has wisdom but has not yet gained full release, but has destroyed the five lower samiyojana (an Anāgāmi). Upon death, he will be reborn spontaneously in a Brahma realm where he will attain Nibbāna without returning from that world. That man is also entirely released from the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$.
(3). "Take the case of another man. He has unwavering devotion (avecca pasāda) to the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sañgha. He has wisdom, but has not yet gained release. By destroying the first three samimojana $a n d$ weakening kāma rāga, patigha, and avijja, he is a Once-returner
(Sakad $\bar{a} g \bar{a} m \overline{\boldsymbol{u}}$ ), who will return once more to this $k \bar{a} m a$ loka. That man is entirely freed from the apāyā.
(4). "Take the case of another man. He is endowed with unwavering devotion (avecca pasäda) to the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha. He has the wisdom but has not gained release. By destroying three fetters, he is a Stream-Winner (Sotāpanna), not subject to rebirth in apāyā, assured of Nibbāna. That man is entirely freed from the apāy $\bar{a}$.

## Sotāpanna Anugāmi Does Not Have Avecca Pasāda

(5). 'Take the case of another man. He does not have unwavering devotion (avecca pasāda) to the Buddha (na heva kho buddhe aveccappasādena samannägato hoti,) the Dhamma, the Sañgha. He has not yet gained wisdom and has not gained release. But he has the following things to some extent: the faculty of faith, energy, mindfulness, concentration, wisdom (saddhā indriya, viriya indriya, sati indriya, samādhi indriya, paññā indriya). He understands with insight, at least moderately, the dhamma of the Tathāgata. That man does not go to apāyā.
(6). "Take the case of another man. He does not have unwavering devotion (avecca pasäda) to the Buddha, the Dhamma, or the Sañgha. He is not joyous and swift in wisdom and has not gained release. But he has the following things to some extent: the faculty of faith, energy, mindfulness, concentration, and wisdom (saddhā indriya, viriya indriya, sati indriya, samādhi indriya, pañ̃̄̄̄ indriya). He understands with insight, at least slightly, the dhamma of the Tathāgata.. He too will not go to the apāy $\bar{a}$.

## Sotāpanna Anugāmī is Also Free of $A p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$

## 7. Note that in \#6 above, for each of the four magga phala:

"Ayampi kho, mahānāma, puggalo parimutto nirayā parimutto tiracchānayoniyā parimutto pettivisayā parimutto apāyaduggativinipātā."
"..That man is entirely free... from the apāya."

- For the last two types (Sotāpanna Anugāmi):
"Ayampi kho, mahānāma, puggalo agantā nirayamं agantā tiracchānayonimं agantā pettivisayamं agantā apāyaí duggatim vinipātaì."
"..That man does not go to the apāyā."
- Taken together with the statements in the sutt $\bar{a}$ discussed above, that means the following. A Sotāpanna Anugāmi is also effectively released permanently from the apāy $\bar{a}$.


## What is Avecca Pasāda?

8. A key phrase in many of the suttā is avecca pasāda. It is frequently translated as "unwavering devotion," as in the above translation. But it has a deeper meaning.

- Pasāda means a combination of 'trust, faith, reverence."
- That comes when one understands the deeper meanings in Buddha Dhamma. In particular, when one starts comprehending Tilakkhaṇa, one can begin to see the unfruitfulness AND danger in trying to seek happiness in this world of 31 realms.
- Then one starts losing cravings ("ava" + "icca") for worldly things. We remember that anicca is "na icca"; see, "Anicca - True Meaning." [avecca :[adv.] certainly; definitely; absolutely; perfectly; having known.]
- Therefore, avecca pasāda or "unwavering faith" is connected to realizing the anicca nature or the "unsatisfactory nature" of worldly things. That craving for worldly things leads to suffering (dukkha). And that in the end, leads to one becoming helpless (anatta), especially when born in the ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$.
- One establishes avecca pasāda or "unwavering faith" in the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sanggha, when one starts to comprehend Tilakkhaṇa.


## Four qualities of a Sotāpanna

9. Four qualities of a Sotāpanna are in all suttā in the WebLink: suttacentral: Sotāpatti Sainyutta (SN 55.1 $\sim 55.74)$ of the Saimyutta Nikāya (SN). The "WebLink: suttacentral: Brahmacarivogadha Sutta (SN 55.2)" has a concise statement about the qualities or qualifications of a Sotāpanna.
"Catūhi, bhikkhave, dhammehi samannāgato ariyasāvako sotāpanno hoti avinipātadhammo niyato sambodhiparāyaṇo.

Katamehi catūhi? Idha, bhikkhave, ariyasāvako buddhe aveccappasādena samannāgato hoti: 'itipi so bhagavā arahaì sammāsambuddho vijjācaraṇasampanno sugato lokavidū anuttaro purisadammasārathi satthā devamanussānaì buddho bhagavā'ti. Dhamme ... pe ... sañghe ... pe ... ariyakantehi sīlehi samannāgato hoti akhaṇ̣ehi ... pe ... samādhisam̀vattanikehi. Imehi kho, bhikkhave, catūhi dhammehi samannāgato ariyasāvako sotāpanno hoti avinipātadhammo niyato sambodhiparāyaṇo"ti.

## Translated:

A Sotāpanna, never again to be born in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$, has acquired four qualities:
(1). He has avecca pasāda in the Buddha, i.e., he understands the following verse. "Itipi so bhagav $\bar{a}$ arahaì sammāsambuddho vijjācaranasampanno sugato lokavidū anuttaro purisadammasārathi satthā devamanussānaì buddho bhagavā'ti."
(2). He has avecca pasāda in the Dhamma, i.e., he understands the following verse. "Svākkhāto bhagavatā dhammo sandiṭthiko akāliko ehipassiko opaneyyiko paccattaim veditabbo viñ̃̄̄̄h $\begin{gathered}t i . " ~\end{gathered}$
(3). He has avecca pasāda in the Sangha, i.e., he understands the following verse. "Suppatipanno bhagavato sāvakasañgho, ujuppaṭipanno bhagavato sāvakasañgho, ñāyappatipanno bhagavato sāvakasañgho, sāmīcippaṭipanno bhagavato sāvakasañgho, yadidaí-cattāri purisayugāni atṭha purisapuggalā, esa bhagavato sāvakasañgho āhuneyyo pāhuneyyo dakkhineyyo añjalikaraṇīyo anuttaramं puññakkhettaì lokassā’ti."
(4). He has the Ariyakantha sīla of the noble ones. It comes with penetrating wisdom and is unbreakable. It leads to samādhi.,
"Ariyakantehi sīlehi samannāgato hoti akhaṇ̣dehi acchiddehi asabalehi akammāsehi bhujissehi viññuppasatthehi aparāmatṭhehi samādhisamंvattanikehi."
"Ariyakantehi [with agreeable to the Ariyā] sīlehi [with ethical conduct] samannāgato [endowed with] [endowed with noble's ethical conduct] hoti akhandehi [unbroken] acchiddehi [impeccable or faultless] asabalehi [spotless] akammāsehi [unmarred] bhujissehi [liberating] viññuppasatthehi [praised by sensible people] aparāmaṭ!hehi [not mistaken] samādhisaïvattanikehi."

## Recital Is Not Enough

10. We note that those first three verses are the same as those in the supreme qualities of the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sañgha; see, "Supreme Qualities of Buddha, Dhamma, Sañgha."

- Therefore, those verses are not just for recitation. They must be recited with UNDERSTANDING before any serious meditation session.
- From \#4 and \#5 above, we see that one gets a "Noble birth" when attaining the Sotāpanna Anugāmi stage. A Sotāpanna Anugāmi is one of the "attha purisa puggalā."

The four qualities of a Sotāpanna are discussed in "Sotāpatti Añga - The Four Qualities of a Sotāpanna." [añga : [nt.] 1. a constituent part; 2. a limb; 3. quality.]

### 7.4.6 Four Conditions for Attaining Sotāpanna Magga/Phala

Revised March 22, 2016; Revised on September 22, 2017, June 28, 2019; November 4, 2021; November 25, 2021 (\#3); September 17, 2022

1. In many suttā, including WebLink: suttacentral: Sotāpattiphala Sutta (SN 55.55) and WebLink: suttacentral: Dutiva Sariputta Sutta (SN 55.5), the four requirements for someone to attain the Sotāpanna stage of Nibbāna are stated: "Cattārome, bhikkhave, dhammā bhāvitā bahulīkatā sotāpattiphalasacchikiriyāya samंvattanti. Katame cattāro? Sappurisasamisevo, saddhammassavanaì, yonisomanasikāro, dhammānudhammappatipatti."

- Association with "sappurisa (sath + purisa or "Noble friend," i.e., an Ariya)," sometimes called a "Weblink: en.wikipedia.org: kalyāna mittā" ("Kalyāna Mitra" in Sanskrit.)
- Listening to Dhamma discourses (while reading is enough to get to the Sotāpanna Anugāmi stage, listening is necessary to attain the Sotāpanna stage, see \#3 below).
- Act with Yoniso manasikāra (basic idea of anicca, dukkha, anatta, and Pațicca Samuppāda).
- Dhammanudhamma patipadā (following the Noble Path, which is beyond the mundane path; see, "What is Unique in Buddha Dhamma?."

When someone starts fulfilling the above conditions one becomes a Sotāpanna magga anugāmi (or Sotāpanna magga anugāmika); see, "Sotāpanna Anugāmi and a Sotāpanna."

- During this process, one removes three of the ten samyojana (or sanyojana or "mental bonds"). The ten bonds are those that bind one to the cycle of rebirth; see, "Relinquishing Defilements via Three Rounds and Four Stages."

2. It is imperative to understand what the Buddha meant by "my Dhamma has not been known to the world." Most people follow what they deem to be "Buddhism." I strongly advise reading the following posts and spending some time thinking about this issue:
"What is Buddha Dhamma?"
"Buddha Dhamma - In a Chart" and the discussion at "What is Unique in Buddha Dhamma?."

- As discussed in those posts, one becomes a Sotāpanna magga anugāmi after progressing on the mundane (lokiya) eightfold path. That is when one embarks on the Noble Eightfold Path.
- As I pointed out in many posts, one on the mundane path abstains from immoral deeds out of fear of bad outcomes. But when one starts comprehending Tilakkhana (anicca, dukkha, anatta), one starts avoiding such deeds because one sees the futility of such acts. What is the point in hurting others to acquire sensory pleasures that, in the end, do not provide any lasting happiness?

3. November 25, 2021: Previously, I had stated that one could learn about Tilakkhaṇa by reading these days. That is still true, and one could become a Sotāpanna anugāmi by listening or reading.

- I just listened to a recorded desanā by the Waharaka Thēro. This desanā is quite comprehensive and provides a detailed description of a sotadvāra citta vithi that is REQUIRED for attaining the Sotāpanna phala. It explains that a Sotāpanna anugāmi attains the Sotāpanna stage only while listening to a desanā by an Ariya (a Noble person, i.e., one with at least the Sotāpanna stage).
- A Sotadvāra citta vīthi of an Ariya (during a desanā) has the necessary javana power to act as a trigger. I am trying to find a Tipitaka reference, and I would appreciate receiving it from anyone who has that information. I will edit this post to include that reference when I see it.
- The javana power in such a sotadvāra citta vīthi is necessary to fulfill the requirement of saddhammassavanaiं (saddhamma + savanaim or "listening to Dhamma") as one condition, as in \#1 above. It is a deep analysis; I will try to write it when enough background material is covered.
- Here is the desanā in Sinhala language:


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- There is still an open question of whether a recorded desan $\bar{a}$ would fulfill the condition. In a separate desanā Waharaka Thēro has mentioned that listening to a recorded desana $\bar{a}$ should count, per his opinion.
- However, even if a Sotāpanna Anugāmi does not get to the Sotāpanna stage in this life, he/she WILL attain the Sotāpanna phala in a future life. A Sotāpanna Anugāmi is a Noble Person and is free of the apāyā; see, "Sotāpanna Anugāmi - No More Births in the Apāyā."

4. When one contemplates the above, one first needs to find out WHY the Buddha said: "this wider world of 31 realms" has much suffering. Sensory pleasures keep us bound to the kāma loka and often to the four $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$. That is the First Noble Truth.

- The Buddha also said that if one comprehends the First Noble Truth, one will automatically understand the other three. That essential vision or the first inkling of "Sammā Ditt hhi" is critical.
- One gets on the Noble Eightfold Path with a rough idea about this vision, i.e., anicca, dukkha, and anatta. Now one is a Sotāpanna Magga Anugāmi. As one comprehends these fundamental characteristics of our world while listening to a desanā by an Ariya, one will get to the Sotāpanna stage by attaining the Sotāpanna magga and Sotāpanna phala virtually simultaneously (in the same citta vīthi); see, "Sotāpanna Anugāmi and a Sotāpanna."
- When one gets to the Sotāpanna stage, one comprehends the First Noble Truth, and thus all four Noble Truths to some extent; one has "seen" Nibbāna. Now, one does not need any help to get to Nibbāna (to "fully experience it") because one sees the whole Path and knows how to get there.

5. With that in mind, it is easier to grasp why the Buddha emphasized the importance of those four conditions. First, since Buddha's message is unique, it has to come from a Buddha or "someone whose knowledge traces back to the Buddha." The following is an analogy given in the suttā.
6. The Buddha can be compared to a great tree, standing tall and firm. All other humans are like "climbers" that need a tree to "climb up." Such climbers do not have strong enough stems, so they cannot stand erect on their own. They need the support of another plant or a stick to stand. Those plants are called climbers. Climbers have tendrils to hold the supporting plant or a post. Following are some examples.


- Let us think of a forest with numerous climbers but only one tree and no other supports such as sticks. The only way for a climber to "climb up"would be to get hold of that tree.
- Only climbers close to the tree can get hold of it and climb. But now others can get hold of them and climb too. Thus, as more and more climbers start climbing, the "access area" grows.
- Therefore, if we can find a climber climbing up, we can ALWAYS trace it back to the original tree. In the same way, an Ariya or a Noble person (a Sotāpanna, Sakadāgāmī, Anāgām̄̄, or Arahant) can ALWAYS be traced back in lineage to the Buddha.
- Because the message is unique, it has to come from the Buddha himself or someone whose lineage is traceable to the Buddha. One cannot attain even the Sotäpanna stage without hearing the correct message. Someone aspiring to become an Ariya MUST hear that Dhamma from another Ariya; see "Buddha Dhamma - In a Chart."

7. Now, we can see the logic of the first two conditions. One has to learn Dhamma (the correct version), AND thus it has to come from an Ariya (Noble) person.

- The phrase "kalyāna miträ" is Sanskrit; in Pāli it is "kalyāna mitt $\vec{a} "$ (pronounced "miththā"), for "a friend who helps to remove defilements" ("kāla" is for "dirty" or "blackish" as in "dirty water" and "na" is for "removing").
- Many people take "kalyāna mitrā" to be a "good friend" in the conventional sense. But it is more than just "good"; one needs to know the message of the Buddha to convey it to others.
- And, of course, one has listened to this correct message or read about it and then GRASP it.

8. One time, Ven. Ānanda, who was the personal assistant to the Buddha for many years, in the end, approached the Buddha and said, "Bhante (Venerable Sir), I have been thinking that the future of the Buddha Sāsana (doctrine) must be dependent at least $50 \%$ on the kalyāṇa mittā." [kalyānamittā]

- The Buddha replied, "Ānanda, do not say that. The Buddha Sāsana will depend 100\% on the kalyāna mittā." Now we can see why. [WebLink: suttacentral: Samyutta Nikāya 3.18 Good Friends Kalyānamittasutta ]
- If that lineage breaks, then that is the end of the Buddha Sāsana. The words may still be there, but there will be no one to explain the true meanings of the keywords, including anicca, dukkha, and anatta.
- However, the Buddha has stated that his Buddha Sāsana will be there for 5000 years, so we are only halfway through. There would be periods of "famine" within which Ariyā would be few. But there will also be times when Buddha Sāsana will shine with numerous Ariyā in the world.
- The key here is once-in-a-while, a "jāti Sotāpanna" is born who has fulfilled his pāramitā to bring back the message of the Buddha-like Venerable Mahinda about 600 years after the Buddha. They are not only $j \bar{a} t i$ Sotāpannā, but have the "paṭisambhidā $\tilde{n} \bar{a} n a "$ " to figure out the true meanings of key Pāli words, such as anicca, dukkha, anatta, and Paticca Samuppāda.
- I believe this is such a time. It is still too early to discuss the details, but there many Ariyā in Sri Lanka and even in other countries, thanks in large part to Waharaka Thero: "Parinibbāna of Waharaka Thero."
- Many "climbers" worldwide have already started "climbing up." I am encouraged by emails from many reading this website on their joy in comprehending the "pure Dhamma."

9. The third condition is to "act with yoniso manasikāra." Here "yoni" means "origin," "so" means "oneself," and "manasikāra" here means "with this in mind."

- The Vibhangapakarana (Book 2, p. 234) explains ayoniso manasikāra as "perceiving anicca as nicca, dukkha as sukha, and anatta as atta." Thus acting with yoniso manasikāra requires comprehending anicca, dukkha, anatta.
- To state that briefly, if one believes that things in this world can provide happiness in the long run, then one acts with ayoniso manasikāra. To act with yoniso manasikāra is to see the unfruitfulness of these struggles to attain something that is not attainable, and thus to work diligently towards at least the Sotāpanna stage because this life is so short.
- But a more direct can be seen when one can see the "origins of various births or jāti" (i.e., rebirths). "Yoni" in Pāli and Sinhala means the birth canal; thus, yoniso manasikāra means the "understanding of origins": One with yoniso manasikāra knows the causes that lead to births in various realms, i.e., "bhava" and "jāti" are according to one’s gati; see, "Gati to Bhava to Jāti - Ours to Control."
- With that understanding, one will be motivated to cultivate "gati" to make good decisions, either automatically or by contemplating them. In other words, one can make better judgements about morality and act with pañña (wisdom).
- Even more importantly, one will automatically avoid those deeds that can lead to rebirth in the apa $\bar{a} \bar{a}$.
- Thus "Yoniso manasikāra" has a deeper meaning than just "appropriate attention." In particular, a Sotāpanna comprehends "pati + icca" leads to "sama+uppada"; see, "Paticca Samuppāda "Pati+ichcha"+"Sama+uppāda."

10. When meeting the first three conditions, one is set to fulfill the fourth, "dhammanudhamma patipadā." Here "dhammanudhamma" is "dhamma + anu + Dhamma" where "anu" means "according to." The second "Dhamma" is the Buddha Dhamma; the first is the "dhamma" that one follows. "Patipad $\vec{a} "$ is "procedure." Thus it means following the procedures in the correct and pure Buddha Dhamma.

- When one learns the true Dhamma from an Ariya (Noble) person, one begins to comprehend:
(i). what is meant by suffering (dukkha),
(ii). that suffering arises due to the anicca nature, and thus
(iii). one does not have any refuge anywhere in the 31 realms (anatta).
- Then one realizes that to seek the only refuge (att $\bar{a}$ ) of Nibbāna, one needs to act with yoniso manasikāra and follow the "dhammanudhamma patipadā."
- There is a series of four suttas, starting with the WebLink: suttacentral: Anudhamma Sutta (SN 22.39).
- Those sutta describe dhammanudhamma patipadā as living with a clear vision of the anicca, dukkha, and anatta nature of the pañcakkhandha (rūpa, vedanā, sañ̃n̄a, sañkhāra, viññāna).

11. As pointed out in "What is Unique in Buddha Dhamma?," dhammanudhamma patipadā or the 'Dhamma Path" starts with mundane sammā ditṭhi, or how to sort out immoral from moral. Then one gets
rid of the moha (deep delusion) that covers the mind, and the mind will be ready to grasp anicca, dukkha, and anatta.

- The second stage or the Sotāpanna phala moment, will result at some point.

12. Let us take an example to illustrate this concept.

One does not intentionally cut oneself, because one can see its harm. In the same way, moral people stay away from immoral acts because they can see the consequences of such wrong actions.

- We can thus see why it is comparatively easy to get on the mundane eightfold path.

13. The lokuttara eightfold Path is harder to see. One has to learn it from a Buddha or a true disciple of the Buddha.

- If someone enjoys tasty food laced with poison, digesting and bringing out its harmful effects will take time. So everyone is enjoying the food and having a good time.
- And then someone says, "this food has poison; the more delicious the food is, the more poisonous it is."
- Most people ignore that message. They cannot comprehend why this person is "trying to ruin the party." But a few people ask for more information and try to find out whether what this person is saying is true or not.
- Like that it is hard for most people to take the "long-term perspective" and investigate whether it is true that "it is not only fruitless but also dangerous" to be attached to the sensory pleasures of this world.

14. It is hard in the beginning to grasp this message. Even when one starts seeing the message (as one gets to the Sotāpanna magga anugāmi stage), initially it is hard to instill discipline. A good analogy here is that it is harder to resist scratching an itch, even though one may realize that it is not a good idea because one will make that a wound. The tendency is to "enjoy the scratching." In the same way, even when one starts seeing the dangers of the rebirth process, initially it is still hard to resist the sensory pleasure.

- The solution is to "put some ointment in the itch to calm it down"; in the same way, one can calm down the strong urges by reading/listening and contemplating Dhamma (thinking about consequences).
- And one should initially focus on the "big itches," and not try to take care of all "minor itches." As one gets relief from the "major itches" one can see the benefits and is motivated to follow the same procedure for other "itches" as well. Similarly, following the Path (especially the Sotāpanna magga anugāmi stage) is a gradual process. One needs to tackle the "bigger offenses" or get rid of the "worst habits (gati)" first.

Of course, one needs to have removed micchā ditthi even to become a Sotāpanna Anugāmi: "Micchā Ditthi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage."

Next, "How Does One Know whether the Sotāpanna Stage is Reached?",

### 7.4.7 Sotāpatti Anga - The Four Qualities of a Sotāpanna

July 8, 2018; revised May 04, 2022; September 17, 2022; re-written September 18, 2022
Sotāpatti anga, or the four qualities of a Sotāpanna, are discussed in many suttas in the "Sotāpatti Samyutta" of the Saminutta Nikāya.

## Introduction

1. There are over 70 suttā in the "Sotāpatti Saminutta" that repeatedly state the four "characteristics/qualities" (Sotāpatti añga) that one can use to determine whether one has attained the Sotāpanna stage of Nibbāna. The series of suttā start with "WebLink: suttacentral: Cakkavattirāja Sutta (SN 55.1)." [añga : [nt.] 1. a constituent part; 2. a limb; 3. quality.]

- I was surprised to see that these four qualities of a Sotāpanna have not been discussed much in the current literature.
- Knowing them can help determine whether one has attained the Sotāpanna stage.


## Sotāpatti Ańga Associated With a Sotāpanna

2. The four qualities (or characteristics) of a Sotāpanna - who has attained the Sotāpanna phala - must not be confused with the four conditions that must be fulfilled to get to the Sotāpanna stage.

- Those four conditions can be found in "Four Conditions for Attaining Sotāpanna Magga/Phala."
- Those four conditions to attain the Sotāpanna stage are also called Sotāpatti añga sometimes; see, for example, "WebLink: suttacentral: Dutivasāriputta Sutta (SN 55.5)." On the other hand, the four qualities of a Sotāpanna are also listed as Sotāpatti añga in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Nandivasakka Sutta (SN 55.40)."
- Therefore, one must pay attention to which context the term Sotāpatti añga is used: whether to refer to the four conditions or the four qualities.

3. The four qualities of a Sotāpanna are stated succinctly in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Brahmacariyogadha Sutta (SN 55.2)." The Buddha asks: "Catūhi, bhikkhave, dhammehi samannāgato ariyasāvako sotāpanno hoti avinipātadhammo niyato sambodhiparāyaṇo. Katamehi catūhi?"

Translated: "Bhikkhus, the ariyasāvaka Sotāpanna, free of the apāyā, has four qualities. Which four?"
Then the Buddha gives the answer: "Idha, bhikkhave, ariyasāvako buddhe aveccappasādena samannāgato hoti: 'itipi so bhagavā arahaì sammāsambuddho vijjācaraṇasampanno sugato lokavid̄̄ anuttaro purisadammasārathi satthā devamanussānaì buddho bhagavātti. dhamme aveccappasādena samannāgato hoti... pe ... sañghe aveccappasādena samannāgato hoti... pe ... ariyakantehi sīlehi samannāgato hoti akhaṇ̣dehi ... pe ... samādhisam்vattanikehi. Imehi kho, bhikkhave, catūhi dhammehi samannāgato ariyasāvako sotāpanno hoti avinipātadhammo niyato sambodhiparāyano"ti. [Four Qualities in Bold Orange Colour.]

Translated: "A Sotāpanna has reverence/faith (pasāda) in the Buddha, Dhamma, Sangha, that comes via losing deep-rooted cravings for things in this world (avecca). He is thus established in the ariyakānta sīla (moral conduct of the Noble Persons) that cannot be broken to make him/her do apāyagāmi actions $(\mathrm{kamma})$. These are the four defining characteristics of a Sotāpanna free of the apāyā." $[\boldsymbol{a v e c c a}=a v a$ (to overcome) $+i c c a$ (liking or craving)]

- First, we note that the "Supreme Qualities of Buddha, Dhamma, Sangha" are listed in this sutta. Only the nine qualities of the Buddha are listed above in red. In the full sutta, the qualities of the Dhamma and Sañgha are also fully listed.


## Aveccappasāda and Ariyakānta Sīla

4. To fully understand this description of a Sotāpanna, we need to understand the meanings of two keywords: aveccappasāda and ariyakānta sīla.

- I have not seen aveccappasäda discussed in English texts; where it is mentioned, it is described as "unwavering confidence."
- But the reason for that unwavering confidence is itself hidden in that word. That is called "pada nirutti," (in the Sinhala language, "pada nirukti"), i.e., the word's meaning is in the word itself. Let us discuss that hidden meaning now.


## Ariyakānta Sīla = Unwavering Moral Conduct

5. Average humans - who are not yet Ariy $\bar{a}$ - highly value sensory pleasures. Most are even willing to do immoral actions to get more sensory pleasures. Even those "moral people" are addicted to enjoying sensory pleasures attainable by moral means without hurting others.

- However, that "moral conduct" is not guaranteed to hold. Even the most moral person WILL BE tempted to do an apāyagāmi action under sufficiently "enticing" or "tempting" conditions.
- When such a strong sensory input (temptation) comes, one who has not comprehended Tilakkhaṇa (in particular the anicca nature) WILL commit an apāyagāmi action at some point (in a future life, if not in this life).
- The "Unwavering/Unshakeable moral conduct" starts to grow as a Sotāpanna Anugāmi and is firmly established in a Sotāpanna.

6. It is impossible to have "Unwavering/Unshakeable moral conduct" until one comprehends how future suffering arises, i.e., Four Noble Truths/Paṭicca Samuppāda/Tilakkhaṇa. See "Paticca Samuppāda, Tilakkhana, Four Noble Truths."

- This is hard for many even to believe. They think their morality cannot be "broken." However, we hear such "moral people" committing heinous acts that we never thought they were capable of now and then. The "unbreakable morality" can be attained only by seeing the unfruitfulness/dangers in sensory pleasures.
- This is the uniqueness of Buddha Dhamma: It is possible to make one's mind NEVER to commit an apāyagāmi action (at the Sotāpanna stage) and NEVER commit a single dasa akusala at the Arahant stage.

7. Thus, a Sotāpanna's moral conduct is unbreakable FOREVER, even through future births. No matter how tempting the external sensory input is, a Sotāpanna will NEVER do an apāyagāmi action (kamma). No willpower is needed to enforce it. That mind has fully grasped the futility/danger in such actions.

- This unbreakable moral conduct of a Sotāpanna is called "ariyakānta sila." Kānta ("ka" $+" a n t a$ ") is the "cooled mindset" achieved via removing the two extremes ("anta") the Buddha rejected: excess sensory pleasures and excess hardship or extreme austerity.
- Ariyakānta sīla is established only in Ariyā, who have comprehended this unique message of the Buddha about how suffering arises in this wider world of 31 realms and how that future suffering can be stopped and a permanent state without suffering (Nibbāna) can be attained.
- Furthermore, the Pāli (and Sinhala) word for a vehicle is "riya", and the stopping of "riya" (sampāric vehicle/journey) is called "Ariya." One who has taken the wheels off the vehicle for the samsāric journey is called an "Ariya." See \#13 of "Nibbāna - Is it Difficult to Understand?" Buddha ("bhava uddha") has the same meaning: "A Buddhist or a Bhauddhayā?"


## Buddha's "Wider Worldview with Rebirth Process" Must be Understood

8. Without a Buddha explaining to us, it will be impossible to comprehend the widespread suffering in the wider world of 31 realms by ourselves.

- How many of us have watched (and enjoyed) television programs where a deer is eaten alive by a tiger? How painful is that experience for the deer? How much pain will a fish feel, dangling by a hook that pierced its mouth and unable to breathe?
- Our minds are programmed to think that animals are not living beings who can feel pain. But ALL living beings experience pain, perception (recognition), and many other mental qualities.
- In the Abhidhamma language, feelings (vedanā) and perception (sañ̃̃ā) are UNIVERSAL mental factors (cetasika) that arise with ALL thoughts of ANY living being.
- Suffering is everywhere. If we pay attention, we can see so much suffering, even among humans. We are unaware of much of the suffering in the wider world of the 31 realms. There is unimaginable suffering in the other three lowest realms and the animal realm.


## Step-by-Step Process - Prerequisites

9. However, the reasons (or causes) for such suffering cannot be understood without investigating (and then being convinced of) the laws of kamma that REQUIRES the rebirth process.

- This is why one cannot comprehend the deeper aspects of Buddha Dhamma without first getting rid of the ten types of micchā ditṭhi or the wrong views about this world of 31 realms.
- One who has not removed the ten types of micch $\bar{a}$ ditṭhi will have avijj $\bar{a}$ at the highest level, which is called moha. Therefore, even a prestigious scientist can have moha; it has nothing to do with "book knowledge." When one gets rid of those, one gets down to the avijja level; see, "Lobha, Dosa, Moha versus Raga, Patigha, Avijijā."

10. Once getting rid of the ten types of micchā dittthi, one can start to "see" (not with eyes, but with wisdom) that the real cause for suffering is tanh $\bar{a}$ (getting attached) that arises due to icc $\bar{a}$ (our liking for sensory pleasures). Furthermore, tanh $\bar{a}$ has origins in "icc $\bar{a} "$ or cravings.

- Again, this is the uniqueness of Buddha Dhamma. Whereas a normal human cannot imagine a "happy existence" without sense pleasures, an Ariy $\bar{a}$ sees the opposite: unfruitfulness and dangers in sense pleasures.
- The key to comprehending the dukkha sacca (First Noble Truth) and Tilakkhana is to see the suffering that is hidden sense pleasures. The worst kind of suffering arises when one does immoral things to access sense pleasures; that is what a Sotäpanna first realizes.
- Note: In both "icca" and "avecca" (or anywhere), the letter "c" is pronounced with the "ch" sound: ""Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars - Part 1."


## Nirāmisa Sukha and Aveccappasāda

11. When one starts to realize the truth at the Sotāpanna Anugāmi stage, one starts experiencing a different kind of "happiness," which is the nirāmisa sukha.

- The real cause of this nirāmisa sukha is the abstinence from sensory pleasures. Again, this is hard to explain and needs to be experienced.
- With that comes the realization of the value of a Buddha, unbreakable faith in him and a reverence for him. This is called aveccappasäda in the Buddha.


## Aveccappasāda = Ava Icca Pasāda

12. Now, we can see the true meaning of aveccappasāda: "ava" means to overcome, and iccā is liking or craving. These two words, when combined, rhyme as "avecca." Now, "pasāda" is reverence/faith. When the two words "avecca" and "pasāda" are combined, it rhymes as "aveccappasāda."

- It must be a truly exceptional person to discover such an unimaginable cause for the suffering in this world, and to find the way out of that suffering (by removing tanh $\bar{a}$ or"icc $\bar{a} "$ for worldly pleasures).
- This unbreakable faith/reverence for the Buddha comes from comprehending the dangers of "icc $\vec{a} "$ for worldly pleasures: "Buddhe aveccappasāda."

13. Of course, one will simultaneously have "Dhamme aveccappasäda," unshakeable faith in the Dhamma, the teachings of the Buddha, that allowed one to be free of the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$.

- Furthermore, one will not be able to learn this unique Dhamma of the Buddha without the Sañgha, those Ariyā who have transmitted the true and pure Dhamma up to now. One could spend a lifetime learning "fake Dhamma" and will not be able to grasp the message of the Buddha. We are fortunate to learn the correct Buddha Dhamma, only because of the Sañgha, who have faithfuilly and correctly transmitted the Tipitaka over all these years.
- That realization leads to "San்ghe aveccappasāda," reverence/faith in the San̈gha.


## Sañgha and Bhikkhu

14. It is important to note that bhikkhus are not necessarily included in the Sangha. Only those eight Noble Persons (attha purisa puggala) are included in Sañgha; see "Supreme Qualities of Buddha, Dhamma, Sañgha."

- However, bhikkhus should always be treated with respect. They represent the Buddha Sāsana.
- As I understand, even a lay $A n a \bar{a} g a \overline{m i}$ should bow to any bhikkhu.


## "Seeing Anicca Nature" Is to Understand Paṭicca Samuppāda

15. The Buddha described two sets of Paṭicca Samuppāda (PS) for a reason. One set (different versions of Akusala-mūla PS) describes the origin of the world or the origin of suffering. The other one describes Kusala-mūla PS for the stopping of suffering.

- Comprehending the "Udayavaya Ñanna" means understanding those two processes. "Udaya" is the "arising (of world/suffering)" or the anuloma (forward) PS. "WebLink: suttacentral: Pathamabodhi Sutta (Ud 1.1)" "Vaya" is the "stopping of that process" or the patiloma (reverse) PS process. "WebLink: suttacentral: Dutivabodhi Sutta (Ud 1.2)"
- ANYTHING in this world can be stopped from arising. That means NOTHING in this world has any essence. They can only bring more suffering. Thus, one only becomes helpless (in the long run) if one pursues "worldly pleasures" with abhisañkhāra.
- The above two lists summarizes the anicca, dukkha, and anatta nature! That "seeing" or Sammā Dittthi comes just by comprehending the "wider worldview" of the Buddha. Details at "Worldview of the Buddha."


## Ariyakānta Sīla and Aveccappasāda Realized via Sammā Diṭthi

16. A Sotāpanna has the "unique vision" or Sammā Diṭthi in the Noble Eightfold Path. A Sotāpanna has seen the ultimate truth about this world. That is the "previously unheard" Dhamma of the Buddha.

- Thus, when a Sotāpanna comprehends this "hidden truth" about the real nature of this world, he/she will begin to see the danger of getting attached to sensory pleasures.
- That "drastic change in vision" will automatically generate faith and reverence in the Buddha, Dhamma, and the Sañgha, thereby generating aveccappasäda for them.
- This is why the Buddha, Dhamma, and the Sañgha are called the Triple Gems and are worthy of homage; see "Supreme Qualities of Buddha, Dhamma, Sañgha."
- However, a Sotāpanna cannot avoid normal sensory pleasures. Most live married lives. Only at the Anāgāmi stage will one give up the desire for sensory pleasures. See, "Vipallāsa (Ditthi, Saññā, Citta) Affect Sanikhāra."


### 7.4.8 Sammā Ditṭhi - Realization, Not Memorization

May 13, 2018; revised June 20, 2020; September 4, 2022

1. Sammā Ditṭhi (or comprehension of Tilakkhana) is the necessary first step to start on the Noble Eightfold Path. If one has gained Sammā Ditṭhi (i.e., if one is a Sotāpanna/Sotāpanna Anugāmi), one would have understood the Four Noble Truths and can "see" (not with eyes, but with pañña $\bar{a}$ the path to Nibbāna:

- One has "seen" that there would be much suffering in future lives (especially in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$ ), if one gets too attached to worldly things by assuming that they can provide lasting happiness (this is the comprehension of the anicca nature).
- The reason for such future suffering is immoral actions, speech, and conscious thinking ( $k \bar{a} y a$ and $v a c \bar{\imath}$ sañkhāra done with ignorance or avijjā). This is why the first step in Paticca Samuppāda is "avijja paccayā sañkhāra."
- One can stop future suffering from arising by controlling one's $k \bar{a} y a$ and vacī sañkhāra or staying away from dasa akusala.
- And the way or path to accomplish that is the Noble Eightfold Path.

Those are the Four Noble Truths.
2. We can analyze it differently by first discussing Nibbāna and Sotāpanna.

- The "WebLink: suttacentral: Nibbānapañhā Sutta (SN 38.1)" clearly describes Nibbāna as, "..ragakkhayo, dosakkhayo, mohakkhayo - idam vuccati nibbānanti." [SN 38.1 Nibbānapañhāsutta] That means Nibbāna is attained via removing greed, hate/anger, and ignorance from one's mind.
- However, the step-by-step procedure to attain Nibbāna involves four steps, which remove seven types of anusaya or mental fermentations that contaminate a mind. That will lead to the stopping of the four types of āsava; see, "The Way to Nibbāna - Removal of Āsavā": Diṭthāsava, kāmāsava, bhavāsava, and avijjāsava.

3. It is important to understand what anusaya or mental fermentations are, how they accumulate, and how they lead to grasping a new bhava at the moment of death.

- Let us take an example. When one keeps doing immoral things based on greed (hurting others, stealing, sexually misbehaving, etc. in order to satisfy that greed), then one's mind accumulates "anusaya of greedy type." "Mental fermentations" is a good translation for anusaya; it implies that the longer one keeps them, the more they get rotten.
- Another way to say that is to say one is cultivating "greedy gati."
- This can be compared to adding rotten things to a pool of water. Contamination gets worse with time. Still, the dirt may settle down at the bottom of the pool, and the water may look relatively clean.
- However, when the water in disturbed, say by stirring with a long stick, some contaminants will come to the surface; that is anusaya. How much comes to the surface (as āsava or cravings/temptations) depends on how hard the water is stirred, i.e., how strong the sense input is. Furthermore, even a slight stirring can bring dirt up to the surface if there is a lot of dirt.

4. Anusaya or mental fermentations are like mud at the bottom of the pool. When a mind has built up a lot of anusaya accumulating deep inside, it is easier for them to come to the surface (i.e., for cravings to come to the mind) when one receives a corresponding sensory input (seeing an attractive person, for example). This is asava or cravings. So, how one automatically responds in a given situation depends on those three parameters (gati, anusaya, āsava), which are interconnected: "Āsava, Anusaya, and Gati (Gathi)."

- Removal of the seven types of anusaya [dittthi, vicikicchā, kāma rāga, patigha, bhava rāga, māna, $a v i j j \bar{a}]$ (the same as removing corresponding gati) leads to the stopping of the four types of $\bar{a} s a v a$; see "Conditions for the Four Stages of Nibbāna."

5. The most important of the four āsava [kāmāsava, bhavāsava, ditṭhāsava, avijjāsava] is the ditṭthi anusaya. All other āsava are influenced by the wrong views one has. With the removal of ditṭthi anusaya at the Sotāpanna stage, $99+\%$ of all "mental junk" or "mental fermentations" disappear from the mind.

- This is why the Buddha said that a Sotāpanna had removed defilements comparable to the soil on the whole Earth. The remaining defilement due to all other types of anusaya is comparable to the amount of soil picked up by one's thumb.
- Therefore, one needs to get a clear idea of what is meant by Nibbāna and to see why that necessarily means getting out of the rebirth process. The rebirth process is filled with so much suffering in the apayy $\bar{a}$. The Buddha said that any given living being spends most of the rebirth process in the apāy $\bar{a}$.

6. Therefore, the first, and most important step towards attaining Nibbāna is to remove dittthi anusaya that builds up over time due to wrong views, at which time three types of samyojana are also removed; see, "Conditions for the Four Stages of Nibbāna":

- The removal of diṭthi anusaya leads to the removal of ditṭhāsava and "vicikicchā anusaya."
- Simultaneously, the three samiyojana (sakkāya diṭthi, vicikicchā, sīlabbata parāmāsa) disappear.
- We will discuss these in the next post.
- They are all removed by the "right vision." It is called "dassanena pahātabbă" or "removal via right vision."

7. The hardest part to understand is what is meant by the "right vision." We have discussed at length on this website that it involves the comprehension of Tilakkhana (anicca, dukkha, anatta): That one cannot achieve long-lasting happiness by pursuing enticing things in this world, that one will be subjected to suffering in the long run if one does that, and therefore, such an approach will lead to one becoming helpless (especially when one is reborn in the apāyā).

- That is the basic "right vision" that must REGISTER in one's mind. The truth of that needs to accepted by the mind.
- Just reading about this, and memorizing it is not enough.

8. Let us take an example to illustrate this point. Some people do not believe in rebirth. That is a "wrong ditthi" or "wrong vision" according to the Buddha. But if one's mind does not see that rebirth must be valid, just reading about it will not change that impression in that mind.

- One should look at the evidence for rebirth with an open mind; see, "Evidence for Rebirth." One should contemplate that nothing happens without causes, i.e., kamm $\bar{a}$ will have vipāka. That in turn leads to the conclusion that rebirth must be valid.
- This is why getting rid of the ten types of micch $\bar{a}$ dittthi MUST happen before one can comprehend Tilakkhaṇa and become Sotāpanna. The Buddha discussed this in the "Mahā Chattārisaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty)."

9. One issue that I do not quite understand is that some people do not believe in rebirth but want to attain the Sotāpanna stage and even the Arahant stage! Don't they realize the contradiction?

- By definition, one wants to attain the Sotāpanna stage to avoid births in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$. So, if one does not believe in rebirth, why does one believe that it is possible to be born in the apayy $\bar{a}$ ?
- We must also remember that even those who believe in rebirth have been in this rebirth for a time that has no traceable beginning. Therefore, we must have also held such wrong views in the past. It is not easy to get rid of these ten types of micchā dittthi.

10. In any case, we still need more clarification on what happens when one truly comprehends Tilakkhaña.

- I think one good analogy is if one is wearing - say, blue-tinted glasses - all the time, then no matter how hard one tries, one WILL see the world see white objects as blue and other objects also distorted to appear with different colors.
- Removing a ditṭhi (or wrong vision) is like taking off those tinted glasses. It happens when one's mind comes to a certain stage of understanding. This is cultivating pañ̃̃ $\bar{a}$ (wisdom).
- The only way to remove those "tinted glasses" is to contemplate Buddha's teachings and engage in puñña/kusala kammā, providing the conditions for the mind to comprehend those teachings.

11. A key factor that most people disregard is how much of a difference it can make in one's mindset when one stays away from dasa akusala and engages actively in kusala/puñña kammā. One's mind becomes clear and sharp, one will be able to comprehend deeper concepts easily; see, "Kilesa - Relationship To Akusala, Kusala, And Puñ̃na Kamma."

- Then one will be able to get rid of the ten types of micchā dittchi and then make the transition to the Noble Path by starting to comprehend Tilakkhaṇa; see, "Sila, Samādhi, Paññā to Paññā, sila, Samādhi."
- Comprehending Tilakkhaṇa is different than learning mundane subjects like geometry or even mathematics. It can be difficult or relatively easier depending on how much "preparations" (dāna, sila, $b h \bar{a} v a n a \bar{a}$ ) one has made in this life and also in previous lives; see, "Puñña Kamma - Dāna, Sila, Bhāvanā" and "Kilesa - Relationship To Akusala, Kusala, And Puñña Kamma."

12. As we discussed above, the key step in getting to the "right view" is for one's mind to see the truth in the world view of the Buddha: That our world is much more complex than what we experience with our senses. That there are more realms of existence, that suffering is worst in those $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$, and that unless we get rid of "apāyagāmi gati" one can end up in the apāy $\bar{a}$.

- Those "apāyagāmi gati" are closely related to ditṭhāsava, which arise and accumulate due to ignorance of the Buddha's worldview or the real nature of the world (Tilakkhana).
- Furthermore, at the dying moment, the mind can grasp such an apāyagāmi sense input (ārammaṇa).
- As we have discussed before, those things happen AUTOMATICALLY, based on one's gati (āsava). That is an important point to understand. Unless one is a Sotāpanna, those possibilities cannot be ruled out.

13. Another related key issue is the following. It does not matter not how many bad kamm $\bar{a} b \bar{i} j a$ have been accumulated. Rather what is important is whether one's mind will grasp a bhava (upādāna) in a given realm. That depends only on the level of pañ̃̃ $\bar{a}$ (wisdom) one has cultivated and THEREFORE what kind of gati one has.

- It DOES NOT matter how many $k a m m a \bar{a} b \bar{j} j a$ suitable to give rebirth in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$ are there. If one has removed "apāyagāmi gati" by cultivating pañña to the Sotāpanna stage, then one's mind would not grasp such bhava.
- If one's mind has removed all gati that can lead to rebirth in any realm, then one's mind would not be able to grasp any bhava, and thus one would attain Parinibbāna at the dying moment.
- For example, Angulimāla killed 999 people but was able to attain Arahanthood within a week or so. Bad kammā bīja that he generated were still there, but his mind would not grasp (upādāna) them. See "Account of Añgulimāla - Many Insights to Buddha Dhamma."

14. When one gets to Sammā Diṭthi (i.e., when one becomes at least a Sotāpanna Anugāmi), one's gati have changed permanently. Since the next birth is according to one's gati, one will not be born into a family with micchā dittthi. This is how it is guaranteed that one will have only seven more bhava left.

- One may grasp Tilakkhana by focusing on one of them. But that will lead to comprehension of all three, and even more characteristics like the asubha (unfruitful) nature. They are all interrelated.
- Of course, there are different levels of Sammā Ditṭhi and it will be completed only at the Arahant stage.

15. Finally, there is no need to worry about whether one has attained a certain stage of Nibbāna. One should concentrate on following the Path. The Buddha said that if one follows Satipatṭhāna, one will attain at the least $A n \bar{a} g \bar{a} m \bar{l}$ stage within seven years (some earlier.) Of course, one must have a tihetuka birth.

- If one does not have a tihetuka pațisandhi, the effort will not go waste but will help attain Nibbāna in future life. See "Patisandhi Citta - How the Next Life is Determined According to Gati."
- He said that if a farmer plants seeds and takes good care of those plants, they will provide a good harvest. It is pointless to check every day to see whether the harvest is ready. It will happen in due time.


### 7.4.9 How Does One Know whether the Sotāpanna Stage is Reached?

## Revised March 23, 2017; May 15, 2018; September 22, 2018; August 12, 2019; February 11, 2020; July 3, 2022; August 5, 2022; October 9, 2022

One can determine for oneself whether one has attained the Sotāpanna stage. It becomes clear that one has removed the characteristics (gati) suitable to be born in the four lowest realms (apāyā).

## Sotāpanna Is the First Goal

1. The most precious thing sought by a Bhauddhayā (or a practicing Buddhist) is the Sotāpanna stage of Nibbāna; see, "Why a Sotāpanna is better off than any King, Emperor, or a Billionaire."

- It is Arahanthood that is the ultimate goal. A Sotāpanna will become an Arahanthood within seven bhava.
- Seven bhava is many more than seven births because, within a given bhava, there can be many births. See "Bhava and Jāti - States of Existence and Births Therein."
- Thus it is essential to know how to figure out whether one has attained that stage. Other than that person himselfherself, only a Buddha can say whether a given person has achieved magga phala; see, "Myths about the Sotāpanna Stage."
- As we discussed in that post, even Ven. Sāriputta (who was only second to the Buddha in Dhamma knowledge) could not do that. Some people claim they know whether another person has attained the Sotāpanna stage (and make money doing that).

2. A Sotāpanna has seen the way to Nibbāna. He/she still has more work to do, but can see a glimpse of Nibbāna from afar. The way to Nibbāna has become apparent.

- In another post, I described a simile. A traveler, looking for a particular mountain to get to the top can finally see an outline of it at a distance. He/she still has to travel to the mountain's base and climb up. Most of the hard work was to find the location of that mountain and get close to it. See, "Sotāpanna Anugāmi and a Sotāpanna" and "The Sotāpanna Stage."


## Nibbāna Is the Stopping of the Rebirth Process

3. In Buddha Dhamma, the ultimate goal is to stop the rebirth process anywhere in the 31 realms of this world. That corresponds to realizing that there is only suffering to be had by staying in this rebirth process. In particular, one has to comprehend the danger of rebirths in the lowest four realms (apayy $\bar{a}$.)

- The ONLY WAY to come to this realization is to comprehend the true nature of this world of 31 realms: anicca, dukkha, and anatta. And those do not mean impermanence, suffering, and "no-self"; see, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta - Wrong Interpretations."
- Instead, it is to realize the unfruitfulness of striving to reach the mirage of happiness in this world of 31 realms and thus convince oneself that one is truly helpless in this cycle of rebirths.
- Therefore, one must work diligently to stop future suffering by "giving up cravings for things in this world" and strive to reach the only oasis in this desert of the cycle of rebirths or Nibbāna. That is to release the mind from the burdens of the material world.


## Comprehension of Tilakkhana will change one's outlook on life

4. Once that idea sinks in, one's attitude, behavior, and outlook on life will change forever.

- Let us take an example. Once a child learns the way to add two numbers, there is no way that the child will ever forget that. There will be no second guessing. If an adult, even a teacher, tells that child that "two plus three is six," there is no way that that child will ever agree.
- Attaining the Sotāpanna stage is like that. Deep down, one will KNOW the dangers of the rebirth process. Any happiness, whether due to health, wealth, or fame, is of NO VALUE in the long term. He /she has truly understood the value of the Buddha Dhamma and that faith (based on understanding) will prevail through future rebirths.
- That is not a "magical effect." A living being is a continuous flow of kammic energy; see "What Reincarnates? - Concept of a Lifestream." Thus what happens at the Sotāpanna phala moment is to change the "gati" of that lifestream irrevocably. One would have permanently shed any "gati" suitable for a hell-being (with gati of strong hate), a peta (intense greed), an asura (freeloading mentality), or an animal (a mixture of all those; "tirisan" or all three "san").
- One way to assess is to see how much of one's such "gati" have changed for the better. (Throughout working towards the Sotāpanna stage). One should be able to see significant changes. For discussions on "gati" (or "gathi"), please use the "Search" box on the top right.


## "Seeing" the True Nature of This World

5. Let us take another example. When we look in a mirror and see our image, we KNOW that it is not another person or oneself but merely an image. We don't need to think twice to realize that.

- But have you seen a dog barking at its reflection in a mirror or the water? A dog thinks it is another dog and barks at it. A dog would not know the reality of a reflection.
- In the same way, an average human thinks very highly of his/her material wealth. One is willing to "do whatever it takes" to possess such material things, titles, recognition, etc.
- But a Sotāpanna would instinctively know the unfruitfulness of such struggles. They may still enjoy sensory pleasures (and thus may still like to eat tasty food or engage in sexual activity, for example). However, they will not willingly go to extremes, such as engaging in sexual misconduct, having affairs outside the marriage, or being excessively greedy and exploiting others.
- A Sotāpanna has reduced lobha to kāma rāga and dosa (or dvesha) to pațigha. In other words, greed or hate that was due to total covering of mind by the five hindrances would reduce to "attachments" and "dislikes"; see, "Lobha, Dosa, Moha versus Raga, Patigha, Avijjaj."
- The most important thing is that he/she will NEVER do an immoral deed strong enough to lead to rebirth in the lowest four realms [Niraya, Tiracchāna-yoni, Peta-yoni, and Asura-yoni], i.e., an apāyagāmi deed. We all KNOW that our reflection in a mirror is not real and thus will not try to talk to that reflection. Similarly, a Sotāpanna INSTINCTIVELY avoids doing anything that is profoundly immoral. $\mathrm{He} /$ she does not need to think about the consequences of such acts, etc. The mind will automatically block such actions.


## Jhāna Can Be a Distraction

6. One could be a Sotāpanna (or even an Arahant) without being able to get to any jhāna beforehand. Many people in the time of the Buddha attained Arahanthood upon listening to a desanā. Upacara and anuloma samādhi are sufficient for one to get to the Sotāpanna stage. Also, jhāna and magga phala are two different things; see, "Samādhi, Jhāna (Dhyāna), Magga Phala."

- That becomes clear when we look at the possible rebirths of a Sotāpanna. A Sotāpanna could be reborn at or above the human realm.
- But if one has attained the first anāriya jhāna, one WILL be born in the Brahma realm. Thus a Sotāpanna with even an anāriya jhānā WILL NOT be reborn as a human.
- By the way, if one is not a Sotāpanna but has attained anāriya jhānā, he/she will also be born in a Brahma realm. But the difference is that he/she is not free from rebirths in even the lowest four realms.
- What I described above is consistent with the extension of 89 cittā to 121 . The "additional 40 cittt $\vec{a}$ " come about when attaining the four stages of Nibbāna for people at various (anāriya) jhāna levels; see, "The 89 (121) Types of Citta." However, these are technical details that may not concern most people. I just wanted to show consistency.


## Ariya and Anāriya Jhāna Experiences Are the Same

7. We also need to keep in mind that the jhānic experience is the same for anāriya jhānā as for_Ariya $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$. They are mental states of the rūpāvacara and arūpāvacara realms; they still belong to this world of 31 planes. However, subtle differences exist due to anusaya being present in anāriya jhāna. See \#8, \#10, etc. in "Tapussa Sutta (AN 9.41)- Akuppā Cētōvimutti."

- There were yogis even before the Buddha who could attain anāriya jhānā to the eighth and also cultivated abhiññā powers. Ceto vimutti (or ceto vimukthi) with anāriya jhānā is not the same as magga phala with paññ̄a vimutti. In the former, defilements are suppressed. In the latter, they have been removed.
- Of course, having even anāriya jhānā makes it easier to do vipassanā (comprehend anicca, dukkha, and anatta) and attain magga phala.


## Ariya and Anāriya Jhāna Are Very Different in Essence

8. Just SUPPRESSION of akusala thoughts and craving for sensual pleasures (kāma rāga) can lead to anariya jhāna.

- On the other hand, attaining Ariya jhāna requires removing craving (anusaya) for sensual pleasures (kāma rāga). Thus one needs to be an Anāgāmi to attain even the first Ariya jhāna. See "Possible Outcomes of Meditation - Samādhi, Jhāna, Magga Phala."
- Here is a desanā from the Waharaka Thero describing the difference between jhāna and magga phala (it is in Sinhala, but I have extracted the essence in this post for others):

WebLink: Listen to Waharaka Thero - Difference between Magga Phala and Jhāna in Sinhala

## Changes One Can See For Oneself

9. Even before reaching the Sotāpanna stage, one will notice changes in one's behavior and attitude towards other humans and all living beings. All of those will gradually change as one starts following the Path.

- But there will be significant changes after attaining the Sotāpanna stage. That change may not be noticeable in a day. It could take weeks or a few months to see some critical differences in one's lifestyle when one looks back.
- The tendency to get together with a lot of people will reduce. One will spend more time learning Dhamma and contemplating concepts that are still not entirely clear. Finding more about the real nature of this world is immensely enjoyable.
- One will also start noticing things that one has not noticed before. One will see clear instances of people's "self-induced" suffering as they try to enjoy life by "partying harder" but only get exhausted.
- The only concrete way to be convinced of the Sotāpanna stage is to make sure that the three samiyojana of sakkāya ditṭhi, vicikicchā, and silabbata parāmāsa are absent. See, "Sakkāya Ditthi is Personality (Me) View?."

Should One Declare One's Attainments?
10. Then there is this question. Is it appropriate or even allowed by the Buddha for someone to declare the magga phala one has attained?

- What is stated in the Tipitaka is the following. If one declares that one has a certain magga phala falsely intending to gain respect, money, publicity, etc., that is a bad kamma. A conventional bhikkhu becomes "pārājika," loses the priesthood automatically, and thus could be born in the niraya for doing that.
- Declaration of a magga phala is not banned. "A person attaining the Sotāpanna stage may declare it if he/she wishes to do so," in particular for the benefit of others. In the "WebLink: suttacentral: Mahāa Parinibbāna Sutta (DN 16)," "Katamo ca so, ānanda, dhammādāso dhammapariyāyo, yena samannāgato ariyasāvako ākañkhamāno attanāva attānaì byākareyya: 'khīnanirayomhi khīnatiracchānayoni khịnapettivisayo khīn̄pāayaduggativinipāto, sotāpannohamasmi avinipātadhammo niyato sambodhiparāyaṇo 'ti."
- The same verse ("A noble disciple who has this may declare of themselves: 'I have finished with rebirth in hell, the animal realm, and the ghost realm. I am a stream-enterer! I'm not liable to be reborn in the lower realms and am bound for the final release-Nibbāna") appears in a series of four suttas (SN 55.7 through SN 55.10); see, for example, "WebLink: suttacentral: Pathamagiñjakāvasatha Sutta (SN 55.8)."
- Most people who attain magga phala do not declare it; it is not a bragging point. It is the same with $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$. Many people start off developing $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$ to attain supermundane (abhiñña $\bar{a}$ ) powers, but once they get there, they have already seen the fruitlessness of even those powers.
- In particular, when one develops abhiñ̃̃̄̄ powers to be able to see previous lives, one becomes so disgusted with what one (and others) have gone through in past lives. One does not seek to look back much further.


## Tipiṭaka Examples/Accounts

11. Now, let us discuss some episodes from the Tipitaka to clarify some of the above points.

- Visākhā (one of the chief female lay disciples of the Buddha) had attained the Sotāpanna stage at a young age. But she remained at that stage even without developing any jhānā or higher magga phala until death at age 120. The Buddha stated that she would be reborn as a Deva many times (as I remember 11 times).
- Similarly, the wealthy businessman Anāthapiṇ̣ika, who built the beautiful and expensive monastery Jetavanaramaya, attained the Sotāpanna stage upon hearing his first desanā from the Buddha. He died and was reborn in the Tusita realm (one of the six deva worlds). Since those deva worlds also belong to the kāma loka, it is clear that he never attained an Ariya jhāna.
- Mahānāma was a wealthy person who was related to Prince Siddhartha's family. The Buddha told him that he had attained the Sotäpanna stage. However, when engaging in his business activities, he often got frustrated and angry with his servants and yelled at them. After such an episode of outburst, he would think, "if I am still able to become angry like this, I must not have attained the Sotāpanna stage yet." So, he would see the Buddha, explain what happened, and ask whether the Buddha was sure about the declaration. He still had doubts about his attainment of the Sotāpanna stage until the Buddha confirmed it for the third time; see "WebLink: suttacentral: Pathama Mahānāma Sutta (SN 55.21)."
- The key is that there is a difference between hate (dosa) and getting angry (patigha); paṭigha is removed only at the $A n \bar{a} g \bar{a} m \bar{c}$ stage.


## More Accounts From Tipiṭaka

12. Then there was the Sarakāni brahmin, who also belonged to a "high caste." He used to consume alcohol and get drunk regularly. His relatives, who were vedic brahmins, disowned him from their lot, saying he was unworthy to be one of them. He also attained the Sotāpanna stage, but could not give up the habit of drinking even after achieving that. When he died, Mahānāma (mentioned above) asked the Buddha where

Sarakāni was reborn. The Buddha said Sarakāni had attained the Sotāpanna stage and had been reborn as a deva. Sarakāni's relatives laughed out loud contemptuously upon hearing this and declared, "if Sarakāni was a Sotāpanna, then we all should be Arahants." When Mahānāma reported this back to the Buddha, the Buddha said those ignorant brahmins would go by outward appearances. That description is in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Pathamasaranānisakka Sutta (SN 55. 24)."

- Of course, that episode does not imply that one could keep doing immoral activities and still attain the Sotāpanna stage. What we need to understand is that drinking alcohol by itself is not one of the dasa akusala (ten immoral actions), but heavy consumption could lead to it. Sarakāni probably continued with his long-time habit to some extent, but was unlikely to have "got drunk." A Sotāpanna removes only strong greed (lobha). Käma rāga or attachment to sense pleasures is removed only at the Anāgāmī stage.
- In the Mahanama sutta (delivered to Mahanama mentioned above), the Buddha described the sila (moral conduct) of a Sotāpanna: "panatipata pativirato hoti, adinnādāna pativirato hoti, kamesu miccacara pativirato hoti, musāvāda pativirato hoti, surameraya majjapama dattana pativirato hoti." It is essential to realize the deep meanings of the "five precepts"; see "The Five Precepts - What the Buddha Meant by Them."
- In the above, "pativirato hoti" does not mean "will not" but rather "will not do with liking." After all, a Sotāpanna (unless had attained Ariya jhānā) is not yet released from the higher realms of the kāma loka, only from the lowest four realms.


## Asmi Māna Removed Only at the Arahant Stage

13. Some people try to remove the sense of "me" or the sense of "self" to get to the Sotāpanna stage, but that is removed only at the Arahant stage.

- As long as one is bound to the 31 realms, a sense of "self" will be there. These "gati" are removed in stages, starting with "gati" suitable for rebirth in the ap $\bar{y} \bar{a} \bar{a}$, as discussed in \#4 above. Even an $A n a \bar{a} \bar{a} m \bar{\imath}$ has a sense of "self" left, though most of his/her attachments for sense pleasures would not be there. One cannot pass a college exam without having graduated from high school.
- One has to advance systematically through stages; see "The Way to Nibbāna - Removal of Āsavā" and "Conditions for the Four Stages of Nibbāna."
- As long as one is bound to the 31 realms or "this material world," it is not correct to say there is a "self" or there is "no-self"; they are both wrong and extreme views; see, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta."
- Any meditation with the wrong concepts of anicca, dukkha, or anatta "will not grow." One should be able to "feel" one's understanding "grow" if one is doing the correct types of meditation; see, "13. Kammattana (Recitations) for the Sotāpanna Stage."


## Only a Buddha Can Know Another Person's Attainments

14. Finally, only a Buddha could discern whether another person has attained magga phala. However, many instances of people declaring their attainments by themselves when that declaration helped a noble purpose.

- All those who participated in the first four Buddhist Councils (Dhamma Sañgāyanā) were Arahants, according to the Tipitaka. Thus all those many thousands of Arahants who attended those four Sañgāyanā must have declared the Arahantship by themselves.
- Ven. Ānanda attained the Arahantship just the night before the first Buddhist Councils (Sañgāyanā.) He came to the Council by air (with abhiñña powers) and entered the hall through the keyhole. He did that to dispel doubts from the other Arahant's minds about his attainment.
- There are only a few instances of Arahants or even the Buddha performing such supernormal acts. It was essential to remove any doubts of others about the Arahantship of Ven. Ānanda because of the critical role he played at the First Sañgāyanā.

Also see: "Sotāpanna Anugāmi and a Sotāpanna," "Four Conditions for Attaining Sotāpanna Magga/Phala," and "Sotāpatti Anga - The Four Qualities of a Sotāpanna."
7.4.10 Assāda, Ādīnava, Nissaraṇa

October 1, 2017

- Assāda, Ādīnava, Nissarana - Introduction
- How Perceived Pleasures (Assāda) lead to Dukkha
- Kāma Guna, Kāma, Kāma Rāga, Kāmaccandha
- Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways
- Feelings: Sukha, Dukha, Somanassa, and Domanassa
- What is "Kāma"? It is not Just Sex (Topic moved to Paticca Samuppāda $=>$ Patticca Samuppāda Essential Concepts)
- Kāma Assāda Start with Phassa Paccayā Vedanā or Samphassa Ja Vedanā

7.4.10. Assāda, Ādīnava, Nissaraṇa - Introduction

November 1, 2017, revised May 25, 2022

1. This subsection replaces the old subsection, "Āsvāda (Mind-Made Pleasures), Ādeenava [ādīnava] (Bad Outcomes), Nissaraṇa (Relinquish)." I had used Sinhala terms in that series without realizing it. Also, I have basically re-written some of the posts - including the Introduction - to have a logical flow.

- Furthermore, this subsection was under "Paticca Samuppāda." I have now moved it to the "Sotāpanna Stage," where it is more appropriate.
- Here is the pronunciation of the three words: "WebLink: Assāda, Ādinava, Nissarana."

2. There are two main categories of "pleasures" that one experiences: (i) Those arising due to kamma $\boldsymbol{v i p a} \boldsymbol{k} \boldsymbol{k}$, and (ii) mind-made "pleasures" where we keep generating more vacī sañkhāra (thinking/talking to ourselves in our minds) recalling such an experience of the first kind.

- For example, eating a piece of cake generates a "good feeling" via the taste itself. That belongs to the first category. This is a kamma vipāka and there are "no new kamma generated"; see, "Avyākata Paticca Samuppāda for Vipāka Viññāna."
- But if we get "attached to that taste" and start thinking about how good it is and crave for more, now we are generating vacī sañkhāra (thinking/talking to ourselves about how good it is), then we are generating "new kamma." This second type is called assā$d a(\bar{a} s v \bar{a} d a$ in Sinhala). [assāda : [m.] taste; enjoyment; satisfaction.]

3. Therefore, assāda are basically "mind-made pleasures," i.e., only those in the second category.

- Those of the first type arise AUTOMATICALLY due to sensory inputs. They arise due to our kamma vipāka/gati via mano sañkhāra. Mano sañkhāra are defined as vedanā, sañ̃n̄a which arise in each and every citta.
- Based on those initial feelings, we are also likely to start generating vacī sañkhāra (talking to ourselves, which is defined as vitakka/vicāra, then actual speech) and then even generate kāya sañkhāra (bodily
actions）．We HAVE CONTROL over vacī and kāya sañkhāra，and that is the key to changing our defiled gati．
－It is important to realize that vacī saṅkhāra are associated with speech and also＂talking to ourselves＂： ＂Correct Meaning of Vacī Sankhara．＂

4．There is nothing we can do to stop the first kind．For example，even an Arahant WILL feel the＂tastiness＂ of sugar or a nice meal（or saltiness of salt or unpleasantness of some medications／foods，etc）．But he／she WILL NOT become attached to that taste and crave for more．
－It is this craving and the subsequent conscious thinking about it（vacī sañkhāra）that is called assāda， and that is what is bad because that will extend the samsäric journey filled with suffering as we will discuss in detail in this subsection．
－So，it is important to distinguish between the AUTOMATIC generation of mano sañkhāra（due to vipäka）and the CONSCIOUS generation of vacī and kāya sañkhāra：＂How Are Gati and Kilesa Incorporated into Thoughts？．＂

5．It is those CONSCIOUS generation of vacī and kāya sañkhāra that contribute to future suffering（and also lead to tāpa or＂heat＂in mind right now）：＂Suffering in This Life－Role of Mental Impurities．＂
－We＂get addicted＂to things like drugs，alcohol，and even over－eating by constantly thinking about them． We tend to recall past experiences and create in our minds such future experiences．This is generating vacī sañkhāra（talking to ourselves）．Then we start talking and doing things accordingly．
－This is how we strengthen＂old bad habits＂and even develop＂new bad habits＂or gati．These habits or gati could be samisāric gati or new ones．
－There are many posts on the site on＂gati＂（or habits／character）．A simple explanation is in＂The Law of Attraction，Habits，Character（Gati），and Cravings（Āsavas），＂and there is a scientific explanation too： ＂How Habits are Formed and Broken－A Scientific View．＂
－This important concept of gati is not discussed in current Theravāda literature，but it can explain many other concepts．

6．The more we enjoy such＂mind－made pleasures＂or assāda，the more established those associated gati become．For example，a drug user／alcoholic is constantly thinking about either past experiences or the next， and is＂building up＂that gati．Then it will become increasingly difficult to be drug／alcohol free．
－There is an even worse consequence too：that gati becomes what one craves／thinks about and will become operational in paticca samuppāda via＂upādāna paccayā bhava．＂One can start a PS cycle just in mind by thinking about getting drunk via initiating vacī sañkhāra and generating＂bhava or existence of a drunkard．＂Then of course one will follow－up with actual drinking，which is done via $k \bar{a} y a$ sañkhāra．Soon enough one will end up an alcoholic．
－Therefore，ādīnava means＂bad consequences or dangers．＂In this case，what we perceive as＂mental pleasures＂（assāda）WILL have bad consequences both in this life and in future lives：In the above example，one is likely to be matched with an＂alcoholic mother＂in the next birth，and be born an alcoholic．［ādīnava：［m．］disadvantage．過患（danger），患難（trials and tribulations），過失（negligence），危難（distress）．］

7．This is another way to express the First Noble Truth．What a normal person thinks as ＂somanassa＂（＂suva＂＋＂manasa＂or＂good feelings in the mind＂）CAN actually be the cause for FUTURE suffering，but ONLY IF one gets attached，as discussed above．
－Note the difference between consuming tasty food and getting attached to it；seeing a nice picture and getting attached to it；hearing nice music and getting attached to it，etc．

- Getting to that point of being able to experience "taste things" without getting attached to them is not easy; that is not attained fully until the Anāgāmī stage. It requires more learning and contemplation (Satipaṭ! hāna bhāvanā).
- However, to first get to the Sotāpanna stage, one needs at least to "see with wisdom" that assāda does lead to $\bar{a} d \bar{n} n a v a$; when that understanding sinks in, that will prevent one from committing apāyagāmi $\boldsymbol{k a m m a}$, i.e., one's mind will get rid of the coarse level of assäda. This subsection can help gain that "vision."

8. When one fully understands the bad consequences (ādinava) of these mind-made pleasures (assāda), that means one has understood the First Noble Truth as well as the causes for it, how to eliminate those causes, and the way to do it, i.e., all four Noble Truths.

- That leads to the cessation of the samsāric journey, and that is called nissarana (end of "carana" or journey ("nis" + "charana," which rhymes as "nissaraṇa"). [nissarana : (nt.) 1. going out; departure; 2. escape.]
- But it is a step-by-step process that starts with the Sotāpanna Anugāmi stage and culminates at the Arahant stage.

9. It will take several posts to explain the above in detail. However, understanding them will help with pațicca samuppāda cycles and also with Satipaṭthāna/Ānāpāna bhāvanā.

- The first few subsections of the "Living Dhamma" section has all the fundamentals that are needed to help understand this subsection. The posts mentioned in \#3 and \#4 are especially important ones.
- Assāda is related to āsava and anusaya too, as well as gati (pronounced gathi) as we mentioned above. There are many posts on those key concepts on the site, and a couple was listed in \#4 above. One could use the "Search" button on the top right to locate relevant posts.
- In the following, we will discuss a couple of more examples of assāda, ādīnava and nissaraṇa in simple terms.

10. We know many things that provide instant gratification but are harmful in the long term. A good example is smoking. A smoker gets an enjoyment with smoking. Furthermore, he/she wants it to be repeated again and again, and that is assäda. But it has been proven without a doubt that long-term smoking causes many health problems including cancer.

- Even though smoking has decreased over the years, many people still who smoke. I had a older friend who smoked heavily; I asked him why he would keep doing it since he knew about the bad consequences. He said the habit had been ingrained, and it was hard to break it. Many years ago, he died because of his bad habit. The last several years of his life were spent in hospitals, with parts of his lungs removed piece-by-piece, and eventually, he was on oxygen most of the time.
- Of course he finally gave up smoking when he was about to be hospitalized. It was too late by the time he clearly saw the "ädinava" (when he actually experienced the bad consequences). The damage had been done.

11. However, his children clearly saw what he went through and understood that smoking might provide temporary enjoyment (assāda), but is bound to bring about bad consequences (ādinava). Thus they stayed away from smoking (nissaraṇa).

- This is the key point that we will prove to be valid for ANY sense of pleasure in the end. But do not worry; we do not have to (and cannot effectively) give up anything without understanding. In fact, such forced "giving up" will only lead to more stress. Our minds will automatically avoid more and more "bad things" as we keep learning Dhamma.
- There are a few more "relatively easy to see" examples of "assāda, ādīnava, nissaraṇa," even before we get to the deeper analysis in the next post.
- Craving for tasty foods is another very clear example. Most of us cannot "see" the bad consequences of overindulging in eating, and as a consequence we have a obesity problem in most countries. This has resulted in many health problems for those people and has led to increased healthcare costs for all. Still, many people are beginning to see the truth of "assāda, ādīnava, nissaraṇa" of overeating.
- Heavy drinking, use of drugs, and association with bad friends are relatively "easy to see" examples.

12. However, we can systematically understand the "root causes" for ALL such problems by using the guidelines provided by the Buddha. Once we understand the actual root causes, at least some of us can think through and avoid not only such "mundane problems", but start seeing even more long-term benefits: It is the same line of reasoning that eventually leads to the four stages of Nibbāna.

- Thus even though Buddha Dhamma is focused on "eliminating the long-term suffering", it can also help reduce some of the "short-term suffering" too.
- As a clear example of this, one can always examine the health of Buddhist monks. On average, they are much healthier than the "householders" in any of the Buddhist countries. They do not smoke and do not overeat.
- And one can clearly see their "joy in heart" and the calmness of their minds even though they have very few possessions and do not seek gratification in many sense pleasures that others value so highly.

13. This last point is worth thinking about some more. If one thinks deeply enough, one can see that even some common "sense pleasures" are not that different from the pleasure one gets by inhaling a drug. They give a highly enjoyable "burst of pleasure", but inevitably lead to bad outcomes, even short term. One can get a hangover with a bad headache due to excess drinking, and in the case of overeating, one can feel the "discomfort" right away.

- We seek such sense pleasures because we don't realize the value of just having a calm, peaceful state of mind. One does not understand the value of a "neutral mind" (which is called upekkhā), unless one can experience it. It is like getting rid of a headache that one has had for a long time. We do not realize the "incessant stress" that is with us, until we reduce it.
- Our minds are constantly under stress seeking sense pleasures. That is what we all had been doing in countless previous births too. That is why it is hard to recognize any negative consequences.

14. In the Sambhodhi Vagga of the Anguttara Nikāya, there are several suttā on assāda, ādīnava, nissarana. The "WebLink: suttacentral: Pubbeva Sambodha Sutta (AN 3.103)" provides a succinct statement on what they are:
"..ko nu kho loke assādo, ko ādīnavo, kim nissaranan'ti? Tassa mayhamं, bhikkhave, etadahosi: 'yaì kho lokam paticca uppajjati sukhaì somanassaì, ayaì loke assādo. Yaì loko anicco dukkho viparināmadhammo, ayaì loke ādīnavo. Yo loke chandarāgavinayo chandarāgappahānaìm, idaì loke nissaraṇan'ti..."

Translated: "..What are assāda, ādīnava, and nissaraṇa in this world? If one gets attached (paṭicca) to sukha/somanassa, that is assāda. That gives rise to the dhammā (the seeds for future suffering, because these are really "kamma seeds") with anicca, dukkha, and viparināma nature, which is called ādīnava. Arising of such dhamma can be stopped by constraining the tendency to indulge in sense pleasures (chandarāgavinayo), and thus getting rid of the craving for sense pleasures (chandarāgappahānaì)..."

- It is to be noted that sukha is "bodily pleasure" and somanassa is "mind pleasure." We will discuss this highly condensed verse in the upcoming posts.
- In that sutta, the Buddha says that he was unable to attain the Buddhahood until he realized the need to see the dangers in sense attachments, and to work diligently to get rid of such cravings for sense pleasures.
- It is important to note that dhammā are really kamma seeds that lead to future vipāka; see, "What are rūpa? - Dhamma are rūpa too!" and "What are Dhamma? - A Deeper Analysis."

12. Many other suttā that discuss these three key concepts. In particular, "WebLink: suttacentral: Assāda Sutta (AN 6.112)" is notable since it ties assāda diṭthi to anicca saññā:
‘"'Tayome, bhikkhave, dhammā. Katame tayo? Assādadiṭthi, attānudiṭthi, micchādiṭthi. Ime kho, bhikkhave, tayo dhammā. Imesaì kho, bhikkhave, tiṇnaì dhammānaì pahānāya tayo dhammā bhāvetabbā. Katame tayo? Assādadiṭthiyā pahānāya aniccasañña bhāvetabbā, attānudittthiyā pahānāya anattasañn̄ā bhāvetabbā, micchāditṭhiyā pahānāya sammādiṭthi bhāvetabbā. Imesamं kho, bhikkhave, tiṇ̣am dhammānam pahānāya ime tayo dhammā bhāvetabbā"ti."

- Or, contemplation of anicca sañ̃̄̄̄a leads to the removal of assāda dittthi.
- This is because the mind-made pleasures (assāda) are based on the wrong perception of nicca sañ̃̄ $\bar{a}$, i.e., that those sense experiences are real and fruitful.


### 7.4.10. How Perceived Pleasures (Assāda) lead to Dukkha

March 11, 2016; revised October 31, 2017; February 10, 2020

1. The essence of the Buddha Dhamma is that what we PERCEIVE to be enjoyment (assāda) is actually the CAUSE of FUTURE SUFFERING; that is called ādinava (or dangers) of assāda. But that understanding comes in stages. This is a subtle point to understand, and requires some cleansing of the mind to "see." Grasping the essence of Buddha Dhamma requires a concentrated mind.

- At a minimum, one should read these posts when the mind is calm. That will make a huge difference in comprehending Dhamma. Most people (especially those who come to this site) are not "immoral", but the state of mind can change. Even an excited mind cannot grasp deep Dhamma. I discussed this in a few of my very first posts two years ago; see, for example, "The Importance of Purifying the Mind."
- This is why I highly recommend everyone to read the first several posts in the meditation section starting with " 1 . Introduction to Buddhist Meditation."
- Most people new to Buddha Dhamma (Buddhism), start at the wrong place: "Do I really need to give up all these sense pleasures?." The answer is no. One will voluntarily give up things that one will be convinced to be dangerous or at least unfruitful. Nirāmisa sukha comes from this understanding.

2. The key here is to understand that "bhava" and "jāti" are according to one's gati. That is because "bhava" arises via "upādāna" and upādāna means what one likes or enjoys; see, "Paticca Samuppāda "Pati+ichcha"+"Sama+uppāda"."

- Bhava means "potential to bring about existence" and that existence is according what one craves for (upādāna), not what one wishes for. Upādāna means things that one is AUTOMATICALLY attracted to. At least the initial reaction is automatic, and that is what counts at the cuti-patisandhi moment; see below.
- If one craves for sensual pleasures in the kāma loka, then it is hard to avoid a bhava and j $\bar{a} t i$ in the kāma loka.
- More importantly, if one is seeking sense pleasures and is willing to do things that can be done only with "animal gati," "pretha gati," "asura gati," or "niraya gati," then no matter how much one wishes, one cannot avoid birth in those realms.
- One cannot fool one's mind. One has to see the dangers in the lowest four realms to cultivate the desire and drive to be free of them.

3. The four lowest realms are collectively called the "ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$." Those who are destined to go to ap $\bar{a} y a$ have "dugati." The word "dugati" comes from "du" + "gati" or immoral habits (character).

- On the other hand, those who have moral character have "sugati," which means good ("su") gati.
- Sometimes the apāy $\bar{a}$ themselves are also called dugati, and the higher realms are called sugati.
- A given person could have both sugati as well as dugati. One becomes the Sotāpanna when the possibility for dugati to surface (i.e., anusaya) is permanently removed.

4. It is hard to see the true anicca nature of the higher realms, i.e., in sugati (for example in the deva realm), until one is free of the lowest four realms. Most of us perceive deva realms to be full of happiness. Until one's mind is purified to at least the level of a Sotāpanna it is hard to comprehend the futility of a birth in the deva realms.

- But the animal and human realms have enough visible suffering for us to be motivated.
- One cannot even imagine to comprehend the anicca nature of rūpa loka or arūpa loka until one is free of kāma loka, including the deva loka.
- This is why COMPREHENDING Dhamma at each level is the essential. It is a step-by-step process.

5. In the Dhamma Cakka Pavattana Sutta, the Buddha described three rounds of bondage (tiprivattaya); see, "Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta." Getting through those three walls is done via four stages of Nibbāna (Sotāpanna, Sakadāgāmī, Anāgāmī, Arahant).

- At each stage, one gains wisdom (ñāna) to " see further", i.e., the anicca nature of higher realms. Thus one has to make progress systematically. This process is analogous to the following example. Let us visualize a person wearing glasses that have been covered with four layers of a dark, but see-through, film. One could see through a single layer of the film, but when all four layers are on, one is virtually blind.
- A normal human without exposure to pure Dhamma is like a person wearing those glasses covered with all four layers. $\mathrm{He} /$ she could just barely see the immediate surroundings, but not much else. Such a person would only be concerned with the immediate surrounding, and will not be able to see any dangers existing not too far away.

6. When exposed to Buddha Dhamma for the first time, it is like bringing in more light. Even with the dark glasses, one can see a bit more clearly, and that is enough for most people to get interested and learn more.

- When one learns about the various aspects of Dhamma, one can see evidence that there is a much bigger hidden world out there, and at some point one could comprehend the dangers of rebirth in the ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$. That stage can be compared to one layer of those dark films coming off. It is the attainment of the Sotāpanna stage. This is a big step since pañcanīvarana (those five factors that cover the mind) are permanently removed.
- Now, one can see much better, and thus has the ability to start comprehending the dangers of the higher realms in the kāma loka, i.e., the human realm and the deva realms. First one comprehends the dangers of sense pleasures associated with the human realm and when that happens one attains the Sakadāgāmi stage (one will never again be born in the human realm), and the second film comes off.
- In two more stages (Anāgāmī and Arahant), the remaining two films come off and one will be able to clearly see the true nature of this world only at the Arahant stage.
- Thus, it is useless to try to grasp everything at once or to try to give up "normal" sense pleasures forcefully. However, it is imperative to give up those extreme (immoral) behaviors (gati) to be free from dugati (apāyā).

7. The main problem is that some people go to extremes in seeking sense pleasures. They are willing to steal, lie, and even commit murder to acquire wealth, status, or titles. All those are perceived to lead to higher sense pleasures.

- But in doing so, one will be cultivating gati suitable for rebirth in the apāy $\bar{a}$, i.e., dugati.
- One may enjoy such sense pleasures for maximum of 100 years or so. But when one is born in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$ it is very difficult to get out. One could be trapped there for billions of years to come. This is the danger that many do not see.
- This is the difference a Buddha makes. In the absence of a Buddha in the world, humans are unaware of the existence of these other 29 realms, and in particular, the four lowest realms.

8. Those akusala kamma that makes one to be eligible to be born in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$ have a special name: $p \bar{a} p a$ kamma. I guess the closest English translation would be "akusala kamma of the worst kinds."

- As I have discussed in a previous post, there is a huge difference between lobha and rāga, dosa and patigha, and moha and avijjā: "Lobha, Dosa, Moha versus Raga, Patigha, Avijjā.".
- Pāpa kamma are done with lobha, dosa, and moha, the stronger versions of greed, hate, and ignorance.
- When one attains the Sotāpanna stage one is left with the milder versions of rāga, patigha, and avijj $\bar{a}$. It basically means a Sotāpanna still likes to enjoy sense pleasures, but not at the expense of others.
- A Sotāpanna is inherently incapable of doing anything that normally would qualify one to be born in the apāy $\bar{a}$. Even under extreme pressure, a Sotāpanna would not be compelled to such pāpa kamma.

9. I have done analyses to show that such pāpa kamma are done because one has micchā ditthi. When one has micch $\bar{a}$ ditṭhi, one has the hidden ability (anusaya) to generate "ditṭhi sampayutta citta" and those are strongest of the 8 lobha citta; see, for example, "Akusala Citta - How a Sotāpanna Avoids Apayagami Citta."

- Thus it is very important to understand what micchā ditthi is. One can use the Search box to find many relevant posts, but here is a simple explanation: "Wrong Views (Micchā Ditthi) - A Simpler Analysis."

10. Another issue to think about is which factor dominates the determination of the next bhava and thus jathi (birth): kamma vipāka (seeds) from the past OR one's gati right now.

- We all have done both highly meritorious deeds and highly immoral deeds in the past. Those cannot be eliminated easily. But the critical point is that unless one "willingly grasp" any one of those kamma seeds at the cuti-patisandhi moment at the end of the current bhava, those kamma seeds cannot bring about a new bhava.
- When one attains the Sotāpanna stage, one permanently loses "gati suitable for the apāyā," i.e., one loses "upādāna" for bhava in the lowest four realms. Thus even though we may have potent kamma seeds for such bhava, they CANNOT be grasped at the cuti-patisandhi moment.
- At the Arahant stage, one loses "upādāna" for bhava in all 31 realms, even though he/she may have even an uncountable number of kamma seeds from the past.
- This is why Angulimāla, who killed 999 people, was able to attain the Arahanthood within 7 days. He lost craving for rebirth anywhere in the 31 realms. See, "Account of Angulimāla - Many Insights to Buddha Dhamma."
- We just need to get rid of gathi suitable to be reborn in the lowest four realms to become a Sotāpanna. That is the critical and first step.

11. To repeat: Avoiding immoral behavior and actively engaging in moral behavior is not only for the prevention of creating bad kamma seeds or for creating good kamma seeds, but for changing our bad gati.

- The more critical end result we are looking for is to change our mindset, our gati. That starts with first getting rid of dugati. For most people, it is easy to see the dangers of the apāy $\bar{a}$.
- When we lose dugati suitable for rebirth in the ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$, we will not grasp such a bhava at the cutipatisandhi moment.
- Until we lose both kinds of gati at the Arahant stage, we NEED TO cultivate sugati so that we will grasp only such a "good bhava" at the cuti-patisandhi moment.

12. Once one gets rid of dugati, one advances to the next stage automatically. It is hard to see the bad consequences of "kāma gati" (sense pleasures that keep one bound to kāma loka), until one is free of the "apāya gati" or dugati.

- In the same way, it is hard to see the anicca nature of "rūpa and arūpa loka gati" (jhānic pleasures that keep one bound to $r \bar{u} p a$ and arūpa loka), until one is free of the "kāma gati."
- This is why it is totally useless to meditate on things like 'there is no self' or 'there is no 'me'." The feeling of a self (or more correctly the samyojana of "māna") is removed only at the Arahant stage, which is infinitely far away compared to losing dugati.
- The perception of a "self" is going to be there as long as one craves for at least a trace of anything in the 31 realms. This is another point that needs a lot of contemplation. The critical point to understand is that it is unfruitful/dangerous to commit immoral actions to enjoy assāda or "mind-made pleasures."


### 7.4.10. Kāma Guna, Kāma, Kāma Rāga, Kāmaccfanda

November 9, 2017; revised September 3, 2019; October 5, 2019

## Introduction

1. It is essential to understand the meaning of each term. The "defilement level" increases in the given order from kāma to kāmacchanda.

- Pronunciation of the terms: WebLink: Pronunciation of kāma guna to kāmacchanda

2. In $k a \overline{m a}$ loka, we experience five types of physical sense inputs: pictures (rūpa rūpa), sounds, smells, tastes, and body touches. There are inherent "qualities" for each of these called "kāma guna." Those are common to all of us in kāma loka. They also depend on "bhava" and thus differ from humans to each type of animal; see below.
[ $\boldsymbol{k} \overline{\boldsymbol{a} m a}$ : may denote: 1. subjective sensuality, 'sense-desire'; 2. objective sensuality, the five sense-objects.
kāma-guna : 'characteristics \{cords (or strands)\} of sensuality'.]

- For example, all of us experience the sourness of lemon or sweetness of sugar (there may be defects in some people due to kamma vipāka).
- We all experience the unpleasantness of thunder or the pleasantness of music.
- While there could be minor differences, all humans experience the same basic "qualities" or 'kāma guṇa" through the five physical senses. Even when one becomes an Arahant, that will not change.


## Realms in Kāma Loka and Two Brahma Lokā

3. The 31 realms naturally exist to provide different levels of kamma vipāka according to the (abhi) sañkhāra done in previous lives (mainly in the human realm).

- The lowest four realms in $k \bar{a} m a$ loka ( $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a})$ have conditions that induce excessive suffering. Higher two realms in kāma loka have rūpa rūpa, sadda, gandha, rasa, and pottabba that provide increasingly higher levels of "pleasures."
- The rūpavācara brahma realms have rūpavācara jhānic pleasures; those brahmā had given up kāma rāga and had cultivated rūpavācara jhānā in previous human lives.
- Those in arūpavācara brahma realms had given up both kāma rāga and rūpa rāga, and had cultivated arūpavācara jhāna in previous human lives.
- That is why kāma guṇa is absent in both rūpavācara and arūpavācara brahma realms. Those who are born in those realms had given up sense pleasures for jhānic pleasures.


## What Are Kāma Guna?

4. Therefore, there are pleasing things in our kāma loka (human realm) that naturally arise to provide sense pleasures. That is because "human bhava" is a "good bhava." Even more sensory pleasures are naturally available in deva realms.

- Thus, as humans, we are naturally exposed to those "kāma guna." We are naturally "exposed to" sense objects that are "pleasing" to the five physical senses. Of course, deva are exposed to even stronger kāma guṇa.
- Thus, if one has not comprehended the Tilakkhaṇa then it is natural to attach to such "pleasurable things." One perceives that things in this world - especially those things with kāma guna - can provide long-term happiness. But in reality, such cravings lead to suffering because those "pleasures" are not sustainable. Furthermore, those things with kāma guṇa motivate people to immoral deeds to get access to them.


## Kāma Rāga - Attachment to Kāma Guṇa via Sañkappa Rāga

5. Now, if a person gets attached to those sensory inputs with kāma guna, and starts generating sensual thoughts (i.e. vacī sà̉khāra) that leads to "kāma" or kāma rāga. Generating sensual thoughts is also called sañkappa rāga (creating sañkappa that lead to samisāric journey). A sutta reference is in $\# 15$ below.

- Engaging in sañkappa rāga (i.e., thinking greedy thoughts about such sense pleasures) means generating vacī sañkhāra. That is then likely to lead to kāya sañkhāra, too (start engaging in related physical activities.)
- That can happen to any average human. It can happen to a lesser extent to a Sotāpanna. That next step of intentionally generating sensual thoughts happens with kāma rāga. That will again reduce at the Sakadāgāmi stage and stopped only at the Anāgāmi stage. [kāma-rāga : 'sensuous lust', one of the ten fetters (samiyojana, q.v.)]
- The removal of kāma rāga cannot be forces. Kāma rāga will naturally reduce when cultivating $\bar{A} n a ̈ p a ̄ n a$ and Satipaṭthāna.

6. An Anāgāmī has removed kāma rāga, but still has kāma, i.e., likes them somewhat.

- However, kāma of an Anāgāmi is not strong enough to lead to rebirth in the kāma loka. In other words, an Anāgāmī will not generate abhisañkhāra (strong sañkhāra) for things with kāma guṇa (for example would have no desire to engage in sex).
- In the Abhidhammic language, an Anāgāmī has removed four greed-based cittā associated with wrong views. There are still "four greed-based citttā dissociated with wrong views" left. But they have lost much of the potency to move from kāma to kāma rāga level; see \#3 of, "Akusala Citta and Akusala Vipāka Citta."
- It is only at the Arahant stage that $k \bar{a} m a$ is absent completely.


## Kāmacchanda - Being Blinded by Kāma Rāga

7. If not willfully controlled, kāma rāga can intensify to a point where one is capable of committing immoral deeds (hurting others or oneself.) One starts losing control when kāma rāga elevates to the kāmacchanda level, the highest. [kämacchanda :'sensuous desire', one of the 5 hindrances (nīvaraṇa, q.v.); attachment to sensual pleasure.]

- That can happen to anyone below the Sotāpanna stage, i.e., one can be "blinded" by $k \bar{a} m a$, resulting in kāmacchanda ("kāma" + "icca" + "andha," where icca is liking, and andha is blind, and thus "blinded by the craving for $k \bar{a} m a$ ").
- Whether an average human will generate kāma, kāma rāga, or kāmacchanda depends on the strength of the sensory input and also on prevalent conditions. For example, if one's mindset becomes degraded due to alcohol consumption, and one sees an attractive woman in an isolated setting, things could get out-of-control with kāmacchanda.


## Kämacchanda Leads to Rebirth in the $A p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$

## 8. Immoral actions done with k $\bar{a} m a c c h a n d a$ could lead to rebirth in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$.

- Only kāma rāga - not kāmacchanda - can be arise in a Sotāpanna. Thus he/she is released from the apāy $\bar{a}$, but not from kāma loka. A Sotāpanna is incapable of committing an "apāyagāmi deed" in order to satisfy any kind of sensory pleasure.
- I hope you get the basic idea. The above reasoning applies to any of the five physical sense inputs.


## Some Examples for Clarification

9. We can clarify with some examples. Sugar has a "kāma guna" of sweetness for humans; that holds for everyone from an average person to an Arahant.

- A beautiful woman will be seen as such by anyone from an average person to an Arahant.
- An average person may generate $k \bar{a} m a$ to $k a \overline{m a c c h a n d a}$ for that woman.
- A Sotāpanna may generate kāma to kāma rāga.
- An Anāgāmī may generate just kāma. But there is no "kāma rāga anusaya" left in him to go beyond that.
- But an Arahant will not generate kāma either.

10. The sight of such a woman is a kamma vipāka. For anyone (from an average person to an Arahant), still living in the human realm will see that she is beautiful.

- If one gets "interested" one generates kāma sañkappa or vacī sañkhāra; see, "Correct Meaning of Vacī Sañkhāra." Then it could lead to kāya sañkhāra, i.e., turn one's head to looks at her again with kāma rāga or kāmacchanda, that is a new kamma.
- A Sotāpanna still has "kāma rāga anusaya," and that is why he/she will return to the kāma loka. $\mathrm{He} /$ she can be born as a human or deva in the future.
- A Sakadāgāmī is in between the Sotāpanna and Anāgāmī stages. He/she will be reborn only in the deva realms.
- Of course, an Anāgāmī will not be reborn anywhere in the kāma loka. since there is no kāma rāga left.


## Different Types of Kāma Guṇa for Different Existences

11. Anyone born in the human realm will have similar "kāma guna" because they had cultivated corresponding "human sañkhāra." We all like same things, and any variations we do have are due the variations in those main sañkhāra types.

- However, "kāma guna" of animals can be much more different compared to humans. There are also many variations among animals.
- Pigs eat very unpleasing things, including feces. Tigers or lions like to eat raw meat. Cows don't like meat but like grass. The variations are quite apparent. Again those correspond to sankhāra that they had cultivated as humans. Furthermore, each bhava (and $j \bar{a} t i)$ corresponds to such sañkhāra via paṭicca samuppāda. Some of you may be able to see that, but we will discuss this later.
- In brahma realms, things with kāma guṇa are absent. They were born in those realms because they had preferred and cultivated jhānic pleasures, instead of craving for sensual pleasures.

12. In that regard, we just keep in mind for now that (abhi)sañkhāra generated by humans have high javana power, and thus lead to various "bhava" and jāti. Animals cannot generate such citta with high javana power because of their unfortunate birth. That is an important point. Animals just pay for past kamma until that kammic power is exhausted; see, "Javana of a Citta - The Root of Mental Power."

- Even most devas enjoy their kāma and "go with the flow," and enjoy them (while they can.) Brahmā too enjoy jhānic pleasures that come with their birth.
- It is only those devas/brahmā that had become at least Sotāpanna that would be motivated to strive for magga phala.


## Only abhisañkhāra Lead to Future Rebirths

13. Therefore, it is mostly humans who can cultivate abhisañkhāra (of both types) and thus make conditions for future "good births or bad births." That is a critical point in the Agganna Sutta.

- All the animals that we see were humans in the beginning. Those with "bad gathi" that had been generated via "bad abhisañkhāra" in their deep past, were reborn as various types of animals as the Earth evolved, and conditions for animal life appeared.
- An introduction to Aggañña Sutta is at "Buddhism and Evolution - Aggañña Sutta (DN 27)."


## Five Kinds of Kāma Guna

14. Now let us briefly discuss a key sutta that is relevant. The "WebLink: suttacentral: Nibbedhika Sutta (AN 6.63)" lists the five kāma guṇa:
"..Pañcime, bhikkhave, kāmaguñā-cakkhuviññeyy $\bar{a}$ rūpa itṭha kantā manāpa piyarūp $\bar{a}$ kāmūpasaimhitā rajanīyā, sotaviññeyyā saddā ... ghānaviññeyyā gandhā ... jivhāviññeyyā rasā ... kāyaviññeyyā phoṭthabbā iṭṭhā kantā manāpā piyarūpā kāmūpasamihitā rajanīyā. Api ca kho, bhikkhave, nete kāmā kāmagun̄̄̄.."

Translated: "..Bhikkhus, there are five types with characteristics of sensuality (kāma guṇa). Which five? Forms are cognizable via the eye-agreeable, pleasing, charming, likable, desire-inducing, enticing. Sounds are cognizable via the ear. Aromas are cognizable via the nose. Flavors are cognizable via the tongue. Body sensations are cognizable via the body-agreeable, pleasing, charming, likable, desire-inducing, enticing. But, Bhikkhus, these are not sensuality (kāma)..."

- I have translated "guṇa" as "characteristics," but "qualities" would work too.


## Kāma Different From Kāma Guṇa

15. Then the next verse of the sutta says what $\boldsymbol{k} \overline{\boldsymbol{a} m a}$ is: "Sañkappa rāgo purisassa kāmo, Nete kāmā yāni citrāni loke..."

Translated: "a person's $k \bar{a} m a$ is getting attached and thinking about (sañkappa rāga) those pleasing things in this world (citrani loke)." Those beautiful things are not kāma." Here, "citrāni loke" means "a world full of delightfiul things."

To emphasize: There are many pleasing, desire-inducing, enticing things in the kāma loka. Just experiencing them is not $k \bar{a} m a$. One who has understood the real nature does not get attached to them. But those who do not yet understand the real anicca nature of things in the kāma loka, value them highly. They crave them, and get a satisfaction (kāma assāda) by thinking about them (generating kāma sañkappa or vacī sañkhāra); that is kāma.

- It is essential to realize that conscious thinking or "talking to oneself" is vacī sañkhāra; see, "Correct Meaning of Vacī Sañkhāra." Thus, one who does that has sañkappa räga.
- Such vacī sañkhāra can then lead to kāya sañkhāra, whereby one takes actions to fulfill such desires (if one has kāma rāga anusaya).
- Some people go one step further and commit akusala kamma to fulfill such desires (then it becomes kāmacchanda).


## Saṅkappa Rāga Is kāma

16. Therefore, anyone in the kāma loka will experience kāma guṇa. It is a natural outcome of being in the kāma loka. It is the tendency to think about them on a regular basis and enjoy that with sañkappa rāga that elevates to $k \bar{a} m a$. A higher level of $k \bar{a} m a$ is $k \bar{a} m a$ rāga.

- And giving up that craving comes only with an understanding of the true nature (the anicca, dukkha, anatta nature), i.e., realize that they have adverse consequences; see, "How Perceived Pleasures (Assāda) lead to Dukkha." and "Assāda, Ādinnava, Nissarana - Introduction."
- Getting to the Sotāpanna stage means one has understood the dangers of kāma assāda. As long as one has cravings for them, one would still have them. However, a Sotāpanna will never do an immoral act to gain those sense pleasures.
- For a Sotāpanna to be free from such kāma assāda, he/she needs to contemplate the dangers (ādīnava) of kāma assāda as we discussed in the above two posts. That is the "asubha bhāvanā." [asubha means unfruitful, detrimental]


## What Is Asubha Bhāvanā?

17. Many people misinterpret the asubha bhāvanā as to contemplate on disgusting things like rotting dead bodies. That is entirely wrong; such meditations only lead to patigha or "friction of the mind."

- Instead, one needs to contemplate on the fact that the cause of future suffering is getting attached to those pleasing sensual things. One needs to see the unfruitful (asubha) nature of those things with kāma guna. Real asubha (detrimental) things are those eye-pleasing, ear-pleasing, ...body-pleasing things in this kāma loka. See, "How Perceived Pleasures (Assāda) lead to Dukkha."
- Therefore, it is not even possible to do the asubha bhāvanā correctly until one gets to the Sotāpanna stage. It is only then one begins to see the dangers in craving for sense pleasures.
- However, it is always good to cut down on sense pleasures, even while striving for the Sotāpanna stage. It makes one's mind calm and susceptible to grasp more profound concepts.
- Extreme sense pleasures are a burden to the mind. It is possible to avoid those right now; see, "Satipatthāna Sutta - Relevance to Suffering in This Life." Doing everything in moderation naturally leads to a simpler, healthier, and peaceful life.


### 7.4.10. Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways

Revised September 4, 2016; Revised February 9, 2017; October 17, 2017; November 5, 2018;May 5, 2020 (Same at Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways @ The Five Aggregates (Pañcakkhandha))

## Introduction

 "become aware." When an ārammaṇa comes to the mind (via any of the six senses,) we become aware of it.

## Vedanā can arise in two ways:

1. One type of vedanā is a consequence of a previous kamma or previous defiled action, i.e., a kamma vipāka. That kamma could have been done many lives ago.
2. For example, when one gets a "pleasant feeling" while eating a piece of cake offered by the friend, that is a vipāka vedana $\bar{a}$. Then, if we start thinking about how to eat that cake in the future, with such thinking, we generate "pleasant feelings" about such future experiences. Those are "mind-made" or samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedana $\bar{a}$ associated with greedy thoughts.

Further details on the two types of vedanā can be found at, "Vipāka Vedanā and "Samphassa-jā-Vedanā" in a Sensory Event." But let us discuss them briefly below.

## Vedanā Arising from Kamma Vipāka

2. Vedanā (feelings) due to kamma vipāka are three kinds : Sukha vedana (pleasant or joyful feeling), dukha vedanā (unpleasant or painful feeling), and adhukkhamasukha (without being painful or joyful, just neutral. The word adukkhamasukha is a combination of adukkhama and asukha.)

- Those three types of vedanā are felt only by the body (kāya). All vedanā initially coming through other five sense faculties are neutral.
- Kamma vipāka leading to sukha vedanā and dukha vedanā happen to everyone, including Arahants. While everyone can live mindfully (taking necessary precautions) to avoid some of such dukha vedan $\bar{a}$, others are too strong to be able to avoid.
- For example, the Buddha himself had physical ailments later in his life as kamma vipāka. Moggallana Thero was beaten to death because of a bad kamma that he did many lives before.

3. However, kamma vipāka are not certain to happen. Some can be reduced in power (see, "Kamma, Debt, and Meditation.') Many vipāka can be reduced in strength with time if one starts acting with mindfulness.

- Many can be avoided by preventing conditions for them to arise. That means acting with yoniso manasikāra or just common sense. For example, going out at night in a bad neighborhood is providing fertile ground for past bad kamma vipāka to appear. Many kamma vipāka CANNOT take place unless the conditions are right. See, "Anantara and Samanantara Paccayā."
- We all have done innumerable kamma (both good and bad) in past lives. If we act with common sense, we can suppress bad kamma vipāka and make conditions for good vipāka to arise.
- Also see the discussion on kamma bīja in, "Sañkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka."
- Now let us look at the second type of vedana $\overline{\text {. }}$


## Vedanā Arising from sañkhāra ("Samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedan $\bar{a} ")$

4. These are the vedan $\bar{a}$ (feelings) that we generate on our own. These are the vedan $\bar{a}$ that do not arise in an Arahant.

- Based on vipāka vedanā, we may generate more types of "mind-made" vedanā called somanassa and domanassa vedanā as we discuss below.
- In \#2 above, we saw that vipāka vedanā are felt only by the body (kāya.)
- Some of the vedana coming through the other senses feel as "pleasant" or "unpleasant" NOT because of kamma vipāka, but due to another reason. Those are associated with each realm and are "kāma guna." See, "Kāma Guna - Origin of Attachment (Tanhā)." For example, all humans taste sugar to be sweet. But some people get addicted to eating sweets full of sugar. That second category is "mindmade."
- We may generate "samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedan $\bar{a}$ " starting with initial vedana due to both mentioned above. But most samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedana $\bar{a}$ have kāma guṇa as the cause.


## Some Examples of Samphassa-ja-Vedanā

5. These samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedana $\bar{a}$ arise due to attachment via greed or hate, at that moment (i.e., due to one's gati); see, "Tanhā - How We Attach Via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance."

These are the vedana (feelings) that Arahants do not feel. Since they do not have any "bad gati," they do not commit any (abhi)sañkhāra, an Arahant avoids any kind of feeling arising from sañkhāra. The easiest way to explain this kind of vedan $\bar{a}$ is to give some examples:

- Three people are walking down the street. One has an ultra-right political bias (A), the second has an ultra-left preference (B), and the third is an Arahant who does not have special feelings for anyone (C). They all see a famous politician hated by the political right coming their way. It is a given that the sight of the politician causes A to have displeasure and B to have a pleasurable feeling. On the other hand, sight does not cause the Arahant to generate any pleasure or displeasure. Even though all three see and identify the person, they produce different types of feelings. It is essential to realize that the feelings were created in $A$ and $B$ by themselves.
- Two friends go looking for treasure and find a gem. Both are overjoyed. It seems quite valuable and one person kills the other so that he can get all the money. Yet when he tries to sell the "gem," he finds out that it was not that valuable. His joy turns to sorrow in an instant. Nothing had changed in the object. It was the same piece of colored rock. What has changed was the perception of it.
- What could happen if an Arahant found the same gem lying on the road? (He would not have gone looking for one.) He might think of donating it to a worthy cause.


## Another Example of Samphassa-jā-Vedanā

6. A loving couple had lived for many years without any problems and were happy to be together. However, the husband slaps his wife during an argument (this is a kamma vipäka). The physical pain from the slap itself did not last more than a few minutes. But for how long the wife would suffer mentally? Those feelings arise due to sañkhāra, i.e., sadness and hate. Even the husband, who did not feel any physical pain, would suffer for days if he really loved his wife. In both cases, the real mental pain was associated with the attachment to each other. The wife could have dropped something on her foot and would have suffered about the same amount of physical pain. But she would not have had any lingering mental pain associated with that.

- In all the above cases, the initial sense contact was due to a kamma vipāka. No kamma energy was generated at that instant. However, based on that initial contact, we tend to pursue it with our mind and thus may start generating kamma automatically. See, "Avyākata Patticca Samuppāda for Vipāka Viññāna."


## Samphassa-jā-Vedanā Arise Due to Taṇh $\bar{a}$

7. Thus it is clear that in all the above examples, the "extra" happiness or suffering (other than due to kamma $v i p a ̄ k a$ ) arose from within one's own mind. And $\tanh \bar{a}$ (attachment via greed or hate) was the cause of it. See, "Tanhā - How We Attach Via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance."

- When we generate such "mind-made vedanā," we also do kamma (via abhisañkhāra) that will bring more suffering in the future.
- The Buddha pointed out that when he described dukkha in the Dhammacakka Pavattana Sutta. See, "Essence of Buddhism - In the First Sutta."

8. Thus all these feelings arise due to $\boldsymbol{t a n h} \overline{\boldsymbol{a}}$, some form of attachment: greed (craving, liking) or hate (dislike); all these are due to mano/vaci/kāya sañkhāra. The feelings (or rather, the perceptions that give rise to feelings) reside INSIDE oneself. It does not come from outside. We use external things to CAUSE happiness or suffering by our own volition.

- There is no inherent suffering or happiness in ANYTHING external; the sense contact with an external thing CAUSES pain or happiness depending on our gati and $\bar{a} s a v \bar{a}$. An Arahant, who has removed all $\bar{a} s a v \bar{a}$, will be free of such emotional responses.


## Connection to Paṭicca Samuppāda

9. It is also clear how the accumulation of sañkhāra via Paticca Samuppāda leads to such varied feelings: If we attach to something with a "like" or a "dislike," we generate a mindset accordingly. That is Paticca Samuppāda (pati +icca leading to sama + uppāda; see, "Paticca Samuppāda - Introduction").

- If we attached to something with "greed", we act with that "greedy mindset." We will be happy if we get what we wanted. If we got "attached" to something with anger, we would have an "angry mindset" and would be happy if we remove whatever caused that anger.
- In either case, the strength of the feeling is also proportional to the strength of the "like" or "dislike": Sama uppāda or Samuppāda means both in quality and quantity; the higher the strength of "pati + ichcha", the higher the strength in "sama + uppāda."
- This is how we form habits ("gati") too. A teenager drinking alcohol with a bunch of friends gets attached to that setting and looks forward to having the same experience again. The more he repeats that activity, the more he gets "bonded", and thus forms a drinking habit. See, "Habits and Goals" and "Samsāric Habits and Āsavā."

The sequel to this post is at, "Feelings: Sukha, Dukha, Somanassa, and Domanassa."
A deeper discussion on vedanā at: "Does Bodily Pain Arise Only Due to Kamma Vipāka?," "How Are Paticca Samuppāda Cycles Initiated?," and "Avyākata Paticca Samuppāda for Vipāka Viññāna."

### 7.4.10. Feelings: Sukha, Dukha, Somanassa, and Domanassa

## December 11, 2015; Revised November 19, 2018

In this post, we will discuss an important classification of vedana $\bar{a}$ based on whether they arise due to kamma vipāka or our defiled thoughts (sañkhāra).

1. This is a sequel to the previous post, "Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways," where we discussed how feelings arise due to kamma vipāka and also due to mano sañkhāra.

- As discussed in several posts, we can avoid certain kamma vipāka from actually taking place by not making suitable conditions for them to appear, but some strong ones are hard to avoid; see, "What is Kamma? - Is Everything Determined by Kamma?."
- However, feelings (both good and bad) that arise due to sañkhāra are totally avoidable, and Arahants are completely free of them. We discussed this in the previous post.
- Now let us discuss in detail what types of feelings arise due to those two causes.

2. First, let us discuss the feelings that we feel in our physical bodies.

- They include sukha vedana such as bodily comforts one feels sleeping in a luxurious bed, eating tasty food, smelling nice odors, seeing something attractive, etc. They arise via the five physical senses.
- Then there are dukha vedanā that are again brought in via the five physical senses: injuries to the body, headaches, eating something untasteful, smelling a bad odor, hearing to an ear-piercing sound, etc.
- Both those types of vedanā are due to kamma vipāka, and Arahants feel them too. Sukha vedanā arise due to kusala kamma vipāka (past good deeds) and dukha vedanā arise due to akusala kamma vipāka (past bad deeds).
- These sukha and dukha vedanā mainly exist in the kāma loka, where the dense bodies of the beings are sufficiently dense to impart them. In fact, it is mainly in the lower five realms (including the human realm, that dukha vedanā exists as kamma vipāka. However, the worst types of dukha vedanā are in the lowest four realms (apāy $\bar{a})$, and that is why a Sotāpanna is said to have overcome the worst of the suffering forever.
- In the deva lokas, it is mainly the sukha vedanā that results due to good kamma vipāka. That is why a Sakadāgāmī is never born at or below the human realm, and is said to become "healthy forever."
- In the rūpa loka and arūpa loka, beings mainly have jhānic pleasures. Thus an $A n \bar{a} g \bar{a} m \bar{r}$, who will never be reborn in the kāma loka, is said to become "peaceful forever."

3. Some vipāka vedanā felt by the body are neutral. Furthermore, all vipāka vedana coming through the other four physical senses are also neutral: adhukkhama asukha (without being painful or joyful, just neutral) vedanā, which are commonly called upekkha vedanā.

- It is important to note that these adhukkhama asukha or upekkha vedanā are the true reality of experience. Vedanā comes from ("ve" + "danā") which means "veema danaveema" (రెఅ टृळలోఅ) in Sinhala. Basically, when we sense something via our six senses, we become aware that something happened, i.e., seeing a picture, hearing a sound, etc.; that is vedan $\bar{a}$.
- For example, seeing a person X only leads to an upekkha vedanā for ANYONE initially.

4. However, within a fraction of a second of that seeing event, it COULD LEAD TO pleasant (somanassa) or unpleasant (domanassa) feelings DEPENDING ON WHO IS SEEING X. Person X's wife or child will generate somanassa vedana upon seeing X. However, an enemy of X will generate domanassa vedan $\bar{a}$ upon seeing X .

- On the other hand, a total stranger (or an Arahant) will not generate either somanassa or domanassa vedana $u$ upon seeing X , and that is the true reality, as mentioned in \#3 above.
- Thus both somanassa and domanassa vedanā are MIND MADE, and arise due to mano sañkhāra. And those sañkhāra are generated based on one's own gathi and āsavas.
- In another example, if two people who are strong supporters of two opposing political parties see the leader of one political party, one will generate somanassa vedana and the other will generate domanassa vedanā upon seeing that politician. Thus, those feelings could not have resided with the politician, but arose entirely due to the gathi of those two people.
- An Arahant will not generate either kind, because there is no attachment (or repulsion) to anything or anyone for an Arahant.
- This is a very important point that one could do insight meditation on.

5. We also know that both sukha and dukha vedanā can LEAD TO somanassa and domanassa vedana $\bar{a}$ too. For example, When one gets a headache due to a kamma vipāka, one could be agonizing over how long that will last, whether that will prevent one from going to a party next day, etc. Those are domanassa vedanā due to that initial dukha vedana from the headache.

- On the other side, when one eats a tasty piece of cake (good vipāka vedanā), one could be start thinking about buying more of that cake and enjoying it later; that gives rise to somanassa vedana
- Both the domanassa vedanā and the somanassa vedanā in the above two examples are totally mindmade, i.e., due to sañkhāra.

6. Therefore, based on the three types of vedan $\bar{a}$ (sukha vedanā, dukha vedan $\bar{a}$, and upekkha vedana $\bar{a}$ ) that arise due to kamma vipāka, ADDITIONAL two types of vedanā (somanassa and domanassa $v e d a n \bar{a})$ COULD arise depending on the $\bar{s} a v a$ and gathi of the person experiencing them.

- Those feelings that we feel IN THIS LIFE due to sañkhāra are MOSTLY two kinds: somanassa vedanā and domanassa vedanā. Those sañkhāra also make bhava (via thoughts, speech and actions) and those give rise to kamma vipāka mostly in future lives but also in this life itself as we discuss below in \#11.
- Thus rebirths are also generated via (abhi)sañkhāra and that is how the cycle of rebirths is maintained. That is why it is called samisāra ("san" + "sāra," where "sāra" means "good"), i.e., one perceives that it is good to keep doing sañkhāra ("san" + "kāra", where "kāra" or "kriya" is action).

7. This is why Dukkha Sacca (First Noble Truth) does not mean that we can ELIMINATE the dukha vedanā arising in our present physical body; those are due to kamma vipāka (the causes were already done).

- However, by gradually reducing sañkhāra (with increased understanding of Buddha Dhamma), we can stop making new sañkhāra and thus eliminate FUTURE suffering. This is the key to dukkha sacca. These sañkhāra are also called assāda (āsvāda in Sinhala); see, "Assāda, Ādīnava, Nissarana."

8. Still, we can reduce bad consequences from past kamma vipāka using what are called "strategies" ("upakrama") in Buddha Dhamma.

- One is to be mindful and not to let conditions for past kamma vipāka to take place. This is discussed in, "What Is Kamma? - Is Everything Determined by Kamma?" and "Anantara and Samanantara Paccaya."
- If the kamma vipāka has already started imparting its effects (say, someone finds out that one has cancer), then one can work to alleviate that condition by using another related "strategy": One can get medical help and adopt a lifestyle that is opposes the spreading of the cancer. Even here what we are doing is to overcome this bad condition by making suitable environment for "opposing good kamma vipāka" to bear fruit. Thus, if one does not make an effort, the bad kamma vipāka will run its course and one may die in short time.

9. Each living being's body is designed to impart appropriate good and bad kamma vipāka suitable for the kamma seed that gave rise to that particular life.

- For example, an animal cannot implement "strategies" ("upakrama") to overcome most of its kamma vipāka. For example, it is unable to do anything about a wound (other than licking it) or to think about dragging its cot to a sunny spot (our dog likes to be in the sun but we have to move her cot!).
- Some animals have built-in defenses for their survival, but they cannot make them any better. For example, some birds instinctively know how to build a nest, but that "nest design" has not been improved by them over millions of years. And baby turtles "know" the way to the ocean and start trotting in the right direction minutes after their hatching; see, "How Character (Gati) Leads to Bhava and Jāti."
- Animals also are unable to do strong good or bad kamma. Even though most animals kill other animals, that is not done with greed or hate, but just for survival. It is just like the instinct for the birds to build nests or the baby turtles to head in the right direction to the sea. In Abhidhamma language, they generate mostly, "upekkha sahagata citta" and those have much less javana power.
- Thus, animals cannot accumulate much good or bad kamma. Otherwise, they will never be able to escape that "bhava," since most survive by killing other animals. In the same way, whenever they get a "good life" (say as a human)- which is very rare - that is due to a good kamma vipāka done in a previous "good life."
- But not all animals are the same. Those "higher up" animals like monkeys can accumulate kamma than "lower ones" such as worms, and cats and dogs are somewhere in between.

10. The potency of human sañkhāra comes from the ability of humans to generate both "somanassa sahagata citta" (thoughts with joy) for kusala kamma and akusala kamma. The javana power of those citta are very high.

- Thus when one is doing a good deed with joy, that brings much more merits compared to someone who is doing it just because others are doing it, i.e., with an "upekkhā sahagata citta"; see, ""A Simple Way to Enhance Merits (Kusala) and Decrease Demerits (Akusala)."
- Even more strong javana arise when a good deed is done with knowledge that it will lead to good results and why, ie., one knows right from wrong.
- But the most potent javana arise when a good deed is done with understanding of the anicca nature, i.e., when one does it with "somanassa sahagata ñāna sampayutta citta." Thus, paññā (or ñāṇa) comes from an understanding that is deeper than just knowing right from wrong.
- It works the other way around for bad deeds: the most potent javana (with high kammic power that can lead to rebirth in the apa$y \bar{a}$ ) are generated with "somanassa sahagata ditthi sampayutta citta," i.e, thoughts with joy and wrong vision. A good example is someone who commits murder and enjoys and it is done with the dittthi that such an action cannot bring bad consequences.
- But when one commits murder due to anger that is done with aversion and displeasure: "domanassa sahagata patigha sampyutta citta"; see, "Akusala Citta and Akusala Vipāka Citta."

11. Now let us consider the consequences of sañkhāra in this life, that we mentioned in \#6 above. Suppose a teenager starts associating with bad friends and start drinking alcohol. Initially, he does not even like the taste of it, i.e., he may be generating a domanassa vedanā due to the taste of alcohol. But with the insistence of those friends he continues drinking.

- Then he makes a habit (gathi) of it, begins to perceive the taste as a somanassa vedana , and starts making sañkhāra about drinking. Even while in the middle of some other task, he starts thinking about the next party where he can drink, and what types of drinks there will be and so on.
- Now "sañkhāra paccayā viññāna" step in the pațicca samuppāda leads to making a "new viññ̄ạna for drinking." The more he thinks about such parties and generate those somanassa vedana , the more viññāna, nāma rūpa, etc that he makes for such "drinking events."
- And the stronger that "viññāna for drinking" gets, the more he will be thinking about it (making more sañkhāra). Then the habit is strengthened; see, "How Habits are Formed and Broken - A Scientific View."

12. Mind phenomena are complex. But with the background that we have accumulated, we can figure out some of the causes and possible effects. There is no need to memorize all these different terms; they will be carved into the memory as one contemplates and sorts out one's own experiences.

To summarize: Sukha and dukha vedanā arise due to kamma vipāka. Somanassa and domanassa vedanā arise due to sañkhāra, which in turn arise due to our gati and $\bar{a} s a v a s$. The more sañkhāra we do, the stronger a given gathi (habit) becomes, which in turn become āsavas (cravings) and fuel the sansāric journey (rebirth process). This vicious cycle can be broken only through comprehending the anicca nature of this world.

### 7.4.10. Kāma Assāda Start with Phassa Paccayā Vedanā or Samphassa Jā 6 Vedana

## Revised April 29, 2021

In posts with advanced concepts, I have to use too many Pāli words. There are no short phrases in English to give the same meanings for phrases like "samphassa j $\bar{a} v e d a n \bar{a}$." Thus it will be beneficial to learn the meanings of these Pāli words and phrases and be able to pronounce them if that seems to be helpful. I have
included some audio files in the post, "Pāli Glossary (A-K) and Pāli Glossary (L-Z)." Here is how to pronounce the Pāli words in the title of this post:

WebLink: Listen to pronunciation of : kāma-āsvāda-phassa-paccaya-vedanā-samphassa-ja-vedanā

1. In the previous post, "What is Kāma? It is not Just Sex," we saw that $k \bar{a} m a$ is not sex or even attractive sense objects, ear-pleasing sound, tasty food, nice smell, or a sensual body touch as many believe. Käma is basically vacī sañkhāra about sense-pleasing objects (constantly thinking about those pleasures), whether it is an eye-catching object, ear-pleasing sound, tasty food, nice smell, or a body touch.
 about such sense objects and giving priority to them. We also saw that such kāma assāda (or asvāda in Sinhala) are vacī sañkhāra that arise when certain sensory inputs trigger our deep-seated $\bar{a} s a v a / a n u s a y a$ (which are related to our habits or "gati").

- Thus we can see that kāma assāda, sankalpita rāga, mano sañkhāra mean basically the same thing.
- To re-emphasize: $k \bar{a} m a$ assāda are beyond actually experiencing those sense inputs that come our way due to good kamma vipāka (even though one would need to stay away from high-pleasure activities, because one could get used to them and make corresponding habits). Kāma assāda are craving and thinking and planning about such sense inputs.
- Some extreme $k \bar{a} m a$ assāda (or at least actions and speech initiated by them) can be suppressed by understanding the bad consequences (ādiñava) of them.
- Without a Buddha appearing in the world, we would not even realize that even milder kāma assāda have bad consequences (ādinava). Yet, they do have bad consequences as we saw in the previous post.

2. The critical point that we need to discuss now is how to prevent milder but still harmful kāma assāda from arising in our minds. We basically have to use the same tactic discussed in the previous post and also in the introduction to this series, "Assāda, Ādīnava, Nissarana - Introduction."

- When a mind comprehends that certain actions are harmful, it avoids such actions. As we discussed in that introductory post, the best way to quit smoking is to understand the bad consequences of that habit fully. Another is to cultivate a good habit (say, listening/reading Dhamma) instead.
- In the previous post, we discussed how we avoid immoral actions via speech and bodily actions by comprehending the bad consequences of such actions.
- In other words, the primary way to effectively remove bad habits (nissarana) is to comprehend the bad consequences ( $\bar{d} d \bar{i} n a v a$ ) of such $k \bar{a} m a ~ a s s a ̄ d a ~ f r o m ~ a r i s i n g ~ i n ~ o u r ~ m i n d s . ~$

3. This is where another important aspect of Buddha's "previously unheard Dhamma" comes into play. This unique message is that in addition to being harmful, kāma assāda are unfruitful in the long run. Even though we normally value them, when analyzed with the way the Buddha taught, we can see that they are just mindmade due to our ignorance of the true nature of this world.
4. It is important to understand the big difference between vipāka vedana and kāma assāda. We cannot stop vipāka vedanā from arising, but we can stop kāma assāda by cleansing our minds.

A vipāka vedanā normally triggered kāma assāda. Also, kāma assāda are totally made up in our minds. Let us take a simple example to gain more insight.

- Husband and wife are walking down the street, and the wife stops and looks at a beautiful painting on display in a store window. The husband looks at it, shrugs his shoulders and wants to move on. It is somewhat expensive, so she is thinking about whether they can afford it right now, but she would really like to buy it. Husband has no interest in it and thinks that it is a waste of money to buy it.
- They both saw the same painting as a vipāka vedanā. That was just the "seeing event," and as we will discuss in Abhidhamma, most vipāka vedanā are neutral, like seeing or hearing. The exceptions are
bodily contacts, which can be either bodily dukha vedanā (like a cut or a headache) or sukha vedan $\bar{a}$ (like getting a massage or being in an air-conditioned room on a hot day) depending on whether it is bad or a good vipāka.
- Now, any "happy feeling" generated in the wife's mind would have been due to $k \bar{a} m a$ assāda. The mind of the husband did not generate such a "happy feeling." This is an important point. The "happy feeling" in the wife's mind could not have been a property of the painting; if so, it should have given the same "happy feeling" to the husband!

5. Thus in the above particular case, only the wife enjoyed kāma assāda due to seeing the painting. In other words, a pavutti akusala-mūla Pațicca Samuppāda cycle operated only for the wife. Her deep-seated craving (āsava/anusaya) for such an object led to acting with avijjā.

- We could also state the same process by saying that "cakkhuñca pațicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññānaà̀" was followed by "tinṇaì sañgati phasso" and "phassa paccayā vedanā"; see, "Tanhā - How We Attach Via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance."
- Now she is attached and deliberately looks at the picture, "avijj ā paccayā sañkhāra" step started and then went through the step, "(san)phassa paccay $\bar{a}$ vedana$"$ " in a fraction of second; see, "Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda."
- However, for the husband, who saw the same painting, there was no āsava/anusaya for such an object to "attach to it" and to act with avijj $\bar{a}$ and to initiate those processes; also see, "'Self" and "no-self": A Simple Analysis - Do We Always Act with Avijijā?."
- For some, this may be crystal clear but those who are not very familiar with the concepts may want to review those relevant posts.

6. Now that she is "attached" to the painting, the wife keeps looking at it for a while, which will lead to numerous such pavutti akusala-mūla Pațicca Samuppāda cycles. Not only that, she will be enjoying "kāma assāda" about that picture even after they left that place by thinking back about it. Now she has made a "viññanna" and a "bhava" for it.

- That "kāma assāda" can resurface with Paticca Samuppāda cycles that involve only the mind when she is at home: It starts with "manañca paṭicca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviññānam̈," i.e., she just remembers the painting while washing dishes. How does she start thinking about the painting when she was busy with some other task?
- One way to explain that is to say that "she had 'cultivated' a viñ̃n̄ana" for that painting and now it can sometimes resurface even without a prompt. This is sometimes known as the "subconscious"; see, "ㄹ. Viñ̃̃āna, Thoughts, and the Subconscious."
- Another way to explain it by saying that she had made a "bhava" for liking that painting and it is a dhamma that can enter the mind when the conditions are right: "manañca paṭicca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviññānam.." However, that particular dhamma or concept or thought would never make contact with the mind successfully if she was listening to a discourse or thinking about a key concept like anicca since she was doing a task that did not motivate her much (washing dishes) that is an opportunity for such "subconscious viññāna" to come to the surface.

7. Of course, now that "manañca pațicca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviññānam̀" step will be followed by, "tinṇaì sañgati phasso" and "(san)phassa paccayā vedanā"; see, "Difference between Phassa and Samphassa." Her "gati" for liking such pictures will make her mind "samphassa," which in turn will lead to "samphassa paccayā vedanā" or "samphassa jā vedanā."

- This is a vedanā that her husband will not get. He did not make a "viññāna" or a "bhava" for that painting and thus it will not come to his mind.

8. Now, suppose that a week later they are walking by the same store. The wife remembers the painting, but finds that it is no longer there; someone had bought it. Now, think about what happens to the two of them.

- The wife will be distraught: "I should have bought it; now I may not be able to find such a nice painting." But the husband will not have any bad feelings, except may be some bad feelings about his wife not been able to get what she wanted.
- This is the suffering that we can stop from arising even in this life. It is not a vipāka vedanā but a "samphassa jā vedanā." The wife got distraught only because she got attached to that painting, but the husband did not.

9. I just gave a straightforward example from real life. Of course it is a relatively insignificant "tanh $\vec{a}$ " without drastic consequences. I just wanted to use it, because most people can understand it. Of course, the consequences can be much harsher if one gets attached to something of more significant, keep thinking about it and make that "viññāna grow," and eventually does something bad to acquire it.

- a) For example, X who "falls in love" with Y , may be thinking about it all day and make a "very strong greedy viññāna" about X . So, X makes all kinds of plans in his/her mind about Y , and the more he/she does it, the more strong that viññāna gets.
- b) The more strong that viñ̃̄āna is, it is more likely to "come to his/her mind" because it is a dhamma that is constantly hovering around his/her mind (or in the subconscious). It is easy to start more PS process with "manañca paṭicca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviññānam்."

10. Note the difference between a) and b) above. In a), the process starts with "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" when X first thinks about Y and starts thinking about Y with avijj $\bar{a}$ and gets "bonded to Y " in his/her mind. At this point, a "baby viññ̄na" is formed about Y.

- Now, since it is at an early stage, this "baby viññāna for Y" may not trigger "manañca paticca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviñ̃̄ānam" (process b) often. And that viññāna may start dying out if X does not get to think about Y for a while.
- But if X sees Y again in a few days, then that "baby viñāāna for Y " gets fed again. The sight of Y makes X go through many PS cycles and strengthen that "viññạ̄na for Y."
- If X gets to see Y often and may be even to "hang out with Y ," that "viññāna for Y " will grow because now X is giving it a lot of food (āhāra).
- Now with a "strong viññāna for Y ," X 's mind will constantly be bothered with "dhamma about Y ," and it is more likely that "manañca paṭicca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviññānaị" will be triggered even while X is doing something else.

11. Then, one day, X hears that Y has got engaged to another person. What will happen to X ? $\mathrm{He} /$ she will be highly distraught, and depending on the level of attraction (and X's gati), X may do something bad.

- For example, if the attraction (level of $\operatorname{tanhh} \bar{a}$ ) was firm, AND if X has "violent character" (i.e., "violent gati ${ }^{\prime}$ ), then X may hurt Y or the person that Y got engaged to. Then not only will X be suffering due to "loss of Y," but would also have made causes for FUTURE SUFFERING by committing a bad kamma.

12. Now we can see how both taṇhā and gati are two critical issues. One can lessened both by contemplating on the bad consequences (ādīnava) of acting foolishly.

- Comprehending anicca, dukkha, anatta is the best way. Then one's gati will change permanently to the "moral gati" of a Sotāpanna, and one will never do anything that will lead to the birth in the apāy $\bar{a}$. Even though a Sotāpanna may still generate "samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedana $\bar{a}$," due to some sense inputs, those will be milder, and thus any suffering incurred would be mild.
- I hope that it is clear from this discussion that it is impossible to suppress kāma assāda or thoughts about sense objects forcibly. The only way is via purifying the mind by learning Dhamma (especially the anicca nature of this world) and thinking about the bad consequences of such thoughts (ädinava). This is what
the Buddha realized as the $\bar{a} s a v a k k h a y a ~ n ̃ a ̄ n ̣ a, ~ t h e ~ w a y ~ t o ~ g e t ~ r i d ~ o f ~ a ̄ s a v a ~(a n d ~ a n u s a y a) ~ v i a ~ g e t t i n g ~ r i d ~$ of bad habits (gati) and cultivating good habits (gati).
- And this is discussed in the meditation (Bhāvanā) section under, " 9 . Key to Ānāpānasati - How to Change Habits and Character (Gati)."


### 7.4.11 <br> Sakkāya Ditṭhi is Personality (Me) View?

March 10, 2017; revised January 20, 2018; June 1, 2019; October 3, 2019; July 24, 2020
In this post, we will discuss why interpretations of two key concepts - sakkāya diṭthi and samyojana in many current English publications (including supposedly Theravāda texts) are incorrect.

## Difference Between Wrong Views and Wrong Perceptions

1. Most texts describe sakkāya ditṭhi as "self-illusion" or "personality belief," i.e., "belief that a self or I exist" (you can Google "sakkāya ditthi" and see). Here it is essential to understand that there is a difference between "wrong view" and "wrong perception." A Sotāpanna would have removed the wrong view (dittthi), but not the false perception (sañ̃̃̄̄.)

- But this perception (saññ̄$)$ of a "self" (or a "soul" which is also called "ātma") is NOT sakk $\bar{a} y a$ ditthth per Tipitaka as we discuss below. That is a sañña (perception) that we have carried from life-to-life. For a discussion on saññā, see, "What is Saññā (Perception)?."
- The deeply-embedded idea of a "self" or an innate sense of "me" is rooted in the mana cetasika.
- If one gets offended if treated with disrespect, that means one still has māna left. Even an Anāgāmī could be somewhat perturbed if he/she perceives to be treated badly. A component of manna - called asmi māna - is still left at the Anāgāmī stage. Māna is removed not at the Sotāpanna stage, but the Arahant stage.


## A Sotāpanna Removes Only Wrong Views About an "Unchanging Self"

2. What is removed at the Sotāpanna stage is the wrong view (ditṭhi) that there is something unchanging and permanent like a "soul" is associated with oneself. That goes with the belief that lasting happiness can be achieved by just living a moral life (even though that is essential.)

- When one can see that there is no "real essence" (like a "soul" or a "ātma") associated with a living being, this wrong view of sakkāya ditṭhi goes away. A lifestream evolves, according to Paṭicca Samuppāda; see, "Anattā in Anattalakkhana Sutta - No Soul or a Ātma."
- Therefore, it is incorrect to believe that the perception of a "self" will go away at the Sotāpanna stage. It is also dangerous, because one is trying to do something that is not possible to do at that stage. It is like a child in the primary school trying to get a Ph.D.


## Sotāpanna Stage - Four Conditions

3. In the post, "Four Conditions for Attaining Sotāpanna Magga/Phala," we discussed the four conditions that need to satisfied to attain the Sotāpanna stage of Nibbāna.

- With fulfilling those conditions, one will break through three samyojana (mental bonds) and be permanently released from rebirths in the apāyā (four lowest realms). The Pāli word samyojana (or sanyojana or sanyoga) is usually translated as "fetters." See, for example, the Wikipedia article: "WebLink: WIKIPEDIA: Fetter (Buddhism)."
- But as in many English publications (books, internet posts), the above Wikipedia article misdescribes samyyojana.

4. We are bound to the 31 realms in this world by ten "mental tethers" or samyojana. It can be visualized as someone attached to a post by a rope, except that there is no one else that forcibly bind us to the 31 realms.

- Sanyojana or sanyoga ("san" + "yoga" where "yoga" means to bind) means bound via "san"; see, "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Samsāra)."
- We voluntarily bind ourselves to this world with our minds, because we believe that somewhere in these 31 realms we can find permanent happiness.
- Most people think they can find happiness in this life itself! They don't even pause to contemplate what happens when one gets old and helpless. If one takes time to observe, there are many examples around: famous, wealthy, and powerful, became disabled at old age, and died a miserable death.


## Three Samyojana Removed

5. A Sotāpanna breaks through 3 of those ten samyojana - or "bonds" or "tethers" - and gets permanently released from the four lowest realms (ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$ ). He/she does this by comprehending the true nature of this world, i.e., attaining samma dittthi.

The keyword "samma" comes from "san" + "mā," which means "to become free of san." For example:

- "Mā hoti jāti, jāti," means "may I be free of repeated birth."
- "Mā me bāla samāgamo" means "may I be free of association with those who are ignorant of Dhamma."
- Thus samma ditthi is to be free of wrong views. One gets some level of samma diṭthi at the Sotāpanna stage and completes it at the Arahant stage.


## Importance of Comprehending the Unfruitful/Dangerous Nature of This World (Tilakkhana)

6. One has to break those bonds in one's mind. One gains sammā ditthi - right view to become free of 'san' - by comprehending the true nature of this world of 31 realms.

Anicca - that nothing in this world can bring permanent happiness in the long run.
Dukkha - despite our struggles, we will be subjected to much more suffering than pleasures if we remain in the rebirth process.

Anatta - therefore, one is truly helpless in this struggle to attain "something of the essence in this world." That is just an illusion.

- See, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta - Wrong Interpretations."


## Two Eightfold Paths

7. It is essential to realize that there are two Eightfold Paths with two types of sammā ditthi. See, "Buddha Dhamma - In a Chart" and "Mahā Cattārīsaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty)."

- One first needs to reach a "moral mindset" by staying away from immoral acts embedded in the five precepts. That is attaining "mundane sammā ditthi."
- Then one's mind is cleansed enough to comprehend the Three Characteristics of this world: anicca, dukkha, anatta.
- When one gains this "lokuttara sammā ditthi" to some extent, one will indeed start on the Noble Eightfold Path; see, "How to Cultivate the Noble Eightfold Path starting with Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta."
- This distinction is hard to perceive for many people. I encourage them to read the first few subsections of the "Living Dhamma" section.

8. Now let us discuss how gaining lokuttara samma ditthi leads to the removal of three of the ten mental tethers (or fetters) that bind us to the rebirth process. In particular, to be released from the worst types of suffering in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$.

- Those three saminojana are sakkāya diṭthi (also called sathkāya dittthi), vicikicchā, and silabbata parāmāsa.


## Two Prevailing Major Wrong Views

9. The Buddha discussed 62 types of ditt thi that were present during that time in the Brahmajāla Sutta. We don't need to address all of them today, because there are only two of those wrong views that are prevalent today.

- Religious people (Creator-based religions), believe that there is a "permanent soul," and one will be born in heaven or hell forever after this life. This idea of a "āthma" or a "self" was the sassata ditṭhi.
- Science today believes that our thoughts arise in our brains, i.e., our mental body is the same as the physical body ("I am my body"). So, when we die, that is the end of the story because the physical body becomes dust; so they say, "enjoy life while it lasts." That was the "uccheda dittthi" (pronounced "uchcheda") that the Buddha also rejected: "Life terminating with the death of the physical body."
- Thus the Buddha rejected both wrong views that "a self exists" and "a self does not exist." Things can exist due to causes, and if those causes do not exist, they cease to exist. That is the principle of cause and effect explained in Paticca Samuppāda. Beings exist due to avijjā and taṇhā, and they cease to exist when those cease to exist and reach permanent happiness (i.e., attain Nibbāna).

10. Even those religious people may subconsciously have that part of the uccheda ditt thi of "I am my physical body."

- Our increasingly materialistic societies always feed this narrative - that it is so important to look beautiful and robust because my body is what I am - via television and movies.
- In other words, sakkāya dittthi in the present day is rooted in the view of "I am my physical body." That leads to the perception, "I can achieve happiness by providing a lot of pleasurable sense inputs to my body."


## Meaning of Sakkāya or Sathkāya

11. "Sath" means "good" or "fruitful."

- And kāya can mean either one's actions or one's body, as we discussed in Kāyānupassanā, see, "Kāyānupassanā - Section on Postures (Iriyapathapabba)."
- Sakkāya ditthi encompasses mainly two views: (i) "I am my body," and I need to keep it beautiful above all. (ii) I can achieve happiness by diligently pursuing (good) things in this world.
- This view is of course related to the perception of nicca. That it is possible to maintain things to our liking or icca (or icch $\bar{a}$.) See, "Sakkāya Ditthi - "Me and Mine" View"


## Getting Rid of Sakkāya Ditṭhi

12. Therefore, getting rid of sakkāya diṭthi in the present day requires one to realize that this physical body is "just a shell" that we have possession of only for about 100 years.

- That is why it is essential to realize the role played by our mental body, gandhabba, which could live for thousands of years. But that also will cease to exist when we grasp a new existence (bhava) at the cutipatisandhi moment when the gandhabba itself dies.
- Our next existence depends not on how well we keep our physical bodies (they need to be healthy), but how well we "improve" our mental body. Learning Dhamma and living according to that Dhamma helps with the latter.
- I have given a more straightforward explanation of gandhabba at the "Living Dhamma" section: "Mental Body - Gandhabba," and there is a separate section in the Abhidhamma section that goes into more detail.

13. The second view associated with sakkāya dittthi in $\# 10$ above. That one can achieve happiness by diligently pursuing things in this world. Sakkāya diṭthi can only be removed by comprehending the "anicca nature."

- See, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta."
- When one comprehends anicca, one realizes that no matter what we do, staying in the rebirth process leads to net suffering. Even though there are bouts of happiness to be had, those will be insignificant to suffering in the long run, especially when one is (inevitably) born in the apa$y \bar{a}$.


## Cülavedalla Sutta (MN 44)

14. It should be noted that a full explanation of sakkāya ditthi is given in the Cūlavedalla Sutta (Majjhima Nikāya 44) where Ven. Dhammadinna explains it to her former husband Visakha:
"..Kathaì panāyye, sakkāyaditṭhi hotī"ti? "Idhāvuso visākha, assutavā puthujjano, ariyānam adassāvī ariyadhammassa akovido ariyadhamme avinīto, sappurisānaì adassāvī sappurisadhammassa akovido sappurisadhamme avinīto, rūpaì attato samanupassati, rūpavantaì vē attānaì, attani vā rūpaì, rūpasmimim vā attānaì. Vedanai் ... pe ... saññai் ... sañkhāre ...
 attānam். Evaì kho, āvuso visākha, sakkāyadiṭthi hotī'ti.

- First, it is essential to realize that "atta" in the above verse used in the conventional sense, to denote "I."
- What we have discussed regarding "I am my body" is stated in the bold text above that can be translated as: "I am my body, my body is me, my body is in me, I am in my body"; see, "Anattā in Anattalakkahana Sutta - No Soul or an Ātma." Thus one may see one's rūpakkhandha as one's "att $\vec{a}$ " in four ways.
- In the same way, some people could take one's vedanā, sañ̃̄̄̄, sañkhāra, and viñ̃̄āna to be oneself in four ways as above. All these mental components give rise to the idea that "I remember this and that happened to me a long time ago; so there must be a continuation of me until the body dies." Therefore, this wrong view encompasses 20 types of ("visativatthuka") sakkāya dittthi."
- The French Philosopher Rene Descartes famously said, "I think; therefore I am"; he proposed that those thoughts arise in the pineal gland in the brain. That is a part of uccheda dittthi.


## Two Meanings of Atta

15. When one attains the Sotāpanna stage, one "sees with wisdom" (becomes "dassanena sampanno") that it does not make sense to take the stand "I am my body," etc. as above.

- However, "just seeing" that it makes sense, and verifying and experiencing that to be accurate, are two different things. One finally confirms that to be accurate and thereby gets rid of the perception of "me" (called "asmi māna") only at the Arahant stage.
- There was a lengthy discussion on this issue at the discussion forum. I recommend reading it since it is not possible to put it in a short post like this; see, "WebLink: Wrong English translations of Aniccha, Anatta, Sakkāya ditthi."

16. The confusion in conventional translations of sakkāya dittthi seems to arise when they try to connect "atta" in the above verse ("rūpain attāto") as the opposite of "anatta" in Tilakkhaṇa. Atta has two meanings: one meaning is "I" or "myself" as in "Atta Hi Attano Nātho" ("only I can be of salvation to myself'), and that is the meaning implied in the above verse.

- The other meaning of "atta" is "in control" or "has an essence", and the opposite of that is the anatta in Tilakkhana: "one is helpless in this rebirth process."
- Those two meanings are explained in "Attā Hi Attano Nātho" and in detail in, "Pāli Dictionaries - Are They Reliable?."
- That is why one needs to be cautious when using Pāli dictionaries. One cannot define and fix the meaning of a Pāli word. One HAS TO KNOW the context; see, "Pāli Dictionaries - Are They Reliable?."


## What is Vicikicch $\bar{a}$ ?

17. The second samyojana removed at the Sotāpanna stage is vicikicchā. Does it means doubts about the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sañgha as explained in many translations? It is informative to see how such doubts are related to the Tilakkhaṇa.

- Vicikicchā comes from vi+chi+ki+icchā. Our distorted views (diṭthi) that worldly things can lead to happiness lead to our liking ("icc $\vec{a}$ ") for them. We then take actions ("ki" or "kriya") are based on our craving. And, "Cha" means citta or the way we think, here based on such ditthi. In this case, "vi"
 wrong view that it is possible to maintain things to our liking is vicikiccha$\overline{\text {. See, \#11 above. }}$
- Therefore, vicikicchā goes away simultaneously with the loss of sakkāya diṭthi.
- One dissociates from such wrong views by comprehending "anicca nature." When one becomes a Sotāpanna, one automatically sees the "fruitlessness" in many immoral or inappropriate actions. One truly knows deep down that most of our efforts in pursuing sense pleasures are in vain. However, until one becomes an Anāgām $\bar{l}$, one is still attached to sense desires.
- For example, a Sotāpanna may still engage in sex, but will not engage in immoral sexual activities outside marriage. While the first can still lead to one's rebirth in the human and deva realms, the latter can lead to births in the apāy $\bar{a}$. A Sotāpanna is released only from the apa $\bar{y} \bar{a}$.
- In other words, if one has vicikicchā, one MAY do immoral apāyagāmī actions under tempting conditions. But a Sotāpanna is INCAPABLE of doing such actions under ANY circumstance. A Sotāpanna will not have any doubts about which activities are really immoral.


## What is Silabbata Parāmāsa?

18. The third samiyojana, silabbata parāmāsa, is the wrong view that Nibbāna can be attained by following specific precepts/rituals. They include five or eight precepts (or just by doing good things).

- Attaining Nibbāna REQUIRES lokuttara sammā ditṭhi. To achieve lokuttara sammā diṭthi, one needs to grasp the Tilakkhaṇa (anicca, dukkha, anatta). See, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta."
- When one comprehends anicca, one stays away from immoral actions. That happens not because one is firmly adhering to a set of precepts or rituals. Now one knows deep inside that such activities are fruitless and dangerous in the long run.
- However, following precepts (i.e., staying away from immoral deeds) is necessary to get to mundane sammā ditṭhi. That enables one's mind cleansed enough to be able to comprehend Tilakkhaṇa.


## Kāma Rāga NOT Removed at Sotāpanna Stage

19. Finally, a Sotāpanna needs to break two more samyojana or bonds - kāma rāga and patigha - to become free of the $k \bar{a} m a$ loka. Only an Anāgāmī is free of rebirth anywhere in the kāma loka, which includes human and six deva realms.

- The last five samyojana (including the perception of a "self" or māna) will be removed only at the Arahant stage; see, "The Cooling Down Process (Nibbāna) - How Root Causes are Removed."

July 24, 2020: A detailed discussion at "The Five Aggregates (Pañcakkhandha)" and "Origin of Life."

### 7.4.12 Akusala Citta - How a Sotāpanna Avoids Apāyagāmi Citta

1. First I need to clarify the title. Of course, citta (pronounced "chittha") are thoughts. All kamma start as mano sañkhāra, i.e., one starts thinking about something and it escalates into speech and bodily action by the "wheeling" or "riya" process; see, "Nibbāna - Stopping of the Sansāric Vehicle."

- The complete cessation of doing sañkhāra happens only when one becomes an Arahant. But after attaining the Sotāpanna stage, this "wheeling process" stops for certain types of initial thoughts or citta.

2. We have seen that apāya is a common word for the lowest four realms of existence, see, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma." Apāyagāmī ("apāya" + "gāmi" means directed towards) citta are those that lead to potent kamma responsible for rebirth in the lowest four realms.
3. So, what citt $\bar{a}$ or thoughts get one started on the "wheeling process" or a "thought process" that leads to speech or bodily action of very bad consequences, i.e., birth in the apāyā? These are thoughts that arise because one does not have a full understanding of the "nature of this world", i.e., the Tilakkhana, or anicca, dukkha, anatta.

Out of the 89 possible citta (see, "The 89 Types of Citta") 12 are immoral citta.

- 8 with the lobha (greed) root; moha root is there too.
- 2 with the dosa (hate, ill will) root; moha root is there too.
- 2 with just the moha (ignorance) root.

ALL TEN immoral acts (dasa akusala; see, "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)") are done with these 12 types of citta.
4. We generate greedy thoughts because we "want to get possession of things that seem to provide happiness." When we do not get what we want, we generate hate or ill will towards whoever Is in the way.

- And we do both types of actions because we do not realize that it is not possible to achieve lasting happiness with anything in "this world." Not only that, but we also do not realize that by doing those bad actions we accumulate bad kamma (i.e., accumulate kammic energy) that are going to have bad consequences in the future, either in this very life or in future lives.
- Thus ignorance of the true nature of 'this world" is the cause of all bad actions done with greed and hate; this is why the moha root is in all of them. We also do certain bad actions just based on ignorance too, like comparing how one is "better" than another, etc.
A. The two ignorance-rooted citta are:
- One associated with vicikicchā (vichi+ki+ichcha = liking based on the distorted view, i.e, ditṭhi). Commonly vicikicch $\bar{a}$ is described as "doubt", which could be taken as "doubt about the true world view." Just like a fish biting on a bait due to not "seeing" the hook, we just grab things without "seeing"
the consequences, i.e., possible harm to others and the consequences of such harmful actions for ourselves.
- One associated with uddhacca (restlessness or agitation of the mind). This is the opposite of samādhi or the ability to concentrate and be able to think through the consequences of actions. One could have uddhacca even if one knows the "true nature" of this world; it is sort of a cumulative result of all defilements accumulated through beginning-less samisāra. This is completely removed only at the Arahant stage.

All 12 types of citta have ignorance as a root (primary as in the above two types) or as secondary in the other ten citta. These ten citta can be divided into two categories in another way, i.e., based on whether such citt $\bar{a}$ arise mainly due to vicikicch $\bar{a}$ (i.e., due to not knowing the true nature of this world) or uddhacca (i.e., the agitation of the mind due to all accumulated defilements).
B. Out of the eight greed-rooted citta, four arise with wrong view (ditthi), i.e., due to lack of understanding of the "true nature of this world", and that "this world" is much more complex than we perceive with our senses, and that our life does not end here, but what we do will have consequences for very long times into the future. The other four are done anyway, even with the right view, because of the agitation of the mind due to all "gunk" accumulated over the long sansāric journey. Thus the eight greed-based citta can be divided into two broad categories:

- Four done with wrong views (diṭthi) are removed at the Sotāpanna stage.
- Four dissociated from wrong view (i.e., it does not matter whether one has right view if defilements still cloud the mind; for example even one who has attained the Sotāpanna stage may do these four)
C. The two hate-rooted citta are also done regardless of whether one has the right view (at the Sotāpanna stage) or not:
- These two hate-rooted citt $\bar{a}$ are dissociated with wrong views but are due to the agitated mind (uddhacca). Thus they persist after the Sotāpanna stage, up to th Anāgāmī stage.


## Now we can see the broad view:

5. Five citt $\bar{a}$ (vicikicch $\bar{a}$ and the four greed-rooted citta associated with wrong view) arise because one does not know the true nature of the world, Tilakkhana, i.e, anicca, dukkha, anatta. They contribute to one of the four types of āsava called the ditthi āsava or ditṭhāsava.

These are the same citta that could lead to apāyagāmī kamma. Thus when one attains the Sotāpanna stage, these five citta cease to arise forever, and one WILL NOT BE ABLE to do any such grave kamma. Thus, the Sotāpanna stage is a very important stage of Nibbāna where āsavakkhaya happens to a significant level due to the removal of diṭthāsava:

- A Sotāpanna attains that stage just by getting rid of ditṭhi or wrong views: sathkāya (or sakkāya) diṭthi is the view that lasting happiness can be attained via pursuing things in this world. Vicikicch $\bar{a}$ is leads to tendencies and actions associated with wrong worldviews, and sīlabbata parāmāsa is the view that Nibbāna can be attained by following specific precepts/rituals without cleansing the mind.
- The other seven citta are the ones that are harder to remove. They arise due to an agitated mind which is a result of other defilements (āsavas) that we have accumulated over the long saimsāra; see. "The Way to Nibbāna - Removal of āsavas."
- Out of these, the two hate-rooted citta are lessened in strength at the Sakadāgāmī stage and are removed at the $A n a \bar{a} g a \bar{\imath} \bar{\imath}$ stage.
- The remaining four greed-rooted citta (those dissociated from wrong views) contribute to kamaraga (greed for things in the kamaloka). Kamaraga is lessened at the Sakadāgāmī stage and completely removed at the Anāgāmi stage. Thus an Anāgāmi is unable to generate hateful thoughts or lustful
thoughts and is free from rebirth anywhere in the kamaloka. An Anāgāmī has removed kamasava, another part of the $\bar{a} s a v a$.
- Finally, it is only at the Arahant stage that those remaining four greed-rooted citta (which still contribute to bhavasava) and the uddhacca citta (which still contribute to avijjasava) are completely removed. This is when all the defilements or āsavas are completely removed from one's mind.

6. It is clear that all five akusala citta that are removed at the Sotāpanna stage arise due to micchā ditṭhi, i.e., not comprehending the Three Characteristics of existence: anicca, dukkha, anatta. Also see, "Ditṭhi (Wrong Views), Sammā Diṭ̣hi (Good/Correct Views)."
7. This realization of correct views CANNOT be attained by following rituals, such as just obeying precepts. It comes naturally when one COMPREHENDS the true nature of this world of 31 realms: anicca, dukkha, anatta; see, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta." That it is unfruitful to involve in any kind of activities to gain mundane pleasures by hurting other beings. Such an understanding makes irrevocable changes in one's manomaya $k \bar{a} y a$, and thus prevents one from doing such activities even in the future lives.
8. Now it is important to realize that a Sotāpanna can be a parent taking care of a family. $\mathrm{He} /$ she will be doing a job, driving kids to school, and doing all other daily tasks. But one does all this with the clear understanding that one should NOT do certain things. One could live a moral life suitable for a Sotāpanna without giving up ANY responsibilities as a regular "householder." Actually one could even attain the Anāgāmī stage without becoming a bhikkhu. And there were many "householders" that had attained Sotāpanna, Sakadāgāmī, Anāgāmī stages at the Buddha's time; there are some even today.

## What is the only Akusala Removed by a Sotāpanna?

## Revised May 10, 2017;December 1, 2017; July 7, 2018; August 16, 2019; August 14, 2022

## Micchā Diṭthi - Only Dasa Akusala Completely Removed by a Sotāpanna

1. Upon attaining the Sotāpanna stage, micchā dittthi (the ten types of micchā ditṭhi together with wrong views of nicca, sukha, and atta) is COMPLETELY removed. That is one akusala out of dasa akusala. But that accounts for more than $99 \%$ of akusala (defilements) from one's mind since the "apāyagāmi strength" of the other nine akusala kamma are also removed.

- That illustrates the importance of removing micchā ditthi and why I have so many posts on that. Also, see the first discourse in "Three Marks of Existence - English Discourses."
- Some people think a Sotāpanna is incapable of breaking the five precepts based on an incorrect translation of the WebLink: suttacentral: Gihi Sutta (AN 5.179). The relevant verse is: "..ariyasāvako pānāātipātā paṭivirato hoti, adinnādānā paṭivirato hoti, kāmesumicchācārā paṭivirato hoti, musāvādā paṭivirato hoti, surāmerayamajjapamādaṭthānā paṭivirato hoti."
- However, "pativirato hoti" does not mean "abstains from" as translated at many online sites; it means "does not do with liking." Thus, a Sotāpanna may - under some conditions - break the five precepts. It is only an Arahant that will not break five precepts or engage in dasa akusala.
- The five precepts have deeper meanings, too: "The Five Precepts - What the Buddha Meant by Them."

2. With the removal of micchā ditthi, a Sotāpanna will be incapable of doing the following six deeds (per "WebLink: suttacentral: Bahudhātuka Sutta (MN 115)".)
(i.) Killing one's mother.
(ii.) Killing one's father.
(iii) Killing an Arahant.
(iv.) Injuring a Buddha.
(v.) Causing sañgha bheda (spreading wrong Dhamma is included here).
(vi.) Taking refuge in anyone other than a Buddha (i.e., believing in other ways of "salvation").

- Furthermore, a Sotāpanna will avoid an unimaginable amount of future suffering.


## Future Suffering Removed by a Sotāpanna

3. WebLink: suttacentral: Nakhasikha Sutta (SN 13.1) describes the vast amount of defilement removed by a Sotāpanna.

- One time the Buddha picked up a little bit of dust with the tip of his fingernail and asked the bhikkhus, "What do you think bhikkhus? Which is greater: the little bit of dust I have picked up with the tip of my fingernail, or the soil in this great Earth?."
- Of course, the bhikkhus answered that the amount of soil on this Earth is vastly more massive than the bit of dust on a fingernail.
- Then the Buddha told the bhikkhus that the amount of suffering that a Sotāpanna has removed could be compared to the soil on the whole Earth. The amount that he/she has left to stop can be compared to the bit of dust on his fingernail.
- Therefore, the amount of suffering a Sotāpanna has left in future rebirths is insignificant compared to that of an average human.

4. More analogies are given in a series of suttas starting with "WebLink: suttacentral: Pathamasinerupabbatarāja Sutta (SN 56.49)." "The amount of suffering a Sotāpanna has to endure can be compared to seven grains of sand on top of mount Sineru. The amount of suffering a normal human has left to endure can be compared to sand in the whole mountain."

- That is logical since the suffering encountered in the niraya never ceases. One birth in the niraya (hell) would lead to much more suffering than thousands of births in the human or higher realms.
- A Sotāpanna will NEVER be reborn in the four lowest realms due to the complete removal of ONE dasa akusala, that of micchā dittthi. Furthermore, he/she will have only seven future bhava left and those in the human realm or the realms above it.


## Removal of Micchā Ditṭhi Is Enough to Become a Sotāpanna

5. That may be why most people tend to think that attaining the Sotāpanna stage requires attaining jhānā, all sorts of abhiññ̄ powers, etc. None of that is a requirement for achieving the Sotāpanna stage.

- One may think that a Sotāpanna would have removed at least half of the ten evils (dasa akusala.) It turns out that a Sotāpanna completely removes only one of the dasa akusala, that of niyata micch $\bar{a}$ dițthi. Of course, in achieving that, a Sotāpanna would have reduced the "apāyagāmī strength" of most of the other dasa akusala. That is the key to understanding. In particular, abhijj $\bar{a}$ [abhijjh $\bar{a}$ ] or lobha reduced to rāga level and vyāpāda or dosa is reduced to pattigha level; see, "Lobha, Dosa, Moha versus Raga, Patigha, Avijijā."
- For a discussion on dasa akusala, see, "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)." As discussed in that post, Niyata Micchā Dittthi (established wrong views) is an akusala done with the mind.
- A Sotāpanna is said to have achieved "dassanena pahatabba" or removal of defilements via correct vision. He/she has removed an unimaginably vast amount of evils ("keles" or "kilesa" or "klesha") with the removal of micch $\bar{a}$ ditt thi, or attaining the first stage of Samm $\bar{a}$ Ditt thi : the true nature of this world of 31 realms.
- How a Sotāpanna reduces dasa akusala via getting rid of micchā dittthi 'to overcome apāyagām̄ citta" is discussed in "Akusala Citta - How a Sotāpanna Avoids Apayagami Citta." Here is it described
how five out of the 12 akusala citta do not arise after the Sotāpanna stage; those are the five that lead to birth in the apayy $\bar{a}$.

6. That is a critical point to understand. Removal of micchā ditṭhi leads to the stopping of highly immoral actions. Most people worry excessively about the defilements done with the body and speech. They are afraid of even accidentally killing an insect or telling a "white lie." Of course, those must be avoided, too, because moral behavior (speech and actions) are a prerequisite for cleansing the mind.

- But having niyata micch $\bar{a}$ ditthi is million-fold more weighty. These and other types of Niyata Micch $\bar{a}$ Ditṭhi (established wrong views) are discussed in "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)" and "Mahā Cattārīsaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty)."
- It would be beneficial to understand the weights of different types of kamma; see "How to Evaluate Weights of Different Kammas."
- If one has a vessel that is leaking water, there is no point in trying to plug the smaller holes first. One should seal the largest hole first, which in this case is getting rid of micchā ditt hi or false views (about this world).
- That may still not convince some. If so, see whether this conclusion contradicts anything in the Tipiṭaka. One should carefully examine all the "requirements" that must be fulfilled to attain the Sotāpanna stage. It should become clear that this is all one needs to do.
- And that comes only via learning Dhamma, the correct version, the version discovered by the Buddha and passed down through generations of Noble Persons or Ariy $\bar{a}$. We discussed in detail in the post, "Four Conditions for Attaining Sotāpanna Magga/Phala."
- Of course, one needs to have removed micchā ditṭhi even to become a Sotāpanna Anugāmi: "Micchā Ditthi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage."


## The Next Step

7. A Sotāpanna has removed the "wrong views" about the nature of this world. But the tendency to "feel" that there are mind-pleasing things in this world is still there.

- That is why we need to comprehend the term sañ̃̃ā, commonly translated into English as "perception."
- Of course, Saññā is one of 52 cetasika and one component of pañcakkhandha. It is one of the seven universal cetasika that arise with every citta.

8. Sañ̃̄̄ works very closely with another universal cetasika called manasikāra. Manasikāra is the cetasika that brings old memories and future hopes into a citta. When cetana "puts together the citta," the citta recognizes the subject (sañ̃ $\bar{a}$ ) and automatically produces vedana (feelings) about it. Thus we can see the significant roles of those four cetasika right away.

- But sañ̃̄ $\bar{a}$ is not limited to "recognizing objects." Sañ̃ $\bar{a}$ is the "inner understanding" of any concept.
- For example, when we hear "fire," we immediately recognize that. Even a picture of a fire may flash in our minds. But a baby (or someone who does not understand English) does not have a "sañña" for that word; it means nothing to them. But the baby (or that person) can understand what "fire" means if we teach it to them.
- Growing up, we acquire innumerable "sañ̃̃̄" mostly by becoming familiar with them. We first recognize who "mother" and "father" are, know different colors, different objects, etc. For details, see "Saññā What It Really Means."

9. Even though we acquire "sañña" for most objects and people, some strong saññ̄ $\bar{a}$ may be "passed down" from previous lives. That can take many forms.

- When visiting a place that one had never previously visited in this life, some people may already "know" about that place in great detail. Children who remember past lives have been reported to lead
investigators to various locations in faraway cities where they had lived in previous lives. Many adults have said they can walk a city with complete confidence that they are visiting for the first time.
- Then there is the "ability" to play the piano, recite sutta, or just be able to comprehend complex mathematics as a child, etc. Some of these cases discussed in "Evidence for Rebirth."

10. We "acquire" most sañ̃ña through our families first, then through friends, schools, workplaces, etc.

- Thus most of our "world views" or dittthis are acquired through our families. Our first impressions of moral issues, politics, and religions come from our families.
- Those saññās are hard to change, depending on how forcefully and frequently they have been used.
- However, the human mind is unique. When given enough substantial evidence, one's sañ̃̄̄̄about something or some concept can PERMANENTLY change. For example, when one learns how to do algebra (addition and subtraction, etc.) correctly, one will never forget that. And even if an authority figure (a teacher) insists that one plus two is four, even a child will not accept that. He/she can count fingers and show the teacher that the correct answer IS three.

11. As we grow up, we acquire saññā for more specialized tasks. One could "learn" to become a carpenter, a doctor, an engineer, etc.

- This "learning" is acquiring "saññ̄" for a particular task. It is not just memorizing how to do things. When a physician finishes his/her learning, he/she can "troubleshoot" a brand new patient and figure out what is wrong. When an engineer builds a new structure, it could be something that has not been made before. One acquires "skills."
- Once one learns a "skill," one will never forget that; at least it is easy to "get back to it." One who had learned to ride a bicycle as a child may never touch a bike for 30-40 years. But even at old age, he can ride a bike with minimal effort.


## Removal of "Micchā Sañn̄̄" or "Saññ̄a Vipallāsa" Needed for Higher Magga Phala

12. A Sotāpanna acquires a basic level of understanding about "this world" and that "knowledge" or "comprehension" does not go away even in future lives.

- Once someone sees a "glimpse" of the Buddha's core message, in the long run, there is no permanent happiness to be had by wishing for anything in this world
- That kind of a "vision change" does not happen quickly unless one has "sañña" about that from previous lives; that is why it is easier for some people to grasp these concepts.
- And this "sañ̃̄̄̄" cannot be acquired via memorizing suttā, how to recite the Paṭicca Samuppāda cycle, etc. Instead, one needs to COMPREHEND the concepts.
- The KEY concept to grasp is the "anicca sañ̃̃̄̄."

13. The only way to "build up" the correct sañ̃ $\bar{a}$ is to make an effort to understand the key message of the Buddha. Humans usually have wrong perceptions or "vipareetha sañña" that one can find happiness in this life by working hard. Most people do not even think beyond this life, even if they believe in rebirth. That is also called the "nicca sañ̃̄ $\bar{a} " ~(p r o n o u n c e d ~ " n i c h c h a ~ s a \tilde{n} \tilde{n} \tilde{a} "$ ), i.e., by working hard or by sheer luck, one can achieve and maintain things in this world to one's satisfaction.

- The fundamental teaching of the Buddha is about the "anicca sañ̃̄̄a," i.e., it is NOT POSSIBLE to maintain ANYTHING to one's satisfaction in the long run. The Sotāpanna stage of Nibbāna is attained when the anicca sañ̃̄ā is cultivated to some significant extent.
- When one has developed the anicca saññā to this level, one's mind automatically blocks "apāyagāmi citta."
- As we discussed in the Abhidhamma section, citta flow very fast, and we do not have control over those initial citt $\bar{a}$. In extreme cases like sudden rages or sheer greed, we will be unable to "control ourselves" without permanently removing "apāyagāmi gati" by getting rid of micchā ditṭhi.
- It is this anicca saññā that grows as one attains higher stages of Nibbāna (Sakadāgāmī and Anāgāmī) and peaks at the Arahant stage. At the Arahant stage, one can see the "anicca nature" of ALL sañkhāra, not only abhisañkhāra. That is what is expressed by "Sabbe sañkhāra anicca," and in the Girimānanda sutta, the Buddha told Ven. Ānanda, "Ayaì vuccati Ānanda, sabba sañkhāresu anicca sañ̃̄$\vec{a} " ;$ see, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta - According to Some Key Suttā."
- Therefore, before worrying about anicca saññā, one must remove the wrong diṭthi by becoming a Sotāpanna. See, "Vipallāsa (Ditthi, Sañ̃̃ā, Citta) Affect Sañkhāra."

14. When one develops the anicca sañ̃̃̄̄ via learning Dhamma (listening and reading), the tendency to act immorally, even under extreme pressure, will slowly diminish.

- One would be able to see the corresponding "cooling down" (reduced stress level) when one thinks back after several months (it could be sooner for some people). One will gradually feel the nirāmisa sukha and be drawn to Dhamma. One would automatically start spending more time learning Dhamma.
- One does not need to force anything except to make an initial determination to verify the truth of what I have discussed above by reading (and listening) and developing the "Dhamma vicaya" sabbojjanga. Make a habit of critically evaluating relevant posts at this site and from other sources. That is the best and most direct meditation technique for attaining the Sotāpanna stage. Buddha Dhamma is about learning the true nature of this world, which WILL automatically lead to the purification of the mind; see "The Importance of Purifying the Mind."
- The more one purifies one's mind, the easier it will become to grasp the key Dhamma concepts and cultivate the "anicca sañña." And developing anicca sañ̃̃̄ $\bar{a}$ itself leads to the purification of the mind. That is why learning becomes exponentially fast once getting some traction.

More on the anicca sañ̃̃̄̄ (for those who may be Sotāpannas) at: How to Cultivate the Anicca Saññā

### 7.4.14 Udayavaya Ñāṇa

- Udayavaya (Udayabbaya) Ñāna - Introduction
- Nibbatti Lakkhana in Udayavaya Ñāna
- Āhāra (Food) in Udayavaya Nāāna
- Udayavaya Ñāna - Importance of the Cittaja Kaya

These posts can be better understood if one has a good understanding of the gandhabba or manomaya kāya: "Manomaya Kāya."

### 7.4.14. Udayavaya (Udayabbaya) Nāạa - Introduction

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Udayabbaya or udayavaya ñana is the knowledge of the mechanism responsible for the arising of rebirth (i.e., suffering) and the way to stop such arising (i.e., end of suffering.)

The udayavaya ñāna (ñāna pronounced "ngāna"; see the pronunciation guide in "Pāli Glossary - (L-Z)") is also referred to as the udayabbaya ñāna.

- The actual Pāli word is udayabbaya (I had inadvertently used the Sinhala word udayavaya). A description of the udayabbaya ñāna is in the Patisambhidāmagga Pakaraṇa: "WebLink: suttacentral;
1.1.6 Udavabbavañānaniddesa (KN Patisambhidāmagga 1.1 Ñānakathā)." [pakaraṇa : [nt.] an occasion; a literary work or exposition.]
- However, it is about the arising (udaya) and destruction (vaya) of a sañkhata. This is another example of two Pāli words combining to sound differently: udayabbaya.


## Pronunciation of udayavaya ñaña:

WebLink: Listen to Pronunciation: Udayavaya ñāna
This series of posts needs to be rewritten. It may take some time since I am busy these days with other things.

- However, it is not urgent to study udayabbaya ñāna in detail. As I explain below, if one understands "Paticca Samuppāda," one would have the udayabbaya ñāṇa.


## What is Udaya (Arising)?

1. Things in this world do not arise without causes. Births in the 31 realms occur due to six causes, which reduces to three root causes lobha, dosa, and moha. That is because the mundane versions of alobha, adosa, and amoha that give rise to births in the "good realms" above the four lowest realms are milder versions of lobha, dosa, and moha. See "Six Root Causes - Loka Samudaya (Arising of Suffering) and Loka Nirodhaya (Nibbāna)."

- The "milder versions" of lobha, dosa, and moha can be removed only by comprehending the teachings of the Buddha embedded in "Paticca Samuppāda, Tilakkhana, Four Noble Truths."
- The mechanism of the arising of any sañkhata in this world is systematically described by "Paticca Samuppāda." Upon his Enlightenment, this was the first part of ultimate knowledge gained by our Bodhisatta to become a Buddha: "WebLink: suttacentral: Pathama Bodhi Sutta (KN Ud 1.1)."
- This forward (or anuloma) Paṭicca Samuppāda describes the "udaya" part of the udayabbaya ñāna.


## One Meaning of "Vaya" - Destruction

2. Anything that comes into existence in this world WILL be destroyed, without exception. That is one meaning of "vaya."

- For example, any sañkhata that comes into existence will exist for a certain duration (during which it will undergo unexpected changes) and then cease to exist. See, for example, "WebLink: suttacentral: Ananda Sutta (SN 22.37)."
- That is one meaning of "vaya." But that is not the meaning implied in the udayabbaya ñāna.


## Second Meaning of "Vaya" - "Stopping of Arising" or Permanent Destruction

3. The second meaning of "permanent destruction" achieved via eliminating all root causes is implied in the udayabbaya ñāna.

- A human being dies within about 100 years. That "death of a person" is the previous meaning of vaya for a human.
- However, that "lifestream" does not end at the death of the physical body. If that human gandhabba has more lifetime left, it will get into a suitable womb and give rise to another human body.
- Even when that human gandhabba dies, that lifestream will just "switch over" to another existence, such as Deva or animal.

4. A lifestream will come to an end ONLY at the Parinibbāna of an Arahant, i.e., when the rebirth process comes to an end. That is the meaning of vaya (complete and permanent stopping) in udayabbaya ñāna.

- That is achieved by eliminating avijjā (ignorance of the Four Noble Truths), i.e., "avijja nirodh $\bar{a}$ sañkhāra nirodho" leads to "sañkhāra nirodhā viññāṇa nirodho," etc. ending in "bhava nirodhā jāti nirodho" and, thus, to the end of suffering: "Evametassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa nirodho hotī'ti."
- That is the reverse of the Pațicca Samuppāda or the pațiloma Pațicca Samuppāda, the second part of the udayabbaya ñāna gleaned by the Buddha: "WebLink: suttacentral: Dutiva Bodhi Sutta (KN Ud 1.2)."


## Udayabbaya Nāṇa - Fifty Types

5. The Pațisambhidāmagga Pakaraṇa analyzes the udayabbaya ñāna by describing 25 factors that lead to "udaya" of the five aggregates and 25 factors leading to their "vaya": "WebLink: suttacentral: 1.1.6 Udayabbayañānaniddesa (KN Patisambhidāmagga 1.1 Nānakathā)."

- Each of the five aggregates arises via avijjā, tanhhā, kamma, āhāra, and nibbatti lakkhaṇa. The last refers to the arising of a physical body (for rūpa) according to kammic energy.
- Each of the five aggregates ceases to arise with the cessation of $a v i j j \bar{a}, \tanh \bar{a}$, kamma, $\bar{a} h \bar{a} r a$, and viparināma lakkhana. The last is the natural death of a physical body in the case of rūpa. That happens at Parinibbāna of an Arahant.
- That is the basic idea of the udayavaya or udayabbaya ñāna.


### 7.4.14. Nibbatti Lakkhana in Udayavaya Nāṇa

## February 26, 2016

1. In the previous post, we discussed the first 25 factors that encompass what is involved in the "udaya" stage of udayavaya: "Udayavaya Ñāna - Introduction." Each of the five aggregates has five factors associated with it basically leading to its formation; thus there are 25 factors that give rise to each person's world.

- The five aggregates or the pañcakkhandha is much more complex than most realize. Please read the posts on pañcakkhandha to familiarize with it if you really want to grasp the udayavaya ñāna: "The Five Aggregates (Pañcakkhandha)."
- Also note that a given sañkhata (sankata in Sinhala) is a tiny fraction of pañcakkhandha. We have discussed the five stages of a sañkhata (sankata in Sinhala), and it is related to udayavaya ñāna. Buddha Dhamma is so deep, all these different descriptions are well-connected at some level.
- Do not worry if all this seems to be overwhelming (of course some people will be able to see the connections). It will make sense with time. Just keep reading posts that you have already read. They will make more sense each time you go back and read, especially after reading other relevant posts.

2. It is important to grasp the fact that anything that we experience, we experience only for a fraction of a second. Then it is gone to the "past pile" (atita; pronounced "atheetha") of the five aggregates or piles.

- Anything that we are only imagining or hoping to experience has not yet materialized; those are in the "future pile" (anāgata; pronounced "anāgatha") of the five aggregates.
- Only a negligibly small fraction is being experienced at a given moment: the "present pile" (paccuppanna; pronounced "pachchuppanna"); see, "Five Aggregates - Introduction."

3. All these things arise as a sañkhata (sankata in Sinhala), whether it is material (rūpa) or mental (vedanā, saññā, sañkhāra, viññāna). A given sañkhata (sankata in Sinhala) itself (not the experience) may exist for
brief moment, or some may last a long time (especially those belonging to rūpa aggregate). But even then parts of it are continually being "passed on" to the past.

- Think about a human being X . He/she starts with a single cell and grows by the day, becomes a baby, a child, a young person, an old person, and then is perished. So, when another person Y , is watching X grow, the "rūpa khandha" of Y continuously grew, all the while making the "past rūpa khandha" bigger each moment. When X is observing himself, that experience goes to his "rūpa khandha."
- At a given time, we can see only a momentary "snapshot" of a rūpa khandha. When X dies, all those stages -moment by moment - had gone to the past, and thus now belong to the "past rūpa khandha" of X and Y . Note that they are different: each one's experience of X is different.
- Now we can see why each person's pañcakkhandha is unique to that person.

4. Now we will analyze why all five aggregates have their origin in $a v i j j \bar{a}, \tanh \bar{a}$, and kamma: Because we have the wrong perception (nicca sañ̃ $\bar{a}$ ) that we can eventually reach happiness by craving for things in this world (avijjă), we get attached to somethings or hate other things (tanh $\bar{a}$ ), and then act accordingly (kamma).

- After one attains parinibbana (i.e., when an Arahant dies), there is no world to experience. No more pañcakkhandha.

5. The other two factors of $\bar{a} h \bar{a} r a$ and nibbatti lakkhana describe the "progression" of a pañcakkhandha that have the origins in avijja $\bar{a}, \tanh h \bar{a}$, and kamma.

- If it is a material thing (rūpa) it needs $\bar{a} h \bar{a} r a$ (food) to grow; they can be food that living beings eat or nutrients that plants need.
- If it is a mental thing (vedanā, saññā, sañkhāra, viññāṇa), it needs "mental food": phassa (contact), mano sañcetanā, and viññāna āhāra. We will discuss these later.

6. Any one of those five aggregates needs a "blueprint" or a set mechanism to arise, grow, mature, decay, and eventually cease to exist. This is what the fifth factor, nibbatti lakkhana, is about.

- This "blueprint" is made according to those three causes: it is a complex plan which takes into account many aspects that are formed by the level of avijjā (ignorance), kind of $\tanh \bar{a}$ (greed, hate), and kamma (kind of acts that were done with body, speech, and mind).
- Those complex factors give rise to nibbatti lakkhana, "blueprint" for any one of the five aggregates to rise. It can be called "production characteristics" of that particular sañkhata (sankata in Sinhala) belonging to one of the five aggregates.
- As we learn more, we will see that all five factors actually become causes, and are inter-related.

7. This is easier to see this with a human (or an animal). When a living being gets a human bhava, then based on a specific kamma vipāka that came to focus at the time of death in the previous bhava, a blueprint for the human bhava is automatically generated by kammic energy.

- That blueprint is the manomaya kāya or the gandhabba that we have discussed many times; see, the posts under the section "Manomaya Kāya."
- The arising of that human starting from a single cell in mother's womb happens according to the "blueprint" in that manomaya kāya: eventual height, eye color, skin color, etc were determined when a suitable womb was automatically selected according to the "gathi" of that being. That "selection process" - which happens automatically and not decided by any superior being - had chosen the matching parents for the gandhabba.
- That was the role played by the nibbatti lakkhana in this particular case.

8. Thus the particular bhava is determined by the particular action (kamma) : if that action was suitable for a dog bhava, then one would get a "dog bhava."

- But other characteristics of that dog are determined by the overall "gathi" of that being that it had acquired through uncountable previous births.
- Thus nibbatti lakkhana is a complex entity that takes into account numerous things, but two are prominent: the specific kamma and overall gathi.

9. For example two different beings could get the same "dog bhava." But no two dogs will look and behave alike. Some are vicious and some are loving. Some are big and some are small. The possible varieties are basically infinite. Even two "twin dogs" that look exactly the same will have at least some behaviour differences when they grow. Same thing applies to two humans.

- Thus nibbatti lakkhana is a complex mold of multiple factors. But only a Buddha can see why certain features are in a given being. Even a spot on dog is said to be due to some reason.
- Even though the "bhava" is determined by a specific strong kamma (called a janaka kamma), the actual body will reflect numerous kamma vipāka from numerous lives in the past.
- But as we have discussed elsewhere, what kinds of kamma vipāka can bring fruits will depend to a large extent on having suitable conditions available. If one acts foolishly that will allow some bad kamma vipäka from the past to bear fruit. In the same way, by acting with mindfulness one can avoid such bad outcomes and even bring about good outcomes due to past good kamma vipāka.
- There are several posts that discuss the above important fact. For example, "What is Kamma? - Is Everything Determined by Kamma?" and "Anantara and Samanantara Paccayā."

10. Therefore, it is important to realize that it is manomaya kāya does not determine one's future rigidly; some of the "production characteristics" can change. It is not like making a robot in a factory according to a set blueprint.

- It is easy to see that one's body structure can change according to one's lifestyle. If one becomes careless and start eating indiscriminately, one will become obese. Even one's character can change by one's motivation and due to external influences.
- Thus nibbatti lakkhana are not deterministically set. The overall gathi can change and the manomaya $k \bar{a} y a$ and the physical body in turn can change.

11. The main reason for this flexibility is that the manomaya kāya has three "components": kammaja kāya, cittaja kāya, and utuja kāya; see previous posts on manomaya kāya.

- The kammaja kāya is the one that is really pre-set. It had taken into account the reasons (kamma vipäka) that led to the particular bhava.
- The critical component that is under OUR CONTROL is the cittaja kāya. This is basically how we think (that leads to our speech and bodily actions). And how we think depends on our level of ignorance (avijjā).
- The third component is the utuja k $\bar{a} y a$, which is basically the fine body of the gandhabba. It is being created and changed CONTINUOUSLY due to both the kammaja kāya and cittaja kāya. The fine matter based on suddhaṭthaka are being created due to kammaja kāya and cittaja kāya; see, "The Origin of Matter - Suddhatthaka."

12. Thus the evolvement of a human being is a complex process. But one could get a good basic understanding by comprehending the above basic structure. We will go into more details in the future, but let us discuss a few more important aspects.
" Now we can see that the physical body is just a "shell." There is gandhabba inside that physical body and controlling it; see, "Ghost in the Machine - Synonym for the Manomaya Kāya?."
13. Thus, these physical bodies that we value so much are really lifeless shells. The essence - gandhabba - is hidden inside that physical body.

- The utuja k $\bar{a} y a$ of the gandhabba is the one that is spread over the whole physical body gives it a "life." It is a fine grid that overlaps our nervous system, and that is how we feel body sensations.
- Under some extreme stresses, the gandhabba can get out of the physical body. This is what is known as the out-of-body experience (OBE); see, "Manomaya Kāya and Out-of-Body Experience (OBE)." When that happens the physical body is lifeless, and doctors have declared many heart patients undergoing operations to be dead for several minutes only to find out later that the patient is alive (gandhabba had returned to the body).

14. The critical point for our present discussion is the fact that once born with a human body, the human gandhabba can determine its own nibbatti lakkhana to some extent by wisely using the cittaja kaya.

- It is this cittaja kaya that ultimately makes it possible for a human to attain Nibbāna.
- One can change one's gathi (habits/character) by comprehending first moral versus immoral, and then comprehending the anicca nature of this world.
- Most people do not realize the importance of the cittaja kaya. This is in essence why a Buddha is needed to reveal the true nature of this world, and to teach how to use the cittaja kaya (i.e., the way one thinks, and therefore speaks and acts): First to stay away from immoral behavior to cleanse the mind to some extent, and then to comprehend the anicca nature.

15. The nibbatti lakkhana for any sankkhata (sankata in Sinhala) associated with any of the five aggregates work similarly. Let us consider a certain viññāna that we experience when seeing a person X.

- That viñ̃̃āṇa depends on who is looking at X . If it a loving parent for Y , then Y will generate a "loving viññāna" upon seeing X. That viññāna will arise, stay there for a certain time, and fade away as the mind is directed to something else. But when that viññāna arises, it arises with some nibbatti lakkhana associated with one's own past experiences with X. An enemy of X (say, Z) could generate a "hateful viñ̃āṇa."

16. It is easy to see that other three aggregates in the above example will also arise accordingly.

- Y will generate happy feelings (vedanā), will recognize (sañña $\bar{a}$ ) X as a parent, and may generate some kind of action or speech via sañkhāra. On the other hand, Z will generate an entirely different set.
- Thus the four mental aggregates are related to each other.

17. In Buddha Dhamma everything that we learn about is connected to each other at some level. It is the whole fabric of nature. Each and every piece of information is part of a complex puzzle. When one begins to see how it all fits together, one's mind becomes joyful, and provides incentive and desire to learn more about the true nature of this complex world.

## Next in the series, "Āhāra (Food) in Udayavaya Ñāna."

### 7.4.14. Āhāra (Food) in Udayavaya Ñāṇa

## March 19, 2016

1. First part of the Udayavaya Ñāna involves the causes for the arising of sañkhata (sankata in Sinhala) (and hence arising of pañcakkhandha). Out of the five main factors (avijja, taṇhā, kamma, āhāra, and nibbatti lakkhana), we discussed the nibbatti lakkhana in the previous post of the series.

- Many posts at the site discuss the first three factors, so will now discuss the remaining factor, $\bar{a} h \bar{a} r a$ (food), that is both a cause and a condition for the arising of pañcakkhandha.

2. When we think of $\bar{a} h \bar{a} r a$ (which means food in both Pāli and Sinhala), we automatically think about food that we consume to stay alive. However, it is clear from the previous two posts that a physical body is just a
shell that is "controlled" by a gandhabba. There are many other posts on gandhabba in the "Manomaya Kāya" section. Here is a summary of some concepts discussed there:

- In effect, we have four kinds of bodies (kāya): the physical body (karaja kāya) is the one people normally associate with the perception of a "me." But we have three "mental bodies" that are collectively "manomaya kāya" or "gandhabba." Those three are kammaja kaya, cittaja kaya, and utuja kaya.
- In a way, the physical body is just a shell that we use for about 100 years or so and discard at death; the gandhabba leaves that dead body and waits for a suitable womb to make another physical body, if there is kammic energy left in the human bhava.
 are consumed by the gandhabba.
- The gandhabba consumes three kinds of mental food: phassa āhāra, mano sañcetanā āhāra, and viñ̃̄āṇa āhāra.

3. A given Kammaja kāya was created at the cuti-patisandhi moment by a powerful previous kamma, and its energy just gets depleted with time. For example, if a particular human bhava came into existence with enough kammic energy to support a human life for 1000 years, then that energy will be slowly spent over 1000 years. In other words, kammaja kāya does not need any additional energy, i.e., āhāra.

- In a way, all three types of mental foods are consumed by the cittaja kāya. And some of the energy from the kammaja and cittaja kaya are converted to suddhatthaka (matter), and that is what makes the fine body (utuja kaya) of the gandhabba, which is too fine for us to see.
- As I mentioned in the previous post is this section, "Nibbatti Lakkhana in Udayavaya Ñāna," the critical component that is under OUR CONTROL is the cittaja kāya. We can overcome our "loosely preset destiny" embedded in the kammaja kāya by cultivating our cittaja kāya, or basically our thoughts and thereby our behavior (gathi). This is what makes it possible to attain Nibbāna!

4. Let us first discuss the kabalinkkāra āhāra. There are two relevant meanings for this name. The first meaning is associated with what this type of āhāra does: to energize the physical body. Here "kabalink $\bar{a} r a "$ comes from "kayata bala dena" in Pāli or Sinhala where "kāya" is body, "bala" is energy or power, and "dena" means provide.

- Therefore, kabalink āra āhāra here means the food we eat to make our bodies grow and keep energized. Without food, a physical body that starts in the womb of the mother cannot grow to a baby and then once comes out cannot grow to be an adult. Without kabalink $\bar{a} r a$ āhāra that particular sañkhata (sankata in Sinhala) cannot survive, and thus is an essential factor contributing to part of the pañcakkhandha.
- This kind of kabalink āra āhāra is essential for the survival for humans and animals (and also devas). Devas consume just one kind of kabalink āra āhāra called "amurtha"; it is a drink that they consume, which leaves no residuals. Thus, they don't need to worry about sweating, urinating, or defecating.
- Thus kabalinkkāra āhāra are needed only in kāma loka. As we will see below, when one loses craving for kabalink $\bar{a} r a ~ a ̄ h a ̄ r a, ~ o n e ~ w i l l ~ n e v e r ~ b e ~ b o r n ~ a g a i n ~ i n ~ t h e ~ k a ̄ m a ~ l o k a, ~ i . e ., ~ o n e ~ b e c o m e s ~ a n ~ A n a ̄ g a ̄ m \bar{l} . ~$
- There are no solid bodies (karaja kāya) in either rūpa loka or arūpa loka. In rūpa loka there is only the "thrija kāya" or the three mental bodies of kammaja kāya, cittaja kāya, and utuja kāya. Thus in the rūpa loka beings are essentially gandhabbas but that term is normally reserved for humans and animals when they are in the para loka waiting for a womb; see, "Hidden World of the Gandhabba: Netherworld (Paraloka)."
- In the arūpa loka, there is no utuja kāya either. Except for the hadaya vatthu, there is no rūpa associated with an arūpa brahma.
- It is not essential to know all these details, but these details are needed to complete the "big picture", especially for those who are interested in finer details.

 $k a \overline{m a}$ loka to enjoy them; see, "How Perceived Pleasures (Assāda) lead to Dukkha."
- Thus, the stronger the craving is, harder it is to "escape from the kāma lokas."
- This is a good example of how (abhi)sañkhāra or strong cravings/hopes/desires lead to corresponding bhava and thus corresponding births ( $j \bar{a} t i)$.
- In pațicca samuppāda, "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" is followed by "sañkhāra paccayā viññāna," and leads to "upādāna paccayā bhava" and "bhava paccayā jāti." Thus generating (abhi)sañkhāra for kabalink $\bar{a} r a ~ a ̄ h a ̄ r a ~ l e a d s ~ t o ~ r e b i r t h s ~ i n ~ t h e ~ k a ̄ m a ~ l o k a, ~ b u t ~ m o s t ~ t i m e s ~ i n ~ u n e x p e c t e d ~ w a y, ~ a s ~ w e ~ d i s c u s s ~$ below.

6. One NEEDS to consume kabalinkāra āhāra to provide one's body with the nutrients it needs to live a healthy life. However, if one craves for tasty foods in excess, kabalink āra āhāra can become a CAUSE to for the arising (udaya) of future births in the kāma loka.

- This is why it is NOT actual consumption of tasty foods that contributes to making "kāma bhava." It is the excess greed for tasty foods (kāma assāda); see the section on, "Assāda, Ādīnava, Nissarana."
- This second type of "pada nirukthi" or the "origin of the phrase" kabalinkkāra āhāra comes from "kāya bali karana" which means "leading to distorted body." Here the word "bali" or "distort" applies because the body that one acquires in a future life is due to such greedy sañkhāra could be much different than expected. This is the deeper meaning of kabalink $\bar{a} r a ~ \bar{a} h a \bar{r} a$ in the udayavaya ñāna.

7. Such excessive greed for food matches the "gathi" of pretha beings. Thus when one cultivates such greedy (abhi)sañkhāra, it leads to corresponding "pretha bhava" and thus "pretha jathi" in the future.

- When encountering delicious food, some people lose any sense of decency. The greediness shows, and when eating such a meal some display "animal like" behavior, spilling food and getting the food all over their face. That is a display of "greedy animal like" sañkhāra. When they cultivate such sañkhāra, the corresponding birth could be that of a pig.
- And then there are some who do not like to share such food and like to keep others away from enjoying such meals. That could cultivate sañkhāra of a "vicious dog." We see such dogs all the time; they growl when another dog comes even close to their food.

8. Once one gets the basic idea, it is easy to see various kinds of pretha and animal sañkhāra can be cultivated even without realizing it, and can lead to future births corresponding to such "gathi."

- And the cultivation of such extreme gathi is a consequence of not knowing or not comprehending Buddha Dhamma, specifically pațicca samuppāda ("pati ichcha" leading to "sama uppada"); see, "Paticca Samuppāda - "Pati+ichcha"+"Sama+uppāda."
- And such sañkhāra CANNOT be suppressed by sheer will power alone. One needs to learn Dhamma and realize that they DO LEAD to bad consequences. Again, see the section on "Assāda, Ādīnava, Nissarana."

9. There are "good births" in the kāma loka too: the human realms and the deva realm. Bhava (and birth) in those realms also are according to one's (abhi)sañkhāra, which of course are generated according to one's dominant gathi.

- Those who cultivate human and deva sañkhāra like to enjoy sense pleasures, but they are not excessively greedy. They don't have mentality of "may all good things come to me, AND not to others." They are content with what they get and willingly share the excess with others.
- One is not released from the kāma loka until one's cravings for sense pleasures completely goes away when one comprehends not only the futility of such sense pleasures but also the possible dangers.

10. At even a deeper level, the tendency to generate such extreme greed goes away AUTOMATICALLY when one starts comprehending the "anicca nature." That it is not possible to achieve and maintain pleasurable worldly things (including food or beautiful bodies that result from eating such foods) as one desires.

- And this change in the mindset and the change in corresponding personal behavior may not reverse in a short time. But as one learns Dhamma, one will be able to see the change over time: Sometimes in a few weeks or even several months.
- The Buddha compared this "gradual transition" to the growth of a tree or a plant. One cannot see the change in the growth of a plant day by day; there is no point in checking it every day to see whether can see the growth. But if one takes care of the plant by providing it with nutrients and keeps the weeds away, one will be able to see the growth over a few weeks or months. And then one day, can reap the benefits of all that work when the plant blossoms and provides the flowers/fruits.

11. Therefore, the key is to LEARN Dhamma and also to comprehend it by contemplating on it, which is MEDITATION. But it is critical to learn the correct Dhamma.

- A good example of the wrong way to meditate is what many people are doing with the pațikūla manasikāra bhāvanā. Many translate "patikūla" as "pilikul' in Sinhala, which means 'to be rejected because it is repulsive." They meditate on contemplating the repulsiveness of the body (sweat, urine, and feces generated by the body) and also the fact that once one chews on even the most delicious food, it becomes "vomit."
- But the Buddha did not advice that. Just as we should not desire extreme sense pleasures, we also should not be repulsed by the things that we mentioned in the above paragraph. They both generate taṇha , in the first instant by attachment (craving) and in the second by aversion (patigha). The neutral mindset (upekkhā) comes from understanding the true nature of things.

12. Now we can see that the connection of kabalinkkāra āhāra in the udayavaya ñāña has two facets:

- One plays a role in taking care of the physical body that we have inherited due to past causes. If we are not mindful of what we eat, it can lead to bad consequences via the body that we already have. If we are mindful, we can make that body to work optimally for achieving our goals, both mundane and transcendental. And of course, if the physical body does not get enough kabalinkāra āhāra, it will die.
 future births via generating (abhi)sañkhāra related to pleasurable foods.
- It is said that one can become an $A n \bar{a} g \bar{a} m \bar{l}($ i.e., stop rebirths in the $k \bar{a} m a$ loka) by comprehending the true nature of kabalink $\bar{a} r a ~ a ̄ h a ̄ r a$. Then one loses the craving for any sense pleasures in the kāma loka. But such a mindset is unfathomable for a normal human who only sees the immediate sense satisfaction. Furthermore, such a mindset CANNOT be achieved by sheer will power; it has to be through understanding the anicca nature of kāma loka.

Next in the series, "Udayavaya Ñāna - Importance of the Cittaja Kāya."

July 22, 2016; December 1, 2017; December 14, 2019

## Three Components of Mental Body (Manomaya Kāya)

1. In previous posts in this series, we discussed kabalinkāara āhāra for the physical body and three types of āhāra for the "mental body" (or manomaya kāya or gandhabba): phassa āhāra, mano sañcetanā āhāra, and viññāna āhāra.

- The manomaya k $\bar{a} y a$ or the gandhabba consists of three components: kammaja kāya, citta kāya, and utuja kāya. The kammaja kāya gets its energy at the beginning of that bhava, and does not require any external $\bar{a} h \bar{a} r a$. The utuja kāya is sustained continuously via fine rūpa produced by kammaja kāya and cittaja kāya.
- Therefore, the three types of $\bar{a} h \bar{a} r a$ for the manomaya kāya are all consumed by the cittaja $\boldsymbol{k} \overline{\boldsymbol{a}} \boldsymbol{y}$. This cittaja kāya is nothing else but the stream of thoughts that we generate.
- An aside: Sometimes the gandhabba can inhale "aroma" or gandha (kabaliñkāra āhāra) and have a fine (misty) physical body too; thus the name gandhabba, where "abbha" means "inhale" or in this case "absorb." Such "more solidified" are the ones that people can sometimes see, and even be captured by a camera.


## The Big Picture

2. Now we can take a step back and look at the big picture, and it gives a very illuminating view. This "big picture" could be very helpful in comprehending the anicca nature. Of course, this is not the only way to grasp anicca nature.

- The physical body that we value so much and think about as "me" is just a temporary shell. Just like anything material in this world, it grows and peaks and then starts the downhill march ending in decay and eventual death. At the death of physical body, the gandhabba that comes out and has to wait for a suitable womb to start building a new body, if the human bhava still has more kammic energy leff; see, for example, "Bhava and Jāti - States of Existence and Births Therein" and "Gandhabba - Only in Human and Animal Realms."
- This is a key factor that contributed to the concept of a "self" ("āthma") in Hinduism. Hindu yogis who cultivated abhiññ̄ $\bar{a}$ powers could look back at a finite number of previous lives and could see a gandhabba giving rise to repeated rebirths in human form (they likely practiced jhāna in those recent previous lives, which made it easier for them to attain abhiññ̄a powers in this life).
- However, they could not see far back enough to see that one could be born an animal or even worse too.


## An Analogy

3. For humans and animals, we can compare the physical body controlled by the gandhabba to a car (or any other vehicle) being driven by a person. The body of the vehicle is like our physical body, and the driver is analogous to the gandhabba. Without the gandhabba, the physical body cannot do anything; it would be a lifeless, i.e., a dead body. It is the gandhabba that "operates" the human body; see, "Ghost in the Machine - Synonym for the Manomaya Kāya?."

- The birth of a gandhabba, in turn, is due to the kammic energy that was created in a previous life. The kammaja kāya represents that energy (which will be slowly depleting with time.) The term kammaja $k \bar{a} y a$ comes from "kamma" and " $j a$ " and "kāya." Here " $j a$ " means "birth" or "origin" and "kāya" is the body. Thus kammaja kāya means the "body that was created due to kamma."
- Similarly, cittaja kāya arises due to citta (loosely translated as thoughts).
- "Utu" means "change" and the utuja kāya is that part of the gandhabba body which arises by conversion of kammic energy and the energy from citta (javana).


## We Have Control Over Cittaja Kāya

4. Now, we can see the critical importance of citta. Kammaja kāya itself arises due to previous kamma, i.e., by citta in a previous life. More specifically, javana in such citta provided the energy for a new bhava which lead to the kammaja kāya; see, "Javana of a Citta - The Root of Mental Power."

- Kammaja kāya is just a result, and it will slowly lose its energy over the human existence. We cannot do anything about (but if one does an anatariya kamma it will be shortened). Thus it is only the cittaja $k \bar{a} y a$ that we have control over. This is critically important. We have finally converged to the essence of a human being.
- This is why the Buddha said "Mano pubbangama Dhamma....." The origin of anything in this world can be traced back to the mind (thoughts).
- Here we see the truth of the above statement for living beings. In the future, it will become clear that ANYTHING in this world has origins in the mind. That is the story in the Aggañ̃a sutta. But we have to proceed step-by-step. An introduction at, "Buddhism and Evolution - Aggañña Sutta (DN 27)."

5. We have the control over our own destiny via our thoughts or cittaja kāala. I cannot emphasize enough the critical importance of the cittaja kāya.

- Therefore, we have to pay attention to what kind of āhāra (conventionally translated as food, but you can see that is not a good translation) that we provide for our thought stream. But we have control over only those thoughts that we initiate.


## Two Types of Citta (Viññ̄āna) and Associated Feelings (Vedanā)

6. There are two types of thoughts. Some citta arise due to kamma vipāka. For example, we may get to taste a delicious meal due to a good kamma vipāka and while eating it we feel "jivh $\bar{a}$ viññāna," i.e., those come through our sense of taste. These do not have abhisañkhāra. Also see, "Moha/Avijijā and Vipāka Viññāna/Kamma Viññān̄a" and "Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways."

- There is another set of citta that we initiate. For example, based on that tasty meal, we start thinking about coming back to the same restaurant in the future, how to make it at home, etc. These generate abhisañkhāra. The worst kind is apuññäbhisañkhāra, where we think about ways to get that meal in an immoral way, say, by stealing.
- But if it is just some food that quenches the hunger, we do not generate that type of citta subsequent to the vipāka citta.
- In another example, we see millions of things in a day (via vipāka citta), but generate abhisañkhāra only in a few.


## The Unending Cycle of Kamma/Vipāka

7. The Buddha said, "kammā vipāk $\bar{a}$ vaddanthi, vipākā kamma sambhavo, thasmā punabbhavo hothi, evan loko pavaththathi."

- What that means is: "Because of kamma vipāka we experience sense inputs; based on those we initiate new kamma (abhisañkhāra), and those, in turn, will bring vipāka in the future; that is how the world evolves (rebirth process continues)."
- Thus the critical part is where we generate abhisañkhāra. This is done with javana citta. We will discuss this using citta vithi in the future, but let us try to get some basic understanding of how these javana citta can be controlled. There are many posts in the "Mind and Consciousness" and "Citta and Cetasika" sections on citta and citta vīthi.


## The Key Is to Change Our Gati

8. In fact, javana citta run too fast to control at that time. Billions of citta run in a second. How can we control them? We cannot control them in situ, as they initially arise.

- Javana citta arise due to our gati! This is the key.
- For example, an Arahant is not be tempted by any attractive sense input. He has removed all āsavas (cravings) and there is no anusaya to bubble up. He/she has "Noble gati of an Arahant."
- On the other hand, a Sotāpanna may be tempted by that attractive sense input. He has not removed all $\bar{a} s a v a s$ (cravings); but he/she has removed gati suitable for the apāyā, so javana citta corresponding to highly immoral acts will not arise .
- The $\bar{a} s a v a$ (or gati) are analogous to the dirt in the bottom of a well. If the well water is perturbed, some dirt can come to the surface (anusaya). (i.e., if a sense input matching our gati comes into play, bad thoughts automatically come into the mind). This is discussed in the post, " 3 . The Second Level - Key to Purify the Mind" in the Meditation section.
- When one attains the Sotāpanna stage, the worst types of "gunk" will be removed. The rest will be removed in three more stages (Sakadāgāmī, Anāgāmī, Arahant).


## $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p \bar{a} n a s a t i / S a t i p a t t h \bar{a} n a$ - Only Way to Change Gati

9. In a normal human, whether or not immoral javana citta will be triggered, will depend on his/her set of $\bar{a} s a v a s ~(o r ~ g a t i)$ ). If that particular sensory input is attractive (i.e., matches his/her $\bar{a} s a v a s$ ), then he/she may automatically initiate a highly immoral act to pursue that sense input.

- But the key here is the following. Even if such immoral javana citta arise, one can still suppress them before the actual act is done, if one has learned Satipaṭthāna (or Ānāpāna.) For extremely immoral acts, like killing another human, most people will be able to control such thoughts even without knowing about Satipattthāna. But the more one learns Dhamma, and the more one understands the consequences, one will be able to have firm control even over minor offenses.
- Furthermore, the more one controls one's actions this way, the more one's gati will change for the better. This is another key! This has been discussed in detail in, " 9 . Key to Ānāpānasati - How to Change Habits and Character (Gati)." There are several posts under that topic.


## Irreversible Change of Gati with Understanding of Tilakkhaṇa

10. A large chunk of immoral gati goes away just via comprehending anicca, dukkha, anatta at the Sotāpanna stage. In fact, those gati that are suitable to be born in the ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$ will be removed. This is called "dassanena pahāthabbā," i.e., "removal via correct vision."

- Thus highly immoral javana citta do not arise in a Sotāpanna. A well that has been cleaned of the visible dirt at the bottom can not be muddied by perturbing the water in that well. Just like that, highly immoral thoughts do not arise in a Sotāpanna because it is free of "worst gunk."
- However, to be able to grasp anicca, dukkha, anatta, one's mind needs to be cleansed to some extent. One needs to gradual changing of one's gati or āsava. The way to get there is to practice the correct Ānāpāna bhāvanā (or Satipaṭthāna bhāvanā.) See, "Is Ānāpānasati Breath Meditation?."


## Udayavaya Nāṇa - How Suffering Arises and How It Can Be Stopped

11. Thus the key to Nibbāna is in the uadayavaya $\tilde{n} \bar{a} n a$ : future rebirths arise (uadaya) due to abhisañkhāra (or cetanā) in our javana citta. By controlling immoral thoughts via reducing our āsava (bad gati), we can eventually stop them from arising.

- This is done by always being vigilant about the moral or immoral thoughts that come to our minds; this is Satipaṭthāna; see, "Mahā Satipatthāna Sutta." Then if the thought is moral, we cultivate it (āna); if it is immoral, we stop it (pāna) before it leads to bad speech or actions; this is $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p \bar{a} n a ;$ see, " 7 . What is Ānāpāna?."
- The other key point is that the more cleans one's mind, the more one will be able to comprehend. In particular, comprehending anicca, dukkha, anatta, REQUIRES a mind cleansed to some extent.
- I hope you can see that this is a feedback loop: each time one goes through the loop (being vigilant or satipatṭhana to cleansing the mind or ānāpāna to more cleansed mind to grasping deeper Dhamma and back to being vigilant), one makes progress.


## Importance of Tilakkhana

12. This effect is greatly amplified when one finally grasps Tilakkhana: One comprehends the futility of staying in this rebirth process (anatta.) Anything that we acquire through much effort cannot be kept to our satisfaction in the long run (anicca) and eventually lead to nothing but suffering (dukha.) When one can "see" that, one will realize the urgency to reduce and remove one's āsava (bad gati). This leads to the Sotāpanna stage.

- A huge chunk of āsava (bad gati) simply disappear just via this understanding of the anicca nature at the Sotāpanna stage. Highly potent immoral javana citta do not arise in the mind of a Sotāpanna. Then no more rebirth in the ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$ or the four lowest realms.
- Thus with udayavaya nāana, one can really clarify the path to the Sotāpanna stage.
- Then the remaining āsava disappear (āsavakkhaya) via three more stages (Sakadāgāmī, Anāgāmū, Arahant) by continuing this process (Ānāpāna and Satipatṭhāna), and one attains Nibbāna, permanent happiness or the removal of all future suffering.
- But one also needs to do Ānāpāna and Satipattthāna before the Sotāpanna stage in order to cleanse the mind to a level that is capable of grasping anicca, dukkha, anatta.


## Closing the 'Gaps"

13. Finally, I would like to close the loop by pointing to the connection to the concepts we have discussed in the early posts. The gandhabba consumes three kinds of mental food: phassa āhāra, mano sañcetan $\bar{a}$ $\bar{a} h a ̄ r a$, and viññ̄ṇa āhāra.

- As we saw in the previous post in this series, "Āhāra (Food) in Udayavaya Ñāna," all three types of mental foods are consumed by the cittaja kāya. And this confirmed by the above discussion: Our initial sense inputs that COULD trigger javana citta come via phassa, sense contacts. They are JUST contacts. But based on those, we COULD accumulate new kamma vipāka (abhisañkhāra) by making samphassa; also see, "Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways."
- Mano sañcetanā āhāra (which are abhisañkhāra) come into play during those samphassa; this simply means we start "making plans", and also keep going back to that sensory input. With repeated triggers for a given sense input (samphassa) provides āhāra for that viññanna; for example, see, "2. Viññāna (Consciousness) can be of Many Different Types and Forms," and other relevant posts.

By reading the links given (and also using the "Search box" at top right) one should be able to clarify key issues. Please don't hesitate to comment if you need help in clarifying a given concept.
14. Also, please make sure to enter your email address correctly when making a comment. Recently, one person entered incorrect address, and sent me the same question twice. Unfortunately, I have no way of letting him know that I replied each time.

## VIII Tables and Summaries

○ "Pāli Glossary - (A-K)"

- "Pāli Glossary - (L-Z)"
o "List of"San" Words and Other Pāli Roots"
o "The 89 Cittas"
o "Cetasika (Mental Factors)"
o "Rūpa (Material Form) - Table"
o "Rūpa - Generation Mechanisms"
O "Rūpa Kalāpa (Grouping of Matter)"
- "Akusala Citta and Akusala Vipāka Citta"
- " 37 Factors of Enlightenment"
- "Conditions for the Four Stages of Nibbāna"
- "Ultimate Realities - Table"
- " 31 Realms of Existence"


### 8.1 Pāli Glossary

1/2/16: It seems that the audio files are not loading, so just removed the audio files.
We now have a Popup Päli Glossary with Pronunciation.

## Possible Confusion in Pronunciation

It seems that the following conventions were adopted in order to make the text shorter.

## In many cases:

1. "c" needs to be pronounced "ch" as in "charm" or "chicago."
2. "t" needs to be pronounced "th" as in "thud" or "throw."

- For example, citta pronounced "chiththa", cakkhu is pronounced "chakkhu", anicca as "anichcha", anatta as "anaththa", $j \bar{a} t i$ as "jathi", taṇhā as "thanha", tilakkhana as "thilakkhana."

3. "d" needs to be pronounced "th" as in "this" or "that." Note the difference in pronouncing "th" between 2 and 3 .

- For example, vedanā or dāna (as in giving) is pronounced this way.


## Pronunciation Key

á rhymes like pat $\hat{\mathrm{a}} \rightarrow$ care $\tilde{\mathrm{a}} \rightarrow$ pay $\overline{\mathrm{a}} \rightarrow$ father $\hat{\mathrm{e}} \rightarrow$ pet $\ddot{\mathrm{e}} \rightarrow$ bee th $\rightarrow$ thin dh $\rightarrow$ this $\ddot{\mathrm{o}} \rightarrow$ toe $\mathrm{u} \rightarrow$ moon ch $\rightarrow$ chin ng $\rightarrow$ thing

## Common Pāli Words

I will keep adding more words to the glossary. If you would like me to add any missing words to the glossary, please send a comment.

10/6/15: I have added audio files. Please note the volume control below each audio.

| Pāli Word | Audio | Pronounciation | Meaning |
| :--- | :---: | :--- | :--- |
| akusala | Q | akusala | immoral, unwholesome |
| adosa | - | adhosa | non-hatred |
| alobha | alobha | non-greed |  |
| amoha | amoha | non-delusion |  |
| Anāgāmī | Anāgāmī | Non-Returner (to the human world) |  |
| Anariya | Anāriyā | One who is not yet a Noble One or <br> Ariya |  |
| anatta | anaththā | not in-control, helpless |  |
| anicca | anichchā | inability to maintain to one's <br> satisfaction |  |
| anantara |  | being in storage until retrieval <br> (kamma vipāka) |  |


| Pāli Word | Audio | Pronounciation | Meaning |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| anupassana | 6 | anupassanā | contemplate with anicca, dukkha, anatta |
| anusaya | 3 |  | defilements arising from latent cravings (āsava) |
| apāya | 9 | apāya | common term for four lowest realms |
| abhijjā [abhijjhā] | 0 | abhijjā | strong greed |
| Arahant | 6 |  | Never to be born in any of the 31 realms |
| Ariya | 9 | āriyā | noble one (Sotāpanna or above) |
| arūpa | 9 | arūpa | without rūpa (not really correct) |
| avijjā | 9 | avijjā | ignorance |
| ahirika | 6 | ahirikā | shamelessness |
| ahetuka | $\bigcirc$ | ahãthuka | without good roots |
| akasa | 6 | ākāsa | space (the void in between rūpa) |
| aloka | 9 | āloka | light, dissociating from "this world" |
| āpo | 9 | āpo | cohesive element |
| ārammaṇa | 3 | ārammana | object of thought |
| āsava (asaya) | 6 | asāva | deep-seated craving |
| asevana | 0 | āa ${ }^{\text {anvanā }}$ | repeated practice |
| bahiddha | 4 | bahidhdhā | external |
| bala |  |  | power |
| bhanga | 9 | bhangā | dissolution |
| bhava | 9 |  | existence level |
| Bhauddhayā (Buddhist) | 6 | Bhaudhdhayā | One striving to stop the rebirth process |
| bhāvanā | 9 | bhāvanā | meditation, constant contemplation \& use |
| Buddha | 6 | Budhdha (not "Budhdhā") | Buddha Gotama |
| bhavañga | 9 | bhavangā | life continuum |
| bhaya | 6 |  | fear |
| citta | 9 | chiththa | early stage of a thought (pure thought) |


| Pāli Word | Audio | Pronounciation | Meaning |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| dana | 6 | dāna | giving |
| dasaka | $\theta$ |  | decad |
| deva | 9 | dãva | a being in 6th- 11 th realms |
| dhamma | $\theta$ | dhammā | Buddha's teachings, phenomenon, mental object |
| dhammavicaya | 6 | dhammavichaya | investigation of concepts like anicca |
| dhātu | 0 | dhāthu | element |
| diṭthi | 6 |  | view, wrong view unless specified |
| domanassa | 0 | dhomanassa | displeasure |
| dosa | 9 | dhosa | hatred |
| dukha | 9 | dhukha | suffering |
| dukkha | 9 | dhukhkha | suffering \& it can be overcome |
| dvara | 0 | dhvāra | door (to the outside world) |
| ekaggata | - | ekaggathā | one-pointedness (of the mind) |
| gandha | $\theta$ |  | smell |
| gati | 9 | gathi | character |
| hadayavatthu | 3 | hadayavaththu | seat of mind |
| hetu | 6 | hãthu | root cause |
| hiri | 0 |  | shame |
| iddhipada | 9 | iddhipāda | means to accomplishment |
| kāmacchanda | 0 | kāmachanda | greed for things in kamaloka |
| kamaloka | 9 | kāmalõka | first 11 realms with five physical senses |
| kamavacara | 0 | kāmavachara | belonging to kamaloka |
| kamma | 9 | kammā | action, deed |
| kasiṇa | $0$ | kasina | meditation device (usu. a colored disk) |
| kāya | 6 | kāya | sensing (seeing, hearing, etc) |
| kaya | $\theta$ | kaya | body |
| khaya | 9 |  | cutting off |


| Pāli Word | Audio | Pronounciation | Meaning |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| khana | 0 |  | moment, sub-moment |
| khandha | 9 |  | aggregate, collection, heap |
| kilesa (keles) | 0 | kilãsa | defilement |
| kukkucca | 9 | kukkuchcha | tendency to do lowly things |
| kusala | $\theta$ |  | removal of defilements |
| lahuta | 6 | lahüta | lightness |
| lakkhana | 0 | lakhkhana | characteristc |
| lobha | 9 | lobha | greed |
| loka | 0 | loka | world |
| lokuttara | 9 | lokoththara | beyond this world, transcendental |
| maccariya | 0 | machchariya | extreme greed, hiding wealth |
| magga | 6 | magga | path |
| mana | 3 | māna | conceit |
| manasikara | $\theta$ | manasikāra | memory |
| mano | $\theta$ | mano | mind |
| manodhatu | 6 | manodhāthu | mind element |
| manodvara | 0 | manodvāra | mind door |
| manussa | 6 |  | human being |
| marana | 0 |  | death |
| metta | 8 | meththā | loving kindness |
| micchā diṭ̣hi | 0 | michcha diththi | wrong views |
| middha | 6 | midhdhha | lethargic mind |
| moha | $\theta$ | moha | delusion |
| mudita | 6 | mudhithā | appreciative joy |
| muduta | $\theta$ | mudhuthā | malleability |
| mūla | 9 | mūla or mūla | root |
| nama | 9 | nāma | name, mental |
| nāmarūpa | $\bigcirc$ | nāmarüpa | name and form |


| Pāli Word | Audio | Pronounciation | Meaning |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| ñāna | $\theta$ | ngāna | knowledge |
| nimitta | 9 | nimiththa | sign |
| nivarana | 9 | neevarana | hindrance |
| niraya | 9 |  | hell |
| niyama | 9 | niyama (not niyāma) | law of nature |
| oja | 6 | ojā | nutritive essence |
| paccaya | $\bigcirc$ | pachchayā | condition |
| pahāna | 6 | pahāna | abandoning |
| pancadvara | $\theta$ | panchadvāra | five sense doors |
| pañcakkhandha | 6 | pancakkhandhā | five aggregates |
| pancaupadanakkhandha | 0 | pancaupādānakkhandhā | grasping/craving of five aggregates |
| pañ̃ā | 6 | pangngā | wisdom |
| piti | 9 | peethi (preethi) | joy |
| pannindriya | 6 |  | wisdom faculty |
| paramatta | 0 | paramaththā | ultimate reality |
| pasāda rūpa | 9 | pasāda rūpa | sensitive matter (internal rūpa) |
| passaddhi | $\theta$ | passadhdhi | tranquility |
| pathavi | 6 |  | element of hardness |
| paṭicca | 9 | patichcha | bind to something willingly |
| paṭigha | 6 |  | aversion, dislike |
| pavutthi | 0 | pavuththi | during this life, current |
| peta (preta) | 6 | petā (pretha) | hungry ghost |
| phala | 0 |  | fruit, fruition |
| phassa | 9 |  | contact |
| puggala | 0 |  | individual |
| purisa | 6 |  | masculine |
| rāga | 9 | rāga | attachment to samsāra |
| rasa | 6 |  | taste |


| Pāli Word | Audio | Pronounciation | Meaning |
| :--- | :---: | :--- | :--- |
| rūpa | - | rūpa | matter (and energy) |
| rūpa kalapa | rūpa kalāpa | material group unit |  |
| rupavacara | rüpavāchara | belonging to rūpa loka |  |
| sadda | sadhdha | sound |  |
| sadharana | sādhārana | sadhdhā | universal, common |
| saddhā | faith (through knowledge and |  |  |
| understanding) |  |  |  |


| Pāli Word | Audio | Pronounciation | Meaning |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| sota | 9 | sotha | ear |
| Sotāpanna |  | Sothapanna | Stream Enterer (first stage of Nibbāna) |
| tanhā | $6$ | thanhā | attachment (bondage) due to greed, hate, or delusion |
| tejo | 6 | thãjo | heat element |
| thina | 0 | theena | sloth |
| uddhacca | 6 | udhdhachchā | tendency to be high-minded (restlessness) |
| upādāna | 0 | upādhāna | clinging, like to hold onto |
| upekkha | 6 |  | equanimity, neutrality |
| uppatthi | 0 | uppaththi | birth |
| vacī | $\theta$ | vachi | speech |
| vaṇṇa (varna) | 3 |  | color |
| vayama | $\theta$ | vayāma | effort |
| vāyo | 0 | vayo | fluidity |
| vedanā | 6 | vãdana | feeling |
| vicara | 0 | vichāra | sustained concentration on an object |
| vicikicchā | 6 | vichikichchā | acting without sati |
| vīmamisā | 0 | vīmamsā | investigation |
| vinnati | 8 | vingngāthi | intimation |
| viñ̃̄āṇa | 0 | vingngana | (defiled) consciousness |
| vipāka | 6 | vipāka | result |
| vipassana | 0 | vipassanā | insight (via analysis of parts) |
| virati | 9 | virathi | abstinence from indulgence |
| viriya | 0 |  | effort |
| visuddhi | 6 | visudhdhi | purification |
| vitakka | 0 | vithakka | initial application of the mind on an object |
| vithi | 9 | veethi | process (sequential) |


| Pāli Word | Audio | Pronounciation | Meaning |
| :--- | :---: | :--- | :--- |
| votthapana | $\ddots$ | voththapana | determining |
| vyāpāda | ® | vyāpāda | ill will, stronger than patịgha |

## $8.2 \quad$ Pāli Glossary - (A-K)

August 12, 2016; Revised May 27, 2017; February 19, 2020; May 29, 2022 (\#4 added)

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## Additional Pronunciation Keys:

"a" is pronounced like " $\mathbf{u}$ " in cut; "a" is pronounced like " $\mathbf{a}$ " in father

- " i " is pronounced like " i " in sit; ' T " is pronounced like "ee" in bee
- " u " is pronounced like " u " in "put"; " $\overline{\mathrm{u}}$ " is pronounced like "oo" in cool
- "o" is pronounced like "oe" in "Moe"; "e" is pronounced like "a" in pay
- "c" needs to be pronounced like "ch" as in "charm" or "chicago"
- "ñ" needs to be pronounced like "gn" in "signor"

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- We also have a Popup Pāli Glossary with Pronunciation, thanks to Mr. Seng Kiat Ng. If that GoldenDict dictionary is installed on your computer, you will be able to access this glossary from each post directly. Furthermore, it could provide translations from other online dictionaries as well.

3. Relevant posts on any of the words can be found by using the "Search" box on the top right.

| Pāli Word | Meaning | Audio |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| abhaya | "a" +'bhaya"; doing something to stop someone's fear | 3 |
| abhaya dāna | saving the life of a living being | 9 |
| abhijjhā | strong greed | 9 |
| abhiñ̃̃̄ | supermundane powers | 6 |
| abhisañkhāra | strong sankkhāra that lead to rebirths and strong vipāka | 3 |
| ādīnava | bad outcome: Assāda, Ādinava, Nissarana - Introduction | 8 |
| adhimokkha | arising to the top; reaching a high value | 0 |


| Pāli Word | Meaning | Audio |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| adhivāsana | things one gets used to based on sansāric habits; part of gathi | 6 |
| adinnādāna | stealing; taking something without permission | 0 |
| adosa | without hatred | 6 |
| ajjhatta | internal | 3 |
| ākāsa | space (the void in between rūpa) | 9 |
| ākāsānañcāyatana | frrst arūpa brahma realm | 0 |
| ākiñcaññāyatana | third arūpa brahma realm | 6 |
| akusala | immoral act | - |
| āhāra | nutrients (for body or mind) | 6 |
| ahetuka | without good roots | 0 |
| ahirika | shamelessness | 6 |
| akālika | remove defilements or timeless (no birth or death, i.e., Nibbāna) | 3 |
| alobha | without greed | 6 |
| āloka | light, dissociating from "this world" | 3 |
| āmisa | mundane (belonging to 31 realms) | 6 |
| amoha | without delusion; moral mindset | 3 |
| amurta | fine food (drink) of devas | 6 |
| Anāgāmī | Non-Returner (to the human world) | 0 |
| anāgata | future | 6 |
| ānāpāna | 7. What is Änapāna? | 3 |
| ānāpānasati | 6. Ānāpānasati Bhāvanā (Introduction) | 6 |
| anāriya | not Noble | 0 |


| Pāli Word | Meaning | Audio |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| anatoppa | fear of doing immoral deeds | $\bigcirc$ |
| anatta | not in-control, helpless | 0 |
| ānenjābhi saṅkhāra | Sañkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka | 6 |
| anicca | inability to maintain to one's satisfaction | 0 |
| Aniccatā | tendency to change unexpectedly; characteristic of a rūpa: Rūpa (Material Form) - Table | 6 |
| anidassana | Cannot be seen; can also mean pure as in anidassana viññāna | 0 |
| animisa | without pausing for even a moment: Animisa Locana Bodhi Poojā - A Prelude to Acts of Gratitude | 5 |
| añ̃amañña | depend on each other | $\theta$ |
| anantara | being in storage until retrieval (kamma vipāka) | 6 |
| anumodanā | accept pattidana (transfer of merits or sharing of merits) with joy | 5 |
| anupassanā | discard kileasa by contemplating with anicca, dukkha, anatta: see \#6 of 4. What do all these Different Meditation Techniques Mean? | 6 |
| anusaya | defilements arising from latent cravings (āsava) and kilesa | , |
| apacāyana | paying respects to those with higher virtues: Puñ̃na Kamma - Dāna, Silla, Bhāvanā | 6 |
| aparāpariya vedaniya | kamma vipāka that can materialize at any time in future | 0 |
| apāya | common term for four lowest realms | 6 |
| āpo | cohesive element | - |
| Appanā samādhi | almost at jhāna: What is Samādhi? - Three Kinds of Mindfulness | 6 |
| appaṇita | not to liking; dislikes | 0 |
| appatigha | cannot be grasped or touched | 6 |
| apuñ̃a | immoral | 9 |
| apuñ̃abhi sañkhāra | highly immoral saṅkhāra | 6 |
| Arahant | never to be born in any of the 31 realms | 0 |


| Pāli Word | Meaning | Audio |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| ārammaṇa | object of thought | 8 |
| Ariya | Noble person (Sotāpanna or above) | 0 |
| arūpa | without rūpa | 8 |
| asañ̃a | without perception; without sañ̃̄̄ | 0 |
| āsava =āsaya | deep-seated craving | $\bigcirc$ |
| āsavakkhaya ñāṇa | Knowledge of removing āsava: The Way to Nibbāna - Removal of Āsavas | 0 |
| āsevana | repeated practice; associate | 4 |
| asobhana | ugly or defiled (used mainly for cetasika) | 3 |
| asura | one of the four apāyā; beings there have large bodies and are inactive | 6 |
| assāda | enjoyment | 3 |
| atita | past | 8 |
| atta | opposite of anatta or eight | 3 |
| attha | opposite of anatta; perception that one has total control | 8 |
| avici | one of the niraya (hell) | 0 |
| avihimsā | non-aggressive | $\bigcirc$ |
| avinibbhoga | consituents not separable, as in a avinibbhoga rūpa kalapa | 3 |
| avyāpāda $=$ abyāpāda | not angry, kind | 6 |
| āyatana | an indriya becomes as āyatana: Sorting out Some Key Pāli Terms - Tanhā Lobha Dosa Moha etc | 0 |
| āyu | lifetime | 6 |
| avijjā | Ignorance of Tilakkhana | 3 |
| bahiddhā | external | 6 |
| bahijja | external | + |


| Pāli Word | Meaning | Audio |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| bala | power | $\bigcirc$ |
| bali | distort | 8 |
| bīa | seed | 8 |
| bhanga | dissolution; destruction | - |
| bhava | realm of existence | 0 |
| Bhaudhdhayā (Buddhist) | One striving to stop the rebirth process | $\bigcirc$ |
| bhāvanā | meditation, constant contemplation \& use | 6 |
| bhavañga | life continuum | 3 |
| bhaya | fear | 6 |
| Bhikkhu | Buddhist monk | $\theta$ |
| bodhicitta | a Mahāyāna term denoting "enlightenment-mind" | 8 |
| bojjhañga | bodhi anga or facilitating factor for Nibbāna | 0 |
| brahma | a being in rūpa or arūpa brahma realms | 8 |
| Buddha | Buddha Gotama |  |
| cakkhu | eye or seeing | 6 |
| cakkavāla | planetary system like our Solar system |  |
| cetanā | intention; but deeper: "Details of Kamma - Intention, Who Is Affected, Kamma Patha." | 8 |
| cetasika | mental factor | 9 |
| chanda | liking | 9 |
| citta | thought (pure thought) | 0 |
| cittānupassanā | doing anupassana via contemplating on thoughts | 8 |
| citta vithi | citta come in packets of a discrete number, a single citta does not arise | 0 |


| Pāli Word | Meaning | Audio |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| cutūpapāta ñāṇa | ability to see all previous births | 8 |
| cuti | death | 0 |
| cuti citta | moment of death | 8 |
| dāna | giving | $\cdots$ |
| dasa | ten | , |
| dasaka | decad; group of 10 |  |
| dassana | vision; but normally used for "comprehending" | 6 |
| dassanena pahātabba | removing (kilesa) via comprehension of Dhamma | 0 |
| desanā | verbal discourse | 6 |
| deva | a being in 6th-11 th realms |  |
| Dhamma | Buddha's teachings, phenomenon, mental object | 6 |
| dhammavicaya (sambojjhañga) | investigation of concepts like anicca | 0 |
| dhammānudhamm a patipadā | condition for attaining Sotāpanna stage: Four Conditions for Attaining Sotāpanna Magga/Phala | 6 |
| dhammānupassan $\bar{a}$ | doing anupassana via contemplating on Dhamma | 3 |
| dhātu | element | 6 |
| dhyāna (same as jhāna) | meditative state with rūpa loka or arūpa loka consciousness | 3 |
| ditta | observation | 6 |
| ditthi | view, wrong view unless specified | 0 |
| ditthhijukamma | "ditṭhi"+"uju"+"kamma" or getting rid of wrong views on kamma:Puñña Kamma - Dāna, Sīla, Bhāvanā | 6 |
| domanassa | mental agony, displeasure; not bodily suffering | 3 |
| dosa | hatred | 6 |
| dosakkhaya | dosa + khaya or removal of hate | C |


| Pāli Word | Meaning | Audio |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| dugathi | "du" + "gathi" or habits that can lead to bad rebirths | 6 |
| dukha | suffering | 0 |
| dukkha | suffering \& it can be stopped from arising | 6 |
| dvāra | door (to the external world) | 0 |
| ehipassiko | a quality of Dhamma, removing defilements in real time: Supreme Qualities of Buddha, Dhamma, Sañgha | 6 |
| ekaggatā | one-pointedness (of the mind) | $\theta$ |
| gandha | smell, odor | 8 |
| gandhabba | Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya) | $\theta$ |
| gati | character, habits | 6 |
| ghāna | nose or smelling | 3 |
| gotrabhu | change of lineage ("gotra") when getting close to a jhāna | 6 |
| hadaya vatthu | seat of mind (in the gandhabbayā) | 0 |
| hetu | root cause | 6 |
| hiri | shamefulness for doing akusala kamma | 0 |
| iddhi | special powers or knowledges | 6 |
| iddhipāda | means to special (mental) accomplishment | 3 |
| indriya | one of the six sense faculties when used without lobha, dosa, moha | 6 |
| issa (irisiyā in Sinhala) | jealousy | $\bigcirc$ |
| Itthi (sthree in Sinhala) | feminine | 6 |
| jarā | getting old or weak | $\theta$ |
| Jaratā | one of 28 rūpa: Rūpa (Material Form) | 6 |
| jāti | birth of a living being OR birth of anything | 0 |


| Pāli Word | Meaning | Audio |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| javana | those citta with which saṅkhāra committed or kamma vipāka generated: Javana of a Citta - The Root of Mental Power | 6 |
| jhāna (same as dhyana) | meditative state with rūpa loka or arūpa loka consciousness | 0 |
| jivhā | tongue (more accurately jivha indriya) OR taste | 9 |
| jīvita | life: jivita indriya maintains life | 0 |
| Jivitindriya | one of the 7 universal cetasika: Cetasika (Mental Factors) OR one of the 28 rūpa: Rūpa (Material Form) | 6 |
| kabaḷ̂kāra | one of the 4 āhāra: Āhāra (Food) in Udayavaya Nāñ | 0 |
| kappa (kalpa in Sinhala) | time duration of an entity: kappa of a human is about 100 years; mahā kappa is lifetime of the universe | 6 |
| kalyāṇa mittā (or mitrā in Sinhala) | Noble friend: Four Conditions for Attaining Sotāpanna Magga/Phala | $\bigcirc$ |
| kāmacchanda | greed for things in kamaloka | 9 |
| kāma loka | first 11 realms with five physical senses | 0 |
| kāma rāga | attachment to sense pleasures in kamaloka | 9 |
| kāmāvacara | belonging to kamaloka | $\theta$ |
| kāmesumicchācār $\bar{a}$ | immoral ways of enjoying sense pleasures: The Five Precepts - What the Buddha Meant by Them | 6 |
| kamma | action, deed | $\theta$ |
| kammanta | actions as in sammā kammanta | $\cdots$ |
| kammatthaña | meditation verses or procedures | 0 |
| kandha | heap, pile, or aggregate | 6 |
| karunā | compassion in the suffering of others | 3 |
| kasiṇa | meditation object in anāriya jhāna (eg. a colored disk) | 6 |
| kāya | pertaining to the body or action | 0 |
| kaya | physical or mental body | 9 |
| kāyānupassanā | doing anupassana via contemplating on the bodily actions | $\cdots$ |


| Pāli Word | Meaning | Audio |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| khaṇika samādhi | What is Samādhi? - Three Kinds of Mindfuiness | 9 |
| khaya | cutting off or gradually reduce | C |
| khaṇa | moment, sub-moment | 9 |
| kriyā | action, deed |  |

4. Anyone can download the audio files here:
"WebLink: GoogleDrive: Pāli Word Pronunciation - Audio Files"

### 8.3 Pāli Glossary - (L-Z)

August 12, 2016; Revised May 27, 2017; February 19, 2020; May 29, 2022 (\#4 added)

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| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| lobha | excess greed: Lobha, Rāga and Kāmaccanda, Kāmarāga | 0 |
| lahutā | lightness (e.g., kāya lahutā is lightness in body) | 6 |
| lakkhaṇa | characteristc of | 0 |
| loka | realm or world depending on the context | 9 |
| lokiya | belonging to this world of 31 realms | 0 |
| lokuttara | beyond this world of 31 realms, transcendental | 8 |
| macchariya | hiding wealth due to extreme greed | 9 |


| Pāli Word | Meaning | Audio |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| magga | path; procedure | 6 |
| mahā | large or important | 0 |
| māna | arrogance, self-admiration | 6 |
| manasikāra | memory. Details at: Citta and Cetasika - How Viññāna (Consciousness) Arises | 0 |
| mano | mind | 6 |
| mano sañcetanā | vedana $\bar{a}$, sañ̃̄ $\bar{a}$ that arise due to one's gati | $\theta$ |
| manodhatu | mind element | 6 |
| manodvāra | mind door to nāmaloka; see, Our Two Worlds: Material and Immaterial | 0 |
| manodvāravajjana | a citta coming to the mind door as in manodvāravajjana citta | 9 |
| manussa | human being | 9 |
| marana | death (death of a physical body is not necessarily the end of human bhava; see, "Antarābhava and Gandhabba" | 6 |
| mettā | kindness. Has two meanings: "Ariya Mettā Bhāvanā" | 9 |
| micchā ditṭhi | wrong views; see. "Wrong Views (Micchā Ditthi) - A Simpler Analysis" | 6 |
| middha | lethargic mind | 2 |
| moha | delusion; mind totally covered; see, "Lobha, Dosa, Moha versus Rāga, Patigha, Avijijā" | 6 |
| mohakkhaya | moha + khaya, removing delusion | , |
| muditā | joy in the success of others | 6 |
| mudutā | malleability; e.g., kāya midutā | 9 |
| mūla | root (usually in root cause) | 6 |
| musāvāda | lies, trying to deceive: The Five Precepts - What the Buddha Meant by Them | $\theta$ |
| muta | combined word for smelling, tasting, and touching | 6 |
| nāma | name, mental | 0 |


| Pāli Word | Meaning | Audio |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| nāmarūpa | name and form OR mental image of a nāma and rūpa | 6 |
| namaskāraya (Sinhala) | Namaskāraya - Homage to the Buddha | 6 |
| ñāṇa | knowledge | 6 |
| nātha | with refuge, opposite of anātha | 3 |
| nekkhamma | relinquish sense pleasures: Difference Between Giving Up Valuables and Losing Interest in Worthless | 6 |
| neva saññā nā saññāyatana | fourth arūpa brahma realm | 0 |
| Nibbāna | stopping the rebirth process: Nibbāna | 6 |
| nibbatti lakkhaṇa | Nibbatti Lakkhana in Udayavaya Ñāna | 3 |
| nicca | having total control, that ability | 6 |
| niddesa | short description: Sutta Interpretation - Uddesa, Niddesa, Patiniddesa | 0 |
| nimitta | sign; something resembling | 6 |
| nirāmisa | neutral thoughts without sense cravings | $\theta$ |
| nirodha | nir + udā or stop from arising | 6 |
| nissarana | willingly give up assāda: Assāda, Ādīnava, Nissaraña - Introduction | 0 |
| Nivana (Sinhala) |  | 6 |
| nīvaraṇa | hindrance; covered mind | $\theta$ |
| niraya | hell | 8 |
| niyama (or niyāma) | law of nature | $\theta$ |
| niyata | permanent, fixed | 6 |
| ojā | nutritive essence | 3 |
| oḷārika | rough, condensed | 6 |
| opapātika | instantaneous and fully-formed birth as in deva and brahma realms | 0 |


| Pāli Word | Meaning | Audio |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| pabhassara | devoid of greed, hate, and ignorance; e.g., pabhassara citta | 9 |
| paccayā | condition | $\bigcirc$ |
| paccuppanna | conditional arising; present moment arising due to conditions | $\theta$ |
| pahāna | abandon; remove | 3 |
| pahātabba | removal | 8 |
| pakiṇ̣aka | particulars or occasionals as in pakiṇ̣aka cetasika: Cetasika - Connection to Gati | $\bigcirc$ |
| pān̄ātipātā | killing a living being: The Five Precepts - What the Buddha Meant by Them | 6 |
| panca | five | $\theta$ |
| pañcadvāra | five sense doors | - |
| pañcadvāra <br> vajjana cittā | Citta Vithi - Processing of Sense Inputs | 0 |
| pañcakkhandha | five aggregates | 6 |
| pañcanīvaraṇa | five hindrances that cover the mind |  |
| pañcaupādānakkh andha | grasping/craving of the five aggregates: Pañcaupādānakkhandha - It is All Mental | 6 |
| paṇita | likable or good |  |
| paññā | wisdom; comprehension of Tilakkhaṇ | 6 |
| pāpa kammā | immoral actions |  |
| para loka (paralowa in sinhala) | a human or animal gandhabba lives in para loka until a womb becomes available: Hidden World of the Gandhabba: Netherworld (Paraloka) | 6 |
| pāramitā | strive through many rebirths: Paramita and Niyata Vivarana - Myths or Realities? | 0 |
| paribramana | rotating around another body | 8 |
| perideva | lamentation, especially upon remembering a past mishap | c |
| parivajjana | staying clear of bad influences: The Sotāpanna Stage | C |


| Pāli Word | Meaning | Audio |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| piti | joy | 6 |
| paññindriya | wisdom faculty | 6 |
| parāmatta | ultimate reality | $\theta$ |
| pharusāvācā | harsh speech: Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala) | 6 |
| pasāda rūpā | sensitive matter (five internal senses; not physical senses): Brain - Interface between Mind and Body | 0 |
| passaddhi | tranquility | 6 |
| pathavi | element of hardness | 0 |
| pațicca | get bonded to something willingly | 9 |
| patigha | aversion, dislike | 0 |
| patikūla <br> manasikāra <br> bhāvanā | 4. What do all these Different Meditation Techniques Mean? | 6 |
| paṭipadā | a procedure; way of living, like in majjima patipāda | 3 |
| paṭiniddesa | detailed description: Sutta Interpretation - Uddesa, Niddesa, Patiniddesa | 6 |
| paṭisandhi | Grasping a new existence (bhava) | $\theta$ |
| patisevana | good associations as in pațisevana pahātabba: The Sotāpanna Stage | 6 |
| pattānumodanā | Transfer of Merits (Pattidāna) - How Does it Happen? | 0 |
| pattidāna | transfer of merits: Transfer of Merits (Pattidāna) - How Does it Happen? | 6 |
| pavutthi | during this life, current | $\theta$ |
| pịlama (peleema in Sinhala) | incessant stress, agitation: Anicca - The Incessant Distress ("Pilana") | 6 |
| peta (pretha) | hungry ghost; one of the four apāyā | $\theta$ |
| phala (pala in Sinhala) | fruit, fruition | 6 |
| phassa | sense contact; most times it is defiled or samphassa: Difference between Phassa and Samphassa | 0 |


| Pāli Word | Meaning | Audio |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| pisuñāvācā | slandering: Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala) | 6 |
| photṭhabba | "poththa" + "abba", where "poththa" is skin: sense of touch | $\bigcirc$ |
| pubbe | previous | 6 |
| pubbenivāsānussa <br> ti ñāṇa | see \#12 of Antarābhava and Gandhabba | $\bigcirc$ |
| puggala | individual | 6 |
| puñña kriyā | deed that makes one's heart joyful | 0 |
| purisa | masculine | 9 |
| rāga | attachment to the 31 realms: Lobha, Rāga and Kāmaccanda, Kāmarāga | 0 |
| rāgakkhaya | rāga + khaya: removal of attachment to the 31 realms | 6 |
| rasa | taste | 0 |
| rūpa | matter AND energy | 8 |
| rūpa kalāpa | elementary material group unit: Rūpa Kalāpa (Grouping of Matter) | $\theta$ |
| rupavacara | belonging to rūpa loka | 6 |
| sabba | all | $\theta$ |
| sacca | truth, as in a Noble Truth | 6 |
| sadda | sound | - |
| saddhā | faith (through knowledge and understanding) | 6 |
| sahajāta | born together | 3 |
| sahetuka | with good roots as in dvihetuka and tihetuka; if no good roots it is an ahetuka birth | 6 |
| Sakadāgāmī | Once-Returner (one more rebirth in kāma loka) | 0 |
| salāyatana | six sense bases for a normal human | 9 |
| samādhi | concentration on a good or bad mindset: What is Samādhi? - Three Kinds of Mindfulness | $\bigcirc$ |


| Pāli Word | Meaning | Audio |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| samanantara | matching with anantara: Anantara and Samanantara Paccayā | 6 |
| samāpatti | different from jhāna, see: Citta Vithi - Processing of Sense Inputs | 0 |
| sammā | quench (defilements): What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Samsāra) | 6 |
| sammappadhāna | four main efforts to stop "san" from arising: Two Versions of 37 Factors of Enlightenment | 6 |
| samatha | calming the mind | 6 |
| sāmisa | citta with kilesa or akusala cetasika | 0 |
| sampajāna | sorting defiled thoughts: Satipatthāna Sutta - Structure | 9 |
| sampappalāpa | frivolous talk: Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala) | $\theta$ |
| samphassa | "san" + "phassa": Difference between Phassa and Samphassa | 6 |
| sampaticcana | where "gati" are incorporated into a citta vithi: Citta Vithi - Processing of Sense Inputs | 9 |
| sampayutta | together and inseparable, like a dye dissolved in water | 6 |
| samudaya | arising due to "san": "san" + "udaya" | 0 |
| samuppāda | birth of a similar kind: sama + uppada | 6 |
| samivega or sanvega | "san" + "vega": javana power in a citta due to "san": see \#9 of Javana of a Citta - The Root of Mental Power | 0 |
| san | San | 6 |
| sandit!thiko | "san" + "diṭthi" or enable seeing "san": Supreme Qualities of Buddha, Dhamma, Sañgha | 0 |
| sañkappa | thoughts, ideas | 6 |
| sañkhāra | actions leading to defilements, habits | 0 |
| sañkhata <br> (sankata <br> Sinhala) | arisen by conditions | 6 |
| saññã | perception, identification | 9 |
| samısāra or sansāra | beginningless rebirth process: $\qquad$ Samsāra) | 6 |


| Pāli Word | Meaning | Audio |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| samsāric | related to the rebirth process | 0 |
| santati | one of the 28 types of rūpa: Rūpa (Material Form) | 9 |
| samivara | "san" + "vara" or stop "san" by moral behavior: What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Samisāra) | $\bigcirc$ |
| samivarena | via sanvara as in sanvarena pahatabba: The Sotāpanna Stage | 9 |
| samivega | "san" + "vega": enhanced javana of a citta due to "san", i.e., highly emotional | 9 |
| sapta or saptha | seven | 6 |
| sāsana | Buddha sāsana is Ministry of the Buddha | C |
| sasankhārika | immoral citta arising due to shrunken mind (thīna middha) | 6 |
| sāsava | with craving | 0 |
| satara (in Sinhala) | four | 6 |
| sakkāya diṭ̣hi (or sathkāya diṭ̣hi) | perception that things in this world are worth striving for: How do we Decide which View is Wrong View (Ditthi)? | 9 |
| sati | in the mindset of anicca, dukkha, anatta: Satipatthāna - Introduction | 6 |
| satipatṭhāna | maintain sati: Mahā Satipatthāna Sutta | 3 |
| santiraṇa | where a decision is made in a citta vithi: Citta Vithi - Processing of Sense Inputs | 6 |
| sanyojana or samyojana | bind to defilements or "san" | 0 |
| sila | virtue, moral conduct | 6 |
| silabbata paramasa | perception that Nibbāna can be attained via just obeying set precepts or procedures | 6 |
| sekha | trainee (the three stages below the Arahant stage) | 8 |
| sobhana | good, likable, moral | $\theta$ |
| soka | sorrow due to personal loss | 6 |
| somanassa | with joy | $\theta$ |
| sota | Two possible meanings: ear and Noble Eightfold Path | 9 |


| Pāli Word | Meaning | Audio |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Sotāpanna | Stream Enterer (first stage of Nibbāna) | $\bigcirc$ |
| Suddhatṭhaka | smallest material element: The Origin of Matter - Suddhatthaka | 6 |
| suddhāvāsa | Brahma realms reserved for the Anāgāmīs | $\theta$ |
| sugati | "su" + "gathi" or moral habits/behavior; also good realms: Sansāric Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Āsava) | 6 |
| sukha | bodily pleasure, like with a massage; somannasa is mental | . |
| sukuma | fine; not coarse | 6 |
| suññatā | emptiness: What is Sunyata or Sunnata (Emptiness)? | 0 |
| suta | sound | 6 |
| sutta | discourse in the Tipitaka | 0 |
| suva | as in Nivan suva: | - |
| taṇhā | attachment (bondage) due to greed, hate, or delusion | 3 |
| tatramajjhattatā | neutrality of mind; not upekkhā: Cetasika - Connection to Gati | 6 |
| tejo | heat element | 3 |
| Thero | One who has attained Nibbāna; nowadays it is used for non-Arahants bhikkhus too | 6 |
| thīna | shrinking of the mind, not alert | 3 |
| tuccha | lowly (behavior) | 6 |
| tiparivatṭa | Three rounds of bondage to this world. |  |
| tihetuka | patisandhi with three good roots | 6 |
| tilakkhana | Three characteristics of the 31 realms: Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta | 3 |
| Tipitaka | three pitaka: sutta, vinaya, abhidhamma: Preservation of the Dhamma | 6 |
| tisarana | refuge in Buddha, Dhamma, Sanghha: Tisarana Vandana and Its Effects on One's Gati | 0 |
| tivijjā | Three special knowledges of the Buddha: The Way to Nibbāna - Removal of Āsavā | 6 |


| Pāli Word | Meaning | Audio |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| uccheda ditṭhi | wrong view that death of the physical body is the end of a living being, i.e., disbelief in rebirth process | 0 |
| udayavaya | arising and destruction of a sankhata (sankata in Sinhala): Udayavaya Nāna | 6 |
| udayavaya or udayabbaya ñāṇa | Udayavaya Ñāna | 0 |
| uddhacca | tendency to be high-minded (restlessness) | 6 |
| uddesa | very short description: Sutta Interpretation - Uddesa, Niddesa, Patimiddesa | 3 |
| upacāra | close to | 6 |
| upacāra samādhi | samādhi close to jhānic state | 0 |
| upādāna | clinging, like to hold onto | 6 |
| upekkha | equanimity, neutrality | $\theta$ |
| uppatti | birth | 6 |
| utu | natural change kammaja and cittaja energies to rūpa | 0 |
| utuja rūpa | rūpa produced via the transformation of kammaja and cittaja rūpa | 6 |
| vacī | speech | 0 |
| vaṇna (varna in sinhala) | color | 6 |
| vaya | destruction or deviating to immorality | 0 |
| vāyāma | effort | 6 |
| vāyo | element of movement, motion | 3 |
| vedanā | feeling or more precisely "sensing of an event": Vedanā (Feelings) | 9 |
| vedanānupassanā | anupassanā on feelings: Satipatthāna - Introduction | 0 |
| veyyāvacca | paying homage to and taking care of Holy places: Puñ̃̃a Kamma - Dāna, Sila, Bhāvanā | 6 |
| vibhava | disbelief in rebirth: Kāma Tanhā, Bhava Tanhā, Vibhava Tanhā | 0 |
| vicāra | sustained concentration on a thought object | 9 |


| Pāli Word | Meaning | Audio |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| vicikicchā | acting without sati; uncertainty of what to do; doing inappropriate things | C |
| vipassanā | insight meditation with and for clear vision: $\qquad$ Meditation Techniques Mean? | 8 |
| vimāna | residence, normally of a deva | 0 |
| vimansā | contemplation, investigation | 6 |
| vimutti | release (from the rebirth process) | C |
| vinaya | rules of discipline for bhikkhus: Kamma, Debt, and Meditation | 6 |
| viññānañcāyatana | second arūpi brahma realm: 31 Realms of Existence | 0 |
| viññata | comprehension via viñ̃āṇa | 8 |
| viñ̃̃ati | intimation. For example, kāya viññati is express intention via body movement. | 0 |
| viññāṇa | defiled consciousness | - |
| viññānañcāyatana | second arūpa brahma realm: 31 Realms of Existence | $\theta$ |
| vinodanā | in vinodanaā pahatabba: The Sotāpanna Stage | 8 |
| vipāka | result (of a kamma) | 0 |
| viparināma | unexpected change | - |
| vipassanā | removing defilements via insight of Tilakkhaṇa | - |
| vippayutta | appear together, but separable; like a current in a wire | 6 |
| virati | lose craving for indulgence | 3 |
| viriya | effort | 6 |
| visuddhi | purification | $\bigcirc$ |
| vitakka | initial application of the mind on an object | 6 |
| vithi | street; but in a citta vithi means a "packet of thoughts" with a certain number of citta | 0 |
| votthapana | determining (citta) | 6 |


| Pāli Word | Meaning | Audio |
| :--- | :--- | :---: |
| vyāpāāa or <br> byāpāda | ill will, stronger than paṭigha | 0 |
| yojanā | distance of about 7 miles | C |
| yoniso <br> manasikāra | ability to see consequences of one's actions for future rebirths: Four <br> Conditions for Attaining Sotāpanna Magga/Phala | 0 |

4. Anyone can download the audio files here:
"WebLink: GoogleDrive: Pāli Word Pronunciation - Audio Files"

### 8.4 List of "San" Words and Other Pāli Roots

June 29, 2017; revised November 9, 2018

1. Pāli is a phonetic language. It does not have its own alphabet. Tipitaka was originally written down in Pāli with the Sinhala alphabet.

- Pāli verses are composed for ease of oral transmission. Tipiṭaka was orally transmitted faithfully for several hundred years.
- So, in many cases, root words are hidden in combined words in verses that were composed to rhyme better for easy oral transmission.

2. Rather than trying to find roots in Sanskrit, that is the way to find the roots. As I explained with evidence from the Tipitaka, the Buddha prohibited the use of Sanskrit words, or even to translate the Tipiṭaka to Sanskrit; see, "Preservation of the Buddha Dhamma."

- That is because despite some similarities, Sanskrit many words were composed to sound more "impressive", without paying attention to embedded meanings.
- For example, Pratītyasamutpāda is the Sanskrit term for Pațicca Samuppāda. Pratītyasamutpāda sounds impressive but the meaning is not clear at all.
- On the other hand, it is clear in pati + icca leading to sama + uppāda; see, "Paticca Samuppāda "Pati+ichcha"+"Sama+uppāda."

3. Pali words are combined in ways to rhyme better. By finding key root-words embedded in such "combined words", one can easily figure out the meaning.

- "yadaniccam tam dukkham, yam dukkham tadanatt $\vec{a} "$ verse appears in many sutt $\bar{a}$.
- In order to understand it, we need to "expand it" or "unfold it": "yad aniccam tam dukkham, yam dukkham tad anattā."
- Now the meaning becomes clear: "anicca nature leads to dukkha, dukkha nature leads to anatta nature"; see, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta - Wrong Interpretations."

4. The following are some examples of combination of words to make a verse rhyme better for oral transmission.

Naidham = na idham or "not the case."
Ayamantimā $j \bar{a} t i=$ ayam + antima $+j \bar{a} t i$ or "my last birth."
Nūppajjati $=n a+$ uppajjati: "will not arise."
Cittappasāda $=$ citta + pasāda; note the two p 's in the combined word that allow it to rhyme better.
Similarly in: Rūpakkhandha = rūpa khandha: "rūpa aggregate."
Aveccappasāda $=$ ava icca pasāda or "faith that leads to overcoming taṇhā (attachment)."
Buddha $=$ bhava $+u d d h a$ : one who figured out how to stop existences (bhava) from arising.
Bhavañga $=$ bhava + ang $a$; intrinsic aspect of bhava .
Sakkāya $=$ sath $+k \bar{a} y a:$ good collections usually referring to the five aggregates. Sakkāya dittthi is the view that the five aggregates should be embraced.

Anāpāna $=\bar{a} n a+\bar{a} p \bar{a} n a:$ : 'taking in" and "putting out."
Note the pronunciation of the following words sort of backwards to rhyme better:

- Anāgāmi = na āgāmi: not coming back (in reference to not to come back to kāma loka for a person who has attained the Anāgāmi stage of Nibbāna.
- Anatimāna $=n a+$ atimāna: atimāna is "high-mindedness" and anatimāna is opposite or "humble."

5. Just by knowing what is meant by the root "san," many Päli words can be understood easily; see, "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansara (or Samsara)."

- Note that some words are written and pronounced with emphasis on " m " rather than " n ", because it rhymes better that way; a good example is sainsāra (saysära) which can be written and pronounced either way.
- On the other hand, samm $\bar{a}$ comes from "san" + " $m \bar{a}$, " but always pronounced as "samm $\bar{a}$," because it rhymes easier that way; eg., sammā ditṭhi, sammā sañkappa, etc.
- It must be kept in mind that "san" has various levels. First one needs to remove 'san' that lead to immoral activities that can lead to births in the ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$; after one becomes a Sot $\bar{a} p a n n a$, one should strive to eliminate "san" involving sense pleasures; after becoming an Anāgāmi, the goal is to remove "san" associated with rūpa and arūpa jhāna. I only stated "sense pleasures" in the Table.

6. I plan to add another table for Pāli words with a few more key "roots."

## Pāli Words with "San" Root

| No | Pāli Word | Roots | Meaning of added word | Meaning of whole word |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 1 | Sammā | san + mā | mā means to "remove" | associated with removing "san" |
| 2 | sammāpaṭipatti | san + mā +patipatti | patipatti is a process | method or effort to remove "san" |
| 3 | sammāvimutti | $\operatorname{san}+m \bar{a}+$ <br> vimutti | vimutti is complete release | Arahant phala; Nibbāna |
| 4 | Sammanti | san + mā | like gaccā to gaccanti | attaining peacefulness by removing "san" |
| 5 | samantano | san + anta; rhymes like samananta | anta is end | a process that gets rid of "san" |
| 6 | Sammā ditṭhi | Sammā + <br> diṭ̣hi | ditthhi is vision (here to see Tilakkhaṇa) | clear vision to see danger of (and how to remove) "san" |
| 7 | Sammā sañkappa | Sammā + sañkappa | sañkappa are conscious/unconscious thoughts | thoughts to removing "san" |
| 8 | Sammā vācā | Sammā + vācā | vācā is conscious thoughts/speech | speech to remove "san" |
| 9 | Sammā <br> kammanta | Sammā + <br> kammanta | kammanta is actions | bodily actions to remove "san" |
| 10 | Sammā ajīva | Sammā + ajīva | ajīva is way one lives | living style to remove "san" |
| 11 | Sammā vāyāma | Sammā + <br> vāyāma | vāyāma is effort | effort to remove "san" |
| 12 | Sammā sati | Sammā + sati | sati is mindfulness (about Tilakkhaṇa) | mindfulness to remove "san" |
| 13 | Sammā samādhi | Sammā + samādhi | samādhi is the state of equanimity (sama + adhi) | state of samādhi resulting from removing "san" |


| No | Pāli Word | Roots | Meaning of added word | Meaning of whole word |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 14 | Sambhava | san + bhava | bhava is existence | existence due to "san" |
| 15 | Sambuddha | $\begin{aligned} & \text { san + bhava }+ \\ & \text { uddha } \end{aligned}$ | uddha is rooting out | one who rooted out existence in 31 realms |
| 16 | Sambodhi |  |  | state attained by a sambuddha; Nibbāna |
| 17 | Sambhūta | san + bhūta | bhūta refers to satara mahā bhūta | creation of bhüta via "san" in the mind; The Origin of Matter Suddhatthaka |
| 18 | Sammapañña | sammā + pañña | pañ̃a is wisdom | wisdom to see the way to remove "san" |
| 19 | Sammā- <br> Sambodhi <br> (Sammā- <br> Sambuddha) |  | Emphasizing the achievement of sambodhi on one's own | reserved for the Buddhas |
| 20 | Sammatta | san+mā+atta | atta means the "truths leading to sammā" | Sammatta niyama is a knowledge of a Sotāpanna. |
| 21 | Sambojjanga | san <br> +bodhi+añga; rhymes as sambojjanga | "anga" means factors | Factors that lead to Sambodhi |
| 22 | Sampajāna (Sampajanna) | san + pajāna | pajāna is to comprehend | to figure out defilements (san) |
| 23 | sammappadhā na | $\operatorname{san}+m \bar{a}+$ <br> padhāna | mā is to remove; padhāna means "first" | first to do to remove "san" |
| 24 | Sambandha | san + bandha | bandha is to bind, associate with | bind with someone/something with "san" |
| 25 | sambhāvitā | san + bhāvitā | bhāvitā is to use | engage in "san" or sense pleasures |
| 26 | Sambheda | san + bheda | bheda means to quarrel | fighting over pleasurable things or "san" |
| 27 | Sambhita | san + bhita | bhita means to terrify | "san" leading to terror (in mind or in future births) |
| 28 | Sambhoga | san + bhoga | bhoga means pleasurable things, especially food | sense pleasures |
| 29 | Sambhunjati | san + bhunja | bhunja means to eat or consume | engage in sense pleasures |
| 30 | sammoha | san + moha | moha is delusion | extreme delusion |
| 31 | sampādesi/ sampādeta | san + pādesi | pādesi is to sort out and see | to clarify what is "san", as in "vaya dhammā sañkhāra, appamādena sampādeta". |
| 32 | sampahanseti | san +pahāna | pahāna is to remove | to remove "san" |
| 33 | sampañño | san + pañño | pañño means with wisdom, possessive of paññā | attained wisdom to see 'san' |
| 34 | Sampajāna | san + pajāna | pajāna is to clarify | sort out or to clarify "san" |


| No | Pāli Word | Roots | Meaning of added word | Meaning of whole word |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 35 | sampayoga | san + payoga | payoga is a clever plan to get something done | plan to access a pleasurable thing |
| 36 | Samphassa | san + phassa | contact with san (in the mind) | Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways |
| 37 | Sampassati | san + passati | passati means to comprehend | comprehend "san' |
| 38 | sankilittha or samikilitṭha | san + kilittha | kilitha is to defile | making mind defiled by adding "san" |
| 39 | sankilesa or samkilesa | san + kilesa | kilesa are defilements | things that defile the mind |
| 40 | Samsāra (Samisāra) | san + sāra | sāra means "good" | perception that san (things in this world) are good. |
| 41 | Sanseva <br> (Samseva) | san + seva | seva means to "associate" | to indulge in worldly pleasures |
| 42 | Samucceda (as in samucceda pahāna) | san + ucceda | ucceda means to "remove from the roots"; pahāna is remove | samucceda pahāna means to "get rid of permanently" |
| 43 | samyoga or sanyoga | san + yoga | yoga is to bind | bound with "san" (to this world) |
| 44 | samyojanā or sanyojanā | san + yo +ja | "yo' is to bind; "ja" is to produce | factors that leads to bonds to rebirth process |
| 45 | samudaya | san + udaya | udaya is to arise | arising due to "san" |
| 46 | Samutthāna | san + utthāna | utthāna means "where it arises" | Samutthāna citta is same as cittaja; where "san" originates (mind) |
| 47 | samvāsa or sanvāsa | san + vāsa | vāsa live with | live together; sexual intercourse |
| 48 | Samvara (Sanvara) | san + vara | vara means to stop, avoid | moral behavior |
| 49 | Samvaddha | san + vaddha | vaddha is to "grow" | to add "san", i.e., defilements |
| 50 | Samvannanā | san + vannanā | vannanā is to praise | to praise immoral acts |
| 51 | Samvattana <br> (Samvattati) | san + vattana | vattana is to "drop" | aiding in removing "san" |
| 52 | samvedanā or sanvedanā | san + vedanā | vedanā is to feel | feelings due to "san": samphassa jā vedanā |
| 53 | samividhāna or sanvidhāna | san + vidhāna | vidhāna means ordering | giving orders, organize (normally used mundanely) |
| 54 | samisaraṇa or sansaraṇa | san + sarana | sarana means move around, travel | wandering in samsāra |
| 55 | Samyutta (as in Samyutta Nikāya) | san + yutta | yutta means "contains" | Suttā in the Samyutta Nikāya explain "san" terms |
| 56 | Sancetanā | san + cetanā | cetanā is intention (in a thought) | defiled thoughts |


| No | Pāli Word | Roots | Meaning of added word | Meaning of whole word |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 57 | sanditthika | san + ditṭhi | ditṭhi is seeing, vision | seeing "san" with Buddha Dhamma |
| 58 | Sangāyanā | san + gāyanā | gāyanā is to recite | Buddhist Council where suttā describing "san" are recited. |
| 59 | Sanga | san + ga | ga is to attach, | attach to "san" |
| 60 | Sangati | san + gati | gati is character, habit | bad character/habits |
| 61 | Sañgha | san + gha | gha is to remove | Those who have removed "san" belong to Sanhga; Nobles or Ariyā, but usu. include bhikkhus |
| 62 | Sāṅghika | possessive of Sañgha |  | offered to Sañgha |
| 63 | Sangita (Sangeetha) | san + gita | gita is a poem, song | music that bend mind towards sense pleasures |
| 64 | sankalpana or sañkappa | san + kalpana | kalpnana means conscious thoughts | defiled thoughts |
| 65 | sankhitta | san + kitta | kitta is action (kriya) | anything done with 'san' (defilements) in mind |
| 66 | Sansun | san + sûn (û <br> rhymes like <br> put) | sûn means to destroy | calming the mind via removing "san" |
| 67 | Sanvara | san + vara | vara is to stay away from | discipline via staying away from "san", i.e., moral behavior |
| 68 | sanvega or samvega | san + vega | vega is speed or rapidity | enhanced javana of a citta due to "san", i.e., highly emotional |
| 69 | saṅkhāra (should really be sankāra) | san + kāra | kāra is action (all actions are initiated via thoughts) | Sañkhāra - What It Really Means |
| 70 | Sankata | san + kata | kata is a result | produced via sañkhāra; anything in this world |
| 71 | Sansāra <br> (Samisāra) | San + Sāra | Sāra is good, beneficial | What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Samisāra) |
| 72 | Santāpa | san + tāpa | tāpa is heat | heating of the mind due to "san" |
| 73 | Santutti (or <br> Santhutti) | san + thutti | thutti is to remove: Arogya Parama Labha.. | ease of mind when "san" removed; but commonly used to indicate happiness |

## The 89 (121) Types of Citta

Revised: October 29, 2015; August 31, 2017; June 3, 2018; July 31, 2018; August 28, 2022

## Citta for Kāma loka (in the $\mathbf{1 1}$ sense realms) - $\mathbf{5 4}$ in all

There are three main types of citta here: The differentiation is based on whether they have immoral roots (lobha, dosa, moha), kammically moral roots (alobha, adosa, amoha), or are kammically neutral, i.e., no roots.

- 12 immoral citta: 8 with lobha roots; 2 with dosa roots; 2 with moha roots. All ten immoral acts (dasa akusala) are done with these 12 types of citt $\bar{a}$. Because of the 12 immoral cittā, seven rootless (ahetuka) vipāka citttā can arise in the future. Thus, altogether there are 19 cittā in this category.
- Eight moral cittā: four with all three moral roots and 4 with two moral roots (lacking in wisdom). They can give rise to two types of vipāka citta: eight vipāka cittā with no roots and eight vipāka citta with moral roots (four of them have all three moral roots, and the other four are lacking in wisdom). Thus 24 types of citta are mentioned here, of which 16 have moral roots, and eight are rootless (ahetuka).
- When these same eight moral citta arise in Arahants, they are called kiriya citta or functional citta. They have the same moral roots as the eight moral citta mentioned above but do not have any kammic potential or kammic consequences.
- All those citta with moral roots (8 kiriya cittā for Arahants and 16 for others) are called sobhana (beautiful) citta.
- Finally, three types of kiriya citta arise in citta vithi: they are neither kamma nor kamma vipāka. These are the htree kiriya citta without any roots, and thus are rootless (ahetuka) citta. Two of these perform functions of (i) five-sense-door adverting consciousness (pañcadvārāvajjana citta) and the votthapana citta, and (ii) mind-door-adverting consciousness (manodvārāvajjana citta). (iii) The third one arises in only Arahants (when they smile about sense-sphere phenomena).
- Note that none of the seven akusala vipāka citta has roots. Also, eight kusala vipāka citta associated with pavutti vipāka (i.e, not giving rise to rebirth) also do not have any roots. Those 15 citta together with the three ahetuka kiriya citta are involved in the vipāka phase of a given citta vīthi. They do not have any sobhana or asobhana cetasika other than the 7 universal cetasika and the 6 pakinnaka (particualrs) cetasika; see, "Cetasika - Connection to Gati" for various types of cetasika. Those 18 cittā are listed on p. 112 of Ref. 1 under the second group below the group of akusala citta.

2, The 54 kāmaloka cittā can be categorized in different ways.

| Asobhana (Unbeautiful) |  | Sobhana (Beautiful) |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Immoral- 12 | Rootless - 18 | Moral -24 |
| Lobha (8) | Immoral Vipāka (7) | Moral (8) |
| Dosa $(2)$ | Moral Vipāka $(8)$ | Moral Vipāka $(8)$ |
| Moha $(2)$ | Kiriya $(3)$ | Kiriya $(8)$ |

## Citta for Rūpaloka (in the $16 \boldsymbol{R} \bar{u} p a$ realms) - $\mathbf{1 5}$ in all

3. There are only 15 citta that are predominantly present in the Rūpaloka. Five are jhānic moral citta, and five are vipāka cittā due to those.
4. The five $j h \bar{a} n i c$ moral citta can be experienced by humans when they develop samādhi and attain these (first through fifth) $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$. However, they can only experience the corresponding five vipāka cittā when they are born in Rūpalokas.
5. The five $j h a ̄ n i c$ states are characterized by five $j h a \bar{n} a$ factors or mental concomitants: vitakka (initial application), vicāra (sustained application), pīti (zest), sukha (happiness), and ekaggatā (one-pointedness). All five factors are present in the first $j h \bar{a} n a$, and as one moves to higher $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$, these factors are lost one by one, and in the fifth $j h \bar{a} n a$, only ekaggat $\bar{a}$ is left.
$P \bar{l} t i$ (zest) is the happiness in the mind, and sukha (happiness) is the tranquility of the body.
6. There are five more jhānic kiriya cittta experienced by Arahants when they attain these $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$.

Thus there are 15 citt $\bar{a}$ in all that predominantly belong to the R $\bar{u} p a l o k a$.

## Citta for Arūpaloka (in the 4 Ar $\bar{u} p a$ realms)- 12 in all

7. There are only 12 citt $\bar{a}$ that are predominantly present in the Arūpaloka. Four are jhānic moral citta and four are vipāka citta due to those.
8. The four jhānic moral cittā can be experienced by humans when they develop samādhi and attain these (fifth through eighth) jhānā. However, they can experience the corresponding four vipāka citta only when they are born in Arūpaloka.
9. The first of the four Arūpaloka jhānā is the attainment of the base of infinite space ( $\bar{A} k \bar{a} s \bar{a} n a n c \bar{a} y a t a n a)$. A human must master the fourth jhāna (Rūpaloka) to attain this jhāna.

The second is the base of infinite consciousness (Viññānañcāyatana). The third is the base of nothingness ( $\bar{A} k i n ̃ c a n ̃ \tilde{n} a \overline{a y a t a n a}$ ), and the fourth is the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception (Nevasañ̃̄̄̄̄āsañ̃̄̄̄yatana). In this last type of consciousness, the perception factor (sañ̃̃̄̄) is so subtle that it can no longer perform the function of perception, i.e., one is unaware of the "world." Yet perception is not altogether absent. This is another reason why the ancient yogis erroneously assumed this eighth jhāna to be Nibbāna.
10. There are four more Arūpaloka jhānic kiriya citttā experienced by Arahants when they attain these jhānā.

Thus there are 12 cittā in all that predominantly belong to the $A r \bar{u} p a$ loka.

## Lokuttara (Supermundane) Citta - 8 in all

11. These pertain to the four stages of Nibbānic attainment: Sotāpanna, Sakadāgāmī, Anāgāmī, and Arahant.
12. Each stage involves two types of citta: path consciousness (magga citta), and fruition consciousness (phala citta).The magga citta has the function of eradicating or permanently attenuating defilements. The phala citta has the function of experiencing the degree of liberation made possible by the magga citta.
13. Each magga citta arises only once and endures for one thought-moment. It is never repeated. The corresponding phala citta (which corresponds to a vipāka citta but is not called a vipāka citta) arises immediately after the magga citta. This is in contrast to mundane vipāka citt $\bar{a}$ where they can occur even many lifetimes after the corresponding kusala or akusala citta.
14. The phala citta can be repeated after one attains it. With practice, it can be sustained for long times, up to 7 days for an Arahant.

Thus, there are $54+15+12+8=89$ cittt $\bar{a}$ in all.

## How 121 Types of Citta are Possible

15. It is possible to further analyze the types of citta by refining the above method by considering that each magga phala can be reached from the vicinity of each anāriya jhānic state.

- One can attain Nibbānic states via the vicinity of each of the five rūpa loka jhānic states (here, the Abhidhamma method of $5 \boldsymbol{j} h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$ is used, instead of the four mentioned in the sutt $\bar{a}$, where the first two jhāna in Abhidhamma categorization are taken to be one jhāna; in the Abhidhamma analysis vitakka and vicāra are removed in two steps, whereas in the sutta analysis it is assumed that they are removed in one step).
- Therefore, the five jhānic states can lead to the four magga cittā and four phala cittā.
- Thus here, there are 40 ways to attain lokuttara citta $\bar{a}$. Therefore, in this case, the total number of citt $\bar{a}$ in this case would be $121(=54+15+12+40)$ instead of 89 .

16. Therefore, magga phala (including the Arahant stage) can be reached via going through any of the $\boldsymbol{j} h a \bar{n} n i c$ states or without going through any jhānic state.

- Of course, the eight lokuttara cittā (i.e., the four stages of Nibbāna) arrived are the same, regardless of whether they arrived via $j h a \overline{n a}$ or not.
- To attain the first Ariya jhāna, one must be at least an Anāgāmi. See \#6 of "Samādhi, Jhāna, Magga Phala - Introduction."


## Important Conclusion Regarding Jhāna and Magga Phala

17. From the above it is clear that magga phala can be attained without jhāna ( 89 cittā analysis applicable). Magga phala can also be attained via each of the five jhānic states (in the Abhidhamma method), which correspond to the four jhāna discussed in the sutta ; here the 121 citt $\bar{a}$ analysis is applicable.

- Furthermore, these jhānic states can be reached via either anāriya jhāna or Ariya jhāna. The experience seems to be the same.
- The only difference is that while kāma rāga is suppressed (vikkhambhana pahāna) in anāriya jhāna, it is REMOVED (samuccheda pahāna) in Ariya jhāna.
- For details, see, "Samādhi, Jhāna (Dhyāna), Magga Phala."


## REFERENCE

1. "A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma," by Bhikkhu Bodhi (2000).

## 8.6 <br> Cetasika (Mental Factors)

Revised January 24, 2020; May 15, 2020; June 8, 2020; August 23, 2022
Cetasika (mental factors; pronounced "chethasikā") appear concomitantly with citta (thoughts; pronounced "chiththā"), and they cease together with citta. They define the character (good or bad or neutral) of the citta.

- The way to "Lead a Moral Life," or to "Seek Good Rebirths," or to "Seek Nibbāna," is to get rid of the bad (non-beautiful) cetasika and cultivate good (beautiful) cetasika. This is done by changing one's habits via learning Dhamma and practicing it: see, "Habits and Goals," "Sansāric Habits and āsavas," and "The Way to Nibbāna - Removal of Āsavā," in that order.

1. Seven cetasika are in every citta. These are called universals (sabba citta sādhāraña):

- Phassa (contact); vedanā (feeling); sañ̃̃̄ā (perception); cetanā (volition); ekaggatā (One-pointedness) can become Sammā Samādhi; jīvitindriya (life faculty) manasikāra (memory).

2. Since they are universals, the above cetasika appears in both kusala and akusala citta. All are important mental factors:

- Saññā and vedanā are in pañcakkhandha.
- Cetana determines kamma; it is the cetasika that "puts together a citta" by automatically incorporating other relevant cetasika according to one's "gati."
- Ekaggatā is the salient factor in samādhi.
- Consciousness cannot arise without phassa. Note that samphassa differs from phassa; see, "Difference between Phassa and Samphassa."
- Jīvitindriya maintains life.
- Manasikāra can be either yoniso manasikāra (important in attaining the Sotāpanna stage), and ayoniso manasikāra can lead to the accumulation of akusala kamma.

3. There are six cetasika that CAN appear in both types of cittā: kusala and akusala. However, they are found in only particular types of cittā. They are called particulars or pakiṇnaka: [pakinnaka :(adj.) [pa+kiṇna (pp. of kirati)+ka] scattered about; fig. miscellaneous, particular, opp. to sādhāraṇa. ]

- Vitakka (focused application) can become Sammā Sañkappa; vicāra (sustained application); adhimokkha (dominate). Adhimokkha is the cetasika that makes another cetasika to dominate a given citta; for example, to get uddhacca, vicikicch $\bar{a}$, or patiigha to strengthen.
- Viriya (effort) can become Sammā Vāyāma ; pīti (joy); chanda (desire, not greed).
- These are important cetasika and play key roles in morality/immorality since they can appear in both kusala and akusala citta. For example, when one's mind is covered with deep ignorance (moha), one may enjoy immoral deeds (pīti), makes a liking for them (chanda), and strive more (viriya) to do such acts.

4. Just like universals, these particulars can appear in either type of cittā, kusala or akusala. Vitakka, vicāra, and pīti are $j h \bar{a} n a$ factors as well.

- Viriya and chanda are two factors in the four bases of mental power, see, "The Four Bases of Mental Power (Cattāro Iddhipāda)."
- Adhimokka is important in decision making by making another cetasika dominant. All these factors can go in an immoral direction too.

5. There are 14 asobhana cetasika (non-beautiful mental factors) that appear only in akusala citta. Out of these, four universals appear in ALL akusala citta:

- Moha (delusion); Ahirika (shamelessness); Anottapa (fearlessness in the wrong); uddhacca (restlessness or agitation).
- Both shamelessness and fearlessness of wrong encourage doing immoral acts. Restlessness causes unwise decision making.

The other ten are "occasionals" that appear in only particular types of akusala citta:

- Lobha (greed); ditthi (wrong view); māna (conceit); dosa (hatred); issā (envy); macchariya (extreme greed, also pretending one does not have wealth); kukkucca (worry, also feeling low); thina (sloth, sluggishness); middha (torpor); vicikicch $\bar{a}$ (doubt arising from temptations).
- Lobha and dosa are two of the three immoral roots. Sloth and torpor normally rise together and are opposite of viriya; they are listed as one factor in Five Hindrances; see, "Key to Calming the Mind."

6. Twenty-five sobhana cetasika (beautiful mental factors) appear only in kusala citta. Out of those, 19 of them appear in every kusala citta and thus are called beautiful universals:

- Saddhā (faith); sati (moral mindfulness) can become Sammā Sati; hiri (shame of wrong); ottappa (fear of wrong); alobha (absence of greed); adosa (absence of hate/anger, of which mettā or "lovingkindness" is a part); tatramajjhattat $\bar{a}$ (neutrality of mind, of which upekkhā is a part); kāyapassaddhi (tranquility of mental body); cittapassaddhi (tranquility of consciousness); k $\bar{a} y a l a h u t \bar{a}$ (lightness of mental body); cittalahut $\bar{a}$ (lightness of consciousness); k $\bar{a} y a m u d u t \bar{a}$ (malleability of the mental body); cittamudut $\bar{a}$ (malleability of consciousness); kāyakammañ̃̃atā (wieldliness of mental body); cittakammaññatā (wieldliness of consciousness); kāyapāguññatā (proficiency of mental body); cittapāguññatā (proficiency of consciousness); k $\bar{a} y u j j u k a t \bar{a}$ (rectitude of mental body); cittujjukat $\bar{a}$ (rectitude of consciousness).

The other six are occasionals that appear in only particular types of kusala citta:

- There are three abstinences: $\operatorname{Samma} \operatorname{Va} \bar{c} c \bar{a}$ (right speech); Sammā Kammanta (right action); Sammā $\bar{A} j \bar{i} v a$ (right livelihood).
- Two Illimitables (limit-less): karuṇā (compassion); muditā (appreciative joy; joy at other's moral success).
- Paññā or pañ̃nindriya (wisdom or wisdom faculty). Sammā Diṭthi leads to paññ̄a.

7. Mental factors in the Noble Eightfold Path are highlighted in green.
8. Immoral roots are highlighted in red. Moral roots are highlighted in purple.
9. As a rule, sobhana and asobhana cetasika CANNOT appear together in a given citta.

### 8.7 Rūpa (Material Form) - Table

## Revised April 22, 2020; August 16, 2020; September 5, 2022

We discuss the 28 types of $r \bar{u} p a$ (material form) in Buddha Dhamma. For discussions on $r \bar{u} p a$, see, "What are Rūpa? (Relation to Nibbāna)" and "Rūpa (Material Form)."

| Concretely Produced (Nipphanna) | Abstract (Anipphanna) Rūpa |
| :---: | :---: |
| I. Great Elements (Mahā Bhūta) | VII. Limiting Phenomenon |
| 1. Pathavi (Extension/Hardness) | 19. Ākasa dhātu (space element) |
| 2. $\bar{A} p o$ (Cohesion/Fluidity) | IX. Communicating (Viñnati) Rūpa |
| 3. Tejo (Heat/Hotness) | 20. Kāya Viññati |
| 4. Vāyo (Motion/Pushing \& Supporting) | 21. Vacī Viñnati |
| II. Internal (Pasāda) Rūpa | X. Mutable (Vikāra) Rūpa |
| 5. Cakkhu (eye element) | 22. Lahutā (lightness) |
| 6. Sota (ear element) | 23. Mudutā (Elasticity) |
| 7. Ghana (nose element) | 24. Kammaññatā (weildiness) |
| 8. Jivhā (tongue element) | XI. Material Qualities (Lakkhaṇa Rūpa) |
| 9. Kāya (body element) | 25. Upacaya (production) |
| III. Gocara (Objective) Rūpa | 26. Santati (continuity) |
| 10. Vanṇa (visible) | 27. Jaratā (Decay) |
| 11. Sadda (Sound) | 28. Aniccatā (Dissolving) |
| 12. Gandha (Smell) |  |
| 13. Rasa (Taste) |  |
| * Photthabba (Tangibility, warmth, and movement) comes from 3 mahā bhūta of pathavi, tejo, vāyo |  |
| IV. Bhāva (Faculties of sex) Rūpa |  |
| 14. Itthi (Feminine) |  |
| 15. Purisa (Masculine) |  |
| V. Hadaya (Mind Base) |  |
| 16. Hadaya Vatthu (seat of the mind) |  |
| VI. Life |  |
| 17. Jīvitindriya (Life faculty) |  |
| VII. Nutritional |  |

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18. Oja (Nutriment)
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## Types of $\boldsymbol{R u p} \overline{\boldsymbol{a}}$

- The four great elements (\#1 through \#4), three gocara rūpa (\#10, \#12, \#13), and nutriment (\#18), ALWAYS appear together. They can NEVER be detected by themselves. They come together as suddhatthaka (meaning the smallest collection of those eight types of $r \bar{u} p a$.) See "The Origin of Matter - Suddhatthaka."
- There are nine rūpā created ONLY by kammic energy at the paṭisandhi moment. Those are the five pasāda rūpa (\#5 through \#9), and four other rūpa (\#14 through \#17), including the seat of the mind (hadaya vatthu).
- The 16 rūpa that are highlighted in blue are fine (sukuma) rūpa. The other 12 are coarse (olārika) rūpa.
- Nipphanna rūpa are caused by kamma, citta, utu (tejo), and āhāra (oja). The other 10 (anipphanna rūpa) are not caused or conditioned by kamma, citta, utu (tejo), and āhāra (oja).
- The ten types of anipphanna rūpa (on the right side of the Table) are abstract $r \bar{u} p a$.


## Types of $R \bar{u} p \bar{a}$ Present in Different Realms

- All 28 rūpā arise in the $k \bar{a} m a$-realms. Eight $r \bar{u} p \bar{a}$ comprising sadda, five viñnatti/vikāra-rūpā, jarat $\bar{a}-$ $r \bar{u} p a$, and aniccatā-rūpa, do not arise at the moment of birth (patisandhi.) During life time, they can arise.
- In the 15 rūpa realms, except for Asañña-realm, 23 rūpā arise (ghāna-pasāda, jivhā-pasāda, kāyapasāda, itthi-bhava and purisa-bhava being excluded).
- Only 17 rūpā arise in the Asañña realm. They are the eight avinibbhoga (four mahā bhūta and vaṇna, gandha, rasa, oja), jivita rūpa, ākāsa dhātu, three lahutadi, and four lakkhana- rūp $\bar{a}$;
- No rūpa above the suddhatthaka level arises (except for hadaya vatthu) in the arūpa-realms. Thus, only that trace of "matter" is present anywhere in the 31 realms. Ancient yogis, who attained all eight anāriya jhānā, could not see any rūpa in the arūpa loka and deduced that was Nibbāna. Only a Buddha can see a hadaya vatthu, i.e., a suddhatthaka. Thus, linkage to mater has not been severed in arūpa loka.


## Definitions from Dhammasañgaṇī

The following are quoted from the "WebLink: suttacentral: Rūpavibhatti DS 2.2.3" section of Dhammasañgan̄ī of the Tipitaka.

- Katamaì tai் rūpaì itthindriyà்? Yaí itthiyā itthilingaì itthinimittaì itthikuttaì itthākappo itthattaì itthibhāvo-idà் taì rūpaì itthindriyam.
 purisākappo purisattaì purisabhāvo-idaì tà̇ rūpaì purisindriyam.
 iriyanā vattanā pālanā jı̄vitaì jīvitindriyaì-idaì tam̀ rūpaì jīvitindriyam.
- Katamaì taì rūpam kāyaviñnatti? Yā kusalacittassa vā akusalacittassa vā abyākatacittassa vā abhikkamantassa vā patikkamantassa vā ālokentassa va vilokentassa va samiñjentassa v $\bar{a}$ pasārentassa v $\bar{a}$ kāyassa thambhanā santhambhanā santhambhitattaì viñnatti viññāpana viññāpitattaí-idaì tà் rūpaì kāyaviññatti.
- Katamaì taì rūpaì vacīviñnatti? Yā kusalacittassa vā akusalacittassa vā abyākatacittassa vā vācā girā byappatho udīranaim ghoso ghosakammaì vācā vacībhedo-ayaì vuccati vācā. Yā tāya vācāya viññatti viññāpanā viññāpitattaím—idaín taì rūpaì vacīviñnatti.
 asamphuṭ़thaì catūhi mahābhūtehi-idamं taì rūpaì ākāsadhātu.
- Katamai் taì rūpaì rūpassa lahutā? Yā rūpassa lahutā lahuparin̄āmatā adandhanatā avitthanatā-idaì taì rūpaì rūpassa lahutā.
- Katamaì taì rūpaì rūpassa mudutā? Yā rūpassa mudutā maddavatā akakkhalatā akathinatā -idà̀ tà̇ rūpaì rūpassa mudutā.
- Katamai் tai் rūpaì rūpassa kammaññatā? Yā rūpassa kammaññatā kammaññattaì kammaññabhāvo-idaì tà̀ rūpà̀ rūpassa kammaññatā.
- Katamaì taì rūpaì rūpassa upacayo? Yo āyatanānaì ācayo, so rūpassa upacayo-idaì taì rūpaì rūpassa upacayo.
- Katamaì taì rūpaì rūpassa santati? Yo rūpassa upacayo, sā rūpassa santati- idai் taì rūpaì rūpassa santati.
- Katamaì taí rūpaì rūpassa jaratā? Yā rūpassa jarā jīraṇatā khaṇ̦iccam pāliccain valittacatā āyuno sam̀hāni indriyānaì paripāko-idam̀ taì rūpam் rūpassa jaratā.
- Katamaim taì rūpaì rūpassa aniccatā? Yo rūpassa khayo vayo bhedo paribhedo aniccatā antaradhānaìi-idaì taì rūpaì rūpassa aniccatā.
- Katamaì taì rūpaì kabaḹ̄kāro āhāro? Odano kummāso sattu maccho maìsaì khīraì dadhi sappi navanītaì telaì madhu phānitaì, yaì vā panaññampi atthi rūpaì yamhi yamhi janapade tesamं tesamं sattānam் mukhāsiyà் dantavikhādanamं galajjhoharan̄̄yam் kucchivitthambhanam், yāya ojāya sattā yāpenti-idaì taì rūpaì kabalīkāro āhāro.


### 8.8 Rūpa - Generation Mechanisms

1. Rūpa (or matter) can be generated by four causes: kamma, citta, utu, and $\bar{A} h \bar{a} r a$ (food). I will discuss these in detail later.

- Kamma here refers to volition (cetana $\overline{)}$ ). The 25 kinds of kamma that produce $r \bar{u} p \bar{a}$ are the volitions of the 12 akusala cittā, 8 great kusala cittā, and the five rūpa loka kusala citt $\bar{a}$. These $r \bar{u} p a$ are created with a time lag, when kamma vipāka bear fruits, like at the pațisandhi to a new life. The three rūpa dasaka of vatthu, kāya, and bhava are created at patisandhi by kamma vipāka.
- The rūpa produced by the citt $\bar{a}$ arise at the same time as the citta themselves, and only at the rising part of the citta . Out of the 89 possible citt $\bar{a}, 75$ citt $\bar{a}$ can produce rūpa (4 arūpa loka vipāka citt $\bar{a}$ and the two sets of fivefold sense consciousness cannot produce $r \bar{u} p a$ ).
- Thus both kammaja and cittaja rūpa have mind as the direct cause. Both of these decay rapidly and are converted to utuja rūpa. What we normally see are the utuja rūpa and āhārajā rūpa, which have their origins also in the great elements of tejo and oja.
- The great element tejo is responsible for producing utu samutthana rūpa: Beginning from the moment of rebirth-linking, the internal tejo element found in the rūpa kaläpas born of kamma combines with the external tejo and starts producing organic material phenomena originating from tejo. Thereafter the tejo element in the rūpa kalāpas born of all four causes produces organic material phenomena born of tejo element throughout the life. Externally, tejo element also produces inorganic material phenomena, such as climatic and geological transformations.
- The nutritive essence, oja, is present in all rūpa-kalāpas both inside the body (internal) and outside the body (external). The external food, which is eaten, is digested in the stomach and dispersed through blood to all parts of the body. So the internal oja and the external oja meet in every part of the body. The combination of internal and external oja produce āhāraja a rūpas.

2. The 8 avinibbhoga rūp $\bar{a}$ of pathavi, $\bar{a} p o$, tejo, vāyo, vaṇna, gandha, rasa, and oja are ALWAYS found together. That unit or kalāpa is the smallest rūpa unit and is called the pure octad (suddhatthaka). Those 8 avinibbhoga rūpa and the $\bar{a} k \bar{a} s a d h a \bar{t} t u$ are produced by all four causes.
3. The four lakkhana rūpā of upacaya, santati, jaratā, and aniccat $\bar{a}$ are not produced by any cause. They represent the nature of $r \bar{u} p \bar{a}$.
4. The remaining 15 rūpa are produced by different combination of the four possible causes as shown in the table below:

|  | Kamma Born | Citta Born | Utu Born | Āhāra Born |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Cakkhu (eye) | Yes |  |  |  |
| Sota (ear) | Yes |  |  |  |
| Ghana (nose) | Yes |  |  |  |
| Jivhā (tongue) | Yes |  |  |  |
| Kāya (body) | Yes |  | Yes |  |
| Sadda (sound) |  | Yes |  |  |
| Itthi Bhva <br> (femininity) | Yes |  |  |  |


| Purisa (masculine) | Yes |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :--- | :--- |
| Hadaya vatthu <br> (heart base) | Yes |  |  |  |
| Jivitindriya <br> (life faculty) | Yes |  |  |  |
| Kāya viññatti <br> (bodily intimation) |  | Yes |  | Yes |
| Vacī Viññtti <br> (vocal intimation) |  | Yes |  | Yes |
| Lahuta (lightness) |  | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Muduta <br> (malleability) |  | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Kammaññata <br> (wieldiness) |  |  |  |  |

## 8.9 <br> Rūpa Kalāpa (Grouping of Matter)

Revised September 15, 2020; September 6, 2022; October 17, 2022 (\#7)

1. There are 28 rūpa types discussed in Abhidhamma: "Rūpa (Material Form) - Table." They are not found separately in nature. The four causes produce them through tiny material groups called rūpa kalāpa or "elementary groups of matter."

- All $r \bar{u} p \bar{a}$ have origins in the four great elements of pathavi $\bar{l}, \bar{a} p o, t e j o$, and $v \bar{a} y o$. However, they all arise together in the smallest unit of matter, a suddhatthaka. See "The Origin of Matter - Suddhatthaka." Four more ru$p \bar{a}$ (vaṇna, gandha, rasa, oja) derived from the great elements are in a suddhaṭthaka making it an octad (composed of eight or an atttaka.)
- There are 15 other elementary units (rūpa kalāpā) that derive from suddhațthaka. All 16 types of rūpa kalāpā are not further divisible. They are avinibbhoga rūpa.
- Let us briefly discuss them.

2. There are three rūpa kalāpa that have nine units: A suddhatthaka "energized" by kammic energy becomes a j $\bar{\imath} v i t a$ navaka (vital nonad) of nime units. That added unit is an "energy unit" called a j $\bar{\imath} v i t a r \bar{u} p a$. That $j \bar{v} v i t a r u \bar{u} p a$ keeps a physical body alive. Another element of nine units, a sadda navaka (sound nonad) is responsible for the sound created by utu, i.e., it is an utuja rūpa. Another is kāyaviñnatti navaka created by cittā responsible for bodily intimation.

- Eight types of rūpa kalāpā have ten units (dasaka or decade) created by kammic energy: Here a suddhatthaka combines with a jīvita rūpa and another unit created by kammic energy to become a dasaka. Those eight types of dasaka are vital parts of a living being. For example, a cakkhu pasāda rūpa (together with the other nine units) creates a cakkhu dasaka responsible for seeing. In the same way sota dasaka, ghana dasaka, jivhā dasaka, kāya dasaka arise. itthibhāva rūpa and purisabhāva rūpa give rise to itthibhāva dasaka and purisabhāva dasaka. The seat of the mind, vatthu dasaka arises with the hadaya vatthu.
- The following are created only by citta (thoughts): One is vacīviññatti-sadda-dasaka (vocal intimation decad) responsible for speech. Kāyaviññatti-lahutādi-dvadasaka (dodecad of bodily intimation) of 12 units with kāyaviññatti and three lahutādi rūpa. Another is vaciviññatti-sadda-lahutādi-terāsaka (tricad of sound) of 13 units with vaciviññatti, three lahutādi rūpa, and sadda.
- Then there is lahutādi-ekadasaka (suddhaṭthaka + lahuta + muduta + kammaññata) with 11 units created by citta. There is also sadda-lahutādi-dvadasaka (suddhaṭthaka + lahuta + muduta + kammañnata $+s a d d a$ ) with 12 units created by $u t u$.

3. All rūpa kalāpā have the following characteristics.
4. All the $r \bar{u} p \bar{a}$ in a ru$p a$ kalāpa arise together, i.e., they have a common genesis.
5. They also cease or dissolve together, i.e. they have a common cessation.
6. They all depend on the four great essentials present in the kalāpa for their arising, i.e. they have a common dependence.
7. They are so thoroughly mixed that they cannot be distinguished, i.e. they co-exist.
8. It should be noted that kalāp $\bar{a}$ are so small that they are indistinguishable from pure energy. The origin of rupa is a javana citta, which is formless and mass-less. Science has shown that the smallest "particle" detected, the Higgs boson, is indistinguishable from energy. See, "The Origin of Matter - Suddhatthaka."
9. There are 17 types of kalāpā produced in 21 ways:

9 kammaja kalāpā 6 cittaja kalāpā 4 utuja kalāpā 2 āhāraja kalāpā as shown below:

|  | Kamma Born | Citta Born | Utu Born | Āhāra Born |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Cakkhu dasaka (eye decad) | Yes |  |  |  |
| Sota dasaka (ear decad) | Yes |  |  |  |
| Ghana dasaka (nose decad) | Yes |  |  |  |
| Jivha dasaka (tongue decad) | Yes |  |  |  |
| Kāya dasaka (body decad) | Yes |  |  |  |
| Itthi dasaka (female decad) | Yes |  |  |  |
| Purisa dasaka (male decad) | Yes |  |  |  |
| Vatthu dasaka (base decad) | Yes |  |  |  |
| Jivita navaka (vital nonad) | Yes |  |  |  |
| Suddhattaka (pure octad) |  | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Kayavinnati navaka (body intimation nonad |  | Yes |  |  |
| Vacī viññati sadda dasaka (vocal intimation decad) |  | Yes |  |  |
| Lahutādi eka dasaka (undecad of mutability) |  | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Kayaviññati Lahutādi dva dasaka (undecad of mutability) |  | Yes | Yes |  |
| Vaciviññati Sadda <br> Lahutādi terasaka (tridecad of mutability) |  | Yes |  |  |
| Sadda navaka (sound decad) |  |  | Yes |  |

## 6. Internal and External Kalāpā

All the 21 rūpa kalāpā mentioned above occur internally in living beings. Itthibhāva-dasaka does not occur in males. Similarly, pumbhava-dasaka (or purisabhāva-dasaka) does not occur in females. For those who are born blind or deaf, cakkhu-dasaka or sota-dasaka are not present.

- In the external (bahiddha) world, only the two utuja-kalāpāare found. All inanimate things, such as trees, stones, earth, water, fire, corpses, etc., are made up of utuja-suddhatthaka kalāp $\bar{a}$. The sounds produced by beating two sticks together, rubbing branches in the wind, or by instruments such as violin, piano, radio, cassettes, etc., are utuja-sadda-navaka kalāpā.
- From the internal rūpas, kāya-pasāda, bhava-rūpa (femininity and masculinity), cittaja-rūpa, utujarūpa and $\bar{a} h a \bar{a} a j a-r \bar{u} p a$ spread all over the body. So they will be present in the eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue and in every part of the body.


## 7. Rūpa in Kamaloka

If circumstances permit, all 28 material qualities occur undiminished in an individual during a lifetime in kāmaloka (sense-sphere).

- In womb-born creatures, only three kammaja-kalāpā comprising body-decad, sex-decad and heart decad are manifested at the moment of conception (at patisandhi).

Here again, the sex-decad may not be manifested in some particular individuals. After conception, during life, the eye-decad and the rest are manifested slowly in due order. Of the groups of material qualities produced in four ways, kammaja-rūpa starts to form at the moment of conception and forms incessantly at every minor instant. Cittaja-rūpa begins to form from the second moment of consciousness, i.e., from the arising instant of the first bhavañga, which follows the rebirth-consciousness. Cittaja-rūpa continues to be formed for a lifetime.

- Utuja-rūpa starts to form from the existing instant of rebirth consciousness. The reason is that the tejodhātu (utu) present in the first kammaja-kalāpā comes to the static stage (thiti) at that instant. From that time onward, the tejo-dhātu produces utuja-rūpa at every moment. Since tejo-dhātu is present in every kalapa, every kalapa, from the time it reaches the static stage, produces new utuja-kalāpā at every minor instant. And the new utuja-kalāp $\bar{a}$, from the time they reach the static stage, again produce new utuja-kalāpa $a$ at every minor instant. So this process goes on forever.

Every kalapa also contains the nutritive essence, oja. But āhāraja-rūpa forms when internal oja meets external oja at the time of diffusion of nutritive essence and the combination of internal and external oja comes to the static stage. From that instant, āhāraja-rūpa is also formed at every minor instant. As new groups of material qualities are incessantly produced, old groups dissolve and disappear. Thus, the material phenomena go on uninterruptedly in the sense-sphere till the end of life like the flame of a lamp, or river stream.

Material Phenomena at Death: At the time of death, psychic life and physical life must cease together. This means that all kammaja rūpa that contains physical life must cease at the time of death. So at the beginning of the seventeenth citta, reckoned backward from the death-consciousness (cuti citta), the last kammaja rūpa is formed. This last kammaja rūpa will cease at the dissolving instant of the deathconsciousness. Cittaja rūpa is formed till the arising instant of the cuti citta. This last cittaja rūpa will have lasted for a conscious-moment at the dissolution of cuti citta and thus will perish in another sixteen
 cuti citta because the support required for the formation of $\bar{a} h \bar{a} r a j a ~ r \bar{u} p a$ can be furnished by citta up to that time. So at death, that last-formed $\bar{a} h a \bar{a} r a j a ~ r u \bar{u} a$ lasted only one minor instant. However in another fifty minor instants (rūpa lifespan - 51 minor instants or 17 conscious-moments), that $\bar{a} h \bar{a} r a j a ~ r u \bar{u} p a ~ a l s o ~ c e a s e s . ~$ Thus at the time of death, kammaja rūpa, cittaja rūpa and $\bar{a} h a ̄ r a j a ~ r u ̄ p a ~ c e a s e ~ a l m o s t ~ i n s t a n t l y . ~$

- But utuja-rūpa goes on forming and dissolving till the corpse is converted into dust. A corpse consists of only utuja-rūpa.
- So when a person dies and is reborn in another life, material phenomena similarly arise from the instant of conception and go on arising till the time of death.

Arising of Material Phenomena in Rūpa-planes In the rūpa-plane, nose-decad, tongue-decad, bodydecad, sex decade and $\bar{a} h \overline{a r a j a-k a l a ̄ p} \bar{a}$ do not arise. At the time of opapātika rebirth, four kammajakalāp $\bar{a}$ arise: eye decad, ear decad, heart decade and vital nonad. During life, however, cittaja kalāp $\bar{a}$ and utuja kalāpā also arise. For the Asañ̃na Brahmā, hadaya vatthu is there, but it is shielded by the "physical body," which has no mana indriya. Thus, it cannot interact with dhamma (or viññāna dhātu,) and citt $\bar{a}$ cannot arise. Therefore, cittaja kalāpā do not arise.

- Thus in kāma loka and rūpa loka, the process of the arising of material phenomena should be understood in two ways, that is (1) at rebirth and (2) during life.


### 8.10 Akusala Citta and Akusala Vipaka Citta

Revised November 4, 2017; October 22, 2021; October 27, 2021

## Twelve Types of Akusala Citta

All ten akusala kamma are done with these 12 akusala citta. There are 8 greed-rooted, 2 hatred-rooted, and 2 delusion-rooted citta. Of course, citta (pronounced "chiththā") are thoughts; any speech or bodily action starts with a thought.

- See, "Conditions for the Four Stages of Nibbāna" for a list of 12 akusala citta.

Both greed-rooted and hatred-rooted also have delusion as a root.

|  | Root | Assoc. with | Dissoc. with | Feeling | Sasankhārika? |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 1 | Greed | Wrong view | - | Pleasure | No |
| 2 | Greed | Wrong view | - | Pleasure | Yes |
| 3 | Greed | - | Wrong view | Pleasure | No |
| 4 | Greed | - | Wrong view | Pleasure | Yes |
| 5 | Greed | Wrong view | - | Equanimity | No |
| 6 | Greed | Wrong view | - | Equanimity | Yes |
| 7 | Greed | - | Wrong view | Equanimity | No |
| 8 | Greed | - | Wrong view | Equanimity | Yes |
| 9 | Dislike | Aversion | - | Displeasure | No |
| 10 | Dislike | Aversion | - | Displeasure | Yes |
| 11 | Delusion | Vicikicchā | - | Equanimity | - |
| 12 | Delusion | Uddacca | - | Equanimity | - |

1. The first citta is described as, "a thought rooted in greed (and delusion), associated with wrong views, accompanied by pleasure." The others can be stated the same way.

- Those citt $\bar{a}$ that are associated with wrong views are the worst, even though wrong views are listed as \#10 on the ten immoral actions, see, "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)."
- Citta generated with pleasure means one is enthusiastic about it because of one's habits (gati) or one starts liking it. For example, one who likes to go fishing has a bad habit; he gets pleasure by just thinking about it; thus it is stronger than one done with equanimity.
- A hateful citta is always arises with displeasure, but that displeasure can arise with ignorance. For example, someone who has wrong views may generate displeasure towards a moral person merely because of one's wrong views. I have encountered some people who got upset with me when I pointed out that rebirth has evidence for it.
- Sasañkhārika means with less javana power.
- See, the notes at the end of the post "Conditions for the Four Stages of Nibbāna" for details.

2. Since vicikicch $\bar{a}$ is also due to wrong views, those five citt $\bar{a}$ marked in red are the strongest akusala citta done with "wrong views" or "ditt!hi." Those five cittā stop arising in the mind of a Sotāpanna.

They can condition one's mind to a "gati" suitable for birth in the apāy $\bar{a}$; see, "What is in a Thought? Why Gati are so Important?."

- The $v y \bar{a} p \bar{a} d a$ or the strong hate - that makes one eligible for birth in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$-actually arises from the first four types of lobha citta. It is also called "dvesa" or "dvesha" which means "second manifestation" or ("dvi +"vesa") of lobha. When one is burdened with extreme greed, it can turn to the second manifestation of extreme hate for anyone in the way.
- Upon attaining the Sotāpanna stage, such habits or "gati" are removed, and thus no adverse kamma vipāka comes to mind at the dying moment, as we point out below. The "pati+ichcha sama+uppada" or what is born is similar to what is grasped, is at play at the dying moment. One automatically grasps things one has a habit of liking; they automatically come to the forefront of the mind at the dying moment.

3. The other 7 akusala citta are stopped from arising in stages as a Sotāpanna cultivates the Path further.

- The two dislike (patigha)-rooted cittā (together with some potency of the remaining 4 greed-based citta, i.e., kāma rāga) are reduced at the Sakadāgāmī stage.
- Those two dislike-rooted citt $\bar{a}$ are stopped from arising at the $A n \bar{a} g \bar{a} m \bar{\imath}$ stage. Also, the potency of the remaining 4 greed-based citta, i.e., $\boldsymbol{k} \bar{a} m a \boldsymbol{r a g} a$ is reduced to just $\boldsymbol{k} \overline{\boldsymbol{a}} \boldsymbol{m a}$ level.
- Finally, the remaining 4 greed-based citta and the uddhacca citta are removed at the Arahant stage. Thus an Arahant will never experience an akusala citta.


## Seven Types of Akusala Vipāka Citta

4. These 12 types of citta lead to 7 types of vipāka (resultant) citta.

- None of the vipäka citta has any unwholesome roots (greed, hate, delusion); of course, they also do not have the wholesome roots. Thus they are called rootless (ahetuka) citta.

5. Five of these akusala vipāka cittā are the ones that lead to (undesirable) sense events through the five physical senses. Thus they are responsible for eye consciousness (cakkhu viññanna), ear consciousness (sota viññāṇa), nose consciousness (ghāṇa viññāṇa), taste consciousness (jivhā viñ̃nāṇa), and body consciousness (kāya viññāna).

- Except for the body consciousness which is accompanied by pain, the other four are accompanied by equanimity; see,"Avyākata Paticca Samuppāda for Vipāka Viññāna" and "How Are Paticca Samuppāda Cycles Initiated?"
- Thus any feelings of displeasure etc due to what is seen, heard, smelled, or tasted, are in the thoughts that follow this "event" experienced through one of the physical senses. We will discuss this in detail in the Abhidhamma section.

6. The sixth akusala vipāka citta is called receiving consciousness accompanied by equanimity (upekkhāsahagata sampaticchana citta). This is a citta that accepts the sense impression to the mind (we will discuss it in the Abhidhamma section).
7. The seventh akusala vipāka citta is called the investigating consciousness accompanied by equanimity (upekkhā-sahagata santīraṇa citta). This is the citta that is responsible for the birth in the apāyā (lowest four realms), i.e, it acts as the patisandhi citta for the birth in the apāy $\bar{a}$.
8. One may wonder how a Sotāpanna avoids the apa $\bar{a} \bar{a}$, because he/she is still capable of generating the 7 cittā that are not associated with ditthi (see the Table above), and thus it is possible to generate this apāyagāmī-patisandhi citta.

- The point is that after becoming a Sotāpanna, such vipāka thoughts do not come to the mind at the last thought processes; only the good kamma vipāka come to the forefront of the mind close to the dying moment because he/she no longer has the "gati" suitable for a birth in the apāy $\bar{a}$.

9. It is hard to give up one's bad habits ("gati"), mainly because one does not fully comprehend the true nature of the world, i.e., anicca, dukkha, anatta, and thus has wrong views about this world with 31
realms. One needs to comprehend that one's actions have consequences not only in this life, but (mainly) in the future lives; also, whatever one gains by such harmful actions is just temporary, AND do not leave one with a peaceful mind.

### 8.11 37 Factors of Enlightenment

## Revised January 20, 2016; May 13, 2019; March 11, 2020; August 20, 2022 (added references)

1. The 37 factors of Enlightenment (Bodhipakkhiya Dhamma) are the combined number of individual factors in:

- Four Factors of Mindfulness (Cattāro Satipatṭhāna); see "Mahā Satipatthāna Sutta,"
- Four Supreme Efforts (Cattāro Sammappadhāna); see, for example, "WebLink: suttacentral: Padhāna Sutta (AN 4.13)."
- Four Bases of Mental Power (Cattāro Iddhipāda); see a series of suttas starting with the "WebLink: suttacentral: Apāra Sutta (SN 51.1)."
- Five Faculties (Pañca Indriya); see a series of suttas starting with the "WebLink: suttacentral: Suddhika Sutta (SN 48.1)."
- Five Powers (Pañca Bala); see, for example, "WebLink: suttacentral: Punakūta Sutta (AN 5.16)."
- Seven Factors of Enlightenment (Satta Bojjhañga); see the series of suttas starting with "WebLink: suttacentral: Himavanta Sutta (SN 46.1)." and
- Factors of the Noble Eightfold Path (Ariya Ațthañgika Magga); see the series of suttas starting with "WebLink: suttacentral: Kalyānamitta Sutta (SN 45.49)."

2. These factors focus on various mental factors (cetasika) and citta that incorporate those cetasika. They are labeled with different names under each category in the Table below to highlight their application.

- For example, the paññā cetasika is labeled as vīmainsā in Four Bases of Mental Power, as dhammavicaya in Satta Bojjhañga, and as Sammā Dittthi in the Noble Eightfold Path.
- Under each category, I have listed the term used for that cetasika in that category. For example, in the Noble Eightfold Path, Sammā Vāyāma is the viriya cetasika.
- Thus even though there are 37 factors of Enlightenment, there are only $\mathbf{1 4}$ cetasika that will be cultivated while cultivating all seven above categories.
- Those seven categories are all interrelated. Thus all 37 factors may be cultivated by focusing only on Cattāro Satipatṭhāna, Satta Bojjhañga, or the Noble Eightfold Path.

3. In the "WebLink: suttacentral: Bhāvanā Sutta (AN 7.71)," the Buddha explained that one needs to cultivate those 37 factors to reach Nibbāna.

- However, there is no need to go through all of them individually. Cultivation of one set in full WILL fulfill the others.
- For example, in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Mahāsatipatthāna Sutta (DN 22)" Buddha explained that the cultivation of Satipatthāna is a guaranteed way to Nibbāna.
- Similarly, "WebLink: suttacentral: Ānāpānassati Sutta (MN 118)" explains that the cultivation of $\bar{A} n a \bar{p} \bar{n} n a s a t i$ will fulfill Satipaṭthāna.
- Therefore, there can be many different ways to get to Nibbāna (Arahanthood.) The key step is to get to the Sotāpanna Anugāmi stage by comprehending the Four Noble Truths/Paticca Samuppāda/Tilakkhaṇa. See "Mahā Cattārisaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty)."

4. It is also important to realize that cetasika is related to one's character (gati): "Cetasika - Connection to Gati"
5. The Four Supreme Efforts (Cattāro Sammappadhāna) are the efforts to purify the mind: (i) remove defilements (akusala) that have arisen, (ii) prevent new defilement (akusala) from arising, (iii) enhance
wholesome states (kusala) that have arisen, (iv) initiate new wholesome states (kusala). WebLink: suttacentral: AN 4.14 Samivarasutta (Restraint).

- Not to let an unwholesome thought arise which has not yet arisen. $\rightarrow$ restraint (00)
- Not to let an unwholesome thought continue which has already arisen. $\rightarrow$ abandonment (01)
- To make a wholesome thought arise which has not yet arisen. $\rightarrow$ development (10)
- To make a wholesome thought continue which has already arisen. $\rightarrow$ protection (maintaining) (11)

6. All 37 factors of enlightenment are fulfilled at the Arahant stage.

| $\begin{array}{\|c} \text { Ite } \\ \mathrm{m} \end{array}$ | Parameter Involved | Four Suprem | Iddhipad <br> a | Five Faculties | Five Powers | Four <br> Factors of Mindfulne ss | 7 Factors of Enlightenme nt | Path <br> Factors | Coun t |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 1 | Paññā (wisdom) |  | vīmamsā | paññā | paññā |  | dhammavic aya | sammā <br> diṭ̣hi | 5 |
| 2 | Vitakka (initial application) |  |  |  |  |  |  | sammā sañkappa | 1 |
| 3 | Sammā vācā |  |  |  |  |  |  | sammā vācā | 1 |
| 4 | Sammā <br> kammanta |  |  |  |  |  |  | sammā <br> kammanata | 1 |
| 5 | Sammā ājiva |  |  |  |  |  |  | sammā <br> àjīva | 1 |
| 6 | Viriya | four efforts (see \#4 above) | viriya | viriya | viriya |  | viriya | sammā vāyāma | 9 |
| 7 | Sati (mindfulness) |  |  | sati | sati | kāya, vedanā, citta, dhamma | sati | sammā sati | 8 |
| 8 | $\begin{gathered} \text { Samādhi } \\ \text { (one- } \\ \text { pointedness) } \end{gathered}$ |  |  | samādhi | samādhi |  | samādhi | sammā samādhi | 4 |
| 9 | Saddhā <br> (faith) |  |  | saddhā | saddhā |  |  |  | 2 |
| 10 | Chanda (desire) |  | chanda |  |  |  |  |  | 1 |
| 11 | citta |  | citta |  |  |  |  |  | 1 |
| 12 | Piti (joy) |  |  |  |  |  | piti |  | 1 |
| 13 | Passaddhi (tranquility) |  |  |  |  |  | passaddhi |  | 1 |


| 14 | Upekkhā <br> (equinimity) |  |  |  |  | upekkhā |  | 1 |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |

7. Also, see "Two Versions of 37 Factors of Enlightenment."

### 8.12 Conditions for the Four Stages of Nibbāna

## Revised August 3, 2016; Revised November 19, 2018; August 21, 2022

The following Table shows the conditions to be fulfilled (i.e., factors to be eliminated) to attain each stage of Nibbāna. For example, to attain the Sotāpanna stage, three of the ten samyojana (or the ten fetters) are removed, akusala citta $\# 1,2,5,6$, and 11 are removed; also, the apāyagām $\bar{\imath}$ strength in the other citt $\bar{a}$ also removed, etc.

| Ariya Stage | Samyojana | Akusala Citta | Anusaya | $\overline{\text { Asava (Asaya) }}$ | Kilesa <br> (Akusala <br> Cetasika) |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Sotāpanna | sakkāya diṭthi, vicikicchā, silabbata parāmāsa | 1,2,5,6,11 <br> Also removes apāyagāmi strength in the rest | ditṭhi, vicikicchā | diṭthāsava | Removed: ditt thi, vicikicchā, thina, middha, issa, maccariya, kukkucca <br> Reduced: lobha, dosa, moha to rāga, paṭigha, avijjā |
| Sakadāgāmī | kāma rāga <br> (reduced) <br> patigha <br> (reduced) | weakens 9, 10 also weakens kāma rāga in 3,4,7,8 | kāma rāga <br> (reduced) <br> patigha <br> (reduced) | kāmāsava (reduced) | Reduced: <br> kāma rāga and patigha |
| Anāgāmī | kāma rāga, patigha | $9,10$ <br> also removes kāma rāga in 3,4,7,8 | kāma rāga, patigha | kāmāsava | Removed: <br> kāma rāga and paṭigha |
| Arahant | rūpa rāga, arūpa rāga, māna, uddhacca, avijj $\bar{a}$ | 3,4,7,8,12 <br> (see below for a list of akusala citta) | bhava rāga, māna, avijj $\bar{a}$ | bhavāsava, avijjāsava | Removed: avijjā, ahirika, anatoppa, uddhacca, māna |

The ability to commit akusala kamma also is removed in stages as one progresses and is completely removed only at the Arahant stage. It is important to note that a Sotäpanna completely removes only one akusala kamma, that of having wrong views (micchā ditthi): "What is the only Akusala Removed by a Sotāpanna?." But this leads to removing many kilesa (mental impurities); see the Table.
$\bar{A} s a v a$ and anusaya are discussed in the post, "Āsava, Anusaya, and Gati (Gathi)." Kilesa is discussed in "Ditthi (Wrong Views), Sammā Ditthi (Good/Correct Views)." For a discussion on Dasa Samiyojana, see "Dasa Samyojana - Bonds in Rebirth Process."

The 12 types of akusala citta are listed in, "Akusala Citta and Akusala Vipāka Citta." But I thought it would be more explanatory to list them. The numbers below correspond to the numbers in the Table.

Lobha (Greedy) Citta (Also has the moha root)

1. Citta connected with a wrong view, accompanied by pleasure, and done with habit.
2. Citta connected with a wrong view, accompanied by pleasure, and done reluctantly.
3. Citta NOT connected with a wrong view, accompanied by pleasure, and done with habit.
4. Citta NOT connected with a wrong view, accompanied by pleasure, and done reluctantly.
5. Citta connected with a wrong view, accompanied by a neutral mind, and done with habit.
6. Citta connected with a wrong view, accompanied by a neutral mind, and done reluctantly.
7. Citta NOT connected with a wrong view, accompanied by a neutral mind, and done with habit.
8. Citta NOT connected with a wrong view, accompanied by a neutral mind, and done reluctantly.

Dosa (Hateful) Citta (Also has the moha root)
9. Citta associated with hate, accompanied by displeasure, done with habit.
10. Citta associated with hate, accompanied by displeasure, done reluctantly.

Moha Citta (only with the moha root)
11. Citta accompanied by a neutral mind, associated with vicikicch $\bar{a}$ (not aware of bad consequences)
12. Citta accompanied by a neutral mind, associated with uddhacca (unfocused).

## Notes:

1. Even though recent Abhidhamma literature categorize lobha and dosa citta as asañkhārika (unprompted) and sasañkhārika (prompted), in original Abhidhamma, they were not categorized as such.
2. For example, the two dosa-mūla cittā are:
i. Domanassa sahagata patigha-sampayutta citta.
ii. Domanassa sahagata sasankhārika patigha-sampayutta citta.

- The first citta arises due to sansāric habits and thus is more potent. For example, someone who tends to easily get angry, normally generates such potent citta.
- On the other hand, another person without such a habit, may not generate such a citta unless "forced hard"; it is done with reluctance, "when pushed to the limit", or if the perceived "sense pleasures" are enticing. Then he/she is actually "incorporating new "san" or initiating a new habit; thus, the name "sasañkhārika."


### 8.13 Ultimate Realities - Table

1. This Table lists the three kinds of ultimate realities (paramattha dhamma) in this world of 31 realms; they are conditioned, i.e., they arise due to causes and perish subsequently on their own; nothing in this world is permanent. They do not arise if there are no causes, and when that happens Nibbāna is the result.

- Nibbāna is the unconditioned reality. It is attained when the six causes (lobha, dosa, moha, alobha, adosa, amoha) are not there. Then the mind cannot get a "foothold" anywhere in the material world.
- Cultivating the three causes of alobha, adosa, amoha (together with removing lobha, dosa, moha) is needed in following the Noble Eightfold Path, and when wisdom grows, all causes will be rejected by the mind automatically at the end.

2. Ultimate realities can be compared to the fundamental particles in physics. Even though it was believed in the early stages that atoms were the fundamental particles, now there are about 32 of such particles; but now the "particle nature" is dissolving into "energy packets" in elementary particle physics. In Buddha Dhamma, the 28 types of rūpa are very fine, and cannot be "seen" even with abhiññā powers; they are "energy packets."
3. The table also shows how "this world of 31 realms" can be described via the five aggregates, the twelve sense bases, or 6 dhatus and how they incorporate the ultimate realities. There are other ways too. They are all compatible and consistent with each other.

- For example, 89 citta and 52 cetasika are included in the four "mental" aggregates, or in the mind base and mind objects, or just in the viññāna dhātu.
- Also note that the correct word is khandha and NOT skandha for the five "aggregates." The Pāli (and Sinhala) word khandha means a "pile" (as in a pile of sand) and is still used to denote a hill in Sinhala. I just look up the meaning of "skandha" in Sanskrit and it says "Hindu god of war." This is how the true meanings of the original words have been lost due to incorporation of "sophisticated sounding" Sanskrit words with no relevance.

Table: Analysis of the "world" and Nibbāna in terms of ultimate realities.

| Lokaya (World of 31 Realms) |  |  |  | Nibbāna |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Ultimate Realities (4 types) | Citta (89) | Cetasika (52) | Rūpa (28) | Nibbāna |
| Aggregates (5) |  | Vedanā khandha Saññā khandha Sañkhāra khandha Viññāna khandha | Rūpa khandha |  |
| Sense Bases (12) | Mind base | Mind Objects (also includes fine matter or sukuma rūpa) | 5 internal (pasāda) rūpa 5 external rūpa (vaṇna, sadda, gandha, rasa, phoṭ̣habba) |  |
| Dhātu (6) |  | Viññāṇa | pathavi, āpo, tejo, vāyo, ākāsa |  |
|  | sañkhata (sankata in Sinhala) include everything in this world (sentient beings have all six $d h a \bar{t} t u$; everything else in the world, like inert objects and plants, do not have viññāna) |  |  | asañkha ta |
| Notes: <br> 1. Number of citta can be 121 in the alternate scheme; see, The 89 (121) Types of Citta |  |  |  |  |

2. Vedanā, saññā are two cetasika; sañkhāra has the rest of 50 cetasika; for a list of cetasika, see Cetasika (Mental Factors)
3. For fine (sukuma) rūpa, see Rūpa (Material Form) - Table.

### 8.14 <br> 31 Realms of Existence

May 20, 2016; revised May 30, 2018; December 16, 2019; June 11, 2020; August 24, 2020 (revised \#5 and many lifetimes, added \#6); September 6, 2022 (\#2, \#3)

| Realm | Description | Cause of Birth in Realm <br> (Note 1) | Lifetime |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| The Apāyā (Undesired Realms) |  |  |  |
| 1. Niraya (Hell) | Unimaginable suffering. | Anantariya papa kamma, Ten akusala kamma with established wrong views. | Variable |
| 2. Tiracchāna (Animal; Tirisan in Sinhala) | Microscopic to large animals. | Ten akusala kamma with established wrong views. | Variable |
| 3. Peta (Hungry Ghosts; Preta in Sinhala) | Some live in our world unseen to us. | Ten akusala kamma with established wrong views. | Variable |
| 4. Vinipāta Asuras (Asuras) | Some live in our world unseen to us. | Ten akusala kamma with established wrong views. | Variable |
| Sugati (Desired Kāma Loka Realms) |  |  |  |
| 5. Manussa (Human) | Most valued birth of all realms. | Puñña abhisañkhāra (thihethuka, dvihethuka, and ahethuka) | Variable (Note 2) |
| 6. Cātummahārājika Deva | Fine bodies from this realm; no diseases. | Puñ̃a abhisañkhāra. | $\begin{aligned} & 500 \mathrm{CY} \\ & 9 \mathrm{M} \text { HY (Note 3) } \end{aligned}$ |
| 7. Tāvatimsā deva | Sakka lives in this realm. | Puñ̃a abhisañkhāra. | $\begin{aligned} & 1000 \mathrm{CY} \\ & 36 \mathrm{HY} \end{aligned}$ |
| 8. Yama deva |  | Puñ̃a abhisañkhāra. | $\begin{aligned} & 2000 \mathrm{CY} \\ & 144 \mathrm{M} \mathrm{HY} \end{aligned}$ |
| 9. Tusitā deva |  | Puñ̃̃a abhisañkhāra. | $\begin{aligned} & 4000 \mathrm{CY} \\ & 576 \mathrm{M} \mathrm{HY} \end{aligned}$ |
| 10. Nimmānaratī deva |  | Puñ̃a abhisañkhāra. | $\begin{aligned} & 8000 \mathrm{CY} \\ & 2304 \mathrm{M} \text { HY } \end{aligned}$ |
| 11. Paranimmita Vasavattī deva |  | Puñ̃̃a abhisañkhāra. | $\begin{aligned} & 16000 \mathrm{CY} \\ & 9216 \mathrm{M} \mathrm{HY} \end{aligned}$ |
| Rūpa Loka (Fine Material Realms) |  |  |  |
| 12. Brahma Parisajja deva | Jhānic bliss in this and higher realms. | First jhāna (minor) | 1/3 kappa (Note 5) |


| Realm | Description | Cause of Birth in Realm (Note 1) | Lifetime |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 13. Brahma Purohita deva |  | First jhāna (medium) | 1/2 kappa |
| 14. Brahmakayika (Maha Brahma) |  | First jhāna (highest) | 1 kappa |
| 15. Parittaba deva |  | Second jhāna (minor) | 2 kappa |
| 16. Appamanabha deva |  | Second jhāna (medium) | 4 kappa |
| 17. Abhassara deva |  | Second jhāna (highest) | 8 kappa |
| 18. Parittha Subha deva |  | Third jhāna (minor) | 16 kappa |
| 19. Appamana Subha deva |  | Third jhāna (medium) | 32 kappa |
| 20. Subha Kinhaka deva |  | Third jhāna (highest) | 64 kappa |
| 21. Vehappala deva |  | Fourth jhāna various levels from here and above | 500 kappa |
| 22. Asañña satta | Body only; no mind |  | 500 kappa |
| 23. Aviha deva | Only Anāgāmīs |  | 1000 kappa |
| 24. Atappa deva | Only Anāgāmīs |  | 2000 kappa |
| 25. Sudassa deva | Only Anāgāmīs |  | 4000 kappa |
| 26. Sudassi deva | Only Anāgāmīs |  | 8000 kappa |
| 27. Akanittakha deva | Only Anāgāmīs |  | 16000 kappa |
| Arūpa Loka (Immaterial Realms); see Note 4 |  |  |  |
| 28. Ākāsānancāyatana deva |  | Fifth jhāna | 20,000 kappa |
| 29. Viññānañ̃cāyatana deva |  | Sixth jhāna | 40,000 kappa |
| 30. Ākiñcaññāyatana deva |  | Seventh jhāna | 60,000 kappa |
| 31. Nevasaññānāsaññā deva |  | Eighth jhāna | 84,000 kappa |

## Notes:

1. See, "Kamma, Sañkhāra, and Abhisañkhāra - What Is "Intention"?." Akusala kamma are the same as apuññābhisañkhāra (apuñña abhisañkhāra.)
2. The realms and the lifetimes are extracted from various suttā: see, for example, "Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta Interpretation - Uddesa, Niddesa, Patiniddesa", WebLink: suttacentral: Sañkhārupapatti Sutta (MN 120), and "Pathama Mettā Sutta (AN 4.125)."

- In particullar, WebLink: suttacentral: Sāleyvaka Sutta (MN 41) discusses how different types of kamma lead to rebirth among the 31 realms.
- The "WebLink: suttacentral: Visākhā Sutta (AN 8.43)" gives lifetimes of various deva realms.

3. Tihetuka means kusala kamma done with alobha, amoha, and amoha.

- Dvihetuka means kusala kamma done with alobha/amoha or adosa/amoha. They have not removed all ten types of micchā ditthi but may have removed many. They grasp the new bhava without fully understanding, i.e., javana citta at the cuti-patisandhi moment will have "weak javana power."
- In contrast, one with tihetuka birth grasps the new existence with a full understanding of the laws of kamma. Therefore, amoha means removal of the ten types of micchā ditthi.
- Ahetuka births occur purely as a vipāka of a good kamma but without generating any javana citta. They have not removed most of the ten types of micchā ditthi. Thus, "ahetuka" does not mean "without hetu" there. It just means an "unfortunate birth."
- See, "Patisandhi Citta - How the Next Life is Determined According to Gathi" for details.

4. $\mathrm{CE}=$ Celestial Years; M HY $=$ Millions of Human Years.
5. A Mahā Kappa is the time for the Solar system to go through a complete cycle. A quarter of this (or an Asañkheyya Kappa or 20 kappa) is the life of the Earth or the Solar system. The solar system is born, destroyed, and reborn like living beings. See, "Buddhism and Evolution - Aggañña Sutta (DN 27)." The Buddha describes the length of one kappa in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Pabbata Sutta (SN 15.5)." The lifetimes of many realms given in Ref. 9; in the English translation, the lifetimes can be found in section WebLink: suttacentral: 18.6.2. Age Limit.
6. The connection between various jhānic states and the corresponding Brahma realms in, "WebLink: accesstoinsight.org: The Thirty-one Planes of Existence."
7. The names of the four arūpa realms are descriptive of their characteristics.

- Akāsānancāyatana comes from "ākāsa" + "ananta" or infinite + "āyatana," or the realm where the infinite space is the focus of the mind (ārammana).
- Vinnānancāyatana comes from "viñ̃āạa" + "ananta" or infinite + "āyatana," or the realm where the infinite viñ̃āna is the focus of the mind (ārammana).
- Ākincannayatana comes from "ākin" + "ca" or mind + "āyatana," or the realm where the focus of the mind ( $\overline{\text { arammana }}$ ) is only the mind.
- Neva saññ̄ n̄̄ $\operatorname{sañña} \bar{a}$ comes from "na" or not + "asaññ"" or without perception + " $\bar{a}$," or not + "saññ"" or perception, i.e., the realm where one cannot say whether there is either "no perception" or "there is perception." One could go on for a short time without perception (just like in the asañña realm), but it comes back since the "bhava" is still there.

8. The following video gives a good general description of the 31 realms:

WebLink: youtube: Bhante Anandajoti: The Planes of Exist
9. All the realms and their characteristics detailed at "WebLink: suttacentral: Dhammahadayavibhanga"

- English translation at "WebLink: suttacentral: 18. Analysis OfThe Heart OfThe Teaching."

January 24, 2019: Relevant post: "Buddhism and Evolution - Aggañña Sutta (DN 27)."

## IX Paṭicca Samuppāda

o "Paticca Samuppāda - "Pati+ichcha"+"Sama+uppāda""

- Subsection: "Sakkāya Ditthi and Paticca Samuppāda"
- "Sakkāya Ditthi - Wrong View of "Me" and "Mine""
- "What Reincarnates? - Concept Of A Lifestream"
- "Anatta and Sakkāya Ditthi - Two Different Concepts"
- Subsection: "Paticca Samuppāda - Essential Concepts"
- "Nibbāna - Rāgakkhaya Dosakkhaya Mohakkhaya - Part 1"
- Pañca Nīvarana and Sensual Pleasures (Kāma)
- What is "Kāma"? It is not Just Sex
- Icchā, Tanhā, Kāma - Root Causes of Suffering
- Jāti- Different Types of Births
- Bhava - Kammic Energy That Can Power an Existence
- Bhava and Punabbhava - Kammic Energy Giving Rise to Renewed Existence
- Concepts of Upādāna and Upādānakkhandha
- Difference Between Physical Rūpa and Rūpakkhandha
- Where Are Memories "Stored"? - Connection to Pañcakkhandha
- Loka Sutta - Origin and Cessation of the World
- Dukkha Samudaya Starts With Samphassa-Jā-Vedanā
- Key Steps of Kammic Energy Accumulation
- Generating Kammic Energy in the "Upādāna Paccayā Bhava"
- Six Root Causes - Loka Samudaya (Arising of Suffering) and Loka Nirodhaya (Nibbāna)
- Subsection: "Kamma and Paticca Samuppāda"
- Kamma and Paticca Samuppāda - Introduction
- Kāma Assāda - A Root Cause of Suffering
- Gati (Habits/Character) Determine Births - Samsappanīya Sutta
- Subsection: "Paticca Samuppāda, Tilakkhana, Four Noble Truths"
- "Paticca Samuppāda - Introduction"
- What Did the Buddha Mean by a "Loka"?
- Future Suffering (Loka/Dukkha Samudaya) Starts With Sensory Input (Ārammana)
- Sotāpanna - One With the "Wider Worldview" of the Buddha
- Sotāpannā - Just Starting on the Noble Path
- Yoniso Manasikāra and Paticca Samuppāda
- Dhamma - Different Meanings Depending on the Context
- Dhammānudhamma Patipatti - Connection to Paticca Samuppāda/Tilakkhana
- Subsection: "Understanding the Terms in Paticca Samuppāda"
- "Distortion of Pāli Keywords in Paticca Samuppāda"
- Subsection: "Sañkhāra - Many Meanings""
- "Sañkhāra - Should Not be Translated as a Single Word"
- "Kamma and Sañkhāra, Cetanā and Sañcetanā"
- "Kusala-Mūla Sañkhāra Are Needed to Attain Nibbāna"
- "Rebirths Take Place According to Abhisañkhāra"
- Subsection: "Viññāña - Two Critical Meanings’"
- "Abhisañkhāra Lead to Kamma Viñ̃ñāna"
- "Two Types of Kamma Viññāna"
- "Summary of Key Concepts About Viññāna and Sañkhāra"
- "Anidassana, Appatigha Rūpa Due to Anidassana Viññāna"
- Subsection: "Memory, Dhammā, and Viññāña Dhātu"
- "Critical Influence of Wrong Views on Akusala Citta"
- "Near-Death Experiences (NDE): Brain Is Not the Mind"
- "Gandhabba (Mental Body) Separating from Physical Body in Jhāna"
- "Where Are Memories Stored? - Viññāna Dhātu"
- "Citta Vithi - Fundamental Sensory Unit"
- "Does any Object (Rūpa) Last only 17 Thought Moments?"
- "Phassa (Contact) - Contact With Pasāda Rūpa"
- "Arising of the Five Aggregates With an Ārammana"
- "Paticca Samuppāda - Overview"
- "How Are Paticca Samuppāda Cycles Initiated?"
- "What Does "Paccaya" Mean in Paticca Samuppāda?"
- Subsection: "Paticca Samuppāda Cycles"
- "Avyākata Paticca Samuppāda for Vipāka Viññ̄āna"
- "Akusala-Mūla Upapatti Paticca Samuppāda"
- "Kusala-Mūla Paticca Samuppāda"
- "Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda"
- Subsection: "Paticca Samuppāda in Plain English"
- "Introduction - What is Suffering?"
- "Introduction - 2 - The Three Categories of Suffering"
- "Avijijā paccayā Sañkhāra"
- "Sañkhāra paccayā Viññāña - 1"
- "Sañkhāra paccayā Viññāna - 2"
- "Viññāna paccayā Nāmarūpa"
- "Nāmarūpa paccayā Salāyatana"
- "Difference between Phassa and samphassa"
- "Phassa paccayā Vedana....to Bhava"
- "Bhava paccayā Jati....Jara, Marana, ..."
- Imasmim Sati Idam Hoti - What Does It Really Mean?
- Upapatti Paticca Samuppāda (How We Create Our Own Rebirths)
- Patiloma Paticca Samuppāda - Key to Nibbāna
- Subsection: "Patthāna Dhammā"
- "Patthāna Dhamma - Connection to Cause and Effect (Hetu Phala)"
- "Anantara and Samanantara Paccaya"
- "Asevana and Annamanna Paccaya"
- Subsection: "Assāda, Ādīnava, Nissarana"
- "Assāda, Ādīnava, Nissarana - Introduction"
- "How Perceived Pleasures (Assāda) lead to Dukkha"
- "Kāma Guna, Kāma, Kāma Rāga, Kāmaccandha"
- "Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways"
- "Feelings: Sukha, Dukha, Somanassa, and Domanassa"
- "What is "Kāma"? It is not Just Sex"
- "Kāma Assāda Start with Phassa Paccayā Vedanā or Samphassa Jā Vedanā"


### 9.1 Paṭicca Samuppāda - "Pati+ichcha" + "Sama+uppāda"

## Revised November 3, 2018; July 29, 2019; re-written March 15, 2022

> "Yo paticcasamuppādaím passati,
> so Dhammaì passati.
> Yo Dhammaì passati, so paticcasamuppādam passati."
"One who sees paticcasamuppāda sees the (Buddha) Dhamma.
One who sees the (Buddha) Dhamma sees paticcasamuppāda."

## (WebLink: suttacentral: Mahāhatthipadopama Sutta (MN 28); at the end)

- Pațicca Samuppāda explains how we accumulate kammic energy to "power up" future births. That sustains the rebirth process and will bring rebirths mostly in the apāyās. Thus, Paṭicca Samuppāda explains how future suffering arises.
- Whenever we get attached to sensory inputs (ārammana) and think, speak, act with lobha, dosa, moha, we will accumulate such kammic energy. We will discuss that in upcoming posts.
- Therefore, it is critical to understand Patticca Samuppāda, see the next post for details: "Paticca Samuppāda - Overview."
- Here is the pronunciation of Paticca Samuppāda:


## WebLink: Pronunciation of Paticca Samuppāda

Paṭicca samuppāda, translated into English as "Dependent Origination," does not convey the phrase's accurate, complete meaning. It is better to keep the same name and understand what it means.

## - The closest English translation is "Willful attachment leading to the existence of similar kind."

1. Paticca = patti+icca; here "patil" is bonding, and "icca" (pronounced "ichcha"; see \#12 below) is liking.

- Thus, Patticca is "bonding to something willingly" or "getting attached to something through a liking for it."
- This bonding depends on one's gati (habits and likings), which in turn are due to deep-seated $\bar{a} s a v a s$ (cravings).
" There are many posts on the website on this key Pāli term: "gati." One can get a list of relevant posts by typing "gati" in the "Search" box at the top right. Note that "gati" is pronounced as "gathi."

2. Samuppāda = "sama" (same or similar) + "uppāda" (generation), i.e., an existence (bhava) of similar quality or kind.

- Thus samuppāda means leading to existence or experience corresponding to defilements that made one attach to the situation (ārammana) in the first place.
- Everything in this world arises due to six root causes: lobha, dosa, moha and alobha, adosa, amoha; see, "Six Root Causes - Loka Samudaya (Arising of Suffering) and Loka Nirodhaya (Nibbāna)."
- Different types of pațicca samuppāda cycles operate based on which kind of causes are involved; see, "Paticca Samuppāda Cycles."


## Connection to Gati - Simple Example

3. For example, when we generate potent hatefil thoughts about a person, we could be in the mindset of an animal. At that moment, we may even behave like an animal, hitting and clawing at that person if things get out of hand. Even if we may not act physically, we will have that "animal-like" mindset.

- At that moment, we generate a gati (character) corresponding to "bhava," or existence similar to an animal. That, in turn, leads to grasping a corresponding "bhava." Then "bhava paccaya $j \bar{a} t i "$ leads to a similar "jāti" or birth, i.e., to act like an animal.
- We generated a corresponding "bhava" in our mind because we got "bonded" to that situation via hateful thoughtful thoughts; we developed a corresponding "bhava" in our minds. Results (effects) correspond to causes: cause and effect. If we keep creating the same kind of "bhava," that leads to forming "gati" or habits. They are all interconnected.
- Strong feelings under such conditions create subtle energies called "kammic energy." That energy can build up to create a subtle "manomaya kāya" (gandhabba kāya) corresponding to a new existence (bhava.)

4. Now, if we keep getting into fights with that person (or with others) similarly, we will be building up that "bhava," and this could lead to the formation of a very potent kamma seed; see, "Sañkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka."

- Furthermore, it becomes a "gati" as well (see, "Samsāāic Habits and Asavas"). Then it is easier to get into such situations, and a vicious cycle starts leading to that gati taking hold.
- Here, it is critical to understand that "uppāda" or "birth" is according to the "bonding with liking" (paṭi icca) for CAUSES, not the birth itself. For example, no one wants to be born a dog. But one cannot avoid being born a dog if one willingly does "lowly things" appropriate for dogs and thus cultivates "gati suitable for a dog."

5. Now we combine the two terms: "Paṭicca Samuppāda" means "attachment to something leading to the generation of the corresponding "bhava" (and thus jāti).

- The establishment of a bhava, in turn, leads to a corresponding jāti or birth: "when one gets attached, it sets up the likelihood of a new birth of similar characteristics."
- For example, when someone acts with greed out of habit, they are prone to behave that way during a lifetime. Furthermore, it could be manifested more powerfully in a future birth by being born a Peta (hungry ghost).


## Two Types of Paticca Samuppāda

6. Therefore, the establishment of an "existence" (bhava) could be two ways:

- Even during the current lifetime, a similar situation can arise. For example, "gati" formed via above mentioned "fights" with other people will tend to draw oneself to a similar outcome even with the slightest provocation. That is a "pavutti bhava" (and jāti) that lasts for a short time during current life; see, "Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda - Bhava and Jāti Within a Lifetime." and "Idappaccayātā Paticca Samuppāda."
- If this hateful "gati" becomes profoundly ingrained and becomes a potent kamma seed, that could come to the mind at the dying moment. That could lead to a hateful "uppatti bhava" in the next existence, as an animal or even in the niraya (hell); see, "Akusala-Mūla Uppatti Paticca Samuppāda" and "Bhava Kammic Energy That Can Power an Existence." [uppatti : [f.] rebirth; coming forth; origin. upapatti : [f.] birth; rebirth; approach.]


## A Uppatti Bhava Can Lead to Many Births (Jāti)

7. Here, one should also be able to make a distinction between "bhava" (existence) and "jāti" (birth). For example, a uppatti bhava may give rise to many births until the kammic energy in that kamma seed wears out; see, "Bhava and Jāti - States of Existence and Births Therein."

- That is why, even though the human bhava is RARE, one may be reborn a human many times at a stretch. Only those born human in a previous life (or a few lives) may be able to remember those lives; see, "Evidence for Rebirth."
- Different types of Paṭicca Samuppāda cycles discussed at: "Paticca Samuppāda Cycles."


## We Attach via Taṇhā and Avijjā

8. By perceiving illusory happiness, we willingly attached to pleasurable things. We also get attached to stuff via hate, and the root cause is an attachment to something related.

- For example, we get "attached" to a person with hate if that person is blocking our access to something that we like. We keep thinking about how bad he is, etc.
 fused or attached to" in English) means; see, "Tanhā - How We Attach Via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance."
- Therefore, it is essential to realize that "tanhh $\vec{a}$ " does not mean just greed. It could also be due to hate or dislike.


## Unimaginable Suffering in Some existences (Among the 31 Realms)

9. Ultimately, both desire and hatred arise due to ignorance (avijj $\bar{a}$ ). Ignorance of not knowing the unfruitful nature of "this world" of 31 realms, ie., "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta."

- We think that living is pleasurable, but lives in some realms are filled with unimaginable suffering. Human birth is rare.
- There is unimaginable suffering in the lower four realms (see "How the Buddha Described the Chance of Rebirth in the Human Realm"').


## We Create Our Future Lives!

10. There is no one, or no external force, keeping us bound to "this world" of 31 realms; see, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma." Just like an octopus grabbing its prey with all eight legs, we willingly cling to things in "this world" of 31 realms filled with suffering.

- Unless we see the true unfruitful and even dreadful (in the lower four realms) nature of 'this world" by comprehending "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta," we will not let go of it.


## Use Pāli Words Without Translating to Other Languages

11. The Buddha advised NOT TO translate keywords in Pāli (and even verses in deep suttas) to other languages. In most cases, there are no equivalent words in other languages.

The translation of Paticca Samuppāda to Sanskrit as Pratittyasamutpāda is an excellent example of this problem. See the explanation of Pratittyasamutpāda (the Sanskrit word for Paṭicca Samuppāda) on Wikipedia: WebLink: wiki: Pratītyasamutpāda

- I think you will agree that it is confusing at best, with multiple possible meanings.
- Even though "Dependent Origination" is better, it still does not convey the whole meaning.
- On the other hand, for someone knowledgeable in Pāli or Sinhala, the meaning is evident in the name itself: paṭi $+i c c a$ sama + uppāda.


## Pronunciation of Pāli Words

12. It is highly beneficial to learn how to pronounce Pāli words. When the European scholars started writing the Pāli Tipitaka with the English alphabet, they came up with a unique system that I call the "Tipitaka English" Convention. It has helped keep the 'word length" short.

- For example, even though written as "gati," its pronunciation is "gathi." Similarly, "icca" is for "ichcha." If written as pronounced, "dhammacakkappavattana" would be "dhammachakkappavaththana."
- See "Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars - Part 1" and "Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars - Part 2" for details.
- A pronunciation guide at "Pāli Glossary - (A-K)" and "Pāli Glossary - (L-Z). "
- Don't be discouraged. Start getting used to the method of learning the meanings/pronunciations gradually. Learn the common keywords first.

Next, "Paticca Samuppāda - Overview,"

### 9.2 Sakkāya Diṭṭhi and Paṭicca Samuppāda

February 4, 20121
Sakkāya Ditṭhi arises in those who do not understand the Paṭicca Samuppāda process. We will discuss the steps in the Paticca Samuppāda process to clarify this critical point.

Sakkāya Ditthi - Wrong View of "Me" and "Mine"
What Reincarnates? - Concept Of A Lifestream
Anatta and Sakkāya Ditthi - Two Different Concepts
Nibbāna - Rāgakkhaya Dosakkhaya Mohakkhaya - Part 1

### 9.2.1 Sakkāya Diṭthi - Wrong View of "Me" and "Mine"

February 4, 2021; revised February 5, 2021 (added \#9 and \#10); major revision June 19, 2022
Sakkāya Diṭthi is the wrong view of an unchanging essence associated with a human. Materialists who don't believe in rebirth - believe the essence is one's physical body. The other extreme is the belief that there is a "soul-like" entity that survives the death of the physical body.

## Definition of Sakkāya Diṭthi

1. Average humans who have not been exposed to the true teachings of the Buddha have sakkaya ditt thi. Several suttas describe sakkāya ditthi with the verse of Ref. 1. In the following, I will discuss the meaning of that verse.

- One group has the wrong view of uccheda ditthi. They regard the physical body to be equivalent to "me." They believe that all mental phenomena arise in the body and are thus totally associated with the body. Materialists of the present day belong to this category. They believe that mental phenomena (thoughts) arise in the brain, and thus, they also stop with the death of the body.
- Therefore, those with uccheda dițthi also believe that vedanā, saññ̄, sañkhāra, and viññāna are equivalent to "me." When the physical body dies, that is the end of all five entities, i.e. the five aggregates or pañcakkhandha.
- Thus, those with uccheda ditthi have those 5 types of wrong views about an existence that is limited to just one life.

2. The other group has the view that something unique to me ("essence of me that will never change and cannot be destroyed) must be moving from life to life. They don't know what it is but the concept is the same as that of a "soul" in many other religions. As we know, in those religions, a soul will live forever either in the heaven or the hell.

- They have one of the following three views regarding their physical body: it represents me, it is "in me", or "me" is in the body temporarily. Again, that "me" is a "soul-like entity."
- They will also have the same views about the mental factors (vedanā,saññā,sañkhāra, and viññāṇa) as well. For example, regarding vedana they have one of the following views: it represents me, it is "in me", or "me" is in vedana temporarily.
- People belonging to most major religions today have these 15 types of wrong views of an "unchanging soul" and that is sassata dittthi.

Those are the $\mathbf{2 0}$ types of wrong views about existence: vīsativatthuk $\overline{\boldsymbol{a}}$ sakk $\overline{\boldsymbol{a}} \boldsymbol{y} \boldsymbol{a}$ ditthi. I have done a deeper analysis with Tipiṭaka references in "Sakkāya Ditthi - Getting Rid of Deeper Wrong Views."

## Getting Rid of Sakkāya Diṭ̣hi Is the First Step to Nibbāna

3. To understand why those are wrong views (per Buddha Dhamma,) first, we need to clarify what kind of suffering the Buddha said can be stopped.

- When an average human thinks about suffering, they would think about the FEELING of pain or suffering. That could be physical suffering (injuries. sicknesses) or mental anguish like depression.
- But the Buddha taught that those kinds of suffering could only be "managed" but cannot be stopped. They can be managed by eating well, exercising, and following medical advice for injuries/sicknesses. One can control mental suffering partially by living a simple, moral life.

4. However, the Buddha said we must pay more attention to possible suffering in future lives. Those lives are yet to arise, and we can stop ALL suffering associated with future births. He taught that the death of the physical body does not end our suffering. One will be reborn either as human again or in one of 31 realms, including the animal realm.

- He said that most births in this process (called saṃsāra) are in the lowest four realms (apāyās) and that the animal realm is one of those four. Even though we cannot see those beings in the other realms, we can see the suffering of the animals, which is much harsher than for humans.
- The critical point is that we can stop such future suffering by attaining Nibbāna.
- When one understands the futility of seeking happiness in this world, one gets rid of sakkāya dittthi and becomes a Sotāpanna. Then one follows the Noble Eightfold Path and becomes an Arahant, thereby attaining Nibbāna.


## The Worst Wrong View Is Uccheda Diṭthi (Materialism)

5. From the above discussion, it is obvious that Buddha Dhamma's main benefit is to help people attain Nibbāna and thus be free of future suffering in the rebirth process (samsāra.) The current body is a "result," and vedanā that arises in that physical body cannot be stopped. We note that Ven. Mahā Moggallāna died a horrible death after being beaten; that was due to a residue of an annantariya kamma from a previous life.. However, ALL suffering for Ven. Mahā Moggallāna ended after his death (Parinibbāna.) For all others, there will be more future suffering after death.

- Thus it should be evident that the worst wrong view is to assume that one's life ends at death. If that is the case, there is not much benefit in studying Buddha Dhamma at a deeper level. One could be a "secular Buddhist" and just try to live a moral life. However, the term "secular Buddhist" is an oxymoron, just like the term "alone in a crowd" or "walking dead."
- Having the sassata ditthi (believing in a permanent soul) is also wrong and is the other extreme. They may be reluctant (or afraid) to engage in immoral deeds for fear of being sent to hell permanently but do not see any drawbacks in engaging in "legitimate sense pleasures."
- I say that those with the uccheda ditṭhi may be worse because they DO NOT NEED to have AN INTRINSIC moral compass. Even though most materialists DO live perfectly moral lives, they could be more susceptible to commit offenses on impulse (when temptations become strong enough.)


## If There is No Soul, "What" Is Reborn?

6. The two views of materialism and soul-view are easy to understand.

Materialism means one lives this life, and when one dies, that is the end. Those with the soul-view do their best to live a moral life and hope to be born in Heaven (Abrahamic religions) or in a Brahma realm which is supposed to be permanent (Hinduism.)

- Most people have difficulty understanding the Buddha's view. Since Buddha's view involves rebirth, it is difficult for them to see how it differs from the soul-view. The question that is frequently asked is: "What is reborn, if there is no soul?" Paṭicca Samuppāda explains that.
- One quick way to see the difference is to compare Buddha's view with Hinduism's. In Abrahamic religions, one will be born either in heaven or hell, i.e., there are not many rebirths. But in both Buddha Dhamma and Hinduism, there can be numerous rebirths. In Buddhism, that process ends when one attains Nibbāna (as an Arahant). In Hinduism, it ends when one is born in the realm of Mahā Brahma.
- The other key difference between Hinduism and Buddhism is the following. In Hinduism, future lives are "reincarnations" of the same $\overline{\text { atman }}$ (similar to a soul in Abrahamic religions.) Reincarnation implies the same "essence" (as a soul) that moves from one life to another.
- In Buddha Dhamma, there is no such soul or ātman that goes from life to life. Instead of "REINCARNATION," it is REBIRTH. That is THE crucial difference.


## How Is Rebirth Different From Reincarnation?

7. Reincarnation implies that there is SOMETHING unique AND unchanging in a human gets carried to the next life. The body can take different forms, but there is a "unique life force" (my characterization of "ātman") that remains unchanged from life to life.

- "WebLink: holy-bhagavad-gita.org: Bhagavad Gita: Chapter 2, Verse 22" explains that as, "As a person sheds worn-out garments and wears new ones, likewise, at the time of death, the soul casts off its wornout body and enters a new one."
- Thus, one may be born with a "different body" (outer garments), but the essence (personal identity or "ātman") remains.
- The mechanism is very different in Buddha Dhamma. Paṭicca Samuppāda dictates the process. "Personality" can change drastically from one existence (bhava) to another. I have tried to explain it in the post "What Reincarnates? - Concept of a Lifestream."


## Concept of a Bhava - No Personality Involved

8. In Buddha Dhamma, a critical idea is the concept of a "bhava." A "lifestream" makes transitions from bhava to bhava based SOLELY on kammic energy. There is NO "personality" that remains FIXED.

Different types of unwise thinking, speech, and actions (dictated by different types of sañkhāra) lead to different kinds of bhava and $j \bar{a} t i$.

- However, in adjacent lives, there will be similarities in character/habits represented by the term "gati." One's gati will significantly influence the next bhava. For example, if one lived an immoral life suitable for an animal, it is likely that they WOULD BE born an animal.
- Pațicca Samuppāda explains that. Sañkhāra (one's thoughts, speech, and actions) that arise due to avijj $\bar{a}$ is at the beginning of the Paticca Samuppāda process. Then towards the end, it leads to a particular type of bhava (existence) and birth ( $j \bar{a} t i$ ) in that existence.
- For example, if a human cultivates arupāvacara jhāna (with āneñjābhisañkhāra), that will lead to existence as an arupāvacara Brahma. See \#5 of "Sañkhāra - What It Really Means" for an explanation of how different types of bhava arise due to three broad categories of abhisañkhāra.


## All Bhava Lead to Suffering

9. The akusala-mūla Pațicca Samuppāda process describes how (abhi)sañkhāra done with avijjā LEAD to various bhava and jāti. This is the first step in the akusala-mūla Paticca Samuppāda process: "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra." Towards the end, it leads to bhava.

- Those bhava lead to births ( $j \bar{a} t i$ ) among the 31 realms. Without exception, any $j \bar{a} t i$ ends up suffering. That is the last step in the akusala-mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda process: " $\bar{j} \bar{a} t i ~ p a c c a y a ̄ ~ j a r a ̄, ~ m a r a n ̣ a, ~$ soka-parideva-dukkha-domanassupāyasā sambhavan'ti."
- In upcoming posts, we will go through the steps in Paticca Samuppāda to further clarify how the wrong view of sakkāya ditṭhi sustains this process that keeps one bound to samsāra, the rebirth process. That is not the reincarnation of a "soul."
- Until one understands that process, one has $a v i j j \bar{a}$, i.e., ignorant about the Four Noble Truths.
- There is one more aspect that needs to be understood. Let us discuss that now.


## Difference Between Wrong Views and Wrong Perceptions

10. Most texts describe sakkāya ditthi as "self-illusion" or "personality belief," i.e., "belief that a self or I exist" (you can Google "sakkāya ditthi" and see). Here it is essential to understand that there is a difference between "wrong view" and "wrong perception." A Sotāpanna would have removed the wrong view (dittthi), but not the false perception (sañña $\overline{\text {. }}$ )

- But this perception (sañ $\tilde{n} \bar{a}$ ) of a "self" (or a "soul" which is also called " $\bar{a} t m a "$ ) is NOT sakk $\bar{a} y a$ ditṭhi per Tipitaka, as we discuss below. That is a sañ̃ña (perception) that we have carried from life to life. For a discussion on saññā, see "What is Saññā (Perception)?".
- The deeply-embedded idea of a "self" or an innate sense of "me" is rooted in the manna cetasika.
- If one gets offended if treated with disrespect, that means one still has māna left. Even an Anāgāmi could be somewhat annoyed if they perceives being mistreated. A component of māna - called asmi māna - is still left at the Anāgāmi stage. Māna is removed not at the Sotāpanna stage but at the Arahant stage.


## A Sotāpanna Removes Only Wrong Views About an "Unchanging Self"

11. At the Sotāpanna stage, the wrong view (ditṭhi) that there is something unchanging and permanent, like a "soul" is associated with oneself, goes away. Simultaneously, the wrong view that one can remove future suffering by just living a moral life (sīlabbata parāmāsa)will go away too. (However, living a moral life is necessary too.) Furthermore, any doubts about the teachings of the Buddha (vicikicchā) will also disappear simultaneously.

- When one can see that there is no "real essence" (like a "soul" or a "ātma") associated with a living being, this wrong view of sakkāya ditṭhi goes away. A lifestream evolves, according to Paṭicca Samuppāda; see, "Anattā in Anattalakkahana Sutta - No Soul or a Ātma."
- However, it is incorrect to believe that the perception of a "me" will go away at the Sotāpanna stage. That perception completely goes away only at the Arahant stage. See "Vipallāsa (Ditthi, Saññā, Citta) Affect Sañkhāra."


## References

1. The following verse appears in many suttas, for example in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Cūlavedalla Sutta (MN 44)": "assutavā puthujjano, ariyānaì adassāv̄ ariyadhammassa akovido ariyadhamme avinīto, sappurisānaì adassāv̄̄ sappurisadhammassa akovido sappurisadhamme avinīto, rūpaì attato samanupassati, rūpavantain vā attānaì, attani va rūpaim, rūpasmimin vā attānarin. Vedanai் ... pe ... saññā̀in ... sañkhāre ... viññānain attato samanupassati, viñnāạnavantaì vā attānaì, attani vā viññānaim, viññānasmim vā attānami. Evaí kho, $\bar{a} v u s o$ visākha, sakkāyadiṭ! hi hotī."

# What Reincarnates? - Concept of a Lifestream 

Revised August 3, 2016; revised March 27, 2018; September 6, 2019; November 12, 2019; August 22, 2020; re-written February 8, 2021; added \#9 February 9, 2021; February 14, 2021 (\#3 and \#8); revised August 7, 2022

## Reincarnation Versus Rebirth

1. Reincarnation is a Hindu concept where the "ātma" ("ātman") or the soul remains the same but takes a different form. The Rigveda compares it to a person discarding an old suit and wearing a new outfit. See "Sakkāya Ditthi - Wrong View of "Me" and "Mine."

- In Buddha Dhamma, it is a rebirth since there is no soul to reincarnate. We have accumulated many "kamma seeds" (kamma bïja) which contain various "habits" and "character qualities" (called "gati") In our long journey through samisāra. Those lead to different types of rebirths; see, "Sañkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka."
- At the end of this human existence, the kammic energy of the kamma seed for the present life is exhausted. At that moment, a new life starts with a new potent kamma seed. The selection of a new seed itself is a complicated process and depends on the potency of the available kamma seeds, but it happens within a thought moment.
- Let us first summarize Buddha's description of sentient life. The following facts are indisputable.


## No Discernible Beginning to Saimsāra (Rebirth Process)

2. During the night of attaining the Buddhahood, the Buddha looked back at his rebirth process. He was able to scan eons in mere moments, but no matter how far back he looked, he could not see a "beginning." He has given many similes (analogies) to indicate the "unimaginable length of the rebirth process."

- For example, WebLink: suttacentral: Assu Sutta (SN 15.3) states: "Bhikkhus, this rebirth process has no discernible (na pannāyati) beginning. Beings whose minds are covered by ignorance and are bound to this rebirth process with bonds of craving."
- Birth as a human is very rare among all those rebirths, as stated, for example, in the WebLink: suttacentral: Nakhasikha Sutta (SN 20.2). "bhikkhus, sentient beings reborn as humans are few as this bit of sand on my fingernail. But those not reborn as humans are many as the sand on this great Earth. Therefore, you should strive diligently and without delay to end this suffering in the rebirth process."
- Further details in "Rebirth - Connection to Suffering in the First Noble Truth."


## The Concept of a Lifestream

3. The Buddha used the term "satta" to describe a living being going through that rebirth process. In the WebLink: suttacentral: Satta Sutta (SN 23.2), Ven. Rādha asked the Buddha: "..they speak of this thing called a 'sentient being.' How is a sentient being defined?"

- The Buddha answered: "Rādha, when there is liking (chanda), strong liking (rāgo), reveling (nand $\bar{l}$ ), and the tendency to attach ( $\tanh \bar{a})$, then a 'sentient being with cravings' (satta) is spoken of." Note that the Pāli word 'satta' means "to attach."
- In other words, as long as a 'sentient being' highly values things in this world, it will be reborn in this world. It could be reborn, a human, an animal, a Deva, etc., at various times. Thus, associating any such existence with an "unchanging entity" (such as a soul) is impossible. When born a human, a satta behaves like a human, and when born an animal, it acts like an animal, etc.
- I use the English word to describe "satta" as a "lifestream." The term "sentient being" is more suitable to refer to a "satta." On the other hand, "a lifestream" refers to the process that a satta goes through in Sainsära.
- A given lifestream can take various forms in the rebirth process. There is no "core" or 'soul" or 'ätman" to talk about! On the other hand, as long as that fact is not understood, there is a satta in the rebirth process.


## A Bodhisatta is a Special Satta

4. Buddha Gotama, like any other Buddha, made a heroic effort to become a Buddha through many eons.

When he made enough progress, he was declared a "Bodhisatta" by Buddha Deepankara many eons ago.

- A Bodhisatta is a special satta destined to become a Buddha. "Bodhi" means "towards liberation/release." When a satta has fulfilled enough paramitā to become a Buddha, he is declared a "Bodhisatta" by existing Buddhas. See, "Pāramitā and Niyata Vivarana - Myths or Realities?."
- Even after becoming a Bodhisatta, it is possible to be born in the animal realm (but NOT in the other three realms in the apāyās.)
- Therefore, a sentient being is born in any given bhava ONLY according to causes and effects. That is described in Paṭicca Samuppāda, which starts with "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" and ends in "bhava paccayā jāti" and jāti paccayā jarā, marana, soka-parideva-dukkha-domanassupāyasā sambhavan'ti.
- There is no reference to a "specia/particular being" in that whole process. Future existences (bhava) and births ( $j \bar{a} t i)$ within that existence only depend on past kamma (sañkhāra) done with avijjā!


## Transcending the "Satta State" to Attain Puggala Stages

5. All other living beings (sattā) overcome the "satta state" by learning how to do that from a Buddha or a true disciple of a Buddha (Ariya.)

- Note that "satta" is pronounced, "saththa." See "Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars - Part 1."
- There are eight such Ariyā (Noble Persons) as described in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Pathamapuggala Sutta (AN 8.59)," for example.
- They are: "Sotāpanno, sotāpattiphalasacchikiriyāya paṭipanno (sotāpanna anugāmi), sakadāgāmī, sakadāgāmiphalasacchikiriyāya paṭipanno (sakadāgāmi anugāmi), anāgām̄̄, anāgāmiphalasacchikiriyāya paṭipanno (anāgāmī anugāmi), arahā, arahattāya patipanno (arahant anugāmi)."
- Another special satta overcomes the "satta state" with his efforts. That is a Pacceka Buddha. A Pacceka Buddha has not fulfilled ALL the paramitās to become a Sammāsambuddha like Buddha Gotama. Therefore, a Pacceka Buddha cannot explain Dhamma like a Sammāsambuddha. Not that many sattā can attain Nibbāna during a Pacceka Buddha.


## All Sattās Are Trapped in the Rebirth Process

6. Therefore, until the Sotāpanna Anugāmi stage is attained, all sentient beings are trapped in the rebirth process.

- They all have not overcome the "satta state" and thus could be born in the apāyās in the future.
- The lifestream of a satta in ANY of those 31 realms will flow ceaselessly until the fruitlessness AND danger in remaining in the rebirth process are comprehended.
- The danger is that most births in the rebirth process are in the lowest four realms (apāyās.) The reason for that is in the verse that describes a "satta" in \#3 above: "Rādha, when there is liking (chanda), strong liking (rago), reveling (nand $\overline{\text { l }}$ ), and the tendency to attach ( $\tanh h \bar{a}$ ), then a 'sentient being' is spoken of."
- The Buddha referred to a sentient being ("satta") as one with attachment to "worldly pleasures."


## Rest of the Satta Sutta

7. After explaining to Ven. Rādha the meaning of a "satta," Buddha explained to him why those sentient beings are trapped in the rebirth process filled with unimaginable suffering.

Here is the English translation at Sutta Central (my revisions are in bold):
"Suppose some boys or girls were playing with sandcastles. As long as they're not rid of greed, desire, fondness, thirst, passion, and craving for those sandcastles, they cherish them, fancy them, treasure them, and treat them as their own. But when they grow up, they get rid of greed, desire, fondness, thirst, passion, and craving for those useless sandcastles. Then they scatter, destroy, and demolish them with their hands and feet, making them unplayable.

In the same way, you should scatter, destroy, and demolish the desire for mind-pleasing things in this world and reject them. And you should practice for the ending of craving. You should scatter, destroy, and demolish the desire for feeling ... perception ... sañkhāre ... Viñ̃̃ānaị, making them unplayable.
Taṇhākkhayo hi, rādha, nibbānan" ti (Rādha, Nibbāna is the elimination of taṇhā)."

## Overcoming the Desire to Build Sandcastles

8. Thus, the Buddha compared the behavior of any living being in the "satta state" to children enjoying building sandcastles on a beach. Due to their ignorance (avijja, ) they don't realize the futility of building sandcastles for enjoyment.

- In the same way, until one hears and comprehends the actual teachings of the Buddha (Four Noble Truths/Pațicca Samuppāda/Tilakkhana,) one would not "see" the futility AND dangers in enjoying sense pleasures in this world. Children building sand castles only waste their time. On the other hand, satt $\bar{a}$ enjoying sensory pleasures pave the way to rebirths in the apāyās without realizing it.
- When one starts "seeing" the true nature of this world, one removes sakkāya ditṭhi and becomes a Sotāpanna Anugāmi. That "vision" is fully established when one also removes any doubts (vicikicchā) and also sees that rituals (sīlabbata parāmāsa) will not get one released from the rebirth process. One is at the Sotāpanna stage at that point.
- However, that is only the beginning of the Noble Eightfold Path. Only the diṭthi vipallāsa (wrong vision) has been removed yet. With that "new vision" (Sammā Dittthi), one needs to follow the other seven steps and get to Sammā Samādhi to remove sañn̄ā vipallāsa at the Anāgāmi stage and the citta vipallāsa at the Arahant stage. See, "Vipallāsa (Ditthi, Saññā, Citta) Affect Sañkhāra."


## Puthujjano Is a Satta in the Human Realm

9. Finally, a human in the "satta state" (i.e., who has not comprehended the Four Noble Truths) is a "puthujjano." Thus, a puthujjano (normally translated as "uninformed ordinary person" in many translations) is a human with sakkāya diṭthi.

- In the "WebLink: suttacentral: Cūlavedalla Sutta (MN 44)," Ven. Dhammadinnā is asked: "how does sakkāya diṭthi (identity view) come about?"
- She replied: ".. uninformed ordinary persons who have not been exposed to the teaching of the Noble persons have one of the following views. One group has the wrong vision of rūpa (material
form) in 4 ways: to regard $r \bar{u} p a$ as "mine," or "I" as $r \bar{u} p a$, or $r \bar{u} p a$ to be "in me," or "I" to be "in $r \bar{u} p a$." Then there is the other group who regard one or more of the mental factors vedana $\bar{a}$ (feeling) ... sañ̃n̄̄ (perception) ... sañkhāra (ways of thinking) ... viññāṇa (consciousness) as "mine," or "I" as those, or them to be "in me," or "I' to be "in them." (We discussed this in \#1 of the previous post, "Sakkāya Ditthi - Wrong View of "Me" and "Mine.")
- Thus, any living being (human, Deva, Brahma, as well as any other living being) who has not comprehended the "world vision" of how suffering arises is a "satta." A satta in the human realm is a puthujjano.


### 9.2.3 Anatta and Sakkāya Ditṭhi - Two Different Concepts

## February 13, 2021

## Anatta is Not Sakkāya Diṭ̣hi

1. As we discussed in the previous two posts [Post 1 and Post 2], sakkāya ditthi is the WRONG VIEW of "me" and "mine." See, "Sakkāya Ditthi and Paticca Samuppāda."

- New existences (bhava) arise due to specific kamma done with different types of abhisañkhāra (vacī abhisañkhāra and kāya abhisañkhāra.) That is a process dictated by Paṭicca Samuppāda. Those sañkhārā arise with having that wrong view (avijjā.) That is why the PS process starts with "avijja paccayā sañkhārā."
- When one understands the Paticca Samuppāda process, one will see that it is such sañkhārā (thoughts) arise because one believes that experiences in this world can bring happiness. Such experiences come through the body and mind, and one takes those as "me." Those external things that be likes, one takes them to be "mine." (To emphasize again, saññ̄à and citta vipallāsa of "me" and "mine" will be removed only at Anāgāmi and Arahant stages. Removal of sakkāya ditṭhi only removes the wrong view.)
- Those wrong views of a "me" and 'mine" keep one bound to the rebirth process. There is a livingbeing (satta) AS LONG AS there is the wrong of a "me" and "mine" associated with that life stre am. We will discuss this in detail in upcoming posts.
- That wrong view is sakkāya ditṭhi. As long as the sakkāya ditṭhi is there, one will not overcome the "satta" state and become one of the 8 Ariya puggalā, as discussed in those previous two posts. Furthermore, a "me" will exist (in the rebirth process) until that wrong view is removed.
- That wrong view will be removed ONLY WHEN one sees nothing in this world TO BE CONSIDERED "me" or "mine." Therefore, sakkāya ditṭhi (the wrong view) is RELATED TO anatta (a characteristic of nature.)
- But anatta is NOT that wrong associated with a "me" or a "self." Anatta means EVERYTHING in this world is devoid of value.


## Anatta is Not "No-Self"!

2. Many people translate the word "anatta" as "no-self." But the Buddha advised us to stay away from the following two extremes to describe a living-being (satta.)

- It is NOT correct to say that a satta (with the wrong view of a "self") does not exist. That satta will live in one of the 31 realms as long as having that incorrect view. Most importantly, life is real, and so is the suffering (together with infrequent happiness). Here, I am referring to the long rebirth process.
- On the other hand, in ultimate reality, there is no "self" or a "soul" or an "ātman" traveling the rebirth process (sainsāra.) When that is understood, that satta will cease to exist IN THIS WORLD, i.e., that lifestream will merge with Nibbāna.
- Instead of having endless debates about whether a "self" exists or not, it pays to focus on how the Buddha explained the existence of a satta suffering much in the rebirth process.
- To repeat: abhisañkhāra ARISE in a mind BECAUSE a satta (living-being) acts with that wrong view. But if one understands this process, one can be mindful and stop such sañkhārā from CONTINUING TO grow and LEAD TO new existences (bhava.) That is the basis of Satipatṭhāna.
- When one understands Paṭicca Samuppāda, one will see no need to follow either of those two extremes of whether there is a "self" or not.


## What is Anatta?

3. The concept of anatta is intrinsically related to the other two: anicca and dukkha. Those three are the "three characteristics of nature."

- None of those are DIRECTLY about a "person" or a "satta."
- Anicca, dukkha, anatta are related by "yadaniccam tam dukkham, yam dukkham tadanattā" (expanded: "yad aniccam taì dukkham, yaim dukkham tad anattā.") That means, "everything in this world" is of anicca nature; (craving for them) leads to dukkha; therefore, it is unfruitful to crave for anything in this world (anatta)."
- There are 12 suttas in the Aniccavagga of the Samiyutta Nikāya 35 (SN 35.1 through SN 35.12), stating that anicca (and dukkha and anatta) nature is associated with everything in this world.
- There are 6 suttas in the Aniccavagga of the Samimutta Nikāya 2 (SN 22.12 through SN 22.17) stating the same and the above relationship among the three entities.


## Inert Things Are of Anatta Nature Too!

4. The "WebLink: suttacentral: Yadanattō Sutta (SN 22. 17)" states: "Rūpain, bhikkhave, anattā. Yadanattā taì 'netaì mama, nesohamasmi, na meso attā'ti evametaí yathābhūtaì sammappañ̃̄̄̄ya daṭ!habbaim. Vedanā anattā ...sañña anattā ...sañkhārā anattā ...viññ̄̄̄nain anattā."

Translated: "Bhikkhus, rūpa is of anatta nature. It has no essence and is of no value. Any rūpa (including external $r \bar{u} p a$ ) should be seen as it really is - with correct wisdom - thus: 'This rūpa is not mine, this I am not, this should not be taken as "me." Then the same is stated for the four mental components.

- There are other suttas explicitly stating that the external world is also of anatta nature. For example, the "WebLink: suttacentral: Bāhirāvatana Anatta Sutta (SN 35.227)" says: "Rāpā, bhikkhave, anattā. Saddā ... gandhā ... rasā ... phoṭthabbā ... dhammā anattā. Evaí passamं ... pe ... nāparaì itthatt $\bar{a} y a \bar{t} t i ~ p a j a ̄ n a ̄ t \bar{\imath} \bar{\prime} " t i$.

Translated: "Bhikkhus, sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and dhammā are of anatta nature. Seeing this ... (a Noble Person) understands: 'There is no value in any of those... (for them) there is no return to any state of existence in this world (i.e., they will attain Nibbāna).""

- Does it make sense to say, "sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and thoughts are not-self"? Is having a "self" a possibility for sights, sounds, etc.? But that is the exact English translation of this sutta at Sutta Central!
- Thus, it should be clear that ALL INERT THINGS in this world are also of anatta nature!
- It is unfruitful AND dangerous to value them and to attach ( $\operatorname{tanhh} \bar{a}$ ) to them.
- We will get to discuss this in detail in the future. But I just wanted to make the distinction between sakkāya diṭthi and anatta.

5. Of course, getting rid of sakkāya diṭthi and starting to comprehend Tilakkhaña (including anatta nature) happens simultaneously at the Sotāpanna stage. Those two concepts are related.

- This relationship is described in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Anattalakkhana Sutta (SN 22.59)," the second sutta delivered by the Buddha to the five ascetics.
- "Rūpaì, bhikkhave, anattā. Rūpañca hidaì, bhikkhave, attā abhavissa, nayidaì rūpaì ābādhāya saìvatteyya, labbhetha ca rūpe: 'evai் me rūpaì hotu, evaí me rūpaí mā ahosī’ti." OR "Bhikkhus, form no value and should not be considered one's own. If $r \bar{u} p a$ (meaning one's body in this case) belonged to oneself, one should be able to control it (without leading to sicknesses and injuries; one should be able to say: "Let my body be thus without affliction)"
- "Yasmā ca kho, bhikkhave, rūpaì anattā, tasmā rūpaì ābādhāya sam்vattati, na ca labbhati rūpe: 'evaì me rūpaì hotu, evai் me rūpaì mā ahosī'ti. OR "But this body has the anatta nature, it leads to affliction, and it is not possible to have it thus: 'Let my body be this way; let my body not be the other way."" Therefore, "this body should not be considered as mine" is ONE ASPECT of the anatta nature.
- In other words, one's body is just like any other rūpa in this world. It is subject to the anatta nature dictated by Pațicca Samuppāda. That is also why sakkāya ditṭhi is wrong.
- The sutta explains that the same is true for the other four mental aggregates: vedan $\bar{a}$ anatt $\bar{a}$, sañ $\tilde{n} \bar{a}$ anatt $\bar{a}$, sañkhārā anattā, viññannaì anatt $\bar{a}$.


## Anattā Asārakaṭ! henāti - Anatta Means Anything in this World is Void of Value

6. Finally, the following verse is in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Khuddaka Nikāya Patisambhidāmagga 3.1. Mahāpañ̃̄̄̄kath $\vec{a} "$ (towards the end) of Patisambhidāmagga in the Tipitaka: "Rūpaì atī̀ ānāgatapaccuppannaim aniccaim khayatthena dukkhaì bhayat!̣hena anattā asārakat!̣henāti.."

- Translated: "any $r \bar{u} p a$ belonging to the past, present, or future is of anicca nature and (attaching to them) will lead to one's downfall (khaya); it is of dukkha nature because it is dangerous (bhaya); it is of anatta nature because it is useless (asāra.)" [asāra : [adj.] worthless; sapless; vain.]
- Thus it is evident that anatta CANNOT be translated as "no-self."

The next verse there is; "R̄̄paì atī̄̄̄nāgatapaccuppannaiं aniccaì sañkhataì patticcasamuppannain khayadhammai் vayadhammai் virāgadhammaiं nirodhadhammanti tulayitvā tīrayitvā vibhāvayitvā vibhūtaì katvā rūpanirodhe nibbāne khippaì javatīti-
 atī̄ānāgatapaccuppannaì aniccaì sañkhataì paṭiccasamuppannai் khayadhammaì vayadhammaì virāgadhammaì nirodhadhammanti tulayitvā tīrayitvā vibhāvayitvā vibhūtaì katvā jarāmaraṇanirodhe nibbāne khippaì javatīti-javanapaññā. Javanapaññatāya samivattantīti-ayaì javanapañ̃̄̄̄. (14)"

- Here it is emphasized that EVERYTHING in this world, including all rūpa, vedanā, sañ̃̃ $\bar{a}$, sañkh $\bar{a} r \bar{a}$, viññāna, cakkhu ... pe ... jarāmarana, are all of anicca nature and arise via Paticca Samuppāda. They ALL lead to eventual suffering (dukkha). They ALL are of no real value (anatta.) See \#3 above "yad aniccam taì dukkham, yaì dukkham tad anattā."
- That is why we first need to understand the Paticca Samuppāda process.
- This post has many Pāli verses. But I wanted to quote directly from the Tipiṭaka to make things absolutely clear. It is critical to understand these fundamental concepts.


### 9.3 Pațicca Samuppāda - Essential Concepts

February 19, 2021

## Nibbāna - Rāgakkhaya Dosakkhaya Mohakkhaya - Part 1

"Lobha, Rāga and Kāmacchanda, Kāmarāga"
"Lobha, Dosa, Moha Versus Rāga, Patigha, Avijija"
Pañca Nīvarana and Sensual Pleasures (Kāma)
What Is "Kāma"? It Is Not Just Sex
Icchā, Tanhā, Kāma - Root Causes of Suffering
Jāti - Different Types of Births
Bhava - Kammic Energy That Can Power an Existence
Bhava and Punabbhava - Kammic Energy Giving Rise to Renewed Existence
Concepts of Upādāna and Upādānakkhandha

- Difference Between Physical Rūpa and Rūpakkhandha
- Where Are Memories "Stored"? - Connection to Pañcakkhandha
- Loka Sutta - Origin and Cessation of the World
- Dukkha Samudaya Starts With Samphassa-Jā-Vedanā
- Key Steps of Kammic Energy Accumulation
- Generating Kammic Energy in the "Upādāna Paccayā Bhava"

Six Root Causes - Loka Samudaya (Arising of Suffering) and Loka Nirodhaya (Nibbāna)

### 9.3.1 Nibbāna - Rāgakkhaya Dosakkhaya Mohakkhaya - Part 1

## February 19, 2021

Nibbāna is defined as "rāgakkhayo dosakkhayo mohakkhayo-idaín vuccati nibbānan'ti" OR "Nibbāna is the ending of rāga, dosa, and moha."

## What Is Nibbāna?

1. The above verse explaining Nibbāna appears in many suttas. The above quote is from "WebLink: suttacentral: Nibbānapañhā Sutta (SN 38.1)."

- There is a stronger version of rāga, i.e., lobha (extreme greed.) Someone with a lobha mindset CANNOT comprehend the Four Noble Truths. That is why Nibbāna is defined as above.
- All future suffering arise due to lobha, dosa, moha. But until lobha is reduced to the rāga level, one cannot comprehend the Noble Truths. See, "Lobha, Dosa, Moha versus Rāga, Patigha, Avijijā."
- Someone with a "moral mindset" who has removed the ten types of wrong views NORMALLY has reduced versions of rāga, patigha, avijjā. However, their mindsets can also be elevated to stronger lobha, dosa, and moha under some conditions (if the temptation is high enough.)
- Someone who has removed the ten types of wrong views can comprehend the Four Noble Truths and remove avijja (ignorance about this world's real nature.) It happens in four stages culminating at the Arahant stage.
- That is a summary. We will discuss the details below and in upcoming posts.


## Nibbāna Defined as Above Is the Ultimate Version

2. What is defined above is the ultimate version of Nibbāna or the "ultimate cooling down" via "eliminating ANY future suffering."

- In the previous three posts in this series, I briefly laid out the key (and deeper) foundations of Buddha Dhamma. I did that so that one would see the outline. Of course, more explanations are needed to clarify them.
- We will gradually clarify those concepts.
- The way to do that is to realize that we CAN experience the early stage of "cooling down" by gradually reducing lobha, dosa, moha to the rāga, patigha, avijjā AND trying to maintain them there without reelevating to the lobha, dosa, moha levels.
- A single Pāli word captures lobha, dosa, moha (and the reduced versions of rāga, patigha, avijjā.) That word is "san." See details in the section on "San."


## Sanditṭhikaím Nibbānaím - One Needs to "See Defilements" to Get to Nibbāna

3. One first needs to "see defilements" or "see 'san"' (san ditṭhika) to be able to see the path to Nibbāna.

- That is why the Buddha Dhamma is "sandittthika." In the verse that points out the virtues of Buddha Dhamma, "..bhagavatā dhammo sandiṭthiko akāliko ehipassiko opaneyyiko paccattain veditabbo viññūhiti" it is one of the qualities that makes Buddha Dhamma unique.
- One can experience the first stages of Nibbāna (cooling down of the mind) by "seeing the dangers of "san" and gradually getting rid of them.
- That is the Nibbāna that can be experienced in this life! It is easily reached, especially if one can see the drawbacks of "san" (greed, anger, delusion.)

4. That is what the Buddha explained to Jāṇussoṇi in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Nibbuta Sutta (AN 3.55)." A reasonable English translation is "WebLink: suttacentral: Nibbāna (AN 3.55)."

- Jānussoṇi asks the Buddha, 'Master Gotama, it is said: 'Directly visible Nibbāna, directly visible Nibbāna.' In what way is Nibbāna directly visible, immediate, inviting one to come and see, applicable, to be personally experienced by the wise?"
- As explained there, a mind with greed, hate, and delusion (ignorance about the real nature) "..experiences mental suffering and dejection."
- Thus if one can see the bad consequences of greed, hate, and delusion (or 'san'), one can reduce those and reach a "better state of mind." It is a "cooled state of mind" with less agitation and would not experience depression.
- In particular, it is easy to recognize when greed and anger arise in one's mind. The one should make an effort to control them. That is the basis of Ānāpāna and Satipatt"hāna me ditations: "being mindful."
- That is why Nibbāna is directly visible AND can be experienced in this life itself!


## $\bar{A} d i t t a p a r i y \bar{a} y a$ Sutta (The Fire Sermon) Is About the "Fire in a Mind"

5. An English translation is at "WebLink: accesstoinsight.org: Ādittapariyāya Sutta (The Fire Sermon)." As with all English translations, it is a 'word-by-word" translation without clarifying what is meant by that "fire." (see other translations at Sutta Central: "WebLink: suttacentral: Āditta Sutta (SN 35.28)")

- It says, "The eye is burning, forms are burning, eye-consciousness is burning, eye-contact is burning, also whatever is felt as pleasant or painful or neither-painful-nor-pleasant that arises with eye-contact for its indispensable condition, that too is burning." That may not make sense if one does not see
that it is ATTACHMENT TO those 5 things that LEADS to "fires in the MIND." Those 5 are associated with "seeing."
- Even the direct translation says, "Burning with what? Burning with the fire of lust, with the fire of hate, with the fire of delusion.
- Such 5 types of "sources of fire" arise with the other senses: hearing, tasting, smelling, body touches, and the mind itself.
- But all those 30 "sources of fire" ALWAYS lead to "fires in mind." We MUST note that all 30 types of sensory experiences register in the mind!
- It is the MIND that will burn (sooner or later) due to the actions one takes (kamma via sañkhāra) with the desire for seeking pleasures with "seeing.'
- Some of that "burning" will materialize later in this life or even in future lives. That "potential to bring suffering" is deposited as "kammic energy," and that is also the same as "bhava" (cause for future suffering)! That is a hard part of understanding. But we will get to that.


## "Burning" (Tāpa) Has Root Cause in Rāga (Greed) and Dosa (Anger)

6. We attach to things that we like. This "attachment" is described in several ways by the Buddha: icchā, $\boldsymbol{t a n h} \boldsymbol{a}$, nandi, piya, kāma, etc. When exposed to such 'likable things" in this world, we become joyful and try to get more of them, even using immoral deeds. Therein lies the problem.

- Those things in this world that lead to such attachment and joyful feelings are called "things with kāmaguna" or "characteristics/sources of kāma." We will discuss that soon.
- Even though they may provide temporary joy, they always lead to "heat/burning" ( $\boldsymbol{t} \bar{a} p a$ a) in mind.
- The word "tappati" in the Dhammapada verse in \#10 refers to a mind that is "heated/burning."


## Rāga and Dosa - Two Faces of a Coin

7. Rāga and dosa are like the two faces of a coin, and the coin itself is moha (avijjā.) As long as avijj $\bar{a}$ is there, rāga OR dosa can arise.

- Dosa (anger/hate/dislike) is the opposite of rāga (and lobha.) There are things that we don't like in this world. Furthermore, we also dislike/hate people who get in our way in our efforts to seek more sensory pleasures.
- We tend to evaluate external objects (people or objects) based on their ability to provide us with enjoyment/happiness or whether they appear ugly/distasteful/tend to get in our way. Thus, we tend to put anything into one of those two categories: like/dislike. This is due to the root cause of moha. This explicit "measuring" or 'evaluation" is "māna."
- We do that "measuring" with the perception of "me" and trying to decide what will enhance "my enjoyment" and minimize "my displeasure." That is because of our avijjā or ignorance that such behavior will ONLY lead to future suffering.


## Moha Is the Root Cause of Rāga and Dosa

8. Sometimes, the mind becomes uncertain (vicikicchā) about what to do. At other times, it becomes perturbed/excited (uddhacca) due to uncertainty about something. In such cases, only moha (or avijja) is present.

- In other words, moha is the root cause of rāga, dosa, and all other asobhana cetasika.
- Furthermore, the deepest level of moha is in māna, uddhacca, avijj $\bar{a}$. Those are removed only at the Arahant stage. It is one of the last five Samyojana (bonds to the samisāric process) of rūpa rāga, arūpa rāga, māna, uddhacca, avijjā.
- By the way, kāma rāga is removed at the Anāgāmi stage. When one becomes an "Arahant Anugāmi" at the next level, one loses rūpa rāga and arūpa rāga. It is only at the Arahant stage that one removes the last three: māna, uddhacca, and avijjā. Here, māna and uddhacca are the last traces of rāga and dosa left. Avijj $\bar{a}$ is the last trace of moha removed that breaks ALL bonds to the rebirth process (samisāra.)


## Avijjā and Taṇhā Go Together!

9. Because of our unwise perception of a "me," we tend to attach to some things ( $r a \bar{g} a$ ) and try to stay away from other things (dosa.) Either way, we are 'mentally bound" to both types. We tend to think about ways to get likable things closer and to keep unlikable things away. Thus, taṇha is involved in both cases. See, "Tanhā - How We Attach Via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance."

- It is impossible to get rid of tanhh $\bar{a}$ as long as we do not comprehend the real nature of this world explained by the Buddha and thereby get rid of avijj $\bar{a}$.
- The first step towards that understanding is to live a moral life and cleanse the mind. That will enable one to comprehend this 'previously unheard" Dhamma: Why sensory pleasures (kāma) WILLL invariably lead to future suffering.
- Therefore, we need to get to the next step of understanding dasa akusala and dasa kusala.
- Don't worry too much about all these Pāli terms. They will become clear as we discuss further. There is no need to memorize. If you understand the concepts, they will become familiar.


## Dasa Akusala and Dasa Kusala

10. The path to Nibbāna is to avoid immoral deeds or dasa akusala ("Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)") and to engage in meritorious deeds or dasa kusala ("Dasa Akusala/Dasa Kusala - Basis of Buddha Dhamma.')

- The drawbacks of dasa akusala succinctly stated in the following Dhammapada verse:

Idha tappati, pecca tappati, Agony now, agony hereafter, pāpakārī ubhayattha tappati.
"Pāpain me katan"ti tappati,
bhiyyo tappati, duggatim gato.
The wrong-doer suffers agony in both worlds.
Agonized now by the knowledge that one has done wrong, one suffers more agony when gone to a state of woe.

- In the same way, the benefits of dasa kusala will be evident in this life and future lives:


## Idha nandati, pecca nandati, Rejoicing now, rejoicing hereafter,

katapuñño ubhayattha nandati. The doer of wholesome actions rejoices in both worlds.
"Puññam me katan"ti nandati, Rejoicing now in the knowledge that one has acted morally, bhiyyo nandati, suggatim gato. one rejoices more when gone to a state of bliss.

- We will discuss the relationship of rāga, dosa, moha to dasa akusala and dasa kusala in the next post in this series.
- Before that please make sure to read the two posts: "Lobha, Rāga and Kāmacchanda, Kāmarāga" and "Lobha, Dosa, Moha Versus Rāga, Patigha, Avijija." It is necessary to grasp the meanings of those various Pāli terms before reading the next post in this series.
Posts in this subsection at: "Paticca Samuppāda - Essential Concepts."


### 9.3.2 Pañca Nīvaraṇa and Sensual Pleasures (Kāma)

February 28, 2021; revised March 1, 2021 (link in \#1 revised, \#8 and \#9 re-written); July 17, 2021
Pañca Nīvaraṇa (Five Hindrances) are defilements that "cover the mind" and make the mind agitated or lethargic and susceptible to make bad decisions. Craving for sensory pleasures is the root cause for the covering of the mind.

## Why Are They Called "Hindrances"?

1. These five are indicators for "mental states." When they become elevated, one can easily make "bad decisions." Furthermore, it is difficult for a mind to focus on any subject or comprehend new concepts with the five hindrances at high levels.

- Pañca nīvaraṇa does not cover a mind all the time. They can be triggered under the influence of temptations.
- In such instances, one could be tempted to engage in dasa akusala to ANY extent, depending on the temptation level. One may even do strong immoral deeds (pāpa kamma) that make rebirth in the apāy $\bar{a} s$ possible.
- The possibility of pañca nīvaraṇa arising will permanently go away when one attains the Sotāpanna stage.
- That is why a Sotāpanna is permanently released from the apāyās.
- However, getting to the Sotāpanna stage REQUIRES seeing (or understanding) that craving for sensory pleasures (kama) is the root cause of all suffering. Of course, even after "seeing" it correctly (i.e., removing the wrong vision) a Sotāpanna would still enjoy sensual pleasures because he had not removed the wrong perception (sañña $\bar{a}$.


## What Is the "Previously Unheard Dhamma (Teachings)?"

2. The Buddha, in his first discourse, declared that his teachings had not been known to the world (in the absence of another Buddha.) That is the meaning of the verse, "Idain dukkhaim ariyasaccan'ti me, bhikkhave, pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu." OR "bhikkhus, this is the noble truth of suffering that was not heard before.." That highlighted part of the verse appears 12 times in the sutta ( 3 times each for the Four Noble Truths)!

- The "previously unheard teaching" is that even though sensory experiences can provide short-lived pleasures, they ALWAYS lead to suffering in the long-term (during this life and especially in the rebirth process.)
- The root cause for that suffering is the wrong view/perception of a "me" or sakkāya dittchi. That view/perception, in turn, arises because of the perceived "pleasure" in sensory experiences.
- We attach to worldly pleasures (with icchā/taṇhā) with that wrong view AND perception BECAUSE we think they can provide long-lasting happiness. But the Buddha explained that there is hidden suffering in those pleasures. See the previous posts in "Sakkāya Ditthi and Paticca Samuppāda."
- Upon attaining the Buddhahood, the Buddha was able to see the minds of countless living-beings and was first discouraged that most of them would not be able to comprehend his teachings. Then he realized that some have the ability to comprehend his deep Dhamma.


## Kāmato Jāyat̄̄ Soko - Kāma Is a Root Cause of Suffering

3. "WebLink: tipitaka.net: Dhammapada Verse 215" provides the key idea:

Kāmato jāyatī soko, From desire, arises grief,
$k a \overline{m a t o ~ j a ̄ y a t ı ̄ ~ b h a y a \dot{n} ; ~ f r o m ~ d e s i r e ~ a r i s e s ~ f e a r ; ~}$
Kāmato vippamuttassa, Completely free from desire, natthi soko kuto bhayam. there is no grief, how can there be fear?

- The above verse is the 7th verse in that link. The verses 4th through 8 th are the same verses with synonymous words for kāma:piya, pema, rati (pronounced 'rathi'), and tanh $\bar{a}$. We have discussed that icch $\overline{\boldsymbol{a}}$ is also the same as $\tanh \overline{\boldsymbol{a}}$. In English, we can use words like desire, attachment, craving, liking, etc., to express the same meaning.
- There are pleasurable experiences. Those are NOT kāma. More details at, "What is "Kāma"? It is not Just Sex." It is critical to read that post.
- The desire to accumulate more such experiences is kāma. That desire has no bounds. If temptations are high enough, we may take extreme immoral actions to fulfill such desires. That is when we get into trouble. But the key is to figure out how to stop such temptations. That CANNOT be done with willpower.
- With that in mind, let us look into pañca nīvaraṇa.


## What Are Pañca Nīvaraṇa?

4. Pañca n̄̄varaṇa are: Kāmacchanda, vyāpāda (or byāpāda), thina-middha, uddhacca-kukkucca, and vicikicchā. See "Āvarananīvarana Sutta (SN 46.38)."

- In the sutta, the Buddha used two words, "āvaraṇā" and "n $\bar{\imath} v a r a n ̣ a ̄ " ~ t o ~ d e s c r i b e ~ t h e s e ~ f i v e . ~ T h e ~ w o r d ~$ " $\bar{a} v a r a n a \bar{a} "$ means "to cover (the mind.)" When the mind is covered, it cannot grasp Buddha's teachings, and thus Nibbāna (or cooling down) is prevented (the meaning of "nīvaraṇā.")
" When a mind is "covered," one cannot clearly see the consequences of one's actions. It is like looking through a fog. One cannot see what lies ahead.
- Removing pañca nīvaraṇa from one's mind is like lifting a fog. One can see far ahead with much clarity.
- But how do those 5 things cover a mind? We need to figure that out before we can remove them.


## Kāmacchanda Is the Main Nīvaraṇa

5. Kāmacchanda is stronger than kāma rāga. It is like lobha but focused on $k \bar{a} m a$.

- Kämacchanda is the highest level of attachment. Here one is willing to do abhorrent acts (killing, raping, etc.) to satisfy one's desires.
- When kāma rises to the kāmacchanda level, one becomes unaware of the bad consequences of one's actions. Kāmacchanda comes from $k \bar{a} m a+i c c h \bar{a}+a n d a$, or "being blinded by sensory attractions." Here, "icch $\bar{a} "$ is liking, and "anda" is blind.
- It is said that "one loses one's mind" when blinded by attachment to sense pleasures, i.e., one cannot think rationally when one has kāmacchanda.
- See, "Lobha, Rāga and Kāmacchanda, Kāmarāga."


## Vy $\bar{a} p \bar{a} d a$ Is a Consequence of Kāmacchanda

6. The second nīvaraṇa, vyāpāda, arises because of kāmacchanda. But it is a different manifestation. Instead of becoming lustful, one becomes hateful and angry.

- That anger arises when one is prevented from satisfying one's desire for sensual pleasures. Patigha (or displeasure) is a lower level of vyāpāda and is not a n $\bar{\imath} v a r a n ̣ a . ~ O n e ~ d o e s ~ n o t ~ d o ~ " a p a ̄ y a g a ̄ m \bar{\imath}$ deeds" with patigha.
- We have heard about people killing others to get their wealth or their spouses or other loved ones. That happens when one's mind becomes overwhelmed with kämacchanda.
- Dosa (or dvesha in Sanskrit or Sinhala) is the ANGER that arises based on initial lobha. Here, dvesha comes from "devana" + "vesha" - 己̨ఠอٍ పఠ๘ん - or second manifestation of lobha. We get angry when someone else is in the way of getting what we want. This statement is from "Lobha, Dosa, Moha versus Rāga, Patigha, Avijjā."
- With dosa, one will inevitably take a "downward path." That is the meaning of vyāpāda ("vaya" or 'downward"+ "pāda" or "direction.") Thus, vyāpāda is the same as dosa.


## Other Three Nīvaraṇa Also Have Roots in Kāmacchanda

7. When one gets attached to sensory pleasures, one's mind becomes dull (Pāli word is thīna.) Because of that, the mind gets stuck (middha.)

- Thus, thīna-middha refers to a mind that has become lethargic and stuck. Such a mind would not be able to focus on anything, let alone difficult concepts. A good example is those addicted to watching movies, TV, sports, etc., all day. Their minds are stuck. Some people forget even to eat.
- A different manifestation is uddhacca-kukkucca. Here, one becomes "high-minded" (uddhacca) with perceived wealth or power and starts doing lowly deeds (kukkucca.) For example, a powerful politician or a wealthy person may engage in "lowly deeds" like bribery, rape, etc.
- A mind is susceptible to cravings for sensory pleasures because it has no true faith in Buddha Dhamma. It is not certain that the concepts in Buddha Dhamma are correct. For example, there are doubts about the laws of kamma or rebirth. Having such doubts is vicikicchä. Such doubts will go away only when one comprehends the Four Noble Truths.
- Further details at, "Key to Calming the Mind - The Five Hindrances."


## Noble Truth on Suffering - Kāma Is the Root Cause of Suffering

8. A key aspect of comprehending Noble Truths is to see that kāma (craving for sensory pleasures) is the root cause of future suffering.

- It is embedded in the verse that describes the root cause of suffering: "yampiccham na labhati tampi dukkhā $\boldsymbol{m} "$ ("Yam pi icchain na labhati tam pi dukkham.". See, "Essence of Buddhism - In the First Sutta."
- "Yam pi icchamं" means "whatever is liked or craved for." "Na labhati" means "not getting," "tam pi dukkhaì" means "that leads to suffering."
- Therefore, that verse simply says: "If one does not get what one craves or likes, that leads to suffering."
- Note that $k \bar{a} m a$ arises due to $i c c h \bar{a}$.


## Importance of Getting Rid of Micchā Ditṭhi

9. Micch $\bar{a}$ Ditthi has TWO levels. Not knowing that $k \bar{a} m a$ is the root cause of suffering is the deeper level of micchā ditṭhi.

- First, one needs to get rid of the 10 types of wrong views that include not believing in the laws of kamma and rebirth. The deeper level of wrong views is removed when one becomes a Sotäpanna and realizes that attachment to worldly things only leads to future suffering, i.e., understand the Four Noble Truths.
- That deeper level of micch $\bar{a}$ dittthi starts fading away when one becomes a Sotāpanna. At that point, ALL FIVE nīvarana are removed permanently.
- An average human (puthujjano) thinks exactly the opposite way; That one should live FOR sensory pleasures. That is why it is so hard to change that ingrained mindset. But it is not that different from the mindset of a fish who only thinks about the tasty bait and does not see the hidden dangers in biting into that tasty bait.


## 10. All relevant posts at, "Paticca Samuppāda - Essential Concepts."

## What is "Kāma"? It is not Just Sex

Revised October 31, 2017; revised December 18, 2018 (\#13, \#14); February 28, 2021 (major revision); March 5, 2021

Kāma means "sañkappa rāga" or "thinking about and planning to enjoy more sensual pleasures." Another related meaning is "giving priority to mind-made pleasures."

## Kāma Is Assigning High Value for Sensory Pleasures in Kāma Loka

1. "Kāma" comes from " $k \vec{a}$ " meaning "eat or destroy" and "ama" means Nibbāna. In our human world, which is a part of "kāma loka," temptations for staying away from Nibbāna come from five physical senses.

- Some people believe "kāma" is just about engaging in sex. Some others believe attractive sense objects are "kāma" objects, and those lead to defilements. Both are not correct.
- While "attractive sense objects" can lead to "kāma assāda" or "mind-made pleasures", the objects themselves don't have kāma. An Arahant is not tempted by any such object. But an Arahant would eat a delicious meal offered, but would not crave such meals.
- Furthermore, an Arahant gets to that stage by learning and contemplating Dhamma (cultivating wisdom) and NOT by living a harsh life.
- The lowest 11 realms are collectively called "kāma loka" because all such made-up pleasures are available through all five physical senses in those realms.


## Sensory Experiences are Not Kāma

2. This is a critical point to understand. There are sensory contacts that naturally bring pleasurable FEELINGS. For example, eating a cake or smelling a rose gives a pleasurable feeling. That experience itself is not $k \bar{a} m a$ or $k \bar{a} m a$ rāga.

- Rather, it is the DESIRE to enjoy more of those sensory experiences is $k \bar{a} m a$. That is why the word "icch $\vec{a} "$ and "tanhhā' are closely associated with kāma/kāma rāga.
- In the "WebLink: suttacentral: Na Santi Sutta (SN 1.34)," the Buddha defined " $k \bar{a} m a$ " as that second kind mentioned above: "Na te kāmā yāni citrāni loke, Sañkapparāgo purisassa kāmo..".

Translated: 'World's pretty things are not kāma, a person creates his/her own kāma by generating mind-made pleasures (rāga sañkappa)..".

- Buddha said that this world has many attractive pictures, sounds, tastes, smells, and touches. But those are not "kāma." The initial sense experience could be pleasant, but it is a kamma vipāka (no sañkhāra generated in the initial sense input).
- When one attaches to such a sensory experience and keep thinking about them, one makes
 "kāma." Each person generates his/her own kāma based on his/her gati or samisāric habits/cravings.


## Sañkappa Rāga Is Kāma

3. We experience those external sensory inputs in two ways:

- We experience them directly: For example, we see a person; hear a song; taste a piece of cake; smell a fragrance; someone we love gives a kiss. Those are actual sense contacts and are due to kamma vipāka.
- But then we tend to re-live that experience over and over in our MINDS. You may be surprised, but most of our "sense pleasures" or "kāma assāda" are created by our minds. A sensory contact comes and goes away relatively quickly; but we keep thinking about it, sometimes for hours. This "kāma assäda" is the one that we CREATE IN OUR MINDS, via vacī sañkhāra.
- For example, we may just see an attractive item in a store display that provides sensory pleasure while we are looking at it for a few seconds.
- But then we start thinking about how nice it would be to be able to buy it, enjoy it, and analyze how to go about paying for it, etc. We may be thinking about it for several days. Please take the time and contemplate this point.
- The initial sense contact of several seconds led to hours of thinking about it and making up "additional pleasure." That is $\boldsymbol{k} \bar{a} m a \operatorname{ass} \bar{a} d a$.


## What Are Sañkappa?

4. Let us discuss what is meant by "sañkappa rāga": Sañkappa means thoughts. Rāga means giving a highpriority (craving) for pleasures in samisāara; see, "Lobha, Rāga and Kāmacchanda, Kāmarāga."

- Thus "sañkappa rāga" means thinking about such sense pleasures and giving priority to them. We tend to think for hours about an actual sensory experience that we enjoyed in the past or one that we are about to experience in the future.
- Sometimes we also think for hours about how to enjoy a certain sense experience that seems out of reach for various reasons. In all these cases, we can spend hours and hours thinking about them and getting kāma assāda (or "āsvāda" in Sinhala) from it.
- In fact, most times sexual enjoyment comes from just thinking about a past experience or an anticipated one. The actual contact pleasure is relatively short-lived.


## Pleasurable Sensory Experiences Due to Good Kamma Vipāka

5. As we pointed out in \#3 above, some actual sense contacts arise due to kamma vipāka (good kamma vipāka lead to good sense experiences and bad lead to bad). Those are not kāma orkāma assāda.

- Even an Arahant experiences such sense experiences due to kamma vipāka, both good and bad. $\mathrm{He} /$ she may eat tasty food when offered, ride in a luxurious car, or see eye-catching pictures while on the road.
- But he/she will not keep thinking about how to enjoy such sense experiences, i.e., there is no "sañkappa rāga."

6. It is relatively easy to distinguish between sense pleasures due to kamma vipāka and those due to kāma assāda.

- When one is offered a tasty meal, for example, that is due to a previous good kamma, i.e., it is a kamma vipāka. But when one starts thinking how good that meal was and starts thinking about how to enjoy another such meal, that is kāma assāda.
- In the same way, one may be born to a wealthy family and get all types of luxurious sense contacts, those are kamma vipāka.
- Whether rich or poor, when one is thinking about acquiring and enjoying new sense pleasures or reminiscing on past sense pleasures, that is kāma assāda.


## What Is Wrong With Kāma Assāda or Sañkappa Rāga?

7. Now we have two questions.
A. Why is it OK to experience direct sense pleasures that naturally comes one's way, but not good to enjoy "made-up mental pleasures" by thinking about them? (It is important to realize that even those direct sense pleasures INITIATED by oneself do not count as harmless; when we think about it a bit, we realize that such instances have their beginnings at "sañkappa rāga," i.e., one must have thought about to initiate it).
B. How can one experience an enjoyable sensory pleasure and not be "tempted by it", i.e., not make "sañkappa rāga"?
8. The answers to those two questions can be found in one explanation. But that requires analyzing the situation from a different vantage point than we are used to. This is the "Dhamma that has never been known to the world.." or "pubbe ananussutesu Dhammesu..".

- The akusala-mūla Pațicca samuppāda cycle starts with, "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra." Those "madeup mental pleasures" or "kāma assāda" are precisely what sä̀khāra are. These have bad consequences, or ādīnava, through the rest of the Paticca samuppāda (PS) cycle: "sañkhāra paccayā viññāna," "viñ̃ān̄a paccayā nāmarūpa,.....up to "jāti paccayā jarā, marana, soka, parideva,...". Thus the endpoint is suffering.
- When we experience a "direct sense contact" that naturally comes our way, that is not sañkhāra or $\boldsymbol{k} \overline{\boldsymbol{a} m a} \boldsymbol{a s s} \bar{a} d \boldsymbol{a}$. That is a kamma vipāka. They do not lead to future suffering.
- In other words, sañkhāra in "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" is sañkappa rāga. They eventually lead to suffering. That is the hard point to understand.


## Early Comprehension - Agitation of the Mind Due to Excess "Sensory Pleasures"

9. Now, one could say, "well, the more such sañkappa rāga that I make, it is better. I don't mind if the mind gets many such assāda in a given time."

- In order to analyze that, we need to look at the ādīnava (bad consequences) of such assāda, other than the mind being pushed and pulled in many directions as we discussed in the previous bullet.
- If you watch too many movies/ TV shows or play video games all day, your mind will be agitated. You may not get a good sleep. This is the key reason for the scattered-ness of our minds. This is called tappa or "heat in the mind"; see, "Satipatthāna Sutta - Relevance to Suffering in This Life."
- The problem is that each time we enjoy kāma assāda, we do (abhi)sañkhāra, as we saw above. They lead to future suffering via the akusala-mūla Paṭicca samuppāda cycle. This is what we have been doing in countless births up to now.

10. That future suffering can arise both in this life as well as in future lives. It can materialize at different levels depending on the "strength of the kāma assāda."

- Let us start at the most extreme level. One decides that "I have to have this. I am going to do whatever it takes to get it." With such a mindset one can kill, steal, engage in sexual misconduct, lie, or make any number of other immoral acts with a "drunken mind" or a"covered mind."
- Of course, the bad consequences are many, even during this life. One could get caught and go to jail. Even otherwise, one will be under the constant stress of worrying about being caught.
- But stronger consequences will follow in future lives as well, with interest. Thus a normal moral person can see the "ādinava" in such strong kāma assāda.
- By contemplating on such "ādīnava," it becomes easier for one's mind to automatically reject doing such acts. That is "nissarana." Through an understanding of the consequences, one avoids such acts.


## Long-Term Consequences of Craving "Sensory Pleasures"

11. At the next level, we may not do any of the immoral acts by body or speech, but may still accumulate vacī sañkhāra via constantly thinking about them. It is important to realize that such conscious thoughts (vitakka/vicāra) are included in vacī sañkhāra; see, "Correct Meaning of Vacī Sañkhāra."

- The problem with vacī sañkhāra or kāma assāda is that they are addictive. One can spend hours and hours enjoying past sense events of perceived future events (especially involving sex, food, and also about one's enemies).
- And vacī sañkhāra or kāma assāda appear to be harmless. No one else can know about them. One could spend hours on end generating kāma assāda about an object of interest and derive enjoyment. But they have consequences.
- It must also be remembered that all those kāya sañkhāra and vacī sañkhāra that one suppressed by one's will power started off as mano sañkhāra (thoughts that just come to one's mind) and then one normally "keeps going" by generating CONSCIOUS deliberate thoughts or vacī sañkhāra, which can lead to actual speech and even bodily actions.
- Thus even though dasa akusala corresponding to speech and bodily actions were avoided, those due to vacī sañkhāra (kāma assāda) would still count as bad kamma.
- This is why keeping the conventional five precepts is not sufficient; the hard part is to purify one's thoughts or the mind; see, "The Five Precepts - What the Buddha Meant by Them."


## Connection to Āsava and Anusaya

12. A key problem with vacī sañkhāra or the kāma assāda is that they lead to the formation of bad habits (gati), which in turn lead to the formation of new āsava/anusaya or in strengthening old āsava/anusaya; see, "Āsava, Anusaya, and Gati (Gathi)," and other related posts.

- It can become a vicious circle. In a way, this is the "wheeling process" of " riya" that sustains the cycle of rebirths; see, "Nibbāna - Is it Difficult to Understand?."
- Even though vacī sañkhāra (abhijjhā, vyāpāda, micchā dițthi) seem to be harmless, those can lead to birth in the apāy $\bar{a}$.
- When one starts controlling such conscious thoughts (vacī sañkhāra), one gati will gradually change, and then those "automatic bad thoughts" or mano sañkhāra will become less and less frequent because one's āsavalanusaya will gradually reduce.
- The best and permanent way to change āsava/anusaya is to comprehend anicca, dukkha, anatta. When one realizes that "nothing in this world can be maintained to one's satisfaction in the long run" (anicca), one's mind automatically stops thinking about such "made up pleasures."

13. Connection to pañca n̄̄varaṇa discussed at, "Pañca Nīvarana and Sensual Pleasures (Kāma)."

- All relevant posts at, "Paticca Samuppāda - Essential Concepts."


### 9.3.4 Icchā, Taṇhā, Kāma - Root Causes of Suffering

## March 7, 2021; March 8, 2021 (\#2, \#3)

An average human sees and perceives sensual pleasures are to be pursued. The Buddha taught that craving for sensual pleasures is the root cause of suffering. However, sensual pleasures can be experienced without having cravings for them.

## Difference Between Kāma and Sensory Pleasures

1. As we discussed in the post, "What is "Kāma"? It is not Just Sex," there is a huge difference between $k \bar{a} m a$ and "good sensory experiences."

- Kāma is the DESIRE/CRAVING to enjoy more of those sensory experiences. That is why the word "icch $\bar{a}$ " and "taṇh $\bar{a}$ " are closely associated with $k \bar{a} m a$ and $k \bar{a} m a ~ r a \bar{g} a$.
- Wealthy people, including Kings, offered the Buddha tasty meals. Jetavanārāmaya, where the Buddha lived for many years, was built like a palace.
- Of course, the Buddha decided to spend the last several months of his life traveling, even while suffering some ailments. He could have stayed in Jetavanārāmaya or one of many such temples. He probably wanted to illustrate the suffering that he himself was experiencing in his old age.
- The Buddha's main message was that one would not be free of future suffering as long as one does not see the long-term bad consequences of sensory pleasures. But, one needs to get there in a step-by-step way. It is impossible to give up sensory pleasures willfully. One MUST first SEE the bad consequences of craving sensory pleasures.


## The Analogy of a Drunkard

2. Let us consider person X an alcoholic. He likes to drink whenever he gets a chance because it is a pleasurable experience for him.

- When X goes to a physical exam, he is asked about his alcohol consumption. Upon hearing how much X drinks, the physician advises him to cut down on drinking.
- Yet, X has a hard time getting rid of the habit. He tries hard to "cut down," but he is back to his routine drinking after a few days.
- One day, he experiences severe abdominal pain and swelling. When admitted to the hospital, his physician takes a scan of his liver and explains to him that it has been damaged and that except for the brain, the liver is the most complex organ in the body. The physician explains that he will have serious health problems soon unless he stops drinking.
(i) Now, for the first time, X "sees" the dangers in drinking alcohol and can cut down his drinking habit drastically. He has lost "ditṭhi vipallāsa" or "wrong/distorted views" regarding drinking.
(ii) After a year, X goes for a checkup, and the physician asks him about his drinking habit. X says he does not drink as much as he used to because he is afraid of dying at a young age. But he says he still likes to drink and would have a drink when the urge becomes too strong. He still has "saññ̄a vipallāsa" or "wrong/distorted perceptions" regarding drinking.
- The doctor gives the following advice: (i) keep contemplating on the dangers of damaging his liver and (ii) also keep contemplating on the relief that he has gained by stop drinking (no more abdominal pain/swelling, etc.), (iii) don't associate with those who like to drink, (iv) associate with those who don't drink in excess.
- Following the advice of the physician, X gradually loses his desire to drink. After several months, he realizes that the desire to "have a drink" is not there anymore. Now he has lost "saññā vipallāsa" regarding drinking as well.


## The Similarities in the Noble Path

3. Humans (and all living beings) are like the alcoholic $X$ in the analogy in $\# 2$ above. They can only see the "immediate pleasures" that mind-pleasing things in this world provide.

- The Buddha is like the physician who can see the dangers of that mindset. But it is hard to convince an average human that craving those "mind-pleasing things" can be not only unfruitful but also WILL HAVE dangerous consequences in the future.
- A Sotāpanna learns the dangers of kāma assāda from a true disciple of the Buddha (an Ariya.) That transition to the Sotāpanna stage happened when he started "seeing" the dangers of kāma assāda.
- There is one difference between the two cases: Unlike the physician who was able to take a scan of the damaged liver and convince X of the dangers, it is harder to explain the dangers to those who don't even believe in rebirth. However, once that stage is reached, the similarities are there as below.
(i) A Sotāpanna "seeing the dangers in craving sensory pleasures" is similar to X, who started "seeing the dangers in heavy drinking." He has now removed ditthi vipallāsa about "sensual pleasures."
- There is a second difference between the two cases: While it is possible for X to "lose his willpower" and to go back to his "old ways" of being an alcoholic, the mindset of a Sotāpanna WILL NEVER change, even in future lives.
(ii) Analogous to X, a Sotāpanna still has not removed the MINDSET (saññ̄ā vipallāsa) that sensory pleasures can provide "enjoyment." Of course, he/she will not engage in immoral deeds to experience such sensory pleasures.
- Similar to X, a Sotāpanna should contemplate the drawbacks of craving worldly pleasures (i.e., contemplate anicca, dukkha, anatta nature or engage in aniccānupassanā, dukkhānupassanā, anattānupassan $\bar{a}$ ) and associate with like-minded people striving for Nibbāna.
- As he contemplates the drawbacks of craving worldly pleasures, sañ̃̄̄$\overline{\boldsymbol{a}}$ vipallāsa fades away and one day he/she attains the Anāgāmi stage by completely eliminating sañña vipallāsa. After that, any desire for sensual pleasures will be gone.
- Many people have a hard time understanding the difference between ditṭhivipallāsa and sañnā vipallāsa. I hope the above analogy is useful.


## Difference Between Kāmacchanda and Kāma Rāga

4. Another way to express the above is the following. A Sotāpanna has removed kāmacchanda, but kāma rāga remains. When diṭthi vipallāsa is removed, one would NOT be "blinded" by sensual pleasures, i.e., $k \bar{a} m a c c h a n d a$ removed. But the tendency to like sensual pleasures (kāma rāga) remains because sañ $\bar{n} \bar{a}$ vipallāsa is still there.

- Thus, a Sotāpanna can live the normal life of a householder. He/she can be married and bring up a family.
- Only when kāma rāga intensifies may one be tempted to engage in activities harmful to others and oneself. That becomes likely when one drinks too much alcohol or takes drugs. A Sotāpanna would instinctively abstain from such activities.
- Association with "bad friends" could make an average person engage in harmful activities. For example, hunting and fishing are immoral activities to be abstained from. Such activities are considered to be accepted "sports activities," and many people engaged in such activities without realizing the dangers. Such activities fall under the "vihims $\vec{a}$ " category (hurting other living beings for one's pleasure) in Buddha Dhamma.
- Note that vihimsa is different from vyāpāda. With vyāpāda, one does immoral deeds with anger/hate. Actions with vihims $\bar{a}$ are done with ignorance (avijjā.)

Jhāna Correspond to Mindset of Brahmas Who Have Overcome Kāma
5. One is born in Brahma realms when one has cultivated jhāna. To cultivate jhāna, one must overcome $k \bar{a} m a$ at least temporarily.

- Thus, one must at least temporarily suppress kāma rāga to cultivate $j h a \bar{a} a$. In fact, one MUST abstain from kāma, vyāpāda, and vihimisa sañkappa (i.e., abstain from thoughts involving sensual, angry, or otherwise harmful thoughts towards other living beings.
- This is why a Brahma in any Brahma realm is free of kāma rāga, vyāpāda, and vihiminsa thoughts during that Brahma existence. But unless they have attained magga phala, they have all three "hidden" or "temporarily suppressed" during that existence (as anusaya.)
- That is just a "side-track" to show the connection to jhāna.


## Difference Between an Average Human and a Noble Person

6. The following table shows what we discussed above in summary form. The first and second columns show an average human and a Noble Person (Ariya). The four rows for the Noble Person depict the Four Noble Truths, as indicated by the third column.

## Average Human

Kāma (sensual experiences) are valuable.
Pursuing Kāma assāda is beneficial.
Not having enough sensual pleasures is suffering.
Noble Eightfold Path is not pleasurable.

## Noble Person

Sensual experiences are empty of value and are suffering.
Pursuing Kāma assāda leads to suffering.
Future suffering stopped by losing cravings for kāma.
Noble Eightfold Path is the way to stop suffering (i.e., to lose cravings for kāma.

## Four Noble Truths

First Noble Truth (What suffering is)
Second Noble Truth (root cause of suffering)
Third Noble Truth (stopping future suffering)
Fourth Noble Truth (the way to eliminate suffering)

- The First Noble Truth states what suffering is. It is not the suffering that one FEELS. Sensual pleasures are devoid of value and cause suffering even during this life (by stressing the mind). Of course, more suffering will materialize in future lives too.
- The root cause of suffering in this life, and future lives, is craving sensory pleasures (kāma). That is the Second Noble Truth.
- The average human (puthujjano) believes that lack of sensual pleasures is suffering. That is why he/she strives for more sensory pleasures. But the Third Noble Truth says that all suffering can be stopped by losing cravings for sensory pleasures (kāma.)
- The average human (puthujjano) cannot understand why a Noble Person lives a life staying away from sensual pleasures. He/she perceives such a life to be suffering. But the Noble Person lives a stress-free life and is free from the births in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$ where there is unimaginable suffering. The way to become a Noble Person (i.e., the way to lose cravings) is the Eightfold Noble Path. That is the Fourth Noble Truth.
- Again, remember that kāma means "sañkappa rāga" or "having a mindset that sensual pleasures (and even jhānic pleasures) are beneficial. Of course, one must first remove the craving for sensual pleasures (kāma rāga) before tackling rūpa rāga and arūpa rāga (cravings for jhānic pleasures.)


## Icchā Is the Root Cause of Suffering - In the First Sutta

7. In his first sutta, the Buddha defined suffering to arise originating with icch $\bar{a}$. The First Noble Truth is stated as: "jātipi dukkhā, jarāpi dukkhā, byādhipi dukkho, maraṇampi dukkham̈, appiyehi sampayogo dukkho, piyehi vippayogo dukkho, yampicchaì na labhati tampi dukkhain-sainkhittena pañcupādānakkhandhā $d u k k h \bar{a}$." See, "Essence of Buddhism- In the First Sutta."

- There, he stated that suffering arises when one does not get the desired outcome: "Yam pi icchā̀̀ na labhati tam pi dukkhaim" OR "one suffers when one does not get (na labhati) what one desired (icchāī.)
- Because of that desires (icchā), one would try to keep close (upādāna) those things that one desires. Those things are parts of the pañckkhandhä that one likes, i.e., pañcupādānakkhandh $\bar{a}$.
- For details, see "Icchā (Cravings) Lead to Upādāna and to Eventual Suffering."

8. The connection between icch $\bar{a}, \tanh \bar{a}$, and $k \bar{a} m a$ comes in the Second Noble Truth on how that suffering arises: "yāyaì taṇhā ponobbhavikā nandirāgasahagatā tatratatrābhinandinī, seyyathidaím-kāma tanhā, bhava taṇhā, vibhava tanhā̆."

- Because of the icchā (or liking/desire), we get attached (taṇhā): "it is this attachment (tanh $\bar{a}$ ) which leads to renewed existence. That taṇhā is just for those delightful things in this world ( $k \bar{a} m a \operatorname{tanhh} \bar{a}$ ), for continued existence (for those who believe in rebirth, i.e., bhava tanh $\bar{a}$ ), and for optimum pleasures while this life lasts (for those who do not believe in rebirth, i.e., vibhava tanh $\bar{a}$ )
- Here we note that $k \bar{a} m a \tanh \bar{a}$ is common to both groups with bhava taṇh $\bar{a}$ and vibhava taṇh $\bar{a}$.

9. The Third Noble Truth states how that suffering can be stopped from arising (nirodha): "yo tassāyeva tanh $\bar{a} y a ~ a s e s a ~ v i r a ̄ g a ~ n i r o d h o ~ c a ̄ g o ~ p a t ̣ i n i s s a g g o ~ m u t t i ~ a n a ̄ l a y o " ~ O R ~ " i t ~ i s ~ t h e ~ r e m a i n d e r-l e s s ~ f a d i n g ~$ away and cessation of that tanh $\bar{a}$, the giving up and relinquishing of it, freedom from it, losing all affection for it."

- Of course, the way to stop future suffering is in the Fourth Noble Truth: "ayameva ariyo atthañgiko maggo, seyyathidaím-sammādiṭthi ... pe ... sammāsamādhi" OR" it is this Noble Eightfold Path. That is, Sammā Diṭṭhi ... Sammā Samādhi.


## Icchā, Taṇhā, Kāma - Can be Removed Only via Noble Eightfold Path

10. The key point here is that those three (icch $\bar{a}, \tan h \bar{a}$, and $k \bar{a} m a)$ CANNOT be removed directly by willpower or rituals. First, one needs to comprehend WHY icchā, taṇhā, and kāma GIVE RISE to suffering. That is the first step in the Noble Eightfold Path: Sammā Ditṭhi.

- Once that is understood, one will automatically follow the Noble Path. First, one will think accordingly (Sammā Sañkappa.) Then the rest will also follow. One will speak (Sammā Vācā), act (Sammā Kammanta), make an effort (Sammā Vāyāma), live (Sammā $\bar{j} \bar{j} \bar{\imath} a$ ), with that mindset (Sammā Sati). Then one will automatically get to Sammā Samādhi.
- There are two descriptive ways to understand the suffering hidden in icch $\bar{a}, \tanh \bar{a}$, and $k \bar{a} m a$. One is to comprehend Paticca Samuppāda, and the other is to comprehend Tilakkhaṇa.
- Of course, those two ways are inter-related. That will become more clear as we proceeded. It should already be clear to some extent by now.

11. All posts in this subsection at, "Paticca Samuppāda - Essential Concepts."
9.3.5 Jāti - Different Types of Births

March 14, 2021; revised March 15, 2021; July 29, 2022
Before understanding Paticca Samuppāda, we need to understand the 11 terms there. One critical word is $j \bar{a} t i$. There are different meanings of the word $j \bar{a} t i$, depending on the context.

## Three Main Meanings of $\boldsymbol{J a ̈ t} \boldsymbol{i}$

1. The commonly-used meaning of $j \bar{a} t i$ is "birth," as in the birth of a human body. We celebrate "birthdays" based on the day someone was born in this life. As we see below, Buddha Dhamma has two other (different) meanings depending on the context.

- In the Uppatti Paticca Samuppāda, jāti means the birth in a new realm among the 31 realms. For example, a living being can be born as a human, animal, Deva, Brahma, etc.; that is a birth in that existence. See, "Akusala-Mūla Upapatti Paticca Samuppāda."
- On the other hand, in Idappaccayatā Paṭicca Samuppāda, one can be "born" in countless "states" during a given lifetime. See \#3 below.
- The above TWO are the main meanings of " $j \bar{a} t i "$ in Buddha Dhamma. After understanding the concepts, one could use the same term appropriate for a given situation.
- Note that $j \bar{a} t i$ is pronounced "jāthi" with "th" sound as in "three." See ""Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars - Part 1."


## "Birth of a Baby" as Jāti Needs to be Understood as the Mundane Version

2. The mundane meaning of "birth" as the birth of a human (or animal) baby is all we can "see" with our limited worldview.

- It takes a Buddha to comprehend the real nature of this complex world.
- The other two possible meanings of "jāti" require a basic understanding of the "wider world view."
- That means possible births among 31 realms in a rebirth process. But it DOES NOT mean the "reappearing" of a soul (as in Abrahamic religions) or a ātman (as in Hinduism.)


## "Births" During a Lifetime - One Important Type of Jāti

3. This type of $j \bar{a} t i$ happens during a lifetime. For example, one can become angry and be "born" in an "angry bhava" and "angry jāti" for a short time. An hour later, one may learn of a big promotion and become very happy. At that time, one is "born" in a "happy $j \bar{a} t i$."

- Even before understanding births ( $j \bar{a} t i$ ) in the rebirth process, it is important to understand how such temporary $j \bar{a} t i$ arise. The Buddha discussed that in many suttas. See, for example, "WebLink: suttacentral: Avijiā Sutta (AN 10.61)." This sutta explains that one must associate with "good people," cultivate good habits, and be mindful of one's actions. That way, one is likely to be "born in good jāti" during a given bhava. That is the basis for guaranteeing good rebirths in the rebirth process (saimsāra.)
- See "Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda" for details on "temporary jāti."


## The Primary Meaning of $J \bar{a} t i$ - Birth in One of the 31 Realms

4. In the "WebLink: suttacentral: Saccavibhañga Sutta (MN 141)," Ven. Sariputta explains in a bit more detail the material in the "Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta (SN 56.11)." That sutta states: "Katamā cāvuso, jāti? Yā tesamin tesam sattānam tamhi tamhi sattanikāye jāti sañjāti okkanti abhinibbatti khandhānaim pātubhāvo āyatanānaì paṭilābho, ayaì vuccatāvuso: 'jāti'."

Translated: "What is $j \bar{a} t i$ ? It is the birth of beings in the various realms with one or more of the following stages: jāti sañjāti okkanti abhinibbatti khandhānain pātubhāvo āyatanānamं paṭilābho. This is called birth."

- English translations try to translate those words directly, but that does not convey the real meaning of those words. See, for example, "WebLink: accesstoinsight.org: Discourse on The Analysis of the Truths."


## Births in the Brahma and Deva Realms Have Only the First step - Jāti

5. For opapātika (instantaneous) births in the Deva and Brahma realms, $j \bar{a} t i$ is the ONLY stage involved. A Brahma or a Deva is born instantaneously, complete with "all parts of the body." [opapātika : lit. 'accidental' (from upapāta, accident; not from upapatti, as PTS Dict. has); 'spontaneously born', i.e. born without the instrumentality of parents. This applies to all heavenly and infernal beings.]

- Here the "body" refers to the combination of the mental body and physical body composed of the four great elements. Of course, the physical bodies of Brahmas only have a few units of suddhatthaka. Devas have more "solid bodies" but are still not visible to us.
- More details in "Manomaya Kāya (Gandhabba) and the Physical Body."


## Humans and Animals Have Other Additional Stages of "Birth"

6. Humans and animals have those other four stages as follows. Let us describe human birth.
(i) A human is first "born" with just 3 sets of suddhaṭthaka (vatthu dasaka, kāya dasaka, and bhava dasaka.) This happens at the $j \bar{a} t i$ stage.
(ii) Within a split second, 4 more dasaka (4 pasāda rūpa of cakkhu, sota, ghāna, and jivhā) are incorporated, leading to the sañjäti stage. This is the same as the gandhabba state. That gandhabba then stays for the duration of the human existence (bhava.) It is periodically pulled into a womb by kammic energy to be "born with a physical body."
(iii) When pulled into a womb, the gandhabba merges with a zygote, which is the okkanti state.
(iv) Then, that embryo grows in the womb in the abhinibbatti stage.
(v) When all body parts are formed, that is the khandhānain pātubhāvo stage, and a baby then comes out of the womb. That last stage is what we commonly call a "birth."
(vi) The sensory faculties start working as $\overline{\boldsymbol{a}}$ yatana after the baby is born. This is the last $\overline{\boldsymbol{a}} \boldsymbol{y} \boldsymbol{a t a n a} \boldsymbol{a} n a \dot{\boldsymbol{m}}$ patilābho stage.

- See "Manomaya Kāya (Gandhabba) and the Physical Body" and "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception" for details.


## Repeated "Births" Within Human and Animal Bhava

7. When that physical body dies, that is not necessarily the end of the "human bhava." That gandhabba comes out of the dead body and waits for another womb. We also call this "repeated jāti" within that same human bhava. See "Bhava and Jāti - States of Existence and Births Therein." Per our discussion above, " $j \bar{a} t i "$ " in that post refer to the mundane meaning - which is the same as the khandhānaim pātubhāvo stage in \#6 above. Thus, we need to understand the meaning of a word appropriate for the situation.

- When the kammic energy for the human bhava (human existence) is depleted, that gandhabba dies, which is the end of human bhava. Then it can grasp a new existence as a Deva, Brahma, an animal, etc.
- Therefore, we can see that a human can be in the 'human bhava" as a human gandhabba for many thousands of years. The same holds for animals. A fly lives with a visible "fly body" only for several days, but that "fly bhava" can last thousands of years. That is the "repeated births" within a given bhava. There are many more details that can be found by searching for posts on gandhabba; type the word "gandhabba" in the "Search" box on the top right.


## There Are Other Types of Jāti Too!

8. When one gets deeper into Buddha Dhamma, one can see that everything in this world is "born" due to causes and effects, i.e., Pațicca Samuppāda. For example, a tree is born out of a seed. A car is "born" in a factory. Paticca Samuppāda can describe all those.

- The Buddha explained this to Vāsetṭha in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Vāsettha Sutta (MN 98)." The English translation there is good enough to get the idea: "WebLink: suttacentral: With Väsettha (MN 98)." However, there is no need to get into those aspects initially.
- However, in that sutta, the Buddha told Vāsetṭha that humans are the same as a species. But they can be "born" in various "gati" according to their actions. For example, one who steals is "born" a thief. In another example, the Buddha says, "I don't call someone a brahmin (of high caste) based on the mother or womb they came from." Furthermore, even an immoral person can change to be "born a moral person of good character."
- Those are also "types of $j a \bar{a} t i$."


## Jātidhammā Different From Jāti

9. It is to be noted that $j \bar{a} t i d h a m m \bar{a}$ means something different from $j \bar{a} t i$.

- As explained in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Saccavibhañga Sutta (MN 141)," Jätidhammā are dhammā responsible for jāti. Similarly, jarādhammā, byādhidhammā, and sokaparidevadukkhadomanassupāyāsadhamm $\bar{a}$ are dhammā responsible for old age, disease, and all other sufferings associated with $j \bar{a} t i$ : sorrow (soka), lamentation (parideva), suffering (dukkha), misery (domanassa), and despair (upāyāsa).
- A fairly good English translation: "WebLink: accesstoinsight.org: Discourse on The Analysis of the Truths."


## Summary

10. The term $j \bar{a} t i$ (birth) needs to be understood according to the given situation.

- When someone says, "I was born 30 years ago," that refers to his/her birth with the present physical body. That person would not know when he/she was first "born" in the human realm. Thus we normally refer to birth as "to be born with a human body." We say the same about animals; "This dog was born ten years ago."
- However, in Buddhist terminology, birth (jāti) refers to two main types discussed above: the first happens many times during a given lifetime.
- The second type of $j \bar{a} t i$ is the moment of appearance in any given realm. A living being could be born a Deva, Brahma, human, animal, etc.
- After the Parinibbāna (death) of an Arahant, birth ( $j \bar{a} t i$ ) in any of the 31 realms of this world will not take place. In the "WebLink: suttacentral: Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta (SN 56.11)," the Buddha stated, "ayamantimā jāti" or "this is my last birth." At Parinibbāna (merging with Nibbāna), suffering stops without a trace.
- As long as there is a $j \bar{a} t i$, it ALWAYS ends up in death. That is why all Patticca samuppāda cycles end with decay (jarā) and death (marana.) Even the kusala-mūla version of Pațicca Samuppāda ends up with just "jāti paccayā jarā maraṇam.." See, "Kusala-Mūla Paticca Samuppāda."
Thus, even a Noble Person on the way to Nibbāna will encounter death. Of course, death is stopped at Parinibbāna.
- The akusala-mūla version of Paṭicca Samuppāda has "jāti paccayā jarā, maraṇa, soka-parideva-dukkha-domanassupāyasā sambhavan'ti." That has other types of suffering as well. See, "AkusalaMūla Upapatti Paticca Samuppāda."


### 9.3.6 <br> Bhava - Kammic Energy That Can Power an Existence

March 21, 2021; revised March 27, 2021; May 31, 2022 (\#4); August 31, 2022 (esp. \#4)
Bhava is kammic energy created by the mind. It can power a new existence in kāma bhava, rūpa bhava, or arūpa bhava. Buddha means "to stop bhava" (bhava + uddha.)

## Grasping a Bhava (Kammic Energy) Leads to Jāti (Birth) in That Bhava

1. There are different types of $j \bar{a} t i$ or births. See, "Jāti - Different Types of Births."

- Nothing can arise without a cause and sufficient energy. Any birth can arise only if kammic energy can sustain that birth. Different types of energy can sustain different types of births.
- Three main types of bhava refer to kammic energies that can sustain existences in the kāma loka, rūpa loka, or arūpa loka. The Buddha explained that to Ven. Ānanda in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Pathamabhava Sutta (AN 3.76)." Venerable Ānanda asked the Buddha "Bhante, they speak of this thing called 'bhava'. How is bhava defined?"
- As we know, all 31 realms in this world can be divided into three categories: 11 realms in kāma loka, 16 in rūpa loka, and four in arūpa loka. See, " 31 Realms Associated with the Earth."
- Existences in those three are supported by kāma bhava, rūpa bhava, and arūpa bhava. We will see below that three different types of energies are created by the mind.


## Kāma Bhava Required for Births in Kāma Loka

2. The Buddha explained kāma bhava as follows: "Kāmadhātuvepakkañca, ānanda, kammaì nābhavissa, api nu kho kāmabhavo paññāyethā"ti?

Translated: "If, Ānanda, a kammic energy established in the sensual plane (kāmadhātuvepakkañca or kāma dhātuve pakkañca) is not entered (nābhavissa or na abhavissa), can an existence in a sensual realm (kāma bhavo) come about?"

- Venerable Ānanda replied that it would not be possible. To be born in any of the 11 realms in the $k \bar{a} m a$ loka, such an appropriate type of energy must be cultivated and then grasped to "start that birth in kāma loka."
- Of course, there are different varieties of kammic energy powering the 11 realms in kāma loka.
- But they all have one thing in common: craving sensory experiences associated with all five six senses, and in particular, the five physical senses. Thus the term pañca kāma or "five types of kāma."
- Note that Devas in the 6 Deva realms have less dense bodies than humans. But they still have dense enough bodies to experience all five physical sensory inputs.


## Rūpa Bhava Required for Births in the Rūpa Loka

3. In the same way as above, the Buddha explained rūpa bhava: "Rūpadhātuvepakkañca, ānanda, kammaí nābhavissa, api nu kho rūpabhavo paññāyethā"ti?

Translated: "If, Ānanda, a kammic energy established in the rūpa plane (rūpadhātuvepakkañca or rūpa dhātuve pakkañca) is not entered (nābhavissa or na abhavissa), can an existence in the rūpa plane (rūpa bhavo) come about?" No.

- Therefore, one must have cultivated the necessary type of energy to grasp a birth in one of the 16 rūpāvacara Brahma realms in rūpa loka. Such energies are created with rūpāvacara jhāna.
- To cultivate $r \bar{u} p \bar{v} v a c a r a j h a ̄ n a$, one MUST give up cravings for the strongest of the pañca kāma, i.e., those sensory experiences associated with a physical body. Those are smell, taste, and physical touch.
- That is why rūpāvacara Brahmas do not have physical bodies. Those Brahmas are satisfied with just sights and sounds.
- There is no need for a physical body if smell, taste, and body touches are not needed. A rūpāvacara Brahma has only a manomaya kāya or a "mental body."
- As we have seen human gandhabbas can still see and hear after coming out of the physical body. A physical body with eyes and ears is not necessary to see and hear. Only the cakkhu and sota pasāda rūpa (in the manomaya kāya) are required for seeing and hearing. See, "Mental Body Versus the Physical Body."


## Arūpa Bhava Required for Births in the Arūpa Loka

4. As can be expected, the Buddha explained arūpa bhava as follows: "Arūpadhātuvepakkañca, ānanda, kammaì nābhavissa, api nu kho arūpabhavo paññ̄̄yethā"ti?

Translated: "If, Ānanda, a kammic energy established in the arūpa plane (arūpadhātuvepakkañca or arūpa dhātuve pakkañca) is not entered (nābhavissa or na abhavissa), can an existence in the arūpa plane (arūpa bhavo) come about?" No.

- Therefore, one must have cultivated the necessary energy associated with the arupa bhava to grasp a birth in one of the four arupāvacara Brahma realms in arūpa loka. Such energies are created with arupāvacara jhāna.
- To cultivate arupāvacara jhāna, one MUST give up cravings for all of the pañca kāma. That is why arupāvacara Brahmas do not have any pasāda rūpa. It has only hadaya vatthu in the manomaya $k a \bar{a} a$. They can not even see or hear. They can only think.
- Thus the only "matter" in rūpāvacara Brahma realms is the suddhatthaka in the hadaya vatthu of those Brahmas.
- We notice a trend from the above summary. Let us discuss that now.


## "Level of Suffering" Decreases With "Decreasing Matter"

5. In general, "Level of Suffering" Decreases With "Decreasing Matter." We see that sensory experiences with all six senses are available only in the 11 realms of the kāma loka. That is where most suffering is too! While the Deva realms with "less dense bodies" have optimum sensory pleasures with all six senses, the four lowest realms (apāyās) have the most suffering. The human realm in the middle has both pleasures and suffering.

- Of course, pañca kāma pleasures are available only in kāma loka. They include body touches, tastes, smells, sights and sounds. The first three types REQUIRE dense bodies to have "close contacts." But there is a "price to pay" as we will discuss below.
- Furthermore, those who cultivate rūpāvacara jhāna (Ariya or anāriya) can see that "jhānic pleasures" are much better and longer-lasting than "pañca kāma pleasures."
- The rūpāvacara jhāna are the first four jhāna. If one keeps going up to higher jhāna, they can see that the higher four arūpāvacara jhāna are better than the rūpāvacara jhāna.
- That is why it is easier for those who have cultivated jhāna to see that there is stress associated with "sensory contacts." The closer the contact is, the stronger the stress level.
- However, there are some exceptions to this "rule." While that trend holds well for the realms above the human realm, there are exceptions in the four lowest realms. In particular, some petas (hungry ghosts) have subtle (not dense) bodies.


## Increasing "Cooling Down" With Decreasing Sensory Contacts

6. In the long-run, having more faculties for sensory experiences has "built-in" suffering much more than any pleasures. The ability to smell, taste and touch requires a dense physical body. Such a physical body comes with bodily pains, diseases, and can be subjected to injuries. Such drawbacks are minimum in Deva realms where those bodies have the least density. But in other realms in the kāma loka, such sufferings can be unbearable, especially in the apāyās.

- Those who cultivate such rūpāvacara jhāna can experience this "relief" in this life itself. As one progresses towards higher $r \bar{u} p \bar{v} v a c a r a j h a ̄ n a$, the physical body is felt less and less. In the fourth $j h a \bar{a} a$, one does not feel the physical body at all. Furthermore, those who cultivate such rūpāvacara jhāna are invariably born in $r \bar{u} p \bar{v} v a c a r a ~ B r a h m a ~ r e a l m s ~ a t ~ t h e ~ d e a t h ~ o f ~ t h e ~ p r e s e n t ~ h u m a n ~ b o d y . ~$
- When one transcends the fourth $j h \bar{a} n a$ and gets into the higher $j h a \bar{a} \bar{a} s$, one will start seeing that even rūpāvacara jhāna are stressful. The relief becomes even higher as one proceeds to the highest arupāvacara jhāna. At the highest arupāvacara jhāna, one just feels that one is alive and the stress level is at the minimum. However, one with anāriya jhāna cannot go beyond that and stop that remaining stress, because one still has anusaya (latent defilements.) Furthermore, one with anusaya can be reborn even in the apāyās in future lives. This is why anāriya jhānās are useless in the end. See, "Samādhi, Jhāna, Magga Phala - Introduction."
- But an Arahant who can attain the highest jhāna can "stop life altogether" and get into "nirodha samāpatti." That can last up to 7 days, and one can "experience full Nibbāna" during that time. But that is not an experience in this world that can be described with the vedanä cetasika. We have no idea of what that would be like.


## Parinibbāna Is Where There Is No Suffering

7. Not even a trace of stress - let alone any suffering - is left when an Arahant attains Parinibbāna at death. All three planes of existence (kāma bhava, rūpa bhava, arūpa bhava) are absent in Parinibbāna!

- This is why "this world of 31 realms" and Parinibbāna are mutually exclusive. One can exist ONLY in either "this world" OR in "full Nibbāna" (Parinibbāna.)
- Note that even an Arahant lives in "this world" until death, and is subject to suffering due to kamma vipāka. Even the Buddha had some ailments and Ven. Moggallana was beaten to death.
- Therefore, even an Arahant is subjected to suffering as long as living in "this world of 31 realms." Thus Nibbāna is not complete until the death of the Arahant.


## Summary

8. Bhava is kammic energy created by the mind. In the above, we discussed three main types of bhava responsible for ALL births ( $j \bar{a} t i$ ) in this world of 31 realms.

- As we can see, the mind creates the required kammic energy. That is quite clear in the cases of rūpa bhava and arūpa bhava where the corresponding jhāna cittā produce that energy.
- Energies associated with kāma bhava are also produced in javana citta. Such javana cittā arise when we are engaged in a strong kamma. For example, javana energy to fuel a birth in the niraya or hell (the lowest realm) is produced in the mind of the murderer while doing that killing.
- That is how different types of bhava are related to different types of kamma. Cultivating jhāna is a type of kamma too.
- Buddha means "to stop bhava" (bhava + uddha.) Only a Buddha can figure out how to stop grasping various types of bhava (kammic energies) that we have accumulated, and thus stop any and all future suffering. That is why "Buddha" is a shared title for all the Buddhās.

All posts in this subsection at "Paticca Samuppāda - Essential Concepts."

### 9.3.7 Bhava and Punabbhava - Kammic Energy Giving Rise to Renewed Existence

March 28, 2021
Bhava is kammic energy. When a vipāka due to that kammic energy is grasped (upādāna), that leads to a new existence (punabbhava.)

## Summary of the Previous Post

1. Bhava is kammic energy created by the mind. It can power a new existence in kāma bhava, rūpa bhava, or arūpa bhava. Those are three main types of bhava responsible for ALL births (jāti) in this world of 31 realms.

- As humans, we can generate all three types of energies that CAN power a new existence in those three bhava. Depending on the details of kammic energies (i.e., specific kamma committed,) they CAN lead to births ( $j \bar{a} t i$ ) in the 4 apāyās, the human realm, and 6 Deva realms in kāma bhava, or in 16 Brahma realms in the rūpa bhava or 4 Brahma realms in arūpa bhava.
- See, "Bhava - Kammic Energy That Can Power an Existence."


## Bhava and Punabbhava

2. Just because there are energies that CAN power a new existence, that second step of grasping (upādāna) a new existence (punabbhava) DOES NOT happen automatically. To be reborn in a new existence, bhava MUST become punabbhava ("puna" + "bhava," where "puna" is "repeat/renewed.") In other words, the mind must grasp (upādāna) that "stored energy" (bhava) to energize the next existence.

- For example, Angulimala killed 999 people just before he met the Buddha. So, he had created a strong kammic energy that could have led to a birth in the niraya, the lowest realm. That kammic energy was there in a "niraya bhava" to support existence in a niraya.
- To INITIATE that "niraya bhava," his mind must latch onto that energy at the cuti-patisandhi moment at the end of the human bhava. However, he learned Dhamma and became an Arahant. Therefore, Ven. Angulimala's mind had become purified and would not latch onto existence in the niraya.
- In fact, since he had attained the Arahanthood, his mind would not latch onto ANY existence (bhava) in this world. He probably cultivated jhanas before his death, but birth in a Brahma realm was also not possible.
- Thus, it is critical to understand the difference between bhava and punabbhava.


## To Be Born in an Existence (Bhava) It Must Be Grasped (Upādāna)

3. We all have done MANY of both good and bad kamma in this life and previous lives. At the end of the human bhava, one can bring a new existence (punabbhava.) For that to happen, the mind needs to go through the "upādāna paccayā bhava" step in Pațicca Samuppāda at the cuti-pațisandhi moment.

- However, depending on the "level of purity" of a given mind, it may not grasp certain types of bhava. For example, a Sotāpanna's mind would not "grasp" (upādāna) a bhava in an apāya; such a bhava would not be compatible with the gati of a Sotāpanna.
- Similarly, an Anāgāmi's mind would not grasp even a human or a Deva bhava. Since Anāgāmi has "seen" the perils of births in kāma loka (kāma bhava), "renewed bhava" (punabbhava) in the kāma bhava WILL NOT happen.
- The mind of an Arahant has seen the perils of ALL existences in this world. Thus, it would not grasp an existence in this world. At death, an Arahant will be released and will merge with Nibbāna.
- Even an Arahant would have accumulated many types of bhava (kammic energies), especially in previous lives. However, none of them will lead to punabbhava or "renewed existence" since that mind would not grasp any existence in this world. That mind has realized that no existence is free of suffering.


## If There Is No New Existence (Punabbhava), There Is No Rebirth (Jāti)

4. Now we can clearly see what the Buddha stated in his first sutta, "WebLink: suttacentral: Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta (SN 56.11)": "Ñānañca pana me dassanaì udapādi: 'akuppā me vimutti, ayamantimā jāti, natthi dāni punabbhavo'" $t$.

Translated: "The knowledge and vision arose in me: 'Unshakable is the liberation of my mind. This is my last birth. Now there is no more renewed existence."

- There are many suttas with similar statements for Arahants. You can search for the verse "natthi dāni punabbhavo" at Sutta Central Search. That phrase means, "now there is no more renewed existence."


## "Upādāna Paccayā Bhava" Step in Idappaccayatā Paṭicca Samuppāda

5. We must understand many of the terms in Paticca Samuppāda, depending on the context. I have pointed out many times that "viññ̄ạna" in the "sañkhāra paccayā viñ̃̄̄̄ṇa" is ALWAYS a kamma viññāna and NOT a vipāka viññāna (like cakkhu viññāna or "seeing.")

- In Paticca Samuppāda cycles that run DURING a lifetime (Idappaccayatā Paṭicca Samuppāda,) the "upādāna paccayā bhava" step leads to TWO effects. (1) It CREATES kammic energies (or bhava) that can manifest AT THAT TIME. One can get to that bhava temporarily and be "born" in that bhava temporarily. (2) Also, part of the kammic energy generated will be preserved as a kamma $b \bar{i} j a$ in the viññạna plane.
- For example, when someone gets into a fight, that angry mindset generates kammic energy in his/her javana citta. Part of that energy leads to a "temporary angry bhava" and, thus, a "temporary angry $j \bar{a} t i$." An onlooker can see the change in his/her body: face will transform to an "angry face." Also, part of the kammic energy generated will either give rise to a new kamma bïja or strengthen an existing kamma bīja for a bhava in the apāyās. Of course, that will be a tiny kamma seed. If one kills a human, that kamma bïja (or bhava energy) will become much stronger and could become strong enough to bring in a punabbhava (new existence) in the apāyās.
- The more he/she engages in similar actions throughout life (even without killing anyone), such kamma $b \bar{j} a$ (bhava) will grow and could contribute to punabbhava.


## "Upādāna Paccayā Punabbhava" Step in Upapatti Paṭicca Samuppāda

6. There are different types of Paticca Samuppāda cycles that run in different situations. A special type of Paṭicca Samuppāda cycle (Upapatti Patticca Samuppāda) operates at the moment when the kammic energy (or bhava energy) for the current bhava runs out. That is when a new or "renewed existence" is grasped (upādāna.)

- In this particular case, the "upādāna paccayā bhava" step becomes "upādāna paccayā punabbhava."
- Therefore, in a Paticca Samuppāda cycle that runs at the cuti-patisandhi moment (at the end of the current existence), the step MUST BE interpreted as "upādāna paccayā punabbhava."

7. Note that neither type of Paticca Samuppāda cycles operate for an Arahant, since the steps "taṇh $\bar{a}$ paccayā upādāna" OR "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" WILL NOT take place for an Arahant.

- All posts in this subsection at "Paticca Samuppāda - Essential Concepts."
- Various types of Paṭicca Samuppāda cycles and related concepts discussed at "Paticca Samuppāda."


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### 9.3.8 Concepts of Upādāna and Upādānakkhandha

April 3, 2021
Important concepts of upādāna and upādānakkhandha are discussed in this subsection:
Difference Between Physical Rūpa and Rūpakkhandha (This post is also in the section on "The Five Aggregates (Pañcakkhandha).")

Where Are Memories "Stored"? - Connection to Pañcakkhandha
Loka Sutta - Origin and Cessation of the World
Dukkha Samudaya Starts With Samphassa-Jā-Vedanā
Key Steps of Kammic Energy Accumulation
Generating Kammic Energy in the "Upādāna Paccayā Bhava"

### 9.3.8.1 Where Are Memories "Stored"? - Connection to Pañcakkhandha

April 7, 2021; revised April 8, 2021; September 10, 2022
Records of our memories (nāmagotta) are permanent. A handful of people worldwide have autobiographical memories, i.e., they can recall their past experiences in great detail. These memory records are the same as "atīta pañcakkhandha."

## Memory Versus Autobiographical Memory

1. An average human can only recall relatively few memories even from this life. During our waking hours, we experience many things. How many events from yesterday can you recall in detail? If you are asked what you ate for lunch or what you wore to work on a specific day last month, can you recall?

- There are only a handful of people in the world who CAN recall such things in great detail. They can recall anything that THEY experienced on any given day for many years in the past. That is a special ability, and scientists call it "Highly Superior Autobiographical Memory" or HSAM.
- Note that this is not an ability of memorization. As we see below, some of these people CANNOT memorize a poem, for example. They can recall whatever they saw, heard, stated, smelled, touched, or thought about. That is why it is called "autobiographical memory."
- They can recall ONLY those things that they experienced. Suppose they had watched a TV show on a certain day, even several years ago. They can "bring back that memory" in their mind and re-live that experience. It is like "playing back" that TV show again in their mind!
- If you ask them what they ate for lunch on a specific day back in 1980, for example, they can "playback" that scene of them eating lunch on that day: They can tell you not only what they ate, but what the weather was like, and who they were with, etc. It is as if their brain is a video recorder, and they can play back on any past event in their life. But the brain cannot "store" events in such detail.
- The key point is that those with HSAM capability are RECALLING those memories from a depository. There is no way that such details can be stored in the brain. Scientists are "stuck" and have not been able to explain the phenomenon of HSAM; see the review article at the end of the post.
- Whatever ALL OF US experience goes into a depository in the viñ̃āāna plane (nāma loka) as we will discuss below. But different people have varying capabilities to retract that information.


## First Recorded Case of Autobiographical Memory

2. That AMAZING ability first came to light with Jill Price, who contacted a team of scientists in the early 2000s about her ability to recall anything from 1974 onwards. Here is a video of her with Diane Sawyer on an ABC News program in 2008:

- She cannot recall all of her life, but just those events after 1974. The ability of HSAM just got 'turned on" when she was a teenager.
WebLink: youtube: The woman that never forgets - Jill Price First Interview!


## The Amazing Recalling Ability of Jill Price

3. Let us discuss the main points from the above video.
@1:10 minutes: She remembers everything since she was 14 years old.
@2:50 minutes: Diane Sawyer tests Jill's ability to recall past events. She passes all tests.
@4:20 minutes: Jill says she has a "split-screen" in her head. She is talking to Diane while "watching" the playback of whatever past event she recalls. She describes what she had for lunch on May 27, 2006. Remember that the above interview was recorded in 2008. Since she kept a detailed diary, anyone can check these accounts. One may think she has memorized all those detailed records, but that is impossible, especially since she can't memorize even a poem.

## Connection to Nāmagotta and Atīta Pañcakkhandha

4. Let us pause and make the connection to Buddha Dhamma.

- As discussed in the post, "Difference Between Physical Rūpa and Rūpakkhandha," rūpakkhandha is 11 types. But all 11 types are in 3 main categories: atīta, anāgata, paccuppanna (past, future, current.) All other types are included in these three types. For example, internal (related to one's own body) and external rūpa must be of past, future, or present.
- The paccuppanna (or current) rūpa are those being experienced now. In a moment, it will go to the past and be added to the atitita (past) rūpa category. The category of anāgata (future) rūpa is those that we hope/expect to experience in the future.
- As we can see, the category of atīta (past) rūpa dominates one's rūpakkhandha. It is also clear that rūpakkhandha is one's own; it is what one has experienced. One person's rūpakkhandha is different from someone else's.
- Furthermore, those atīta (past) rūpa (i.e., atīta rūpakkhandha) are just RECORDS of past rūpa that one has experienced. They are PERMANENT. Whatever happened cannot be changed.

Memories Are the Same as Atīta Pañcakkhandha (Past Experiences)
5. Now, here is another KEY point to remember. Whenever an event (registering of one of six kinds of rūpa) registers in the mind, corresponding mental aggregates (vedanā, sañ̃̄̄a, sañkhāra, viññāna) also register. Thus all five aggregates (pañcakkhandha) arise and immediately go into atīta pañcakkhandha.

- For example, suppose we hear a pleasing sound, for example. It may register as a sukha vedana $\bar{a}$, and we recognize what that sound is (sañña $\bar{a}$.) Then we think about it (sainkhāra) and the overall sensory experience is viññanna (in this case, sota viññāna.)
- Thus not only is that sound (sadda rūpa) registered in the mind but those mental components are also registered. Thus, a rūpakkhandha ALWAYS arises with the other four khandhas (aggregates.) In other words, pañcakkhandha arises with any sensory event and is immediately recorded as atīta pañcakkhandha.
- Those records (atīta pañcakkhandha) are in the viñ̃̃̄ãna plane (nāma loka) and can be recalled at any time in the future. They are called "nāmagotta." (With each sensed event, a record of it gets added to nāmagotta in viñ̃̃̄ạa dhātu - via the mana indriya in the brain.)
- Details at "Arising of Five Aggregates Based on an Ārammana" and "Our Two Worlds: Material and Immaterial."
- Please note that it is necessary to read and understand the posts I refer to if one wants to understand these concepts. Just reading a post or two will not do.


## People With Iddhi (Supernormal) Powers Can Recall Past Lives

6. Now, we can see how the Buddha could "look back" and recall his past lives extending trillions of years to the past.

- Just like Jill Price can recall any event that took place in HER life, the Buddha was able to recall any event that happened in his life. The only difference is that Jill Price can recall ONLY her current life from 1974. The Buddha could recall any event in his ANY previous life!
- By the way, anyone who can cultivate the fourth jhāna (Ariya or anāriya jhāna) would be able to recall at least a few past lives. Even before the Buddha, many yogis could recall several past lives. Note that some children can remember events from their previous life.
- One can recall past lives only because records of all past experiences are preserved in the viñ $\tilde{a} n{ }_{n} a$ plane (nāma loka). Those memories are NOT stored in the brain, but the brain plays a role in "bringing those memories back." A discussion on this subject is in "Brain and the Gandhabba."
- When an average human recalls (some of) past events, it is those nāmagotta that they recall. It is just that an average human can recall only significant events of his/her life. Many people with HSAM can recall all events from their current life.


## Nāmagotta (Atīta Pañcakkhandha) Has Records of One's Life Experiences

7. Let us go back to discussing the video of $\# 2$ above.
@5:15 minutes: Jill Price says she was not "good in school" and could not memorize even a simple poem. She meant that she was an average student who was not exceptionally intelligent. What she has is not KNOWLEDGE, but an ability to RECALL memories. As she explains, her memory is aitobiographical, i.e., she can recall ONLY those events she has experienced (seen, heard, tasted, smelled, touched, and thought about.)
@6:40 minutes: She says that she "travels in her head." That means she can travel to the past and relive an experience as if it is happening now!
@6:40 minutes: She says she will not be able to go on the TV show "Jeopardy" and win because she does not have general knowledge about the world. She can recall ONLY those EVENTS that she experienced, for example, by watching TV. This is a critical point that I want to emphasize. It is not knowledge/wisdom that she has, but the ability to RECALL past events in great detail!

## Summary

8. All our memories (including those from previous lives) are preserved in the viñ̃ān̄a plane (nāma loka.)

- The ability to recall memories is a complex subject. A Buddha can recall events from ANY life in the past. An average human can recall only bits and pieces from the current life. Between those two extremes, there is a huge variety of that capability.
- Recalling a memory means playback that old experience in one's mind. Recalling an "experience" recreates that whole past event. That includes that part of the rūpakkhandha and the events's mental attributes (other four aggregates). Thus, it plays back that part of the "atīta pañcakkhandha."
- The five aggregates (pañcakkhandha) are one's own. It has one's past experiences, experiences happening at the present moment, and hopes/expectations of future experiences.


## Implications

9. Each person is automatically attached ( $\tanh \bar{a}$ ) based on one's past experiences. One would like to "keep them close," i.e., have "upādāna" for those things. Those past experiences (atīta pañcakkhandha) influence one's character/habits (gati.) That is how "pañca upādānakkhandha" arises.All these concepts are interrelated. I hope you can at least begin to appreciate these relationships.

- To break bad gati and to avoid taṇhā/upādāna for things that can get one into trouble, one must be able to clarify these concepts and "see" how future suffering arises due to them.
- The "cooling down of the mind" can result ONLY via gaining knowledge of this process. Following moral guidelines (precepts) is essential to get to the right mindset. But it is pañ̃̃ $\bar{a}$ (wisdom) that eventually leads to the right vision (Sammā Diṭthi) at the Sotāpanna stage.


## Further Information

10. It is impossible to put all the necessary information into one post. If one desires to comprehend these concepts, one must spend some time reading all related posts. I have mentioned some above.

- Other related posts: "Recent Evidence for Unbroken Memory Records (HSAM)," "Autobiographical Memory - Preserved in Nāma Loka," "Rūpa and Rūpakkhandha, Nāma and Nāmagotta."
- Here is a recent review article on the subject of memory recall: "Individual Differences in Autobiographical Memory - Daniela J. Palombo et al.-2018."
- All posts in this subsection at "Paticca Samuppāda - Essential Concepts."


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In the Loka Sutta, the Buddha explained the arising and cessation of the "world of an individual." It does not directly refer to arising and cessation of the vast physical world.

## Introduction

1. The "WebLink: suttacentral: Sabba Sutta (SN 35.23)" explains everything belonging to the world as, "Kiñca, bhikkhave, sabbaì? Cakkhuñceva rūpā ca, sotañca saddā ca, ghānañca gandhā ca, jivhā ca rasā ca, kāyo ca phoṭthabbā ca, mano ca dhammā ca-idaì vuccati, bhikkhave, sabbamं."

Translated: "And what, bhikkhus, is the all? The eye and forms, the ear and sounds, the nose and odors, the tongue and tastes, the body and tactile objects, the mind and mental phenomena. This is called the all."

- Here, "the all" refers to "everything in the world." The Buddha refers to the world per each individual. A given person has six sense faculties, and with which they experience the "world."
- If you think carefully, you will see that this description is the same as saying that one's five aggregates (pañcakkhandha) are the same same as one's world. The rūpakkhandha includes one's sensory faculties and any "rūpa" ever experienced. The four mental aggregates include all mental phenomena that arise as a result of such sensory experiences. One person's world is different from another.
- In the Loka Sutta, the Buddha describes how that world repeatedly arises in the rebirth process. Of course, the world experienced in different births are very different. Most births are into sufferingfilled worlds, and that is why one would want to stop this recurring process.


## Loka Sutta - Arising of One's World

2. Here is how the Buddha described the "arising of ones world" in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Loka Sutta (SN 12.44)": "Katamo ca, bhikkhave, lokassa samudayo? Cakkhuñca pațicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññānam. Tiṇ̣am sañgati phasso. Phassa paccayā vedanā; vedanā paccayā taṇhā; taṇhā paccayā upādānaim; upādāna paccayā bhavo; bhava paccayā jāti; jāti paccayā jarāmaranamì sokaparidevadukkhadomanassupāyāsā sambhavanti. Ayaì kho, bhikkhave, lokassa samudayo."

Translated: "And what, bhikkhus, is the origin of the world? In dependence on the eye and forms ( $r \bar{u} p a$ ), eye-consciousness arises. That is followed by "contact with the three types of 'san'" or "samphassa." With samphassa as condition, samphassa-j $\bar{a}-v e d a n \bar{a}$ come to be; with samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedana $\bar{a}$ as condition tanh $\bar{a}$; with taṇhā as condition, upādāna; with upādāna as condition, existence (bhava); with bhava as condition, birth; with birth as condition, aging-and-death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure, and despair come to be. This, bhikkhus, is the origin of the world."

- The word samudaya comes from "san" + "udaya" which rhymes as "samudaya." There is "san" again! Now, "udaya" means to arise, and thus, "samudaya" means "arising due to san." This really means not the arising of the whole world with trillions of stars/planets, but the re-arising of the world at death. If "san" (or the defilements of greed, hate, ignorance) were to have been removed, one would not be reborn and experience this suffering-filled world again.
- Note that just a sensory experience CANNOT be the root cause of suffering. Rather it is the attachment to sensory experience with samphassa that is the root cause. That is the KEY POINT of this sutta. This is why I have bolded the verse, "tinnain sañgati phasso."
- Let us discuss the time sequence stated in the whole verse. Then my point will become clear.


## Time Sequence in the Above Verse - The first Step Happens to Anyone

3. The whole process starts with a sensory input through one of the six senses. The above verse describes what happens when someone sees an object they attach to (other five sense faculties work the same way.) That attachment (tanhh $\bar{a}$ ) eventually leads to suffering in some form.

- The process starts with "cakkhuñca pațicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññānami." That means cakkhu viññāna occurs when one sees an object. It just sees what that object is. No kamma generated here. That "seeing event" or cakkhu viñ̃ñạna arises with the help of the phassa cetasika. This phassa (contact) is that between cakkhu and rūpa.
- As we have discussed, phassa cetasika is a universal cetasika that arises with ANY sensory event. Suppose you hear a sound or taste food; that involves the phassa cetasika. Any living being, including an Arahant, will experience all six sensory inputs.
- The next step is "tịnṇaì sañgati phasso."


## Tị̂naín Sañgati Phasso - Misunderstood Key Verse

4. This short verse is commonly mistranslated as, "The meeting of the three is contact." See the English translation of the Loka Sutta at Sutta Central: "WebLink: suttacentral: The World (SN 12.44)."

- It does not make any sense to say "the meeting of cakkhu, rūpa, and cakkhu viññāṇa." Instead, cakkhu viññāna (or seeing the object)" happens with the contact or meeting of cakkhu and rūpa. There is no "meeting of the three."
- Instead, what happens at this second step is "contact with defiled gati" or "samphassa." Here samphassa is "san phassa" ("san" + "phassa," where "san" are defilements (greed, anger, ignorance). It rhymes as "samphassa." To learn about "san" see, "What is "San"? Meamomg of Sansāra or Samsāra"). Thus samphassa (contact with defilements) is an internal process that happens in mind.
- There are three main "defiled gati": lobha, dosa, moha. Those are the "three" referred to in verse.
- For details see, "Difference between Phassa and Samphassa." Then we can see that "phassa paccay $\bar{a}$ $v e d a n \vec{a} "$ really means "samphassa paccay $\bar{a}$ samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedana $\bar{a}$." Some deep suttas are in "summary form" and need detail explanations; see, "Sutta Interpretation - Uddesa, Niddesa, Patiniddesa."


## "Phassa Paccayā Vedanā" Is "Samphassa Paccayā Samphassa JāVedanā."

5. Therefore, the third step, "phassa paccayā vedanā" that comes after the step "tiṇnaím sañgati phasso" is "samphassa paccay $\bar{a}$ samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedan $\bar{a}$." This is a "mind-made vedan $\vec{a} "$ due to samphassa.

- Now it is clear that the fourth step of, "vedan $\bar{a}$ paccay $\bar{a} \operatorname{tanhh} \bar{a}$ " really is "samphassa-j $\bar{a}-v e d a n \bar{a}$ paccayā taṇhā." An Arahant has vedanā, but not samphassa or samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedana $\overline{\text { a }}$.
- One would attach to that ārammaṇa ONLY because it led to "samphassa" with the step"tinnain sañgati phasso."


## "Loka Samudaya" Will Not Take Place for an Arahant

6. Therefore, all steps after the first step of 'seeing an object" will not arise for an Arahant because an Arahant would not generate samphassa. See \#3 and \#9 of the post "Difference between Phassa and Samphassa."

- Another way to state the same is to say that an Arahant does not have sañgati ("san gati") or "defiled gati." An Arahant's mind is pure and is devoid of greed, hate/anger, and ignorance. Note that "gati" is pronounced "gathi" like in "Thailand."
- For an Arahant, a 'seeing event" is just that. No attachment. Thus, any sensory event would be limited to just experiencing that sensory input. The critical step of "tinụaim sangati phasso" WILL NOT take place for an Arahant. Thus all other steps following it would not be there!
- That is why an Arahant is free from future suffering.


## How Can Someone Get to the Arahanthood?

7. Now the question is: "How can someone attain Arahanthood, i.e., attain Nibbāna"?

The Buddha provided the answer in the second part of the sutta: "Katamo ca, bhikkhave, lokassa atthañgamo? Cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññānaì. Tị̣nam sañgati phasso. Phassa paccayā vedanā; vedanā paccayā tanhhā. Tassāyeva taṇhāya asesavirāganirodhā upādāna nirodho; upādāna nirodhā bhava nirodho ...pe... evametassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa nirodho hoti. Ayamं kho, bhikkhave, lokassa atthañgamo."

Translated: "And what, bhikkhus, is the cessation/ending of the world? In dependence on the eye and forms, eye-consciousness arises. That is followed by "contact with the three types of 'san'" or "samphassa." With samphassa as a condition, samphassa-jā-vedanā come to be; with samphassa-j $\bar{a}-$ $\boldsymbol{v e d a n} \bar{a}$ as condition tanhha. But with the remainder-less fading away and cessation of tanh $\bar{a}$ result in the cessation of upādāna; with the cessation of upādāna, cessation of existence (bhava); with the cessation of existence, cessation of birth; with the cessation of birth, aging-and-death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure, and despair cease. Such is the cessation of this whole mass of suffering. This, bhikkhus, is the cessation/ending of the world.

- Until one attains the Arahanthood, one COULD generate samphassa, depending on the sensory input. As one attains higher magga phala, there will be less and less ärammaṇa that could lead to samphassa or "contact with defilements." For example, after attaining the Anāgāmi stage, one would not "attach to" any sensual pleasures available in kāma loka.
- An Arahant would have removed all defilements, and thus, the akusala-mūla Paticca Samuppāda process starting with "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" would not be initiated. That is the cessation/ending of the world for that Arahant!


## A Sensory Experience is a Trigger to Initiate a PS Process

8. As Loka Sutta points out, the accumulation of kammic energy to "power up" future existences starts with sensory experiences. Kamma generation in Paṭicca Samuppāda (PS) process takes place in the "taṇh $\bar{a}$ paccayā upādānaí" step in \#2 above.

- As discussed in the second part of the Loka Sutta, the critical point is the stopping of the sequence of events following a sensory experience at the arising of tanh $\bar{a}$ due to "samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedana $\bar{a}$." Obviously, we cannot control it at that moment since it happens within a split second.
- (Additional information: Two critical things need to happen to reduce and eliminate taṇhā over time: (i) First, one must comprehend this whole process that we are discussing, and also how the Paticca Samuppāda process works. That is the "dassanā pahātabba"" step where a large fraction of wrong views are removed at the Sotāpanna stage by getting rid of wrong views. (ii) Once getting to the Sotāpanna stage, one needs to remove the tendency to attach to sensory pleasures with $\overline{A n} \bar{a} p \bar{a} n a$ and Satipattthāna Bhāvanā. One reaches higher stages of magga phala in this second stage of "bhāvana pahātabbä" step. In the WebLink: suttacentral: Sabbasava Sutta (MN 2), "dassanā pahātabbä" is the "first removal" and "bhāvanā pahātabbā" is the "last removal.")
- We will discuss that in future posts again. But it has been discussed in some existing posts. See, for example, "Tanhā - The Origin of Suffering" and "Vipallāsa (Ditthi, Saññā, Citta) Affect Sañkhara."


## Paṭicca Samuppāda process Initiates With a Sensory Experience

9. Therefore, the akusala-mūla Paticca Samuppāda process does not automatically start with "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra." No one would act with avijjā WITHOUT a cause. The cause for acting with avijjā is a TEMPTATION brought up by a SENSORY EXPERIENCE.

- One can see that by combining the two suttas discussed in this post, the Sabba Sutta (SN 35.23) and the Loka Sutta (SN 12.44).
- In fact, this is the theme that one can see in many suttas, including the Chachakka Sutta (MN 148). I have discussed that sutta in detail in another series of posts on the "Worldview of the Buddha." Just take a look at the introductory post of that series; "Buddhist Worldview - Introduction."
- The current series looks at the same issue with a different approach: "Paticca Samuppāda - Essential Concepts."


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### 9.3.8.3 Dukkha Samudaya Starts With Samphassa-Jā-Vedanā

## April 23, 2021; revised September 7, 2022

Dukkha samudaya means "origin of suffering." Kammic energies for future suffering accumulate via Paticca Samuppāda (PS). We start acting with avijjā and initiate PS when sensory inputs trigger temptations and generate "samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedan $\bar{a}$ " or "mind-made feelings."

## Critical Conclusions from Loka Sutta (SN 35.23)

1. In the previous post, "Loka Sutta - Origin and Cessation of the World," we reached the following conclusions. (you may want to print it and refer to it as we proceed.)

- IPațicca Samuppāda (PS) describes the key steps leading to future suffering.
- However, that process DOES NOT initiate with "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra." We don't AUTOMATICALLY start acting with avijjā!
- A sensory input (ārammana) triggers the Paticca Samuppāda process: sight, sound, taste, smell, touch, or the memory of a past event (dhamma $\bar{a}$.)
- If the mind attaches to such a sensory event ( $\tanh \bar{a}$ ) that attachment leads to upādāna (keeping it in mind and getting stuck in it.) Then while in the "upādāna paccayā bhava" step, we accumulate kammic energy for future births with mano, vacī, and kāya sañkhāra. That is how the PS process gets to "avijjā paccayā saǹkhāra."
- Before we discuss those details, it is critical to understand how this whole process starts with "getting attached" to certain sensory inputs (ārammaṇa) with "samphassa-j $\bar{a}-v e d a n \bar{a} "$ " or "mind-made feelings."
- By the way, "dukkha samudaya" is the same as "loka samudaya." That is why Nibbāna implies "stopping future rebirths" or "stopping the re-arising of this word." It may take time to absorb this critical point.


## "Samphassa-jāa-Vedanā" - Example 1

2. A sensory input comes through one of the six senses: eyes (sights), ears (sounds), nose (smells), tongue (tastes), body (touches), and mind (memories). In Pāli, they are six types of vipāka viññāna.

- Let us consider a simple example starting with cakkhu viññāna. Suppose three people A, B, and C, sit in a small coffee shop. They are all facing the door, and person X walks in. Suppose that person X is a close friend of A , the worst enemy of B , and that C does not know X at all. We will also assume that all 4 are males.
- So, let us see what happens within a split second. A recognizes $X$ as his friend, and a smile comes to his face. B recognizes X as his enemy, and his face gets darkened.
- On the other hand, X is just another person to C . He immediately goes back to whatever he is doing.

3. That is an example of a "cakkhu viñnāna," a "seeing event." It is over within a split second, just like taking a photo with a camera takes only a split second, where the image in captured on the screen instantaneously.

- However, something very complicated happens in the human mind when a "seeing event" occurs.
- It is critically important to go slow and analyze what happens to see how complicated this process is (for a human mind) to capture that "seeing event." It is much more complicated than just recording "a picture" in a camera.

4. Within that split second, A recognizes X as his good friend, and joy arises in his mind, and he becomes happy. B recognizes X as his worst enemy, and bad emotions arise in his mind, and he becomes angry. On the other hand, no extra feelings arise in him. He goes back to whatever he was doing.

- As we can see such vastly varying feelings arise due to the three steps that follow the "seeing event" or cakkhu viññanna. As we remember from the previous post (refer to the printout) those three steps are "Tiṇnain sañgati phasso; Phassa paccayā vedanā; vedanā paccayā tanhā." As we discussed, the last two steps are "samphassa paccay $\bar{a}$ samphassa-j $\bar{a}-v e d a n \bar{a} "$ and "samphassa-j $\bar{a}-v e d a n \bar{a} p a c c a y \bar{a}$ taṇhā."
- The three people, A, B, and C, generate different "san gati" upon seeing X. Even though they all see the same person X, three different types of "samphassa-j $\bar{a}-\mathbf{v e d a n} \vec{a}$ ": joy, anger, and neutral feelings arise respectively in $\mathrm{A}, \mathrm{B}$, and C .
- How does the SAME "seeing event" (seeing X) lead to all these very different changes in the minds of three different people? (and the emotions even show up on their faces!)

5. Since all three people A, B, and C, are average humans, they have not removed "san gati" or defilements from their minds. Such "san gati" remain hidden as "anusaya" in all three.

- However, a trigger is needed to bring those "san gati" to the surface. A has had "good experiences with X ," and thus "affectionate san gati" arose in him upon seeing X. B's experiences with X were not good, and those "bad memories" were triggered by seeing X.
- On the other hand, C has had no prior experiences with X . Thus, a trigger for "samphassa-j $\bar{a}-v e d a n \vec{a}$ " was not there. But if C sees a person he is familiar with, that may trigger his "san gati."
- If C were an Arahant, he would not have any "san gati" left. Thus, affection or anger would not arise upon seeing ANY person.
- The best way to comprehend this key point is to think about your own experiences.


## Kamma Generation Depends on One's Actions Based on the Initial "Attachment"

6. Once bound to an event with "samphassa," that leads to corresponding "mind-made feelings" or samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedanā. Joyous feelings arose in A and angry feelings arose in B upon seeing X . Both A and $B$ got "attached" to that event. Thus, tanh $\bar{a}$ can arise via greed or anger.

- Person A may start talking to X excitedly, especially if X is a close friend. B's face may darken and many angry thoughts about his past experiences with X may arise in him. Both are "samphassa-jā-vedana paccayā taṇhā" and "taṇhā paccayā upādāna."
- The next step of "upādāna paccayā bhavo" depends on what happens next. In this case, B may start accumulating "bad kamma" just by cultivating "bad vacī sañkhāra" in his mind, even if he does not say or do anything. Such "bad thoughts" arise via "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" where sañkhāra are vacī sañkhāra (not speaking out but talking to himself.)
- But it could get worse if B's anger rises and he says something bad to X. That is also 'bad vacī sañkhāra." If X responds and the situation escalates, B may hit X. That is getting to the "bad kāya sañkhāra" stage. All these lead to the accumulation of "bad kamma" for B.
- That is a brief example of how one could generate kammic energy for future existences, even if this particular action may not be strong enough to "power up" a new birth. However, if the situation escalates and B kills X, then that would certainly be a strong kamma leading to new birth in an apaya.


## "Samphassa-jā-Vedanā" - Example 2

7. Let us clarify it further with an example since it is critical to understand this issue. Suppose a friend visits an alcoholic $(\mathrm{X})$ and brings a bottle of alcohol. Again, let us follow the steps in \#2 of the previous post.

- First, X sees that his friend has brought a bottle of alcohol, his favorite kind. This is the "seeing event" in this example: "cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññānaṁ." This cakkhu viññāṇa is a vipāka viññāna and no kamma generated. Even an Arahant would see the bottle.
- Next is the CRITICAL step "tinnain sañgati phasso" where X's mind instantly makes the "san phassa" or "defiled contact" with his "alcoholic gati."
- Note the two types of "contacts" in the above two processes. In the first, the "phassa cetasika" in cakkhu viññāna makes the "contact" between cakkhu and $r \bar{u} p a$ (alcohol bottle) to give rise to cakkhu viññanna (seeing the bottle.) The second is a "defiled contact" (samphassa) that arises due to his craving for alcohol.
- On the other hand, if someone brought a bottle of alcohol to an Arahant, he would also see the bottle, i.e., cakkhu viññāna with the "phassa cetasika" will also arise in him. But there would be no "tiṇnam sangati phasso" and, thus, the process will stop there.

8. Once X got "attached" to the bottle of alcohol with samphassa he becomes joyful and that joyous feeling is samphassa-jā-vedanā: Samphassa led to "Samphassa-j̄̄a-vedanā."

- Therefore, the "extra vedan $\bar{a} "$ made up by the mind is the "samphassa-jā-vedana." Here, "jā" means "generated with." That vedan $\bar{a}$ was generated by samphassa (san phassa).
- Suppose X's wife is also home when the friend brings the bottle. She would not be happy to see the bottle, especially if she is trying to break the "drinking habit" of her husband. She may even get angry with her friend. That is also a samphassa-j $\bar{a}-$ vedana $\overline{\text { a }}$.
- On the other hand, the Arahant will also see the bottle and will identify it as such. But there will be no joy or dismay. There will be no samphassa-j $\bar{a}-v e d a n \bar{a}$.

9. The "samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedan $\vec{a}$ " of joyous feelings in X makes him attach (tanh $\bar{a}$ ), which immediately leads to the next step of upādāna. Which means his mind is now focused on the alcohol bottle.

- If his wife opposes him having alcohol often, she may become agitated. Even if she may not say anything, she could get mad at the friend for bringing the alcohol bottle. Does he not know that he is easily
tempted? Did the two of them plan to "have a drink" without her knowing? She also gets to the "tanh $\vec{a} "$ and "upādāna" stages.
- Of course, an Arahant would not "get attached" or "get stuck" (no taṇhā or upādāna.)


## Generating Kamma Starts With the "Taṇhā Paccayā Upādānaì" Step

10. Therefore, once getting attached with tanhhā, the next step of "getting stuck and proceeding along" is likely to happen with "taṇhā paccayā upādāna" and "upādāna paccayā bhavo" steps.

- This is where X started getting ready to "have a good time with the friend." He would think, speak, and act to have a "good time " with his friend.
- However, it is possible to stop the process at that point by acting mindfully. If $X$ has seen the dangers of keeping his "drinking habit" he can think about the bad consequences of engaging in that practice and tell the friend that he is trying to eliminate his drinking habit. Thus he could start acting with "vijja" (or wisdom) and NOT engage in "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra."
- That is the basis of the correct Ānāpānasati or Satipaṭ!hāna Bhāvanā.


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### 9.3.8.4 Key Steps of Kammic Energy Accumulation

May 1, 2021; revised May 2, 2021; October 13, 2022
Here we discuss the critical steps in kamma accumulation. Paṭicca Samuppāda (PS) explains how one creates one's future with our actions (kamma generated via sañkhāra.) However, that kamma accumulation process starts not at the beginning of PS but in the middle of PS with a sensory experience.

## Chronological Order of Kamma Accumulation

1. Let us first list the critical steps involved.
(i). A sensory experience with one of the six sense inputs (seeing, hearing, smell, taste, touch, memory recall) is the first step.
(ii). Attachment (tanhā ) to that sensory experience based on our habits/character (gati.)
(iii). Embracing (willingly getting involved) in that sensory experience with specific goals.
(iv). Thinking, speaking, and doing things to accomplish that goal.

- During that last step, we accumulate kammic energy to bring about future rebirths and all other types of kamma vipāka.


## Matching the Steps in Paṭicca Samuppäda

2. We experience those sensory inputs with our five physical senses and the mind. In Pāli, those six are "salāyatana" or "all āyatana.")

- A sensory experience starts with the "salāyatana paccayā phasso" step in PS. That verse means "making contact with one of the six āyatana."
- Here, it is critical to see that an Arahant does not have "āyatana" but only "indriya." Arahant‘s six senses only capture a sensory experience. An Arahant has indriya, but they DO NOT become "āyatana." Indriya become āyatana when rāga, dosa, moha (or "san") come into play.

3. So, IF someone's mind "gets involved" with a sensory experience and starts the "salāyatana paccayā phasso" step, that person's indriya becomes ayatana. That is the beginning of a PS process based on that $\bar{a} r a m m a n a$. Then the mind automatically goes to the next few steps of "phassa paccay $\bar{a} v e d a n \bar{a}, "$ "vedanā paccayā taṇhā," and "attaches" (tanhhā) to that ārammaṇa. As we discussed in previous posts, "vedan $\bar{a} "$ here really is "samphassa-jā-vedanā." See "Loka Sutta - Origin and Cessation of the World" and "Dukkha Samudaya Starts With Samphassa-Jā-Vedanā."

- Once "attached," the mind automatically "pulls it close (upādāna)" and will start thinking, speaking, and acting on it. That is the "upādāna paccayā bhavo" step taking a side-step leading to "avijja paccayā sañkhāra." This is when the PS process starts from the beginning. The following chart illustrates this critical point.


Download the pdf: "WebLink: suttacentral: Icchā to Upādāna to Suffering."

- Let us take an example to illustrate this critical point.


## Example of "Salāyatana Paccaȳ̄ Phasso" Leading Automatically to "Upādāna Paccayā Bhavo" Step

4. Husband and wife are walking down the street, and the wife stops and looks at a beautiful painting on display in a store window. The husband looks at it, shrugs his shoulders, and wants to move on. But the wife is "attached" to that painting. So, she asks her husband whether they can go inside and take a good look at it.

- In this particular case, both saw the painting, i.e., "cakkhuñca pațicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviñ̃āṇam"" took place for both. But the critical step of "tiṇnaì sañgati phasso" DID NOT take place in the husband's mind. Note that this is the sequence of events described in the Loka Sutta. See "Loka Sutta - Origin and Cessation of the World."
- The exact sequence of events is stated slightly differently in the PS process (for the wife.) It starts with "salāyatana paccaya phasso." It immediately goes through "phassa paccayā vedanā," "vedanā paccayā tanhhā," and 'tanhh $\bar{a}$ paccay $\bar{a} u p \bar{a} d \bar{a} n a "$ " steps. Now she is "stuck" with that ārammaṇa or the painting. See, Dukkha Samudaya Starts With Samphassa-Jā-Vedanā."
- It is a good idea to have both of those posts printed out for reference.
- Now, the wife is at the "upādāna paccayā bhavo" step in PS and the Loka Sutta steps. II hope you can see that the steps in the two versions describe the same processes that the wife's mind underwent.


## Kamma Accumulation in the "Upādāna Paccayā Bhavo" Stage

5. At this point, the wife starts acting with avijjā. She starts generating kamma via "avijjā paccay $\bar{a}$ sañkhāra," "sañkhāra paccayā viññāna," "viññāṇa paccayā nāmarūpa," etc., down to "upādāna paccayā bhava" again!

- Before we discuss those details, let me digress a bit to address some related issues.


## Additional Details

6. Here, I want to emphasize an important point. Getting attached to a painting is not an immoral deed. But in a deeper sense, such actions keep one bound to the kāma loka and away from Nibbāna. That is why it falls under avijjā. But only Sotāpannas who are trying to attain the Anāgāmi stage automatically avoid such actions. I am just taking an example that everyone can understand.

- They both saw the same painting as a vipāka vedanā. Here, one should not assign such "vipāka vedan $\bar{a}$ " to a single past kamma. Our physical body is the result of incalculable past kamma. A "mundane event" CANNOT be traced back to a SINGLE kamma done in the past. Only strong kamma (like killing a human) can lead to a specific vipāka (like getting a bad rebirth.)
- That was just the "seeing event." As discussed in Abhidhamma, most vipāka vedanā are neutral, like seeing or hearing. The exceptions are bodily contacts - either bodily dukha vedana (like an injury or a headache) or sukha vedanā (like getting a massage or being in an air-conditioned room on a hot day) depending on whether it is a bad or a good vipāka.
- Now let us get back to our example.


## "Upādāna Paccayā Bhavo" Stage Explained With the Above Example

7. Let us continue with our example to see how the wife keeps accumulating kamma with different types of sañkhāra with the "upādāna paccayā bhava" step in PS.

- The painting is expensive, so the wife is considering whether they can afford it now, but she would really like to buy it. The husband is not interested in it and thinks it is a waste of money. Those are sañkhāra done with $a v i j j \bar{a}$, i.e., "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra." Now we can see how the PS process starts from the beginning starting with the "upādāna paccayā bhava" step.
- Now, any "happy feeling" in the mind of the wife would be due to her "san gati" that comes to play at the "tinnain sañgati phasso" stage of getting attached to a sensory event; see, "Dukkha Samudaya Starts With Samphassa-Jā-Vedanā." This is also called kāma assāda.
- Such a "happy feeling" did not arise in the husband's mind. This is an important point. The "happy feeling" in the wife could not have been a property of the painting; if so, it should have given the same "happy feeling" to the husband! Only the wife had "taṇha" and "upādāna" for the painting.
- Now that she is "attached" to the painting, the wife keeps looking at it for a while. She will be enjoying "kāma assāda" about that picture even after they leave that place by thinking back about it. Now she has made a "viññaṇa" and a "bhava" for it.


## Repeated PS Cycles Based on One Arammana

8. Numerous such Paticca Samuppāda cycles can operate for her based on that ārammaṇa even several days later.

- For example, that "kāma assāda" can resurface with Paṭicca Samuppāda cycles that involve only the mind when she is at home. It can now start with "manañca patticca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviññānaí," i.e., she just remembers the painting while washing dishes. How does she start thinking about the painting when she is busy with another task?
- One way to explain that is to say that "she had 'cultivated' a viññanna" for that painting, and now it can sometimes resurface even without a prompt. This is sometimes known as the "subconscious"; see, "ㄹ. Viñ̃nāna, Thoughts, and the Subconscious."
- Another way to explain it by saying that she had made a "bhava" for liking that painting and it is a dhamma that can come back to the mind when the conditions are right: "manañca paticca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviññānam."."

9. Of course, that "manañca paticca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviññānaị" step will be followed by, "tiṇnaim san gati phasso" and "(san)phassa paccayā vedanā"; see, "Difference between Phassa and Samphassa." Her "gati" for liking such pictures will make her mind "samphassa," which in turn will lead to "samphassa paccayā vedan $\bar{a} "$ or, more accurately, "samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedanā."

- As long as that "kamma viññāna" (expectation of owning the painting) is present in her, the possibility of cultivating more sañkhāra with that ārammaṇa (painting) will be there. Again, "cultivating sañkhāra" here means to think and act on the desire to own the painting; see "Sanikhāra - What It Really Means."
- However, that particular dhamma or concept or thought would never come to her mind if she were listening to a discourse or thinking about a critical concept like anicca. But such a "subconscious viññāna" gets an opportunity to come to the surface while doing a mundane task (washing dishes, in this case.)


## One Way That Kamma Viññāṇa May be Removed from Her Mind

10. One way that can happen is IF IT BECOMES CLEAR that it would be impossible for her to fulfill her expectation due to events beyond her control. Suppose that a week later they are walking by the same store. The wife looks for the painting but finds it no longer there; someone had bought it. Now, think about what happens to the two of them.

- The wife will be distraught: "I should have bought it; now I may not be able to find such a nice painting." But the husband will not have any bad feelings, except may be some bad feelings about his wife not being able to get what she wanted.
- This is the suffering that we can stop from arising even in this life. It is not a vipāka vedanā but a "samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedanā." The wife got distraught only because she got attached to that painting, but the husband did not.
- I have discussed this example and more in the post, "Kāma Assāda Start with Phassa Paccayā Vedanā or Samphassa-Jā-Vedanā."

11. Once it becomes clear to the wife that owning that painting is no longer possible, that expectation will automatically disappear from her mind. In other words, that "viññāna to own the painting" will no longer be there.

- Therefore, she will no longer think or act based on that viñãāna. Since that viṇ̃̃̄̄̄a is no longer there to trigger the step "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra." The rest of the steps in PS will also stop.
- However, it is essential to note that her "san gati" have not changed. A similar viññāṇa can reappear in her mind if that painting is returned to the store and will become available to purchase. Another similar painting could also do it.


## Second Way That Kamma Viññāṇa May be Removed from Her Mind

12. The second way she could lose that desire for the painting (and thus that viñ̃ānạa "to own the painting') is if she attained the Anāgāmi stage. This time, the removal is permanent, with no "san gati" or "anusaya" left for sensual pleasures.

- One gets to the $A n a \bar{g} \bar{a} m i$ stage by realizing the fruitlessness of "owning such sense-pleasing objects."
- At that stage, she will not desire to own ANY "sense-pleasing objects." In other words, her "san gati" (or anusaya) would have been permanently removed from her mind.
- That is a deeper discussion involving the "anicca nature."


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## 9.3.s.5 Generating Kammic Energy in the "Upādāna Paccayā Bhava"

May 7, 2021
Bhava is the energy that powers mindsets, existences, and rebirths. That energy is produced in the "upādāna paccayā bhava" step in Pațicca Samuppāda. That is also where we cultivate "bad gati" to attach to various sensory inputs. That is the process we need to control to gradually reduce tanhh $\bar{a}$ to attain Nibbāna with Ānāpānasati and Satipatthāna meditations.

## Sensory Trigger Is "salāyatana paccayā phasso" step in PS.

1. In the past two posts ("Loka Sutta - Origin and Cessation of the World" and "Dukkha Samudaya Starts With Samphassa-Jā-Vedanā"), we discussed the fact that it is an arrammana through one of the $\mathbf{6}$ "sense doors" that triggers PS processes. The Pāli verse that describes such a trigger is, "cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññāṇam்.." Let us call this "trigger description 1."

- We did not specifically say it, but it is easy to see that this is the same thing that happens at the "salāyatana paccayā phasso" step in the "moment-to-moment PS" or the "Idappaccayatā PS." See, "Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda." Let us call this "trigger description 2."
- In "trigger description 1" we have the first few steps of "cakkhuñca patticca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññānain, tinñain sañgati phasso, phassa paccayā vedanā; vedanā paccayā taṇhā."
- In "trigger description 2" the corresponding steps are, "salāayatana paccayā phasso, phassa paccayā vedanā, vedanā paccayā taṇhā,"
- The two processes highlighted in blue are the same. That becomes clear when we see that salāyatana (all "āyatana") takes into account "contact with defiled gati" or "sañ phassa" or "samphassa."
- Please make sure you understand that point by reading the recent previous posts in "Concepts of Upādāna and Upādānakkhandha."
- By the way, there are many suttās that discuss "trigger description 1" and "trigger description 2." See, " 315 results for tinnam sangatit" and " 738 results for paticca AND uppajjati."


## Samphassa Is Already Included in "Salāyatana Paccayā Phasso" Step in PS

2. The above key point is also explained in "WebLink: suttacentral: Paticcasamuppāda Vibhañga (VB 6)" in one of the original commentaries: "Tattha katamo salāyatana paccaya phasso? Cakkhusamphasso sotasamphasso ghānasamphasso jivhāsamphasso kāyasamphasso manosamphasso-ayam vuccati "salāyatana paccayā phasso."

Translation: "What is salāyatana paccayā phasso? It is cakkhusamphasso sotasamphasso ghānasamphasso jivhāsamphasso kāyasamphasso manosamphasso."

Thus, contact with an "āyatana" MEANS a "defiled contact." An Arahant DOES NOT have 6 āyatana (cakkhāyatana and so on). Instead, an Arahant has 6 indriya (cakkhu indirya and so on.) Thus an Arahant can see, hear, etc. But his mind will not make contact with "sañ gati" because "sañ gati" are absent. That means the step "tiṇ̣am sangati phasso" will not occur as we discussed in the previous two posts.

- As I explained in the post, "Sutta Interpretation - Uddesa, Niddesa, Patiniddesa," a fundamental concept is first stated succinctly ("uddesa" or "utterance.") That is the version of PS in most suttās where the 11 steps are briefly stated.
- Then a "niddesa" is a "brief explanation" that can be found in the commentaries (above verse is a good example. Of course, one should rely on the 3 original commentaries and NOT on more recent commentaries like Visudhimagga; see the above post.
- Then the concept needs to be explained in detail with examples ("patiniddesa") My explanation of "samphassa" in the post "Dukkha Samudaya Starts With Samphassa-Jā-Vedanā" is an example of that.


## Importance of the "Upādāna Paccayā Bhava" Step

3. In other words, we start acting with avijjā ONLY IF we get attached to a sensory event (also called ārammaṇa.)

- Attachment (taṇhā) to an ārammaṇa directly leads to "taṇhā paccayā upādāna" and "upādāna paccayā bhava" steps.
- It is at the "upādāna paccayā bhava" step that we start acting with avijjā via "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra." That is when we start generating "kammic energy" for a corresponding existence (bhava.) That "kammic energy seed" can germinate in the future and give rise to a corresponding birth ( $j a \bar{a} t i$.) Each $j \bar{a} t i$ ends up in old age, disease, and death.
- (Note that the term "jāti" could also mean a "temporary birth" DURING a lifetime. For example, someone can get drunk and be "born" in a "drunken state" for a few hours.)
- Thus, the origin of future suffering starts (i.e., the PS cycle starts at the beginning) WITHIN the "upādāna paccayā bhava" step. A trigger is a sensory event. Let us discuss this critical issue.


## Tendency to Attach to $\bar{A} r a m m a n ̣ a ~ I s ~ C u l t i v a t e d ~ i n ~ t h e ~ " u p a ̄ d a ̄ n a ~ p a c c a y \bar{a}$ bhava" step.

4. Thus, it is at the "upādāna paccayā bhava" step that the full PS cycle starts as follows: "avijj $\bar{a}$ paccayā sañkhāra; sañkhāra paccayā viññanna; viññāna paccayā nāmarūpa, nāmarūpa paccayā salāyatana, saḷāyatana paccayā phasso, phassa paccayā vedanā, vedanā paccayā taṇhā, taṇh $\bar{a}$
paccayā upādāna, upādāna paccayā bhavo, bhava paccayā jāti, jāti paccayā jarā, maraṇa, soka-parideva-dukkha-domanassupāyasā sambhavan'ti." See "Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda."

- But the above verse is in the "uddesa" version. It is a highly condensed statement of a complex process. It needs to be explained at least in "niddesa" (brief explanations) and in the "paṭiniddesa" version, preferably in a verbal discourse with many examples as needed to clarify subtle issues. My posts are somewhat in between niddesa and patiiniddesa.
- For details on that see, "Sutta Interpretation - Uddesa, Niddesa, Patiniddesa."
- Let us re-visit an example to clarify what we discussed above in the "patiniddesa" version.


## Re-Visiting a Previous Example

5. At \#7 of the post, "Dukkha Samudaya Starts With Samphassa-Jā-Vedanā," we discussed the case of an alcoholic ( X ) tempted by the seeing of an alcohol bottle.

- As soon as X saw the alcohol bottle, his "sañ gati" (craving for alcohol) emerged via "tiṇnaì sañgati phasso." Then he immediately started generating sañkhāra via "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra."
- With such sañkhāra, he started cultivating a viññāna (expectation to have a drink) with "sañkhāra paccayā viññāna." Note that the "trigger event" for the whole process was a "vipāka viññāna" (cakkhu viññāna.) Now, he is cultivating a "kamma viññāna" (expectation to have a drink) via "sañkhāra paccayā viññāṇa."


## "Feeding the Viñ̃̄āna" - Generating Kammic Energy for "Kāma Bhava"

6. All of X's conscious thoughts (vacī sañkhāra) and actions (kāya sañkhāra) lead to a kamma viññāna via the "sañkhāra paccayā viññāna" step. All these sañkhāra strengthens his "alcoholic mindset." His thoughts, speech, and actions are based on that mindset.

- Note that until he gets drunk, he is not committing any immoral deeds. Yet, his desire to get drunk leads to a corresponding mindset. To put it differently, someone cultivating jhāna WOULD NOT get into such a situation because that person knows that such a mindset is not compatible with rūpa/arūpa realms (i.e., rūpa/arūpa jhāna.) It is compatible with realms in kāma loka, at least in the human realm.
- As long as one cultivates sañkhāra compatible with kāma loka, it is impossible to be freed from kāma loka. Even seeking "harmless sense pleasures" binds one to kāma loka. This is a deep and critical point.


## If Immoral Sañkhāra Generated Suffering Will be Higher

7. Now, if X gets really drunk, he could start acting like an animal. In an extreme case, he and his friend could get drunk (and may be even using drugs) and become totally incoherent, and they may not be able to stay upright. That is getting into the mindset of animals. At some "wild parties," immoral deeds like rapes could happen with such a mindset. If so, X could be cultivating the mindset suitable for an animal. This is called "establishing viññāna suitable for animal bhava." That sets up a possible birth in a lower realm of kāma loka.

- That is the meaning of "sañkhāra paccayā viññāna." Such kamma viññāṇa are "fed" by strong sañkhāra or "abhisañkhāra."
- The key point is that repeatedly engaging in unwise behaviors will feed both "bad gati" and "kamma viññanna." As we can see, "bad gati" directs one to engage in more similar actions. That feeds "kamma viññāna" or "kamma bija" that can become strong enough to bring about a 'bad jāti" such as one in the animal realm, and thus to future suffering.
- That is a brief going-over of the whole PS cycle ending up with future suffering.
- One can think about how other types of activities (triggered by sensory inputs) can lead to different PS cycles. For another example see, "Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda."


## Samphassa Takes Place Because of "Sañ Gati"

8. From the recent posts so far, we see that "getting attached to an arammana" starts with the "tiunnaim sañgati phasso" step. That happens because of "san gati" or "defiled gati," as discussed in \#6 of that post.

- For example, someone who has an "angry character" is more likely to be triggered with an insult. A "greedy character" is easy to be bribed. An alcoholic is easily tempted to "have a drink." Therefore, the critical step of "tiunain sañgati phasso" or "samphassa" is closely associated with one's gati (character/habits.)
- An Arahant has no "sañ gati" left, and thus his/her mind does not attach to ANY such sensory event (ārammaṇa). Of course, all sensory events like "cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviñ̃nāṇaì" takes place for an Arahant, i.e., he/she will see, hear, etc. But "tiṇnamं sañgati phasso" will not take place. An Arahant has removed tanhhā!
- The key to eliminating tanh $\bar{a}$ is to gradually reduce "sañ gati" in the 4 stages of Nibbāna and eventually eliminate it at the Arahant stage!
- To get rid of such "sań gati," one needs to see the bad consequences in engaging in related activities. Thus, an alcoholic needs to understand the bad consequences in two ways: (i) drinking alcohol can lead to health problems and also can get one to engage in immoral activities, (ii) these activities involve "bad sañkhāra" that can lead to births in lower realms.


## Clarification of Sañkhāra

9. Most people are familiar with the phrase "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" but do not comprehend the meaning of that phrase. Translation of "sañkhāra" as "mental formations" may not convey the real meaning. Let me go through the example to make it clear.

- Let us look briefly at the actions of X once he is "attached." Now, he wants to have a "drink" with his friend with snacks and watch a game on TV.
- All such activities are done with mano, vacī, kāya sañkhāra. First, he automatically thinks about such activities (mano sañkhāra.) Then he will come up with a plan and starts speaking about such activities (vacī sañkhāra). He then starts working to put that plan in action with kāya sañkhāra. Note that all 3 types of sañkhāra arise in mind.
- Kammic energy is generated in such sañkhāra and lead to kamma viññāna. Thus, "sañkhāra paccayā viññāna" is really "abhisañkhāra paccayā kamma viññāna." Sometimes, especially in Sinhala, it is also stated as "abhisañkhāra paccayā abhiviññāna," where "abhiviññāṇa" just means "strong kamma viññāna."
- The point is that this viññ̄ạa (that arises in the PS process) is DIFFERENT from the vipāka viññ̄ạna that arises in a sensory event like "cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññānam̈." That cakkhu viññāṇa was a vipāka viññāṇa and had no kammic energy in it.


## Summary

10. The initial trigger for kamma accumulation is a vipāka viññanna that arises with sensory input (ārammana.) That can be described in two ways: (i) "cakkhuñca paticca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhu viññānaỉn (any one of the six types of vipāka viñ̃ñ̄āna).." OR (ii) the "salā̄yatana paccayā phasso" in the PS cycle. Both describe the same process.

- If that person attaches to that sensory event (i.e., if it matches a "sañ gati"), then he/she will start thinking/acting to engage with that experience. That starts PS processes at "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" and leads to the progression of that cycle ALL THE WAY to the end.
- That process is AUTOMATIC. We don't have control over the initial steps of "getting attached."
- The only way to control is to reduce one's "san gati gradually." The key here is to realize that one is "attached" and is "generating sañkhāra" and to stop generating such "bad sañkhāra" once one becomes aware of it.
- If that alcoholic understood the PS process, he/she would realize that one needs to control one's urges. This is what is meant by "being mindful" in the Ānāpānasati or Satipatthāna meditations.
- If X becomes good at controlling his urges, his "sañ gati" (craving alcohol) will gradually diminish, and he will be free of that addiction over time.
- That is the way to break any bad habit ("sañ gati.) On the other hand, one should willingly engage in activities that cultivate "good gati." Those are the "āna" and "āpāna" in Ānāpānasati. See, " $\underline{\text { b }}$ Ānāpānasati Bhāvanā (Introduction)."


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### 9.3.9 <br> Six Root Causes - Loka Samudaya (Arising of Suffering) and Loka Nirodhaya (Nibbāna)

July 19, 2018; revised December 23, 2018; re-written June 3, 2021 (like a new post); re-written August 21, 2022
Loka Samudaya is not about "creating a whole new world." When someone dies and is reborn, that is "arising into a new world" for that person. The stopping of the rebirth process is loka nirodhaya, the same as Nibbāna.

## Meanings of Samudaya and Nirodhaya

1. Loka Samudaya ("san" "udaya") means "arising (again) into this suffering-filled world." Loka nirodhaya ("nir" "udaya") means "stopping the rebirth process permanently." Then the world will cease to exist for that lifestream.

- As we have discussed before, the meanings of words (whether Pāli or in any language) need to be understood in the context. Thus, loka Samudaya is not about "creating a whole new world/universe." It is about being reborn upon death.
- That may sound bad. But that will make sense when one understands that most rebirths are into realms filled with suffering.
- Let us consider an example to understand the implied meaning.


## Life in the 31 Realms Arise Due to Six Root Causes

2. There are six root causes (mülika hetu) that lead to the arising of one's world: lobha (greed), dosa hate/anger), moha (having ten types of micchā ditṭhi), and alobha (non-greed), adosa (non-
hate/anger), amoha (absence of moha). Those latter three are only "superficial" and thus are mundane versions of alobha, adosa, and amoha.

- When one acts with one or more of lobha, dosa, and moha, one is giving rise to kamma būja (kammic energy) that can lead to rebirth in the four "bad realms" or the apāy $\bar{a} s$. In other words, one is generating bad abhisañkhāra or "apuñña abhisañkhāra," therefore, "bad viññāṇa," etc., which lead to "bad bhava" and "bad jāti"" (see, "Paticca Samuppāda").
- In the same way, one or more mundane alobha, adosa, or amoha, give rise to kamma bïja that can lead to rebirth in the "good realms" at or above the human realm. There, one is generating good abhisañkhāra or "puñña abhisañkhāra" with "good viññāna," etc., which leads to "good bhava" and "good jāti."


## There Are No "Good Reams" In Ultimate Reality

3. However, those "good realms" at and above the human realm are also NOT free from suffering. Old age and death are inevitable in any realm.

- To look at it from another point of view, the two sets of root causes are like the two faces of a coin. Getting rid of just one face of a coin is impossible.
- In other words, getting a "good rebirth" does not mean one will not get "bad rebirths" subsequently. Most rebirths are in the "bad realms."
- Only when one comprehends the Four Noble Truths (closer to Anāgāmi/Arahant stages) can one clearly understand the futility and dangers of rebirths in ANY realm of "this world."
- That is why one must follow the path sequentially. See "Is It Necessary for a Buddhist to Eliminate Sensual Desires?"


## Lobha, Dosa, Moha Lead to Apāya Births - Mundane Alobha, Adosa, Amoha to Births in Good Realms

4. Lobha, dosa, and moha are food (āhāra) for the apāyās (the lowest four realms.) They give rise to the worse form of sañkhāra, i.e., apuñña abhisañkhāra (or apuññābhisañkhāra.) One does pāpa kammā (immoral deeds) with lobha, dosa, and moha.

- One does puñ̃̃a kammã (moral deeds) with the mundane versions of alobha, adosa, and amoha, i.e., with puñ̃n̄abhisañkhāra.
- The problem is that not only papa $\boldsymbol{k a m m a} \overline{\boldsymbol{a}}$ but also puñ$\tilde{\boldsymbol{n}} \boldsymbol{a} \boldsymbol{k a m m} \overline{\boldsymbol{a}}$ are done with avijja $\bar{a}$ (ignorance.) The ignorance here is that of the Four Noble Truths (which says birth in any of the 31 realms will not stop future suffering.)


## Moha and Mundane Amoha Can Arise in Any Average Human (Puthujjano)

5. In an average human, thoughts can arise with EITHER moral roots (based on mundane amoha) OR immoral roots (based on moha.)

- Moral deeds (puñña kamma) are done with mundane amoha and involve puñ̃na abhisañkhāra (puññābhisañkhāra.) Immoral deeds (pāpa kamma) done with moha involve apuñña abhisañkhāra (apuñ̃ābhisañkhāra.).
- Puñña kammā make a mind joyful and bring good vipāka. Pāpa kammā leads to a stressed-out mind and leads to bad vipāka.
- For an average human, avijjā remains as anusaya (hidden) even with mundane amoha. This is why a puñña kamma done by an average person belongs to puññābhisañkhāra that arises with "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" in "Akusala-Mūla Upapatti Paticca Samuppāda."
- Only kusala kamma can lead to Nibbāna via "kusala-mūla paccayā sañkhāra" in "Kusala-Mūla Paticca Samuppāda."
- Puñ̃a Kammā become kusala kammā and lead to stopping the rebirth process and, thus, attaining Nibbāna upon becoming a Sotāpanna Anugāmi; see "Kusala-Mūla Paticca Samuppāda."


## All Six Root Causes Sustain the Rebirth Process

6. Therefore, all six root causes lead to the continuation of the rebirth process. However, one needs to work to stop only the three "bad root causes" to stop the rebirth process ((AND cultivate pañ̃̄̄̄)): "rāgakkhayo dosakkhayo mohakkhayo-idam vuccati nibbānan'ti." See "WebLink: suttacentral: Sāmandaka Sutta - SN 39.1"

- The path to Nibbāna involves the reduction of the three immoral roots and the cultivation of the three mundane moral roots first. Then one must comprehend the Four Noble Truths and cultivate paññā or wisdom. That is when one can turn puñ̃a $\boldsymbol{k a m m a}$ a to kusala kammā.
- To attain Nibbāna, one MUST be born in a good realm. Therefore, the first objective is to avoid births in the apāyās. The three bad roots (lobha, dosa, moha) are also called kilesa (or keles or impure) because they can lead to rebirths in the apāyās.
- Once one is born in a good realm (especially the human realm), one can learn the Noble Truths from a Nobel Person (Ariya) and, with sufficient work, comprehend them. That will elevate mundane amoha to pañ̃̃ā gradually.


## Paññā Is Not Mundane Amoha - It Is Comprehension of Noble Truths

7. Mundane amoha is just the absence of lobha (greed) and dosa (hate/anger.) The deeper (lokuttara) amoha is pa $\tilde{n} \tilde{n} \bar{a}$ (wisdom) comprehension of the Four Noble Truths (which is the same as comprehending Pațicca Samuppāda or Tilakkhaṇa.) One would understand all three if one understands one of those three.

- When one comprehends the Four Noble Truths, one will lose the desire to be reborn in the "good realms," too. That is the same as "seeing the anicca nature." It is also the same as truly understanding how cultivating various types of sañkhāra (with avijjāa) leads to births among the 31 realms.
- When one's pañ̃āa becomes optimum at the Arahant stage, one's MIIND will not go through the "upādāna paccayā bhava" step in Paṭicca Samuppāda leading to ANY rebirth. See "Concepts of Upādāna and Upādānakkhandha."
- That is why completing the eighth step of Samm $\bar{a} \operatorname{Sama} \bar{d} h i$ in the Noble Eightfold Path enables one to get to the Sammā $\tilde{N} \bar{a} n a$ stage (when pañña is optimized.) Then one attains Sammā Vimutti (complete release from this world), i.e., "dasa añgehi samannāgato Arahant."


## "Kusala-Mūla Paccayā Saṅkhāra" In Kusala-Mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda

8. When someone starts following the Noble Path, that avijja anusaya will be removed in stages. Thus, at least some puñña kamma will be effectively become kusala kamma.

- That is why the type of sañkhāra in the kusala-mūla Paticca Samuppāda are "kusala-mūla paccayā saǹkhāra." Thus such sañkhāra may be called "kusala sañkhāra."
- "Kusala" comes from "ku" + "sala," or getting rid of immoral ("ku"). All kusala kammā involve the three "good roots" of alobha, adosa, amoha, AND comprehension of the Noble Truths.
- As we know, puññābhisañkhara come under "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" in akusala-mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda. See \#6 of "Sañkhāra - What It Really Means."
- By Arahanthood, all puñña kamma would become puñ̃na kiriyā. Since an Arahant would not have defilements, there are no akusala to deal with. Thus, any puñ̃a kamma done by an Arahant becomes NOT a kusala kamma but a puñña kiriyā (just a good deed without kammic power.)


## Difference Between Puñña Kamma and Kusala Kamma

9. Therefore, one can do puñna kamma without getting rid of avijijā, i.e., without cultivating paññā. Most people (who are not even Buddhists) engage in giving, have compassion for others, etc. Being a Buddhist (in particular, a Noble Person) is more than that. That is a crucial point to remember.

- Only Noble Persons (at or above the Sotāpanna Anugāmi stage) can do kusala kamma. That requires an understanding of the Four Noble Truths/Paṭicca Samuppāda/Tilakkhaṇa.
- Therefore, for Noble Persons (up to the Arahant stage), puñ̃a Kammā effectively become kusala $\boldsymbol{k} \boldsymbol{a m m} \boldsymbol{m}$ and lead to stopping the rebirth process; see "Kusala-Mūla Paticca Samuppāda."
- An Arahant has no akusala to remove, thus any puñ̃a Kammä by an Arahant becomes a puñña $\boldsymbol{k r i y} \overline{\boldsymbol{a}}$ (just a good deed without kammic power) as explained in \#8.


## Two Eightfold Paths

10. Before getting to the Noble Eightfold Path, one must follow the mundane eightfold path; see "Mahā Cattārisaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty)."

- Therefore, "good deeds" are done at two levels: within the mundane eightfold path, one can do puñña kamma. More and more of the same deeds become "kusala kamma" as one starts comprehending the Noble Truths; see, "Puñña Kamma - Dāna, Sīla, Bhāvanā."
- In other words, puñña kamma are "contaminated" to some degree, and they become more potent kusala kamma in the Noble Path with the increasing comprehension of Tilakkhana.
- For example, in "mundane alobha," one loses the craving for some things and is willing to share those with others. In "lokuttara alobha," one just loses craving by seeing the worthlessness of things in this world.


## Until Comprehending Noble Truths, All Kamma Perpetuate the Rebirth Process

11. It is inevitable that even the most moral "average person (puthujjano)" WILL generate "bad abhisañkhāra" either during this life or in the future life until one REMOVES the three bad root causes from the mind via comprehending Tilakkhaṇa. They remain as anusaya and come to the surface under suitable conditions.

- For example, X may see an enticing object, and greed (lobha) may come to his mind.
- But at another time, X may see a hungry person and buy that person a meal with MUNDANE non-greed (alobha), non-hate (adosa), and amoha.
- An Arahant has removed all six root causes. But he/she may provide a meal to a hungry person out of paññ $\bar{a}$ (wisdom) - doing the appropriate thing; it is also called a kiriya $\bar{a}$, just action without kammic consequences.


### 9.4 Kamma and Paṭicca Samuppāda

Kamma and Paticca Samuppāda - Introduction
Kāma Assāda - A Root Cause of Suffering
Gati (Habits/Character) Determine Births - Samisappanīya Sutta

### 9.4.1 Kamma and Paṭicca Samuppāda - Introduction

March 27, 2020

## The uniqueness of Buddha Dhamma (Buddhism)

Kamma and Paṭicca Samuppāda are closely related, with sañkhāra bridging the gap. We will get to the role of sañkhāra in the next post.

1. Many Eastern religions (Buddhism, Hinduism, Jainism, Sikhism) believe in kamma and rebirth. So, what is the difference in Buddhism?

- Abrahamic religions do not believe in rebirth. But they also teach that the way to get to a state of permanent happiness is to live a moral life. That means one needs to do good kamma and avoid doing bad kamma.
- On the other hand, all religions other than Buddhism are based on finding a permanent existence of happiness in a heavenly world. Buddha Dhamma does not promise sensory pleasures in a heavenly realm. Attachment to sensory pleasures is what leads to future suffering.
- By the way, Buddhism is not a religion. It is a fully self-consistent world view. When one comprehends that world view, one can see a permanent solution to the problem of suffering.
- Understanding the Four Noble Truths first requires understanding that suffering exists in the rebirth process. That understanding will reveal three more truths at the same time. (i) The Causes of future suffering, (ii) that those causes CAN BE REMOVED, and (iii) the WAY to stop that suffering from arising. Therefore, it is necessary to first understand the "previously unknown suffering" that the Buddha revealed to the world.

2. Buddhism (Buddha Dhamma) says the following.
(i) There is no existence in this world where suffering is absent permanently. There are existences in higherrealms that are almost suffering-free, but they also have limited lifetimes.
(ii) Even if one does good deeds and lives a moral life, one can have bad future births because of kamma from previous lives.
(iii) On the other hand, even if one has lived immorally in this life, it is possible to attain Nibbāna in this life.

- Those three points may not be clear. In the next few posts, I will address those issues.
- The answers to those questions will also clarify the following. The Buddha taught that it is not a good starting point to insist on whether a "self" exists or not. Instead, we need to start by investigating how future births (and thus future suffering) arise. Just like in science,
- Like science, Buddha Dhamma is based on the Principle of Causality. Nothing can happen without causes. Yet, NOT all causes inevitably lead to their outcomes. That is a crucial point to understand too.


## Causes and Conditions Bring Future Births

3. If all causes just lead to their consequences, then kamma would lead to deterministic outcomes. For example, some religions teach that immoral deeds WILL lead to their results. So, they try to find ways to remove existing bad kamma. That is what the Buddha also tried to do for six years while striving to attain the Buddhahood.

- On the night of his Enlightenment, the Buddha discovered that causes could bring their effects (results) ONLY if the right conditions are there. That is Paticca Samuppāda, the Principle of Causes and Conditions. But one must understand what those conditions are. That is why Patticca Samuppāda is a profound concept.
- By the way, Paticca Samuppāda pronounced, "patichcha samuppaada." The way Pāli words are written is different from standard English; see, ""Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars - Part 1" and "Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars Part 2."
- Paticca Samuppāda explains how causes lead to their effects UNDER suitable conditions. Therefore, we do not need to remove past kamma. We can purify our minds so that CONDITIONS for those bad kamma to bring vipāka will be absent. That is how Angulimāla, who killed almost a thousand people, was able to attain the Arahanthood; see below.
- Since this principle of CAUSES and CONDITIONS is a crucial point, let us discuss this a bit more with that analogy of a seed.


## An Example of the Requirement of Conditions

4. An apple seed has the POTENTIAL to bring an apple tree to life, so the CAUSE is there in the seed.

- Suppose one prepares a plot by preparing the soil, providing water, and plants the seed there. If sunlight is also available, the apple seed will germinate, and an apple tree will grow. Those are the necessary CONDITIONS for that apple seed to germinate and give rise to an apple tree.
- However, if one keeps the apple seed in a cool, dry place, it will not germinate, i.e., necessary CONDITIONS are not present in that case for an apple tree to come to life. After a long time, the seed will become a "dud" and will never be able to give rise to a tree.
- Furthermore, when an apple seed is planted, a mango tree will not result from that, only an apple tree. The RESULT (vipāka) is according to the CAUSE (kamma or more specifically kamma bīja).


## Example From Tipiṭaka - The account of Angulimāla

5. In the same way, someone who attains the Arahanthood may have done highly immoral deeds even in the present life. But he/she would have eliminated the CONDITIONS that can bring the results of those deeds to fruition.

- The account of Angulimāla is a good example to illustrate this point. He had killed almost a thousand people. Thus he had done enough bad kamma to be born in the apāy $\bar{a}$ many times. Yet he was able to attain the Arahanthood in a few weeks! See, "Account of Angulimāla - Many Insights to Buddha Dhamma."
- When one does a bad kamma, a kamma bïja (kamma seed) is created. Under suitable conditions, that kamma seed can "germinate" and lead to a new birth, just as a seed can lead to the birth of a plant. We will discuss how such a kamma seed is created by one's powerful thoughts (javana citta.)
- However, unlike in the case of plant seed, even potent kamma CANNOT bring vipāka to an Arahant to bring rebirth. In the case of Angulimāla, the strong bad kamma of killing almost a thousand people was done in the same life that he attained Parinibbāna. At his death, those kammic energies were there, but his mindset would not grasp them, i.e., the "upādāna paccāyā bhava" step in PS would not take place.
- Of course, we need to discuss that last point in detail in the upcoming posts.

6. Furthermore, the result (if it manifests) is compatible with the kamma. That is analogous to only an apple tree arising due to an apple seed. Akusala kamma (an immoral deed) will only lead to a birth in the apāyā. It will not lead to a birth in the human realm or a higher realm.

- Similarly, a kusala kamma (a good deed) will not lead to a birth in the apayy $\bar{a}$. It will only lead to a birth in a good realm.
- Most importantly, even if the causes are there, corresponding results (vipāka) would not materialize if necessary conditions are not fulfilled.
- We all have done uncountable kusala and akusala kamma in our previous lives. We need to be mindful to make conditions for good kamma to bring their vipāka AND for bad kamma not to bring their vipāka.
- So, we can see why both CAUSES and CONDITIONS play roles in our daily life and in the rebirth process.


## "Self" and "No-Self" Are Misleading Concepts

7. We can get some insights about the concept of a "self" from the fact that an Arahant would not have a rebirth. If a permanent "self" existed, it would be impossible for an Arahant to attain Parinibbāna and to end the rebirth process. That means there was no everlasting "self" like a "soul" or an "Atman" or "ātma."

- However, that Arahant was possibly born in most of the 31 realms uncountable times in the past. During a human existence, for example, there was a "self" living his/her life. He/she was making his/her decisions.
- When that Arahant was born an animal, it would have had the mindset of an animal. When born In a Deva realm, that Deva would have enjoyed sensual pleasures for a long time.
- Therefore, the idea that there is "no-self" while one is living life does not make sense either. There is obviously "a self," making decisions about how to live life. Even a wild animal has to decide how to get the next meal.

8. We can summarize as follows. While we live this life, we cannot deny that we exist. On the other hand, the idea of a "self' is a temporary one. That 'self' keeps changing even during life, but will change drastically when grasping a "new bhava." Thus, it is also not correct to talk about an "everlasting self."

- The "sense of a self" goes away entirely only at the Arahant stage. Until then, we need to try to comprehend WHY it is unfruitful to take anything in this world to be "mine."
- That does not mean one needs to start giving away everything that one owns. We have responsibilities to fulfill. Furthermore, the "giving" and "letting go" will happen AUTOMATICALLY as the mindset changes. I have personally experienced that.
- Another critical point is that having the "big picture" helps clarify many issues. That may sound contradictory, but that is true. See, "The Framework of Buddha Dhamma."


## The Bigger Picture of 31 Realms

9. As we discussed in many previous posts, our world is much more complicated than what we can experience with our limited senses. I will summarize some relevant key points to the current discussion.

- The 31 realms in our world belong to three types of "loka" or "worlds." The "kāma loka" has 11 realms, including the human realm. There are 16 realms in "rūpa loka" where rūpāvacara Brahmā live. Then, there are four realms in "arūpa loka" for arūpāvacara Brahmā.
- Those higher-lying two lok $\bar{a}$ are the simplest. In those 20 realms, there is only jhānic pleasure. A human can experience all those by cultivating jhāna. The lower four jhānā correspond to the jhānic experiences of the 16 rūpāvacara Brahma realms. The higher four correspond to the four arūpāvacara Brahma realms. All those Brahmā do not have "dense bodies" like ours. Their "bodies" have very little matter. They are even harder to "see" than even gandhabbā.
- The remaining 11 realms are in the kāma loka. Sensory pleasures associated with eating, smelling, and body touches are available only in those 11 realms. Living beings in those 11 realms have relatively "dense solid bodies" or karaja kaya. There is a complex variety of "bodies" in kāma loka. We can see very high complexity even within the animal realm. In general, Devā in the six realms have "bodies" much lighter than ours but denser than Brahma.


## What Leads to Rebirth in Different Realms?

This has answers from the close relationship between kamma and Paṭicca Samuppāda, where sañkhāra plays a key role.
10. To be born in those higher 20 realms, a human must cultivate $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$.

- It is not necessary to follow Buddha Dhamma to cultivate either type of $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$ and to be born in those higher 20 realms. Anāriya (or non-Noble) meditation techniques (breath and kasina meditations) can be used to cultivate those anāriya jhāna.
- However, that birth in a Brahma realm lasts only for the duration of the life there. Then one will be born back in the kāma loka based on the strongest kamma vipāka that comes to the mind of that Brahma at the dying moment.
- Rebirths in various realms in the kāma loka are much more complex. We will discuss those in the next post, where we will discuss the role of sañkhāra.


## Summary

11. We have discussed other ways of looking at the basic principles in Buddha Dhamma before. See, for example, "The Framework of Buddha Dhamma."

- The above is a simple summary of yet another way. We will continue to explore the connection between kamma and Paṭicca Samuppāda in the next post.
- It is essential to grasp the basic framework from different "vantage points." Then we can slowly get into more profound aspects.
- Reviewing the "bigger picture" from different angles is necessary to get an idea of the beginning-less rebirth process. The world is complex, and understanding it is like putting together a big jigsaw puzzle. It takes a real effort, but it becomes joyful when one gets some traction.
- Once one starts understanding the essential aspects, one will see the value of the Buddha, his Dhamma (teachings), and the Sangha, who understood this profound Dhamma and transmitted it faithfully over 2500 years. That is the real faith (saddh $\bar{a}$.)
- All previous posts in the series at "Origin of Life."


## Kāma Assāda - A Root Cause of Suffering

April 4, 2020; revised April 6, 2020

## Kāma Assāda - Sensory Pleasures

1. Kāma assāda, or simply "kāma," means "sensory pleasures." See, "What is "Kāma"? It is not Just Sex."

- We all like and crave sensory pleasures. An average human likes to eat tasty foods, smell perfumes, and experience soothing bodily contacts, including sex. $\mathrm{He} /$ she also wants to see related objects and listen to related sounds. Thus, an average human enjoys such sensory events through all five physical senses.
- Besides, we also tend to endlessly think about such "pleasures" and how to get more of them. Thus, we use all six senses to "enjoy sensual pleasures." That leads to kāma taṇhā, one of the three types of taṇhā: kāma taṇhā, bhava taṇhā, vibhava taṇhā.
- The Buddha pointed out that we are trapped in the suffering-filled rebirth process because of this tendency to value sensory pleasures or kāma assāda. That is another way to discuss the "previously unknown suffering" that the Buddha introduced in his first discourse, Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta. The dangers in kāma assāda stated there as one extreme way to live life, or "kāmasukhallikānuyogo."
- It is important to note that Buddha rejected the opposite extreme, too ("attakilamathānuyogo.") There is no need to force oneself to eat less or to eat not-tasty food, be subject to unpleasant bodily contacts, etc. The "middle way" is to live a simple life away from both extremes and to contemplate and comprehend the "true nature of this world 31 realms."
- It is not easy to comprehend the bad consequences/danger (ādīnava) of kāma assāda. We will go through a systematic analysis.


## Connection to the Previous Post

2. In the previous post, we discussed that causes (kamma bïja) are not enough to bring about their results (kamma vipāka.) Just because one has done bad kamma does not mean one will have to face adverse consequences, especially unfortunate rebirths. The same is true for good kamma.

- We all have done enough good and bad kamma to sustain the rebirth process over billions of years. However, even Angulimāla, who killed almost a thousand people, was able to nullify that kamma. He did that by purifying his mind (attaining Arahantship) and removing avijjā and taṇhā that fuel the Upapatti Paticca Samuppāda process.
- That indirect way of "overcoming" a kamma bīja is called kammakkhaya. It does not destroy any previous kamma bïja. Instead, one would remove the conditions for such kamma bïja to "germinate." As we know, the removal of avijj $\bar{a}$ will stop the tendency to attach to "worldly things" (tanh $\bar{a})$. Then, the "upādāna paccayā bhava" step in Upapatti Paṭicca Samuppāda will not take place.
- The key message of the Buddha was that the rebirth process in "this world" is filled with suffering. When one comprehends that "hidden suffering" of "this world," one will strive to overcome the rebirth process and to attain Nibbāna.
- "This world" ("ayamं loko") consists of three loka: kāma loka (with 11 realms,) rūpa loka (with 16 realms,) and the arūpa loka (with four realms.) As we know, at the Sotāpanna stage, one overcomes rebirths in the four lowest realms (apāy $\bar{a}$.) Rebirths in all realms in kāma loka will stop at the Anāgāmi stage. At the Arahanthood, rebirths in all three lok $\bar{a}$ (i.e., in all 31 realms) will end, and Nibbāna realized.


## Most Living Beings Are Trapped in the Four Lowest Realms (Apāy $\bar{a}$ )

3. Over $99 \%$ of the living beings are trapped in the four lowest realms (apayy $\bar{a}$ ) in the ka$m a$ loka. It is extremely difficult to get rebirth in a higher realm.

- For example, there are less than eight billion people on Earth. But there are a million times more ants on Earth! There are a trillion types of lifeforms on Earth; see, "WebLink: sciencealert.com: The Largest Study of Life Forms Ever Has Estimated That Earth Is Home to 1 TRILLION Species." These are mind-boggling numbers! That is not counting the other three realms in the apāya that we cannot see.
- While it is hard to get rebirth in the human and Deva realms, it is EVEN HARDER to get rebirths in rūpa loka and arūpa loka, collectively called Brahma loka. That is because one has to overcome (at least
temporarily suppress) kāma rāga (craving for sensory pleasures) to get a birth in a Brahma realm. If one can attain a jhāna, that means one has at least temporarily suppressed (during this lifetime) attachment to sensory pleasures, especially desire for sex.
- That is why it is tough for most people to attain jhāna.


## Easy to Describe and Hard to Imagine Life in the Two Brahma Loka

4. Those Brahmā do not need "solid, dense bodies" like ours since they have overcome the desire for physical touch, taste, and smell. Solid, dense bodies are required for those three sensory contacts.

- Rūpāvacara Brahmā still have cravings for seeing and listening. But those two functions can be achieved without dense bodies and just with the two corresponding pasāda rūpa. A pasāda rūpa is a suddhatthaka that is "energized" by kammic energy. A rūpāvacara Brahma also has hadaya vatthu (seat of mind), another "energized" suddhatthaka.
- Those living-beings in the highest loka, the arūpāvacara Brahma loka, have only the mind. They have given up the desire to see and hear as well. Thus, they just have hadaya vatthu, just a single suddhatthaka!
- It is not easy for an average human to even imagine such lifeforms. Only a Buddha can discover such details about the "wider world of 31 realms."
- Anyway, the point is that it is much easier to explain the lifeforms in the highest 20 realms. Furthermore, they mainly experience $j h a \bar{a} i c$ pleasures. Therefore, even sensory experience is easy to explain. That was briefly discussed in the previous post, "Kamma and Paticca Samuppāda - Introduction."


## Eleven Realms in Käma Loka Are Very Complex - Simplest Are the Deva Realms

5. Compared to the higher-lying 20 Brahma realms, life in the 11 realms in $k \bar{a} m a$ loka is very complex.

- The 6 Deva realms in the kāma loka are the simplest. They have opapātika births (instantaneous births) without a "growth stage" like ours. Even though they have all five physical senses, their "physical bodies" are much less dense, almost like the gandhabbā.
- As we have discussed, a gandhabba is born with a mental body that is similar to a Brahma. That means just with a hadaya vatthu and a set of pasāda rūpa. Then that gandhabba can absorb aroma (scents) and become a bit denser, but still cannot be seen by average humans. See, "Ghost 1990 Movie - Good Depiction of Gandhabba Concept." A Deva is similar to a gandhabba that has a "bit more dense body" than just the mental body.
- Devā enjoy sensory pleasures and do not experience significant bodily ailments or diseases. Thus, the main difference between them and Brahmā is while Brahmā enjoy jhānic pleasures, Devā enjoy sensual pleasures or kāma assāda.


## Complexity Starts at the Human Realm

6. As we know, suffering is the highest in the lowest four realms including the animal realm.

- Therefore, the human realm is unique. Some humans enjoy life, almost like some Devā, without even any health problems. Then are others who suffer almost like some animals due to either financial or health issues. Furthermore, a human could cultivate jhāna and enjoy jhānic pleasures like Brahmā.
- Brahmā and Devā are content with their sensual or jhānic pleasures. It is mostly those who had attained magga phala as humans who are interested in following the Path. On the other hand, those in the ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$ do not have the mental capacity even to comprehend Dhamma.
- That is why the human realm is the best-suited to follow the Noble Path. Humans can comprehend Dhamma. Furthermore, other than a relatively few, they do experience enough suffering to be motivated to think about the problem of suffering.
- In this and a few upcoming posts, we will focus more on the reasons for living-beings to be born in all these different realms. That will help us understand the critical principles of Paticca Samuppāda.


## Overview of the Three Lok $\bar{a}$

7. We know that causes are not ENOUGH to bring rebirths in respective realms, as discussed in the previous post, "Kamma and Paticca Samuppāda - Introduction." But causes are NECESSARY to bring rebirth in a given realm. Without a cause, there cannot be a rebirth in a given realm.

- A discussed in that post, one MUST cultivate a jhāna to get rebirth in a Brahma realm. A rūpāvacara $j h a ̄ n a$ leads to rebirth in one of 16 realms in the rūpāvacara Brahma realms (in rūpa loka). An arūpāvacara jhāna will lead to rebirth in an arūpāvacara Brahma realm (in arūpa loka).
- Of the three types of loka, kāma loka is the "default loka" for living beings. Living beings have cravings for sensory pleasures ( $k \bar{a} m a ~ a s s a \bar{a} d a$, ) and that is kāma rāga. One who has very strong $k \bar{a} m a$ ragga, and is willing to do immoral deeds to enjoy them, has lobha.
- Those with lobha also have a higher version of patigha, and that is dosa. One acting with lobha/dosa can do immoral deeds (pāpa kamma) and make kamma bīja suitable to bring rebirths in the apayy $\bar{a}$ (four lowest realms in kāma loka.)
- To summarize, lobhaldosa are strong versions of kāma rāga/patigha; see, "Lobha, Dosa, Moha versus Rāga, Patigha, Avijijā."
- Those with kāma rāga/patigha are capable of engaging in moral actions (puñña kamma.) Such puñña kamma are the causes to bring "good rebirths" in the human realm or the six Deva realms.
- The bottom line is that living-beings in kāma loka have strong cravings for sensual pleasures (kāma rāga.) Until those cravings are removed, it is not possible to overcome rebirths in kāma loka.
- As we know, even a Sotāpanna has kāma rāga. Only an Anāgāmi has removed kāma rāga.


## Craving for Sensory Pleasures Is the Root of Most Suffering

8. From the above discussion, it should be clear that suffering in the rebirth process can be attributed to the innate tendency of living-beings to crave sensual pleasures (i.e, to have kāma rāga.)

- When they do immoral deeds (pāpa kamma) in their pursuit of sensual pleasures, they build-up kammic energies (kamma bīja) to bring about rebirths in the apāy $\bar{a}$.
- Even those who just enjoy sensual pleasures (without doing immoral deeds like killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, etc) they cannot "escape" the realms in the kāma loka. This is clear in the "tanh $\bar{a}$ paccay $\bar{a}$ upādāna" and "upādāna paccayā bhava" steps in Pațicca Samuppāda.
- In order to overcome or transcend the kāma loka, one MUST lose the cravings for sensual pleasures or $k \bar{a} m a ~ a s s a ̄ d a$. I will try to use the term "kāma assāda" in the future since it relates directly to kāma loka. Here "assāda" means "pleasures" and thus kāma assāda are sensual pleasures (taste, smell, and touches including sex.)


## Dangers in Kāma Assāda

9. What we discussed above is an essential teaching of the Buddha that is hidden these days. The Buddha described "kāma assāda" or just "kāma" to be very dangerous.

- Bhava Sutta (AN 6.23) says: " 'Bhayan'ti, bhikkhave, kāmānametamं adhivacanamं; ‘dukkhan'ti, bhikkhave, kāmānametaì adhivacanaì; 'rogo'ti, bhikkhave, kāmānametaì adhivacanaì;.." OR "'Danger', 'suffering', 'disease',..are terms for sensual pleasures."
- Bhaya Sutta (AN 8.56) says, "" danger' is a term for sensual pleasures. 'Suffering', 'disease', 'infected wound', 'pierced by spear', etc. are terms for sensual pleasures. And why is 'danger' a term for sensual pleasures? Someone who is caught up in sensual greed and shackled by lustful desire is not freed from dangers in the present life or in lives to come. That is why 'danger' is a term for sensual pleasures.."
- See the English translations there for more details.
- There are many sutt $\bar{a}$ that emphasize the hidden dangers in kāma assāda or kāma rāga. For example, Mahādukkhakkhandha Sutta (MN 13), Cūladukkhakkhandha Sutta (MN 14), Cūladhammasamādāna Sutta (MN 45), and many others discuss the ādīnava or "bad and dangerous consequences of indulging in sensual pleasures, i.e., dangers of $k \bar{a} m a$ assāda.
- I have given the links to the Pāli versions of those sutttā at Sutta Central. One can access translations to several languages, including English, by clicking on the "down arrow" above the name of the sutta.

10. We will make the connection of various types of rebirths to sañkhāra and Paticca Samuppāda in the next post.

- More on assāda and ādīnava at, "Assāda, Ādīnava, Nissarana."
- All posts in this series at, "Origin of Life."


### 9.4.3 Gati (Habits/Character) Determine Births - Samsappanīya Sutta

April 11, 2020

## Gati (Habits/Character) is a key concept

1. Gati (Habits/Character) is a key concept that has been hidden for hundreds of years, just like the true meanings of anicca and anatta. I just did a search for the keyword "gati" on Tipitaka at the Sutta Central and came up with "WebLink: suttacentral: 515 results of search for gati." At the end of the post, I will discuss one sutta as an example, which describes how one with "crooked gati" is a candidate to be "reborn crooked."

- Any given person thinks, speaks, and acts based on his/her views. If started with wrong views, one tends to go in the wrong direction. That is why Sammā Ditthi or "correct views" comes first in the Noble Eightfold Path.
- Avijjā and micchā ditṭhi go together. See, for example, "WebLink: suttacentral: Avijjā Sutta (SN 45.1)."
- Any person will have a certain set of gati at a given time, based on avijj $\bar{a}$ and micchā dițthi at that time. As one makes progress on the path, avijjā and micchā ditthi will be reduced and one's bad gati will be reduced too.
- Gati is a common Sinhala word with the same meaning as in Pāli, so it would be easier for a Sinhala-

- The Buddha explained that if one cultivates "dog gati" that could lead to rebirth as a dog in the "Kukkuravatika Sutta (Majihima Nikaya 57) - Kammakkhaya."
- An introduction to gati at, "The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Āsava)." Further information at, "9. Key to Ānāpānasati - How to Change Habits and Character (Gati)."
- It is also important to know the difference between standard English and "Tipitaka English." See, ""Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars - Part 1" and "Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars - Part 2."


## Five Main Types of Gati

2. The Buddha explained that there are five main types of gati. The WebLink: suttacentral: Gati Sutta (AN 9.68): "Pañcimā, bhikkhave, gatiyo. Katamā pañca? Nirayo, tiracchānayoni, pettivisayo, manussā, devā-imā kho, bhikkhave, pañca gatiyo. Imāsam் kho, bhikkhave, pañcannaì gatīnaì pahānāya ... pe ... ime cattāro satipaṭ̂hānā bhāvetabbā"ti."

Translated: "Bhikkhus, there are five character qualities (gati). What five? (Those belonging to) hell, the animal realm, the ghost realm, humans (manussā), and Devā. To eliminate those five types of gati, you should cultivate Satipatṭhānā."

- In the WebLink: suttacentral: Sañgīti Sutta (DN 33): "Pañca gatiyo-nirayo, tiracchānayoni, pettivisayo, manussā, devā."
- By the way, Sañgīti Sutta provides definitions of many key Pāli words.
- It is to be noted that all six Deva and 26 Brahma realms are included in the Deva category in many suttā, including the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta. See \#7 of, "Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta Interpretation - Uddesa, Niddesa, Patiniddesa."

3. In many English translations, the Pāli word "gati" is mistranslated as "destination." But the correct translation is "habits/character" as explained in detail in the links in \#1 and also at \#8 below. We can also see that in other suttā, for example, in the Mahāparinibbāna Sutta (DN 16.)

- In the WebLink: suttacentral: 9. Anāvattidhammasambodhiparāyana (DN 16) section of Mahāparinibbāna Sutta, Venerable Ānanda asks the Buddha about several people who had recently died: "sālho nāma, bhante, bhikkhu nātike kālañkato, tassa kā gati, ko abhisamparāyo?" OR "the monk named Sälha has passed away in Nādika. What is his gati (that led to the new birth) and where has he been reborn?"
- However, it is true that one with "bad gati" (or dugati), for example, will have a "bad destination" (or duggati.) Similarly, one with "good gati" (or sugati), will have a "good destination" (or sugati.) Note the subtle difference in dugati and duggati, whereas the same word "sugati" is used for both "gati" and "destination."
- Now, let us look at the connections between gati, sañkhāra, and rebirths in various realms.


## Connection to Paticca Samuppāda

4. As we know, Paṭicca Samuppāda dictates future existences (bhava) and births ( $j \bar{a} t i$.) One generates (abhi)sañkhāra due to avijjā and engages in three types of abhisañkhāra. This was discussed in detail in the posts, "Kamma, Sañkhāra, and Abhisañkhāra" and "Kamma are Done with Sañkhāra - Types of Sañkhāra." It is essential to understand those posts.

- As explained there, those three types of abhisañkhāra are, Puñ̃̄ābhisañkhāra (puñña abhisañkhāra), apuññābhisañkhāra (apuñña abhisañkhāra), and āneñjābhisañkhāra (āneñja abhisañkhāra.)
- Those lead to various types of rebirths, per Pațicca Samuppāda.

5. We can understand the connection between those three types of abhisañkhāra and the five types of gati, in simple terms, as follows.

- Apuñña abhisañkhāra (in the mind) lead to the ten types of akusala kamma and thus lead to rebirths in the apāyā. In other words, such kamma committed by those with niraya, tiracchāna, and peta gati.
- On the other hand, one with manussa or deva gati does puñña kamma with puñña abhisañkhāra. They lead to rebirths in the human, Deva, and the 16 rūpāvacara Brahma realms. It is to be noted that cultivation of the four lower jhāna falls under puñña abhisañkhāra.
- Āneñja abhisañkhāra are cultivated while practicing the highest four $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$ leading to rebirths in the four arūpāvacara Brahma realms. It is interesting to note that "āneñja" means "un-dying" and thus "permanent." Ancient yogis (including Ālāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta) thought these realms have infinite lifetimes and equated rebirths there to the cessation of the rebirth process. Of course, the Buddha found out that those also have finite lifetimes, even though extremely long, lasting eons (billions of years).
- Also see, "Sañkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka" and \#14 of "Vacī Sañkhāra - Sañkappa (Conscious Thoughts) and Vācā (Speech)"


## Good Realms Are Sugati and Bad Realms Are Duggati

6. There are several sutt $\bar{a}$ that discuss various types of behaviors that lead to good and bad rebirths. Those with "good gati" tend to reborn in "realms with good gati" or "sugati" ("sukha" + "gati.") On the other hand, those with "bad gati" tend to reborn in "realms with bad gati" or "duggati" ("dukkha" + "gati.")

- For example, see, "WebLink: suttacentral: Dukkha Sutta (AN 5.3)," "WebLink: suttacentral: Dukkha Sutta (AN 6.75),"

7. The last verse of the "WebLink: suttacentral: Vinopama Sutta (SN 35.246)" is informative: "Evameva kho, bhikkhave, bhikkhu rūpaì samanvesati yāvatā rūpassa gati, vedanamं samanvesati yāvatā vedanāya gati, saññai samanvesati yāvatā sañn̄āya gati, sañkhāre samanvesati yāvatā saǹkhārānaì gati, viñ̃n̄ạnàं samanvesati yāvatā viñnānassa gati. Tassa rūpaì samanvesato yāvatā rūpassa gati, vedanaiं samanvesato ... pe ... saññai் ... sañkhāre ... viññānamं samanvesato yāvatā viññāṇassa gati. Yampissa taỉ hoti ahanti vā mamanti vā asmīti vā tampi tassa na hotī"ti."

Translated: "So too, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu investigates a rūpa to see the connection to gati in that rūpa, he investigates feelings to see the connection to gati in those feelings, he investigates a perception to see the connection to gati in that perception, he investigates sañkhāra to see the connection to gati in that sañkhāra, he investigates viñ̃̄āna to see the connection to gati in that viññāna. Through those investigations, whatever notions of ' I ' or 'mine' or 'I am' had occurred to him before no longer occur to him."

- The Buddha described a living being as a "collection" of the five aggregates: rūpa, vedanā, sañ̃̄ $\bar{a}$, sañkhāra, and viññāna. A living-being, in any of the 31 realms, arises due to a certain paṭisandhi viññāna cultivated with a certain gati.
- What this deep sutta is saying that when one understands the Paticca Samuppāda process, one would be able to "see" how various types of gati lead to corresponding rebirths.
- Now we will discuss the WebLink: suttacentral: Sainsappanīya Sutta (AN 10.216) which explains how a human can be reborn a "creeping creature" like a snake. [sappana :[nt.] crawling. samsappi : [aor. of samsappati] crept along; crawled; moved slowly.]


## Sainsappanīya Sutta (AN 10.216)

8. In this sutta, the Buddha has explained that one who engages in dasa akusala has "bad gati" or "dugati" or "crooked/bad character." Such people are eligible for rebirth in "bad realms" or "duggati."

- Similarly, one who abstains from dasa akusala has "good gati" or "sugati" or "straight/good character." Such people are eligible for rebirth in "good realms" or "sugati."

I am going to skip some standard verses and translate (explain) the critical verses to provide the essence.

- "Bhikkhus, I will explain to you how creeping, crooked creatures like snakes are born in this world."


## "Crooked Kamma" Done With "Crooked Gati" Lead to "Crooked Births"

9. "And what, bhikkhus, is that explanation of the Dhamma on creeping creatures? Bhikkhus, living-beings are the owners of their kamma, the heirs of their kamma. They have kamma as their origin, kamma as their bondage, bound to their kamma. Whatever kamma they do, good or bad, they will inherit the corresponding vipāka.

- In the following, the numbers refer to each of the dasa akusala.
(1) "Consider someone who destroys life. He is murderous, bloody-handed, given to blows and violence, merciless to living beings. He is crooked in bodily actions, speech, and thoughts. His bodily kamma, verbal kamma, mental kamma are all crooked. His gati is crooked and his rebirth is crooked ( jimha gati, jimhupapatti, where "jimh $\vec{a} "$ is "crooked" and "jimhupapatti" is "jimh $\vec{a} "+$ "upapatti").
- For one with a crooked gati and rebirth, I say, there is one of two destinations: either the exclusively painful hells or a species of creeping animal. And what are the species of creeping animals? The snake, the scorpion, the centipede, the mongoose, the cat, the mouse, and the owl, or any other animals that creep away when they see people.
- Thus a being is reborn from a being, meaning one is reborn through one's deeds. When one has been reborn, one makes more (defiled) sensory contacts (to be born again.) It is in this way, I say, that beings are the heirs of their own kamma.
(2) "Similarly, someone takes what is not given ... (3) ... engages in sexual misconduct ... (4) ... speaks falsehood $\ldots$ (5) $\ldots$ speaks divisively $\ldots$ (6) $\ldots$ speaks harshly $\ldots$ (7) $\ldots$ indulges in idle chatter $\ldots$ (8) $\ldots$ is full of greed ... (9) ... has a mind of ill will and intentions of hate ... (10) ... holds the ten types of micch $\bar{a}$ ditthi. He creeps along by body, speech, and mind. His bodily kamma is crooked ... His gati crooked and his rebirth is crooked....
- Thus a being is reborn from a being, meaning one is reborn through one's deeds. When one has been reborn, one makes more (defiled) sensory contacts (to be born again.) It is in this way, I say, that beings are the heirs of their own kamma.


## "Straight Kamma" Done With "Straight/Honest Gati" Lead to "Good Births"

10. "Bhikkhus, beings are the owners of their kamma, the heirs of their kamma. They have kamma as their origin, kamma as their relative, kamma as their resort. Whatever kamma they do, good or bad, they are its heirs.
(1) "Consider someone who has abandoned the destruction of life. With the weapons laid aside, conscientious and kindly, he dwells compassionate toward all living beings. He does not engage in crooked bodily actions, speech, and thoughts. His bodily kamma, verbal kamma, mental kamma are all straight. His gati are straight and his rebirth is straight (good.)

- For one with a straight gati and rebirth, I say, there is straight gati (uju gati; where "uju" means "straight") and births (ujupapatti). They have rebirths in either pleasurable heavens or eminent families, such as those of affluent householders, families that are rich, with great wealth and property, abundant gold and silver, abundant treasures and belongings, abundant wealth and grain.
- Thus a being is reborn from a being, meaning one is reborn through one's deeds. When one has been reborn, one makes more (defiled) sensory contacts (to be born again.) It is in this way, I say, that beings are the heirs of their own kamma.
(2) "Having abandoned the taking of what is not given, someone abstains from taking what is not given ... (3) $\ldots$ abstains from sexual misconduct $\ldots$ (4) $\ldots$ abstains from false speech $\ldots$. (5) $\ldots$ abstains from divisive speech ... (6) $\ldots$ abstains from harsh speech ... (7) $\ldots$ abstains from idle chatter ... (8) $\ldots$ is without longing ... (9) ... is of goodwill ... (10) ... holds correct views. He does not creep along by body, speech, and mind. His bodily kamma is straight ... His gati are straight and his rebirth is straight....
- Thus a being is reborn from a being, meaning one is reborn through one's deeds. When one has been reborn, one makes more (defiled) sensory contacts (to be born again.) It is in this way, I say, that beings are the heirs of their own kamma.
"Bhikkhus, beings are the owners of their kamma, the heirs of their kamma. They have kamma as their origin, kamma as their relative, kamma as their resort; whatever kamma they do, good or bad, they are its heirs.

11. Again, it is necessary to understand the posts, "Kamma, Sañkhāra, and Abhisañkhāra" and "Kamma are Done with Sañkhāra - Types of Sañkhāra."

### 9.5 Paṭicca Samuppāda, Tilakkhaṇa, Four Noble Truths

October 4, 2021
Paticca Samuppāda - Introduction
What Did the Buddha Mean by a "Loka"?
Future Suffering (Loka/Dukkha Samudaya) Starts With Sensory Input (Ārammana)
Sotāpanna - One With the "Wider Worldview" of the Buddha
Sotāpannā - Just Starting on the Noble Path
Yoniso Manasikāra and Paticca Samuppāda
Dhamma - Different Meanings Depending on the Context
Dhammānudhamma Patipatti - Connection to Paticca Samuppāda/Tilakkhana
9.5.1 Paṭicca Samuppāda - Introduction

October 4, 2021; revised August 31, 2022

## Resources in the Tipitaka

1. In the "WebLink: suttacentral: Saimyutta Nikāva 12" in the Sutta Pitaka, there are over 100 suttas on Paṭicca Samuppāda. However, the first 70 are the more important. The series starts with the "WebLink: suttacentral: Paticcasamuppāda Sutta (SN 12.1)." That first sutta introduces the terms in Paṭicca Samuppāda and the second one, "WebLink: suttacentral: Vibhañga Sutta (SN 12.2)" provides brief descriptions of the terms in Paṭicca Samuppāda.

- Of course, many other key suttas and sections spread over the whole Tipitaka because it is the essence of Buddha Dhamma. For example, "WebLink: suttacentral: Mahānidāna Sutta (DN 15)" is a key sutta on Paṭicca Samuppāda.
- To get to deeper explanations, one needs to refer to the "WebLink: suttacentral: Paticcasamuppādavibhañga (Abhidhamma Vb 6 )" in "Vibhañga Pakarana," one of the three original Commentaries included in the Tipitaka, As usual, SOME of the English translations there are NOT correct. Of course, the original Pāli versions (in English letters) are correct.
- The Commentary, Visuddhimagga, written (much later, around 450 CE) by Ācariya Buddhaghosa is completely inadequate. It only discusses the Akusala-mūla Uppatti Pațicca Samuppāda and does not even discuss the Kusala-mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda. In brief, the Akusala-mūla Uppatti Paṭicca Samuppäda explains how different types of births arise in the rebirth process and the Kusala-mūla Paticca Samuppāda explains the way to stop the rebirth process and attain Nibbāna.


## A Novel Approach

2. I have discussed Paticca Samuppāda in the section "Paticca Samuppāda." Here, I want to take a different approach that hopefully provides new insights.

- Almost all explanations of Paticca Samuppāda follow the standard sequence starting with "avijjā paccayā sankhhāra." That is because the main cause for the rebirth process and its result (the last step in Paṭicca Samuppāda, i.e., "jāti paccayā jarā, maraṇa, soka-parideva-dukkha-domanassupāyasā sambhavan'ti') is avijj $\bar{a}$. As we have discussed, the rebirth process and all that suffering arise due to ignorance of the Four Noble Truths/ Tilakkhaṇal Paṭicca Samuppāda; see, "Buddha Dhamma Noble Truths, Paticca Samuppāda, Tilakkhana."
- However, in real life, we don't start acting with avijjā without reason. Our unwise actions ALWAYS start based on an ārammaṇa that comes through one of the six senses.


## Mind "Turns On" With an Arammaña

3. Our minds are not active if we are unconscious or deeply sleep. Thus, under those conditions, we are unaware of the "world" around us. But, of course, we are still alive and our bodies are kept alive by kammic energy.

- We take action in response to an external stimulus called an ārammana. Some actions are "morally bad," some are "morally good" and others are "neutral."
- An ārammaṇa can come in on its own. For example, while walking we may see and hear various things. Most are "neutral" and we don't pay attention to them.
- But if we see something "eye-catching" we may even stop and take a good look at it. If we hear a loud noise, we may walk away from it. In such cases, we take action based on such an ārammaṇa.
- The sense inputs coming through the five physical senses are easy to recognize as such. But many $\bar{a} r a m m a n ̃ a$ come through the mind itself. For example, while waiting to fall asleep, thoughts about a memory or a future plan may come to mind. We may act on those too. For example, if thoughts about an old friend come to mind, one may decide to call that friend.


## What Happens When an Arammana Brings a Sensory Input?

4. It is useful to see how the Buddha described that process. That will help our analysis of how a Paticca Samuppāda process is initiated.

- If we see something while walking, our eyes capture an image of a certain object, say a person (X.) It just happened because that person was also walking on the road. Even though the eyes capture that image, it is not the eyes that "see" that person. It is our mind that "sees." We don't need to understand the details, but here is what happens: The image of person X captured by the eyes is processed by the brain and then transmitted to the cakkhu pasāda rūpa in the "mental body" or the gandhabba.
- At the SAME MOMENT the cakkhu pasāda rūpa (abbreviated as "cakkhu") receives such an image from the brain, it passes that image (called " $r \bar{u} p a$ ") to the seat of the mind, hadaya vatthu. That is how the mind becomes aware of that person X , i.e., how a "cakkhu viññāna" arises.
- That interaction between the cakkhu and a rūpa leading to the "awareness of an external object" is written in Pāli as, "cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhu viññāṇaṃ." For details, see the post, "Phassa (Contact) - Contact With Pasāda Rūpa."
- Don't be discouraged by these Pāli words. Try to get the basic idea. The main point is that "seeing" does not happen in the physical eye. The mind sees (not the eyes and not the brain)!

5. The Pāli verse, "cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhu viññānaṃ" is commonly translated as, "eye-consciousness arises dependent on the eye and sights." But we need to remember that the "contact" is NOT between the PHYSICAL EYES and the PHYSICAL OBJECT (a person in our above example.)

- In that verse, "cakkhu" refers to the cakkhu pasāda rūpa and " $r \bar{p} p a$ " refers to the "image of person X" (formed by the brain based on the image received from the physical eyes.) The "meeting of the cakkhu and rupa" is indicated by "paticca" in the above verse. Which leads to the mind "seeing an image of person X" (cakkhu viññāṇa or eye-consciousness).
- Therefore, there are a few CRITICAL things to remember: "cakkhu" is not physical eyes; "rūpa" is not the actual object (a person in this example); "cakkhu viññāna" does not arise in the eyes or the brain or even in the cakkhu pasāda rūpa (cakkhu.) That cakkhu viññāna (eye-consciousness) arises in the mind!
- The other processes involving ears, nose, tongue, and the physical body (touch) must be understood similarly.


## Two Meanings of Patticca

6. The Pāli word "paticca" has TWO possible meanings, depending on the context. The term "Patticca Samuppāda" means "getting attached willingly" or "paṭi" + "icca" ("pati" means to "bind.") See "Paticca Samuppāda - "Pati+ichcha" + "Sama+uppāda""

- However, in the above verse, paticca [pați+ca= bind + and $=$ in dependence] implies "two entities (that are compatible) making contact." A rūpa does not "make contact" with one of the other four indriya like "sota pasāda rūpa" or "ghāna pasāda rūpa." Similarly, a sound (sadda) does not "make contact" with "cakkhu pasāda" or "ghāna pasāda."
- In the "Samyojana Sutta (SN 44.9)," the Buddha explains the second meaning: "Seyyathāpi, bhikkhave, telañca paṭicca vațtiñca paṭicca telappadīpo jhāyeyya" OR "Bhikkhus, an oil lamp burns in dependence on oil and a wick (oil getting soaked in the wick)." An old-fashioned oil lamp has a wick partially immersed in oil. That oil soaks the wick gets to the burning wick's tip, and sustains the flame. Therefore, oil and wick are compatible and will "paticca." If one puts a "wick made out of the plastic" in oil, the oil will not soak the plastic, i.e., they are incompatible and thus would not "get together" or paticca.
- Now let us go back to our example of "seeing a person."


## Cakkhu Viññāṇa Is More Than Just "Seeing"

7. Suppose that person X is a friend. The moment we see person X , we identify him. Think about it. It does not take more than a split second to identify X . How does that happen?

- A complex process happens in mind during the event of "cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhu viññānaṃ." That process happens in that single citta which lives only for less than a billionth of a second. Only a Buddha can discern something that can happen that fast. We can verify that to be true only by seeing that it is compatible/consistent with nature.
- The mind needed to compare it with previous experiences to identify $\mathbf{X}$ as a friend. Otherwise, how would it identify person X ?
- It is possible because the mind can access the five aggregates (pañcakkhandha)!
- As we have discussed, the mind has access to our past experiences and future hopes. Ruppakkhandha is of 11 types, including "past rūpa we have experienced" and the same is true for the other four aggregates: vedanā, sañ̃̄ā, sañkhāra, viññāṇa. The mind can scan our memories/hopes and IDENTIFY the sense object (we have had prior experiences with it). That is how the mind identified person X as "a friend." The amazing thing is that it happens so fast. See, "Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)."
- Further details and examples at "Arising of the Five Aggregates With an Ārammana."


## Next Post

8. It is not possible to put everything in a single post. Therefore, reading the relevant posts referred to above is critical to get a better understanding of the concepts.

- All posts are in the "Paticca Samuppāda, Tilakkhana, Four Noble Truths" section.


### 9.5.2 What Did the Buddha Mean by a "Loka"?

October 11, 2021
By the word "loka" the Buddha did not mean the "physical world." He meant various types like kāma loka, rūpa loka, arūpa loka, manussa loka, Deva loka, etc.

## Introduction

1. In the previous post, "Paticca Samuppāda - Introduction", we started a new discussion on Paṭicca Samuppāda. In the WebLink: suttacentral: Samiyutta Nikāya 12 in the Sutta Piṭaka, there are over 100 suttas on Paticca Samuppāda.

- Recently I realized that these suttas are in a particular order. Even though it is impossible to discuss all those suttas, it is beneficial to see the progression of suttas there to get some key insights. Furthermore, I will discuss only those suttas relevant to our ongoing discussion on the connection between Paticca Samuppāda and Tilakkhaṇa (and the Noble Truths.)
- In the previous post, I pointed out that the first two suttas provide a brief introduction to Paticca Samuppāda.

2. The third sutta, "WebLink: suttacentral: Patipad̄ Sutta (SN 12.3)" points out that the steps in the standard Akusala-mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda describe unwise actions (starting with "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra") that lead to future suffering ("jāti paccayā jarā, maraṇa, soka-parideva-dukkhadomanassupāyasā sambhavan'ti'). Therefore, it describes micchā patipadā (wrong practices/way of living) of an average human. Such future suffering can be stopped by stopping the steps in Patticca Samuppāda. That is accomplished by cultivating wisdom (knowledge of the Noble Truths) and removing $a v i j j \bar{a}$. Once one understands the true nature of this world (Tilakkhaṇa) at the Sotāpanna stage, one will follow sammā patipad $\bar{a}$ (correct practices/way of living) or the Noble Eightfold Path to get to Nibbāna.

- Then there are seven suttas (SN 12.4 through 12. 10) that describe how most recent 7 Buddhas discovered how future suffering arises via the Paṭicca Samuppäda process, i.e., why an average human follows the micch $\bar{a}$ patipad $\bar{a}$. (The teachings of a given Buddha last only a limited time. That is why each Buddha needs to discover this process on his own.) Of course, simultaneously, each Buddha figures out how to stop future suffering in the rebirth process, i.e., samm $\bar{a}$ patipad $\bar{a}$.
- The next sutta in the series (of interest to the present discussion) clarifies a "loka." In almost all English translations, "loka" is translated as "world" and gives the impression that the Buddha meant the "physical world around us" or even "the universe with its stars, planets, galaxies, etc." But the Buddha meant something entirely different, as we see below.


## Kaccānagotta Sutta (SN 12.15) - "Loka" Is Not the "Physical World"

3. The "WebLink: suttacentral: Kaccānagotta Sutta (SN 12.15)" provides the first clues. Venerable Kaccānagotta asks the Buddha what is meant by "samma ditṭhi" and the Buddha explains in the following way: "Dvayanissito khvāyamं, kaccāna, loko yebhuyyena-atthitañceva natthitañca."

- The world (loka) arises mainly based on two extreme views:
(i) it lasts forever (atthitañca), and
(ii) it does not last forever (natthitañca.)
- Here the Buddha is NOT talking about the physical world with stars, planets, galaxies, etc. He is referring to the existence of a living being. Just like these days, people mainly had two extreme views: (i) a living being exists forever (i.e., the belief of a "soul" or "ātman"), and (ii) "one's world" (loka) ends at the death of the physical body (the materialistic view of today).

4. Then the Buddha explains that both those views are not correct. A living being will exist (within the 31 realms) as long as the (Akusala-mūla) Paṭicca Samuppāda process is in effect and thus exists in a "loka." Of course, most existences are filled with unbearable suffering. And that will not end until that living being starts comprehending the Four Noble Truths (or Tilakkhaṇa or Paṭicca Samuppāda) and becomes a Sotāpanna.

Thus the Buddha almost always used the word "loka" to refer to the "world of a living being." The next verse in this sutta also confirms that: "Tañcāyaì upayupādānaì cetaso adhitthānaìm
abhinivesānusayaì na upeti na upādiyati nādhitṭhāti: 'attā me'ti. 'Dukkhameva uppajjamānaỉn uppajjati, dukkhain nirujjhamānain nirujjhatī'ti na kañkhati na vicikicchati aparapaccayā


Translated: "But someone with the right view does not cling to existence. He does not see any benefit of existence in this world, i.e., anything in this world is of no value (and thus should be considered mine or 'attā me'ti). He has no perplexity or doubts that what arises is only suffering; what ceases is only suffering. It is in this way, Kaccāna, that there is CORRECT VIEW."
5. The verses at the end of the sutta provide further confirmation:
"Sabbam atthī'ti kho, kaccāna, ayameko anto. 'Sabbain natthī'ti ayamं dutiyo anto.
Ete te, kaccāna, ubho ante anupagamma majjhena tathāgato dhammaì deseti:

- 'avijjāpaccayā sañkhārā; sañkhārapaccayā viññānaim ...pe... evametassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa samudayo hoti.
- Avijjāya tveva asesavirāganirodhā sañkhāranirodho; sañkhāranirodhā viññānanirodho ...pe... evametassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa nirodho hotī" "ti.


## Translated:

"'All exists': Kaccāna, that is one extreme. 'All does not exist': that is the second extreme.
Without veering towards either of these extremes, the Tathägata teaches the Dhamma by the middle:

- 'With avijj $\bar{a}$ as condition, sañkhāra arise; with sañkhāra as condition, viññāna (and the rest of steps in PS).... Such is the origin of this whole mass of suffering.
- But with the remainderless fading away and cessation of avijjā comes the ending of sañkhāra; with the cessation of sañkhāra, cessation of viññāna (and the rest of steps in PS).... Such is the end of this whole mass of suffering."
- Also, note that the Buddha has defined "all (sabba)" as "all that pertains to a living being," ie., the five aggregates/twelve $\bar{a} y a t a n a /$ six $d h a \bar{t} t u /$ etc. Thus, by "all," he did not restrict to the physical world (that is, of course, a part of "all"). The five aggregates/twelve $\bar{a} y a t a n a / s i x ~ d h a ̄ t u / e t c . ~ i n c l u d e ~ t h e ~ p h y s i c a l ~$ and mental worlds. See, "WebLink: suttacentral: 256 results for kiñca AND sabbam்."
- But in a sutta elsewhere in the Tipitaka, the Buddha did discuss the "physical world" too.


## Rohitassa Sutta (AN 4.45) - A Sutta That Addresses the "Physical World"

6. In the "WebLink: suttacentral: Rohitassa Sutta (AN 4.45)" Rohitassa Deva comes to the Buddha and asks whether it is possible to "travel to the end of the physical world." Buddha answers that it is not possible. The Rohitassa says he had confirmed that in a previous life where he had developed abhiññ̄ powers as a yogi; with his manomaya kāya (gandhabba-like), he could travel the distance from one ocean to another in one stride. One day, he decided to see the "end of the world." He said he traveled for a hundred years and died on the way.

Then the Buddha makes the following deeper point: "Yattha kho, āvuso, na jāyati na jīyati na mīyati na cavati na upapajjati, nāhaì tamं gamanena lokassa antaì ñāteyyaì daṭheyyaìm patteyyan'ti vadāmi. Na cāhaì, $\overline{\text { a }}$ vuso, appatvāva lokassa antaì dukkhassa antakiriyamं vadāmi. Api cāhaì, āvuso, imasmimyeva byāmamatte kalevare sasaññimhi samanake lokañca paññāpemi loka samudayañca loka nirodhañca loka nirodhagāminiñca patipadanti."

- The following is the concept described by the Buddha in the above verse: "Without attaining Nibbāna, it is not possible to get to an "end of the world" by traveling. Until the suffering (associated with the rebirth process) is ended, one cannot reach the "end of this world." For it is in this
physical body with its manomaya kāya with perception and mind (sasaññimhi samanake) restricted to moment-to-moment arising (byämamatte) that I declare the arising and cessation of this world and the practice that leads to its cessation."

7. Modern science admits that it cannot find "an edge to the universe." The size of the universe is genuinely mind-boggling. The furthest a human has traveled in outer space is to the Moon. It is doubtful that humans will be able to travel to even the nearest star system anytime soon or probably ever.

- Distances between stars are too large to be measured in km or miles. Such vast distances are calculated in "light-years." One light-year is the distance traveled by light in a year. The closest star to us is over four light-years away, meaning it will take a light beam over four years to travel to that star.
- For comparison, the distance to the Moon is only about $\mathbf{1 . 3}$ light-seconds! Of course, our fastest rockets take about three days to get to the Moon. Such a rocket will take over 80,000 years to get to the vicinity of the nearest star! You can Google that to verify.
- Then there are billions of stars in our galaxy, and there are billions of such galaxies in the universe. There is no way to count all galaxies, and there may not even be a limit!
- That is why the Buddha said there is no point in investigating the physical universe. We will NEVER be able to even fully explore the closest stars and their planets, let alone the whole universe.


## "Loka" Is One's World!

8. Therefore, it is critical to understand that when the Buddha referred to "loka," he meant the existence of a living being.

- That is why the Buddha only talked about various types of loka encompassing the 31 realms: In one category, we have kāma loka, rūpa loka, and arūpa loka with 11, 16, and 4 realms, respectively. Within the kāma loka, there are various "lokā": manussa loka (human world), peta loka (loka of hungry ghosts), Deva loka, etc. The 20 realms in rūpa loka and arūpa loka are all inhabited by Brahmas and thus are commonly known as Brahma loka.
- A living being WILL ALWAYS live in one of those "worlds" until Parinibbāna is attained (the death of an Arahant.) Thus, the "world' does not cease to exist until then.
- Thus, we can also see that "cessation of the world" is the same as Nibbāna.


## What Are "Loka Samudaya" and "Loka Nirodha"?

9. When the current existence (say, human existence) ends, that is the end of the current "human bhava" in the "manussa loka." But all of us (who are not Arahants) still have many accumulated kammic energies to "power up" different types of "bhava" for different kinds of "loka."

- For example, that human may grasp a "Deva bhava" and thus be born in a "Deva loka." Someone who has cultivated jhāna will grasp a "Brahma bhava" and thus be born in a "Brahma loka." Yet another who had killed a parent will grasp a "niraya bhava" and be born in a "niraya." For each of them, that will be their "loka" until that kammic energy runs out.
- However, there will always be many possible bhava for any average living being. We all have accumulated many such "seeds" in our past lives and maybe even a few in this life. That is why there is no end to this process until Arahanthood. The creation of such a kammic energy (to power up a new bhava) is the "arising of a "loka" or "loka samudaya."
- That "loka samudaya" takes place via the Akusala-mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda process. It describes how such kammic energies accumulate via acting with avijja. We will continue that discussion in the next post.
- Accumulation of new bhava (and grasping such accumulated bhava) will stop at the Arahant stage. Then no more existences in any type of loka, and that is "loka nirodha" or Nibbāna. We will get to that discussion on the Kusala-müla Paṭicca Samuppāda process later.


### 9.5.3 Future Suffering (Loka/Dukkha Samudaya) Starts With Sensory Input (Ārammaṇa)

October 18, 2021
As pointed out in many suttas, future suffering (Loka/Dukkha Samudaya) starts with sensory input (ārammaña). Here we specifically discuss the Loka Sutta and the Dukkha Sutta as part of our discussion of the suttas in Samiyutta Nikāya 12 on Paṭicca Samuppāda.

## Previously Unheard Dhamma - Arising of Suffering Same as Arising of the World

1. I have emphasized this before. However, this is so contradictory to our perception of the world that I need to repeat it.

- An average person has a wrong "nicca view/perception" that one can succeed and be happy by striving to "make money and acquire things of worldly value" such as houses, cars, etc. That is because our time horizon is VERY short.
- Some people believe that there is no afterlife. Most of those who may believe in rebirth are too busy living this life. Both those groups focus on "enjoying life while it lasts."
- However, the Buddha pointed out that we will be reborn, and MOST of the future existences are guaranteed to be "filled with much suffering." That is true for even the most moral person living today until understanding the Noble Truths. I have explained this in detail before.
- Until that is understood, people will inevitably have the "nicca view/perception," ie., everything is going to work out as long as we make an effort to be "successful" by getting a good job and acquiring worldly things. However, the world has "anicca characteristic."


## "The World" Includes Both Physical and Mental Worlds

2. Modern science is focused on the "physical world." But the Buddha taught that one's world includes both the physical world and the mental world. in fact, the mental world is more important than the physical world.

- The Buddha defined the "world" (same as "sabba" or "all") in several different ways. All of them encompass the physical world and mental world.
- For example, the Buddha taught that everything in the world come under six dhätu: pathavī, appo, tejo $v a \bar{a} y o, \bar{a} k \bar{a} s a, ~ v i n ̃ \tilde{n} a ̈ n a$. As you can see, the first five include everything in the physical world. Everything in the mental world comes under viññ̄ạna dhātu.
- The Buddha also described everything in the world as pañcakkhandha (five aggregates): rūpakkhandha, vedanākkhandha, sañ̃̄̄̄kkhandha, sañkhārakkhandha, and viññānakkhandha. In this categorization, the first five dhātu are included in rüpakkhandha. Viññāna dhātu covers the other four aggregates.


## A Sentient Being Has All Six Dhätu/Five Aggregates

3. It is evident that the difference between sentient living beings and everything else (rocks, houses, planets, stars, etc., as well as plant life) is that a sentient being has viññāna dhātu.

- All physical entities (including the physical bodies of living beings) are made of the four great elements (pathavī, āpo, tejo vāyo) and are in specific locations in space (ākāsa.)
- However, viññāna dhātu has no such space location. It permeates the whole space and is accessible to any sentient being from anywhere. For example, astronauts can function well on the Moon, just as on Earth. Their memories remain intact, i.e., memory has no spatial locations and is accessible from anywhere.
- Therefore, any living being anywhere in the universe will have all six $d h a \bar{t} t u /$ five aggregates.


## Loka Sutta (SN 12.44) - Existence in a Loka Means Subjected to Suffering

4. The Buddha starts the "WebLink: suttacentral: Loka Sutta (SN 12.44)" by saying, "Bhikkhus, I will teach you the origin and the cessation of the world." ("Lokassa, bhikkhave, samudayañca atthaṅgamañca desessāmi.")

- One's world does not end at the death of the physical body. For example, when a human dies, he will be reborn with a different human body if more kammic energy remains in the human bhava. Otherwise, he will grasp a new bhava, and the rebirth will be in that appropriate realm (among the 31 realms.) That is "loka samudaya" or "origin of the world" above.
" As we have discussed, "cessation of the world" (stopping the rebirth process) happens at Arahanthood, and that Arahant will be "totally separated from this world" at Parinibbana (death of the physical body.)

5. Next, the Buddha explained how "loka samudaya" happens: "Katamo ca, bhikkhave, lokassa samudayo? Cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhu viñ̃n̄ṇam். Tiṇnam் sañgati phasso. Phassa paccayā vedanā; vedanā paccayā taṇhā; taṇhā paccayā upādānaim; upādāna paccayā bhavo; bhava paccayā jāti; jāti paccayā jarāmaranaì sokaparidevadukkhadomanassupāy āsā sambhavanti. Ayaì kho, bhikkhave, lokassa samudayo."

Translated: "And what, bhikkhus, is the origin of the world? When cakkhu and rūpa "get together" (paṭicca), cakkhu viññāna arises. Then contact with "san" (samphassa or "san" + "phassa") happens due to one's sañgati ("san" + "gati"). As a result, "samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedan $\bar{a} "$ arises; with samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedan $\bar{a}$ as condition, craving; with craving as condition, clinging; with clinging as condition, existence; with existence as condition, birth; with birth as condition, aging-and-death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure, and despair come to be. That, bhikkhus, is the origin of the world."

- I have discussed this in the previous series on "Origin of Life." You can review the relevant posts under the subsection "Worldview of the Buddha" there. I discussed the "Chachakka Sutta (MN 148)," which discusses sensory inputs through the six sense faculties. But we will discuss that verse briefly again.
- It is CRITICAL to note that the Buddha equated birth in any realm (loka samudaya) to be the same as the origin of suffering!
- The second part of the sutta describes how "cessation of the world" (or loka nirodha/atthañgama.) We will discuss that in detail in the future (see \#8 below.)


## Seeds for the "Origin of the World" (Rebirths) Initiate With Our Response to Sensory Inputs (Arammana)

6. Then, the verse is repeated for the other five senses. Thus, the "origin of the world" (or the rebirth process) can start with sensory input (i.e., arrammaṇa) coming through any of the six senses.

- That is explained (in summary form) in the following part of the verse: " Phassa paccay $\bar{a}$ vedan $\bar{a}$; vedanā paccayā taṇhā; taṇhā paccayā upādānaì; upādāna paccayā bhavo; bhava paccayā jāti; jāti paccayā jarāmaranaim sokaparidevadukkhadomanassupāyāsā sambhavanti.
- That is how "seeds" for future rebirths accumulate with strong akusala kamma. Even though only a tiny fraction of sensory interactions lead to the creation of such "seeds" (or "kamma bija"), we all have
accumulated countless such seeds over previous lives. Luckily, they DID NOT inevitably bring future rebirths, and we will discuss that. (Otherwise, no one will be able to attain Nibbāna.)
- Now let us discuss the Dukkha Sutta (SN 12.43), which comes just before the Loka Sutta (SN 12.44).


## Dukkha Sutta (SN 12.43) - Origin of Suffering Same as Origin of the World (Rebirth)

7. The Buddha starts the "WebLink: suttacentral: Dukkha Sutta (SN 12.43)" by saying, "Bhikkhus, I will teach you the origin and the cessation of suffering." ("Dukkhassa, bhikkhave, samudayañca atthaṅgamañca desessāmi.")

- Then the Buddha explained "dukkha samudaya": "Katamo ca, bhikkhave, dukkhassa samudayo? Cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhu viññ̄n̄ami. Tinṇaì sañgati phasso. Phassa paccayā vedanā, vedanā paccayā taṇhā. Ayaì kho, bhikkhave, dukkhassa samudayo."
- Comparing this verse with that in \#5 above from the Loka Sutta (SN 12.44) makes the following very clear: "Loka samudaya is the SAME as dukkha samudaya."
- In other words, "arising of a new world in a new birth" is the SAME as "arising of another mass of suffering."


## End of Suffering (Nibbāna) Is Cessation of the World (Rebirth Process)

8. In the second part of the Dukkha Sutta the Buddha says how that suffering can be stopped from arising: "Katamo ca, bhikkhave, dukkhassa atthañgamo? Cakkhuñca pațicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññānam். Tiṇnamin sañgati phasso. Phassapaccayā vedanā; vedanāpaccayā taṇhā. Tassāyeva taṇhāya asesavirāganirodhā upādāna nirodho; upādānanirodhā bhava nirodho; bhava nirodhā jāti nirodho; jāti nirodhā jarāmaranamं sokaparidevadukkhadomanassupāyāsā nirujjhanti. Evametassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa nirodho hoti. Ayaì kho, bhikkhave, dukkhassa atthañgamo."

- That is also the same verse as the second part of the Loka Sutta (SN 12.44.) In other words, "Stopping of the arsing of a new world (new birth)" is the SAME as "stopping the arising of another bout of suffering."
- The above verse requires a detailed discussion. We will do that in upcoming posts.
- It is a good idea to understand what an arammaña is before we get into that discussion. See, "Ārammana Plays a Critical Role in a Sensory Event."

9. We know that Nibbāna is the cessation of suffering. We see clearly from the above two suttas that the end of suffering stops the rebirth process (bhava and $j \bar{a} t i$ ).

- Of course, there are many more suttas stating the same. These two suttas are in the "Samyutta Nikāya 12" on Pațicca Samuppäda that we are discussing presently.


## Connection to Paṭicca Samuppāda

10. The other important point is that the above two suttas point out the connection of loka samudaya/dukkha samudaya to Pațicca Samuppāda.

- As I have pointed out before, the Paticca Samuppāda process starts with "salāyatana paccayā phasso," i.e., with sensory input (ārammana) coming to one of the six sensory faculties.
- That is what the verse in \#8 above says. As we can see, it has the following steps (in the latter part) of the Pațicca Samuppāda sequence: "Phassa paccayā vedanā; vedanā paccayā taṇhā. Tassāyeva tanhāya asesavirāganirodhā upādāna nirodho; upādāna nirodhā bhava nirodho; bhava nirodhā
jāti nirodho; jāti nirodhā jarāmaranaì sokaparidevadukkhadomanassupāyāsā nirujjhanti. Evametassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa nirodho hoti."
- I have discussed this in the previous series on "Origin of Life" as mentioned in \#5 above.
- We will look at it from a bit different point of view here, highlighting the steps in Paṭicca Samuppāda.

11. The process by which that future suffering arises is (Akusala-Mūla) Paṭicca Samuppāda.

- In plain English, the following happens. One gets attached to an ārammaṇa and starts doing foolish/immoral deeds ("avijjā paccayā sañkhāra.") Such actions are going to have future consequences, ALWAYS leading to suffering at the end.
- But that process starts only with a strong sensory input or an ārammana. See, "Ārammana Plays a Critical Role in a Sensory Event."
- The critical point is that those consequences can manifest in future lives as well. Strong immoral deeds lead to future births in "undesired existences," in particular the four lowest realms.


## Future Suffering (Loka/Dukkha Samudaya) Starts With Sensory Input (Ārammana)

12. As we can clearly see in $\# 5$ and $\# 7$, the two suttas state that loka samudayaldukkha samudaya (origin of the world/origin of suffering) starts with: "Cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhu viññānaim.." The suttas repeat that verse for all six senses. That is the same as the "saḷāyatana paccayā phasso" step in Paṭicca Samuppāda.

- Then, attachment ( $\tanh \bar{a}$ ) to such a sensory input lead to the subsequent steps leading to suffering at the end: "phassa paccayā vedanā, vedanā paccayā taṇhā, tanhhā paccayā upādāna, upādāna paccayā bhavo, bhava paccayā jāti, jāti paccayā jarā, maraṇa, soka-parideva-dukkha-domanassupāyasā sambhavan'ti"
- It is at the "upādāna paccayā bhavo" step that Paṭicca Samuppāda goes to the step "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" and starts accumulating kamma to that could power future existences.
- We will discuss that in the next post.


### 9.5.4 Sotāpanna - One With the "Wider Worldview" of the Buddha

October 25, 2021; revised \#4 on October 27, 2021

## Introduction

1. We covered a lot of material in the recent few posts about "original of the world" (loka samudaya) and "origin of suffering" (dukkha samudaya.") See, "Paticca Samuppāda, Tilakkhana, Four Noble Truths."

- As we saw, the Buddha equated the world's origin (with each new birth in the rebirth process) as the origin of suffering. That is because even if that particular existence (e.g., a Deva realm) may not have extreme suffering, the possibility of suffering in the future (in a lower realm) is there.
- We used direct Pāli quotes from relevant suttas in those posts.
- Some people (justifiably) stress out just seeing Pāli words. Here, I want to provide a summary in simple English to clarify the key conclusions.
- I want to do that because the concepts discussed in those posts are contrary to the views/perceptions of an average human. Once comprehend the key message, they can go back and review those posts. They may also want to carefully go through the suttas to ensure that I have not distorted a single verse.
- I welcome thoughtful discussions based on the Tipitaka. If my writings are contradictory to anything in the Tipitaka, please provide references, and discuss them. Understanding the primary message of the Buddha is ESSENTIAL before trying to follow his path to Nibbāna!


## The Suffering Buddha Referred to - In the Rebirth Process

2. Many people go to meditation retreats to get rid of the daily stresses of life by calming the mind. There is nothing wrong with that. However, Buddha's teachings are there to tackle a much bigger problem.

- That problem is the unimaginable suffering in the rebirth process that is inevitable for all those who have not understood the "wider world view" of the Buddha.
- The Buddha described a world consisting of 31 realms, out of which an average human is aware of only two: the human and the animal realms. He taught that our lives don't end with the death of this physical body. We can be reborn anywhere in the 31 realms, but most rebirths are in the four lowest realms (apāy $\bar{s} s$,) where the level of suffering can be much higher than that we can see in the human and animal realms.
- We will address the validity of that "wider worldview" in the next post. Let us finish our summary of recent posts.


## Suffering Is Inevitable in the World and Absent in Nibbāna

3. The main two conclusions for the previous two posts are the following:
i. Both suffering and sensory pleasures are present in the world of 31 realms, i.e., in the rebirth process among the 31 realms. The higher realms have more happiness than suffering, while the suffering in the lowest four realms is unbearable. Since any given living being spends most of the time in the apāyās, suffering dominates this world.
ii. There is no suffering or sensory pleasures in Nibbāna (after the death of an Arahant.) Nothing of this world exists in Nibbāna. In terms of the language of mathematics, "this world and Nibbāna are mutually exclusive." Material objects, feelings and perceptions about them, etc., all belong to this world, and NONE of them exist in Nibbāna. Even a Buddha cannot "describe" what is in Nibbāna because we don't have that terminology in this world. The only way to conclusively describe Nibbāna is to say that there is no suffering in Nibbāna; that is how the Buddha ALWAYS described Nibbāna.

- Another critical point is that Nibbāna is also, "rāgakkhayo dosakkhayo mohakkhayo-idaí vuccati nibbānan" ti OR "the ending of rāga, ending of anger/hate, and ending of ignorance/delusion is Nibbāna." See, for example, "WebLink: suttacentral: Nibbānapañhā Sutta (SN 38.1)."
- Equating Nibbāna to rāgakkhaya provides a CRITICAL clue to our current discussion. We will discuss that in \#7 below.

4. Only an Arahant in Nirodha Samāpatti can experience the complete "Nibbānic bliss" (total absence of suffering.) An Arahant can stay in Nirodha Samāpatti only for up to seven days at a time. During this time, the physical body of the Arahant appears to be dead (even the heart stops beating), but kammic energy maintains the body temperature.

- However, one can experience more and more of the "Nibbānic bliss" as one proceeds up the four stages of magga phala. That "reduced level of mental stress" has been referred to as "cooling down of the mind" in the Tipitaka.
- On the other hand, bodily suffering (aches, injuries, sicknesses, etc.) will persist until the death of the physical body of an Arahant. That is because even an Arahant has to live in this world until the demise of the physical body. With the death of the physical body, an Arahant departs from this world. That is is Parinibbāna or "full Nibbāna." No more rebirths in this world and no more suffering!


## The Reality of any Existence in This World

5. We all would like to live a "comfortable and pleasurable life" among our friends and family. But the reality is that no one has been able to sustain that EVER. Anyone who ever lived had to give up everything at death. We would not even know where we would be reborn.

- After some years, we may be reborn with a human body if more kammic energy remains in this human bhava. Until then we will only have the "mental body" or the "gandhabba kāya." Of course, even then, we don't know exactly where that birth would be.
- If there is no more kammic energy left in the human bhava, we have no idea where we will be reborn. That depends not only on how we lived this life but also on what types of kammic energies have been accumulated in previous lives.
- However, those who have attained stages of Nibbāna would have eliminated rebirths in lower realms. A Sotāpanna would not be reborn in the four lowest realms (apāyās.) A Sakadāgāmi would be born only among the six Deva realms. An Anāgāmi would be reborn only in certain Brahma realms. They all will attain full Nibbāna within a relatively short time.


## Importance of Becoming a Sotāpanna

6. Most people cannot imagine that there can be suffering in the realms above the human realm. But we all can clearly see the suffering in the human and especially the animal realm. The animal realm is the only apāya that we can see. The Buddha has described the suffering in the other three lowest realms, and those descriptions are scary. That is why the main goal of a Buddhist is to attain the Sotāpanna stage.

- Most humans cannot even fully understand the suffering we experience in the human realm because their minds are "covered" by anticipated bouts of "future pleasures" that one hopes to achieve. But anyone can see the suffering in the animal realm. Since a Sotāpanna would avoid rebirth in all four lowest realms, that should incentivize one to attain the Sotāpanna stage.
- Once getting to the Sotāpanna stage, one will begin to see the suffering in the human realm. But a Sotāpanna may still have the perception that life in a Deva or a Brahma realm could be good.
- Therefore, for anyone below the Sotāpanna stage, there is no need to comprehend suffering in higher realms. But the point is that life in that higher realm WILL end, and one WILL end up in the lower realms.
- The only REQUIREMENT to attain the Sotāpanna stage is to understand the "wider worldview of the Buddha." The Buddha said that just that understanding (or getting to the correct worldview) would remove an unimaginable amount of defilements. It is the removal of defilements by clear vision ("dassanā pahātabbā") in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Sabbāsava Sutta (MN 2)." We can see that from a different perspective too. Let us discuss that first.


## "Rāgakkhayo Nibbānan" - Nibbāna Is Ending of Sainsāric Travel

7. Without exception, the current English translation of "rāga" is "greed." However, "greed" is "lobha." Furthermore, have you ever wondered why Nibbāna is NOT defined as "lobhakkhayo dosakkhayo mohakkhayo-idamं vuccati nibbānan" ti? That would be the logical choice there since the three immoral roots are lobha, dosa, moha.

- The correct "pada nirutti" (etymology) of " $r \bar{a} g a "$ " comes from " $r \vec{a} "+$ "agga" where " $r \vec{a} "$ means to "travel (in the saimsäric journey)" and "agga" is to "give priority." Thus, "rāga" means to "travel (the saimsäric journey)." Here, one may not even believe in rebirth but would still enjoy the world as long as it lasts. In other words, anyone craving things in this world would have some type of rāga. [agga : [adj.] the highest; the top-most. (m.), the end; the top.]
- Rāga arises because one believes there are pleasures to be had in this world (i.e., one believes the world to be of nicca nature.) But one would NOT do highly immoral things with just rāga. Specifically, kāma rāga needs to escalate to lobha for immoral actions to take place.
- The samisāric journey is among three types of loka: kāma loka, rūpa loka, and arūpa loka (with the 31 realms distributed among these three.) As explained in Paṭicca Samuppäda, one's birth will be according to one's cravings for things in this world. When one has kāma rāga, one will be born among the 11 realms in the kama loka. Those who have (at least temporarily) overcome kāma rāga (and cultivate rūpāvacara jhāna) may still have rūpa rāga and thus will be born in the 16 realms in rūpa loka. Those who have overcome kāma rāga and rūpa rāga (and cultivate the arūpāvacara jhāna) will be born in one of the four realms in the arupāvacara loka.
- To attain Nibbāna, one must permanently overcome all three types of rāga, and thus "rāgakkhayo nibbānan."

8. The relevant point to our discussion is the following: If one can understand the material in the previous two posts in this series, one would realize that future suffering is INEVITABLE unless the rebirth process is stopped. "The suffering-filled world" will keep arising at death.

- Please read that again and contemplate on it. The Buddha said that arising of any new birth (anywhere among the 31 realms) means the suffering has not stopped.
- Saimsāric suffering (future suffering in the rebirth process) will not stop until one comprehends this KEY POINT.
- That is the same as understanding the "wider worldview of the Buddha" of the rebirth process among the 31 realms.
- One becomes a Sotāpanna Anugāmi when starting to understand that critical point. When that understanding takes root in the mind irreversibly, one would attain the Sotāpanna stage at that moment.
- That is the removal of defilements by clear vision ("dassana pahātabba"") mentioned in \#6 above per Sabbāsava Sutta (MN 2.) That is the Noble Sammā Dițthi ('Noble Correct View") of a Sotāpanna.


## A Sotāpanna Starts on the Noble Eightfold Path with Sammā Diṭ̣hi

9. It is at that point one can start on the Noble Eightfold Path as a Sotāpanna. All others below the Sotāpanna Anugāmi stage are still on the mundane eightfold path (a Sotāpanna Anugāmi WILL become a Sotāpanna.) The WebLink: suttacentral: Mahācattārīsaka Sutta (MN 117) discusses the two eightfold paths; see, "Mahā Cattārisaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty)."

- In the "WebLink: suttacentral: Dutivasāriputta Sutta (SN 55.5)" the Buddha discussed the Sotāpanna stage with Ven. Sariputta. The Buddha asked, "'Sotāpanno, sotāpanno'ti hidamं, sāriputta, vuccati. Katamo nu kho, sāriputta, sotāpanno"ti? OR "Sāriputta, they speak of 'a Sotāpanna'. Who is a Sotāpanna?"
- Venerable Sariputta replied: "Yo hi, bhante, iminā ariyena atṭhañgikena maggena samannāgato ayaì vuccati sotāpanno, svāyaì āyasmā evainnāmo evañgotto"ti. OR "Bhante, someone who has embarked on the Noble Eightfold Path is a Sotāpanna," and the Buddha consented.

10. Furthermore, in several suttas Samm $\bar{a}$ Ditt $t h i$ is described as, "understanding the truth about suffering."

- That "previously unheard truth about suffering" is that "the origin of suffering is the origin of the world (with each rebirth)" as we discussed.
- For example, in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Saccavibhañga Sutta (MN 141)": "Katamā cāvuso, sammā ditṭhi? Yaì kho, $\bar{a} v u s o$, dukkhe ñānaì, dukkhasamudaye ñaṇam, dukkhanirodhe ñānaì, dukkhanirodhagāminiyà paṭipadāya ñāṇaì, ayaì vuccatāvuso: 'sammā ditṭhi'."
- As we saw, "dukkha samudaya" is the same as "Ioka samudaya;" "dukkha nirodha" is the same as ""loka nirodha;" "dukkhanirodhagāminiya patipad $\bar{a} " "$ is the same as "lokanirodhagāminiy $\bar{a}$ paṭipadā."
- That is "dukkhe ñānaí" or the knowledge on the Noble Truth about suffering.


## It Is a Sotāpanna Who Can Cultivate the Other Seven Factors on the Noble Path

11. Therefore, one must first see the "wider worldview of the Buddha" to get to Sammā Ditthi, or "the correct vision about the world." At that point, one has SEEN the unfruitful/dangerous nature (anicca nature) of this world. That is the same as comprehending the First Noble Truth on suffering. That is also the same as comprehending Tilakkhaṇa (Characteristics of this world) and Paṭicca Samuppāda (how suffering arises due to causes and conditions.)

- A Sotāpanna WILL NOT lose that understanding even through future lives. Even if it takes several more births to complete, a Sotāpanna WILL cultivate the remaining seven steps on the Noble Path and WILL get to the Arahanthood.
- That is why understanding the Four Noble Truths/Tilakkhaṇa/Pațicca Samuppāda is ESSENTIAL to becoming a Sotāpanna Anugāmi first. Sometimes a Sotāpanna Anugāmi is called a Cula-Sotāpanna, even though that term is not in the Tipiṭaka.
- This turned out to be a long post. But the essence of the Buddha Dhamma is summarized here.


### 9.5.5 Sotāpannā - Just Starting on the Noble Path

## November 1, 2021

A Sotāpanna is at the beginning stage of the Noble Path, and needs to overcome kāma rāga, rūpa rāga, and arūpa rāga.

## Getting to Nibbāna Is a Step-by-Step Process

1. In the recent posts, I have outlined the ULTIMATE GOAL of a Buddhist. Those posts may discourage some people. They may think that they will never be able to get to Nibbāna. However, I just wanted to emphasize that it is a "previously unknown worldview." But getting to that ultimate goal is a step-bystep process. Even a Sotāpanna is far away from losing attachments to "this world." But many people attribute qualities of an Arahant to a Sotāpanna.

- Thus, many people waste precious time by trying to suppress sense desires. In some cases, they try to eliminate the innate sense of "me" or "a self." That is an impossibility! Their goal should be to understand the "worldview of the Buddha" and first become a Sotāpanna. It is a good idea to read the post, "Is It Necessary for a Buddhist to Eliminate Sensual Desires?"
- Some others also waste time doing Ānāpānasati/Satipațthāna using "breath meditation." Only a Sotāpanna knows how to cultivate them properly. At the beginning of the "WebLink: suttacentral: Ānāpānassati Sutta (MN 118)," Buddha clearly stated that ALL the Bhikkhus listening to the discourse had various stages of magga phala, i.e., all were at or above the Sotāpanna stage.
- You can read this English translation at Sutta Central: "WebLink: suttacentral: Mindfulness of Breathing (MN 118)." Of course, the title is quite misleading, and the latter part of the sutta translated incorrectly. But the detailed description of the assembled bhikkhus proves my point. That description starts with, "Bhikkhus, this assembly is free from prattle, this assembly is free from chatter. It consists purely of heartwood.." close to the beginning of the sutta. [Apalāpāyaì, bhikkhave, parisā; nippalāpāyaì, bhikkhave, parisā; suddhā sāre patiṭthitā.] [paris $\bar{a}:[\mathrm{f}]$ a company; an assembly. palāpa : [m.] chaff (of corn); prattle; nonsense; voice of essence. nippalāpa : [adj.] free from chaff or prattle. sāra : (m.),
essence; the pith of a tree; the choicest part. (adj.) essential; excellent; strong. patittthita : [pp. of patitṭhahati] was established; stood firmly; found a support.]

2. The same sutta also has the following verse: "Nāhaim, bhikkhave, mutṭhassatissa asampajānassa annāpānassatim vadāmi." In the above translation: "I do not say that there is the development of mindfulness of breathing for one who is forgetful, who is not fully aware."

- But the real meaning of that Pāli verse is more like, 'I do not teach ānāpānassati to those who do not know where to establish sati (mutthassatissa) and not know how to sort out "san or defilements" (asampajānassa).
- Therefore, the priority is to understand the worldview of the Buddha that we discussed in previous posts and become a Sotāpanna Anugāmi. It is also a good idea to dispel some other myths about Sotāpanna Anugāmi/Sotāpanna.


## Sotāpanna Anugāmi/Sotāpanna - Knows the Anicca Nature of This World

3. As I explained in the previous post, one gets to the Sotāpanna stage by removing wrong views about the world (worldly things can be fruitful/beneficial.) That is the wrong view that the world is of "nicca nature."

- We are bound to "this world" with ten samisāric bonds (samiyojana.) They are "mental bonds." At the Sotäpanna stage, only three of those ten bonds break and ALL three are about wrong views only.
(i) First there is sakkāya ditṭhi is the WRONG VIEW of a "nicca worldview." Breaking of that bond leads to the simultaneous breaking of the other two bonds.
(ii) Vicikicch $\bar{a}$ is to have doubts that Buddha discovered the true nature of this world, his Dhamma is the correct world view, and his Noble disciples can end the samsāric suffering.
(iii) Sīlabbata parāmāsa is the wrong view that end of suffering is achievable by just following a set of rituals, without understanding the broader worldview.)

4. A Sotāpanna has Sammā Dițthi or "the correct world view" and would be able to follow the Noble Path without further assistance. A Sotāpanna also knows and understands the other seven steps to get to Arahanthood. That takes place via three more stages: Sakadāgāmi, Anāgāmi, Arahant. The two primary bonds that break at the Sakadāgāmi and Anāgāmi stages are kāma rāga (craving sensory pleasures) and patigha (tendency to get upset/angry when obstacles come in the way of fulfilling such cravings.).

- The Buddha laid down a systematic way for a Sotāpanna to reach those higher goals. He first described them in the Ānāpānassati Sutta. He gave more details in the Mahā Satipatṭhāna Sutta (DN 22.) The $\bar{A} n a \bar{p} \bar{n} n a s s a t i ~ S u t t a ~(M N ~ 118) ~ h a s ~ t h e ~ f o l l o w i n g ~ v e r s e: ~ " E v a i ̀ ~ b h a ̄ v i t a ̄ ~ k h o, ~ b h i k k h a v e, ~$ ānāpānassati evaì bahulīkatā cattāro satipatṭhāne paripūreti" OR "Bhikkhus, that is how $\bar{a} n \bar{a} p a ̄ n a s s a t i, ~ d e v e l o p e d ~ a n d ~ c u l t i v a t e d, ~ f u l f i l l s ~ t h e ~ f o u r ~ f o u n d a t i o n s ~ o f ~ m i n d f u l n e s s ~(c a t t a ̄ r o ~$ satipaṭthāna)." Thus, ānāpānassati is just a brief version of satipatṭhāna.


## It is Not Easy to Remove Kāma Rāga and Get to the $\operatorname{An} \bar{a} g \bar{a} m i$ Stage

5. The question is: If a Sotāpanna KNOWS that craving worldly things hinder getting to Nibbāna, why is it hard for a Sotāpanna to lose those cravings? Why did the Buddha systematize that process to make it easier? The short answer is that even though a Sotāpanna has removed the wrong views (dittthi) about this world, wrong perceptions (sañ $\tilde{n} \bar{a}$ ) about mind-pleasing things in the world still remain intact.

- The analogy of an alcoholic can be helpful to understand the difference. To give up alcohol, first, he must come to the right view, i.e., that alcohol is bad for health. But most alcoholics get stuck at the second step of getting rid of the "good sañña " associated with drinking. He must persistently be thinking about
the bad consequences of drinking. In the same way, even though a Sotāpanna KNOWS that sensual pleasures lead to suffering, it is hard to get rid of that "good saññ"" associated with sense pleasures.
That is where $\bar{a} n \bar{a} p \bar{a} n a s s a t i ~ a n d ~ s a t i p a t!!~ h a ̄ n a ~ m e d i t a t i o n s ~ a r e ~ r e q u i r e d . ~$
- It is a good idea to read the post, "Saññā - What It Really Means" and understand the concept of saññā. Further details of the difference between ditṭhi and sañ̃n̄ā at "Vipallāsa (Ditthi, Saññ̄a, Citta) Affect Sañkhāra."

6. That is where many people get confused. Some people INCORRECTLY believe that a person needs to abstain from sensory pleasures completely to GET TO the Sotāpanna stage. Of course, one MUST refrain from extreme immoral actions seeking sensory pleasures to get to the Sotāpanna stage. But as we discussed above, kāma rāga can be removed only AFTER the Sotāpanna stage. Even then, it will take a considerable effort.

- A simple analogy is an alcoholic. There is no hope of getting rid of that habit without first "seeing" the harmful consequences of drinking. But even after "getting to the correct view," it takes considerable effort not to "have a drink" when the urge comes! An alcoholic MUST keep thinking about the adverse consequences of drinking. That is precisely what a Sotāpanna would do while engaging in $\bar{a} n \bar{a} p \bar{a} n a s s a t i / s a t i p a t t t h a ̄ n a ~ B h a ̄ v a n a ̄ . ~ I t ~ i s ~ N O T ~ a b o u t ~ b r e a t h i n g ~ i n ~ a n d ~ o u t!~ R e r e a d ~ \# 1, ~ \# 2 ~ a b o v e ~$ carefully (and read those references) if you have any doubts.
- Now let us discuss some key features of the Sotāpanna stage to dispel some more common myths.


## The Sotāpanna Stage - Per Tipiṭaka

7. Valuable information about the Sotāpanna Stage is in the "Sotāpattisamimutta," where a series of suttas from SN 55.1 through SN 55.74 provide a lot of information.

- The first one, "WebLink: suttacentral: Cakkavattirāja Sutta (SN 55.1)," states that a Sotāpanna is better off than an Emperor who rules the whole world because that Emperor is not free of rebirth in the apāyās. The four realms in the apāy $\bar{a} s$ are also named niraya (hell), animal, peta, and vinipāta asura. Furthermore, a Sotāpanna has unbreakable faith (aveccappasādena) in the Buddha, Dhamma, Sañgha and has unbreakable moral conduct (ariyakānta sīla.)
- One who gets to the Sotāpanna stage can figure that out by himself. That is in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Pathamagiñjakāvasatha Sutta (SN 55.8)." It specifically states that one would know that one is free from the four apāyās. Furthermore, one is free to declare that attainment if so desired. Many people believe one should not state such attainments. Even though one should not brag about it, the above sutta clearly shows that the Buddha allowed it. There are more such myths.


## More Myths About the Sotāpanna Stage

8. A Sotāpanna has only "seen" what Nibbāna is and knows the path but has just started. His new mindset will not allow any apāyagāmi kamma (immoral deeds that will lead to rebirth in the apāyās).

- Sarakāni was an old Brahmin who used to drink a lot. At old age, he listened to a discourse by the Buddha and attained the Sotāpanna stage. Soon afterward, he died, and the Buddha stated that he was born in a Deva loka. Some people laughed at the notion that an alcoholic could be born in a Deva loka. Buddha explained that those were ignorant of the Buddha Dhamma. That account is in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Pathamasaranānisakka Sutta (SN 55.24)." We also know that Angulimāla killed almost a thousand people and was able to attain Arahanthood!

9. Another myth is that a Sotāpanna would not crave sensory pleasures. But there were millions of Sotāpannas who got married and led normal family lives during the days of the Buddha. For example, Visākhā (or Visākā), who was the leading female lay disciple at the time, attained the Sotāpanna stage at age seven and went on to get married and have twenty plus children. She did not abstain from sex. She still
had kāma rāga since she was not an Anāgāmi. Of course, she would not have engaged in sex outside the marriage.

- There are only six types of strong kamma that will not happen by a Sotāpanna: killing mother, father, or an Arahant, injuring a Buddha, causing "sañghabheda," and following a path other than that of the Buddha. These are in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Bahudhātuka Sutta (MN 115)." So, it is a myth to say that a Sotāpanna will not break any of the five precepts. It is an Arahant who is incapable of breaking them.
- That is not to minimize the status of a Sotāpanna. A Sotāpanna would NEVER be born in an apāya.


## A Sotāpanna Understands the Pațicca Samuppāda Process

10. In the "WebLink: suttacentral: Dutiyasāriputta Sutta (SN 55.5)," the Buddha discussed the Sotāpanna stage with Ven. Sāriputta. As we discussed in the previous post, someone who has embarked on the Noble Eightfold Path is a Sotāpanna. That sutta also states how one can get to the Sotāpanna stage. Venerable Sāriputta says, "Sappurisasamisevo hi, Bhante, sotāpattiyañgaì, saddhammassavanaì sotāpattiyañgaim, yoniso manasikāro sotāpattiyañgaì, dhammānudhammappatipatti sotāpattiyanggan" $t i$ OR "Bhante, the necessary conditions are: associating with Noble Persons, listening to the true teaching, yonisomanasikāra, and practicing in line with the teaching." Here, the key point is that one cannot be exposed to the correct Dhamma unless taught by someone who has understood it first. Another is the term yoniso manasikāra (mundane translation "proper attention") meaning "to understand how various types of births (bhava and $j \bar{a} t i)$ arise via Paticca Samuppāda."

- The "WebLink: suttacentral: Pathamabhayaverūpasanta Sutta (SN 55.28)" in the same series explains yonisomanasikāra as follows: "Idha, gahapati, ariyasāvako paṭiccasamuppādaññeva sādhukamं yoniso manasi karoti-iti imasmim sati idamं hoti, imassuppādā idam uppajjati; iti imasmim asati idaì na hoti, imassa nirodhā idamं nirujjhati; yadidaì avijjāpaccayā sañkhārā, sañkhārapaccayā viññānami ...pe... evametassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa samudayo hoti." In other words, one has yonisomanasikāra when one understands Paṭicca Samuppāda.
- I have only provided a summary of the most essential facts about the Sotāpanna stage above. It is good to scan through the available English translations, even though they are not correct in some aspects. Here is the link to the first sutta in the series at Sutta Central: "WebLink: suttacentral: A Wheel-Turning Monarch (SN 55.1)."


## Summary

11. Living moral life is NECESSARY but NOT ENOUGH to get to the Sotāpanna stage. One MUST see the dangers in the rebirth process, just like an alcoholic must first see the dangers (health risks) associated with drinking.

- Many people have wrong ideas about the Sotāpanna stage. I have addressed some in this post.
- Sotāpanna Anugāmi/Sotāpanna stages are the beginning stages of the Noble Path, not the end. A Sotāpanna has understood the dangers in remaining in "this world" (rebirth process) but has to overcome kāma rāga, rūpa rāga, and arūpa rāga (that binds one to the kāma loka, rūpa loka, and arūpa loka.) But a Sotāpanna has overcome the lowest realms in the kāma loka and thus is free from MOST of the suffering in the rebirth process.
- Many people start "meditating" even before understanding "what to meditate on." Of course, if one is doing "breath meditation," there is nothing to learn. Breath meditation can be used as a "Samatha $B h \bar{a} v a n \bar{a} "$ to calm the mind. But it WILL NOT get one closer to the "end of suffering."


### 9.5.6 Yoniso Manasikāra and Paṭicca Samuppāda

November 9, 2021

To get to the Sotāpanna stage, one must understand the mechanism by which future suffering arises, i.e., Paticca Samuppāda. One first gets on the Noble Path by beginning to understand this process as a Sotāpanna Anugāmi. When that understanding takes a firm hold in mind, one gets to the Sotāpanna stage. That is not stated directly in a single sutta, but we will discuss a few suttas to clarify it.

## Four Conditions Required to Attain the Sotāpanna Stage

1. There are four conditions NECESSARY to get to the Sotāpanna stage.

In many suttā, including WebLink: suttacentral: Sotāpattiphala Sutta (SN 55.55) and WebLink: suttacentral: Dutiva Sariputta Sutta (SN 55.5), the four requirements for someone to attain the Sotāpanna stage of Nibbāna are stated: "Cattārome, bhikkhave, dhammā bhāvitā bahulīkatā sotāpattiphalasacchikiriyāya saṃvattanti. Katame cattāro? Sappurisasamsevo, saddhammassavanam, yonisomanasikāro, dhammānudhammappatipatti."
i. Association with "sappurisa (sath + purisa or "Noble friend," i.e., an Ariya)," sometimes called a "kalyāna mittā" ("kalyāna mitrā" in Sanskrit.)
ii. Listening to Dhamma discourses (while reading is enough to get to the Sotāpanna Anugāmi stage, listening is necessary to attain the Sotāpanna stage).
iii. Act with yoniso manasikāra (basic idea of anicca, dukkha, anatta, and Pațicca Samuppāda).
iv. Dhammanudhamma patipad $\bar{a}$ (following the Noble Path, which is beyond the mundane Path; see, "What is Unique in Buddha Dhamma?".

## A Noble Friend Needed to Fulfill First Two Requirements

2. To get to a destination, we need to get directions from someone who KNOWS how to get to that destination. These days, there are many people giving directions to get to Nibbāna (i.e., facts about the Noble Path.) Obviously, you cannot get to the correct destination if you follow someone who does not know the "path to Nibbāna." If someone has attained at least the Sotāpanna stage, he/she would know.

- We discussed that in detail in the post, "The Sotāpanna Stage."
- The next two requirements can be fulfilled ONLY through such a Noble friend.
- Now, you may ask: "Why do I need someone to tell me the correct path? Isn't it described in the Tipitaka?"


## Degradation of Buddha Dhamma and the Revival of that "Distorted Version"

3. We are indeed fortunate to still have the original Tipitaka as recited in the first four Buddhist Councils by Arahants. Those Arahants at the Fourth Council wrote down that Pāli Tipiṭaka. That was 2000 years ago. See, "Preservation of the Buddha Dhamma."

- However, distortion of key concepts started soon after the Fourth Buddhist Council. The main reason for that was the mundane interpretations introduced by Mahāyāna Buddhism that originated in India about 2000 years ago.
- Even though Buddhism in India faded away and disappeared at least 500 years ago, those Mahāyāna concepts took root in many other Buddhist countries, including Sri Lanka. Therefore, even though the Pāli Tipiṭaka remained intact, its translations became incorrect. For example, the Sinhala translation of the Tipitaka (Buddha Jayanti edition) has anicca and anatta translated incorrectly as impermanence and "no-self."
- When Europeans discovered Buddhism in the Asian countries, those two (and more) misinterpretations were deeply rooted in all those countries. I have given a brief account in the post, "Misinterpretation of Anicca and Anatta by Early European Scholars."
- By the time Europeans arrived, Buddhism had been in decline in those countries. Most Buddhist places of worship were in poor condition. Those European scholars and the British government helped restore many of those places. More importantly, they collected and preserved the original Pāli documents that are still in the British museum today. That is how the Pāli Tipiṭaka survived.
- The European scholars readily accepted those interpretations. Even though they were "academic scholars", they were even less familiar with the deep concepts in Buddha Dhamma. So, those "mundane interpretations" made perfect sense to them. They widely disseminated those incorrect interpretations using the printing press invented around that time.


## "Mundane Interpretations" Are Easy to Grasp

4. There is a reason for the degradation of Buddha Dhamma. Let us consider two examples of anicca as impermanence and $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p a \overline{n a s a t i}$ as breath meditation.

- It is very easy for anyone to see the "impermanent nature of things." We can easily see that anything in this world is not permanent. Especially these days, science has shown that even our Sun will be destroyed in several billion years.
- In the same way, it is easy to accept that $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p a ̄ n a s a t i$ is breath meditation. Even though the deeper meaning is to "discard immoral" and "take in morals," these days it is interpreted as "breathing in and breathing out." In addition, "watching the breath" does calm the mind, so many people are impressed by that itself.
- Even though this gradual degradation started with Mahāyāna, those concepts gradually got incorporated into Theravāda Buddhism. A turning point was Buddhaghosa's writing, especially his Visuddhimagga. For details, see, "Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga - A Focused Analysis."
- In almost all Buddhist countries, the Pāli Tipiṭaka was set aside and Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimmagga was adopted. The accepted theory was that there was no need to go through the 56 volumes of the Tipitaka. Buddhaghosa had summarized it all in a single commentary!


## Concepts in the Tipiṭaka Need to be Explained

5. Fortunately, there are three original commentaries prepared by Arahants that have survived as part of the Tipitaka: Patisambhidamagga, Petakopadesa, and Nettippakarana.

- No one had bothered to read them for hundreds of years. In fact, even if read, it is not possible to grasp those deep concepts unless explained by a Noble Person (Ariyā). Such Noble Persons are born occasionally and they revive the correct teachings. They are "jāti Sotāpannas" who had attained the Sotāpanna stage in previous lives.
- Waharaka Thero was such a jāti Sotāpanna. In his discourses, he had described how the correct meanings naturally came to him. When he grew up he was able to go through the Tipitaka, and with the help of those three original commentaries mentioned above, he was able to revive the correct interpretations. Of course, each person needs to verify that by carefully comparing his interpretations (which I provide on this website) with many other interpretations widely accepted all over the world.
- With that background, let us discuss the remaining two requirements for the Sotāpanna stage mentioned in \#1 above. Hopefully, you can see which version is correct by comparing my analysis with other current versions.

Yoniso Manasikāra - Connection to Paṭicca Samuppāda and Tilakkhaṇa
6. The third condition for the Sotāpanna stage is to have "yoniso manasikāra." Here "yoni" means "origin," "so" means "oneself," and "manasikāra" here means "with this in mind."

- The origin of future existence (bhava) and births within them (jāti) is explained in Paṭicca Samuppāda. As we have discussed, "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" means to do "unwise actions due to ignorance of the Noble Truths." That ALWAYS ends with "bhava paccayā jāti, jāti paccayā jarā, maraṇa, soka-parideva-dukkha-domanassupāyasā sambhavan'ti" or the "whole mass suffering."
- To put it another way, one's future births (and associated suffering or happiness) are according to one's actions. Births in the "good realms" lead to mostly happiness and births in "bad realms" lead to suffering. However, the problem is that MOST births are in the "bad realms." At a deeper level, the reason for that is the tendency to act with "ayoniso manasikāra" the OPPOSITE of "yoniso manasikāra."

7. The Vibhangapakarana (BJ edition Book 2, p. 234) explains ayoniso manasikāra as follows: "Tattha katamo ayoniso manasikāro? Anicce "niccan"ti ayoniso manasikāro, dukkhe "sukhan"ti ayoniso manasikāro, anattani "attā"ti ayoniso manasikāro, asubhe "subhan"ti ayoniso manasikāro, saccavippațikulena vā cittassa āvatṭanā anāvaṭtanā ābhogo samannāhāro manasikāro-ayam vuccati "ayoniso manasikāro".

- At Sutta Central, you can find it toward the end of section "3. Tikaniddesa" at"WebLink: suttacentral: Khuddakavatthuvibhañga (KN vb 17)"
- In many English translations, ayoniso manasikāra is "improper attention." See, for example, the "WebLink: suttacentral: English Translation of Mahāli Sutta (AN 10.47)" at Sutta Central.
- However, the above verse says:"ayoniso manasikāra is to consider anicca as nicca, dukkha as sukha, and anatta as atta."
- To state that briefly, if one believes that things in this world can provide happiness in the long run, then one acts with ayoniso manasikāra. To act with yoniso manasikāra is to see the unfruitfulness of these struggles to attain something that is not attainable, and thus to work diligently towards at least the Sotāpanna stage because this life is so short.
- As we have discussed in many posts, this world is of anicca, dukkha, anatta nature. However, an average human (who has not understood Buddha Dhamma) perceives this world to be nicca, sukha, atta nature. See, "Basic Framework of Buddha Dhamma."


## Critical Inferences

8. The discussion in \#6 and \#7 points to the following.

Now it is clear that the third requirement is a natural extension to the first two requirements. Without a Noble friend, it is not possible to fulfill the third requirement, i.e., to understand what is meant by yoniso manasikāra because that requires an understanding of anicca, dukkha, anatta (Tilakkhaṇa.)

- It also confirms the value of the original three commentaries that we discussed in \#5 above. The critical verse from Vibhangapakarana in \#7 clarifies yoniso manasikāra.
- But an understanding of that verse REQUIRES comprehension of the true meanings of anicca, dukkha, anatta.
- In recent times, those meanings have become clear due to our kalyāna mittā, Waharaka Thero. He was able to provide a consistent picture based on the Tipitaka simply because he was born a jāti Sotāpanna.
- We will discuss the fourth requirement, dhammānudhammappaṭipatti, and its connection to Patticca Samuppāda in the next post.

Previous posts in this subsection at, "Paticca Samuppāda, Tilakkhana, Four Noble Truths."

### 9.5.7 Dhamma - Different Meanings Depending on the Context

November 16, 2021
Dhamma is a Pāli word that gives (seemingly) different meanings depending on the context. But those meanings are based on the root "to bear."

## Introduction

1. In the previous post, "Yoniso Manasikāra and Paticca Samuppāda," we discussed the four requirements for someone to attain the Sotāpanna stage There we discussed the first three requirements. The fourth is dhammānudhammappatipatti.

- The Pāli word dhammānudhammappaṭipatti is the combination of three words: dhamma, anudhamma, and patipatti.
- Therefore, we need to discuss the words "dhammä" and "anudhamma." As we will see, "dhamma" can have different meanings based on the context.
- We have many examples in English where the same word gives different meanings based on the context. For example, the term "right" conveys unrelated things in "turn right" and "you are right."
- That is why it is dangerous to translate Pāli texts word-by-word, as commonly done these days. I have pointed out such issues with specific examples.


## The Meaning of "Dhamma"

2. "Dhamma" means "to bear." This direct meaning is in verse, "manañca paṭicca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviññānaṃ."

- "Vipāka-bearing kammic energy" of a kamma stays in viññāna dhātu as "kamma bija" or "dhamma."
- Just like a $r \bar{u} p a$ can bring in a sensory input via the five physical senses, dhammā can bring a sensory input (memory of a previous kamma) directly to the mind.
- While the five types of rūpa (vanṇa, sadda, gandha, rasa, photthabba) belong to the "material world" made of suddhatthaka, "dhammā" are below the suddhatthaka stage. As we know, a suddhatthaka is the smallest unit of matter in Buddha Dhamma (comparable to an atom or an elementary particle in modern science. However, a suddhatthaka is even smaller.)
- Unlike the other five types of rūpa, dhammā cannot be seen (anidassana) or touched/detected even with most sensitive instruments (appatigha) and detectable only with the mind (dhammāyatanapariyāpannaì).
- That is explained in the last verse of "WebLink: suttacentral: Abhidhamma Ds 2.3.1. Tikanikkhepa" in Dhammasañgaṇī as, "yañca rūpai் anidassanaì appaṭighaì dhammāyatanapariyāpannaï; asañkhatā ca dhātu-ime dhammā anidassana appattighā."
- Therefore, those $\boldsymbol{d h a m m a} \boldsymbol{a}$ bear the fruits of kamma! They can bring vipāka in the future.

3. All such dhammā generally appear in two forms: dhamm $\bar{a}$ and $a d h a m m \bar{a}$.

- The word dhammā generally refers to "good dhammā." Those that arise due to "bad kamma" are "adhammā."
- "WebLink: suttacentral: Dhamma Sutta (AN 10.182)" provides a direct explanation. "Killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, divisive, harsh, or idle speech, greed, ill will, and wrong view. Those ten are adhammā. Abstaining from such actions (and having the opposite mindset generating "good javana power") lead to dhammā.
－However，both dhamm $\bar{a}$ and adhamm $\bar{a}$ belong to the dhamm $\bar{a}$ category．It is just that adhamm $\bar{a}$ ＂bear the fruits of bad kamma＂and dhammā＂bear the fruits of good kamma．＂
－The word＂smell＂indicates all types of odors，but if someone says＂it smells，＂that means it is a＂bad odor．＂That is the accepted usage．In the same way，dhammā usually means the＂good type．＂


## Anudhamma at the Basic Level

4．Each of the ten types of dhamma falls into four categories［see （1）（2）（3）（4）$=$ dhamma／（1）（2）（3）（4）$=\mathrm{adhamma}$ ］．For example，concerning（1）killing other living beings，it is not only（1）abstaining from killing that counts as dhamma．［Ten types of dhammā ：pāṇātipātā，adinnādāna， kāmesumicchācārā，musāvāda，pisuṇavācā，parusāvācā，samphappalāpa，abhijjha，vyāpāda，micchā ditṭhi］［pānātip $\bar{a} t \bar{a} \boldsymbol{a}$ ：（pānana呼吸＋atipāta殺），Kill 殺生（kill one who is breathing 殺有呼吸者）。］［pāna： ［m．］life ；breath；a living being．］［atipāta ：［m．］slaying；killing．］［kāmesumicchācārā ：（＝kāmesu micchā carati），邪淫］
－（2）Not helping others in killings，（3）not encouraging others to kill，and（4）not praising killings by others also count as＂good deeds＂or dhamma．Those are the anudhamma．
－In the same way，while（1）killing is the worst adhamma in that category，（2）helping others to kill， （3）encouraging others to kill，and（4）praising killings by others also count as evil deeds and will have dire kammic consequences．

## Above Usage is the Basic Form－Completes the Mundane Eightfold Path

5．Abstaining from immoral deeds and cultivating moral acts is NECESSARY to facilitate the mundane eightfold path．That is to bear＂moral dhamma＂and NOT to bear＂immoral adhamma．＂
－Cultivation of moral dhamma will help remove the ten types of micchā dittthi．
－Getting to that stage is NECESSARY to comprehend the deeper dhamma needed to get to the Sotāpanna and higher levels of Nibbāna．
－Of course，even after that，it is necessary to hear the deeper dhamma（Four Noble Truths／Tilakkhana／Paticca Samuppāda）from a Noble Person．As we have discussed，the first two conditions pertain to that．

## Mundane Eightfold Path Has Similarities with Other Religions

6．From \＃3 above，we can see that the mundane path has some common features with other world religions． However，even there，there are some drastic differences．
－For example，other religions（except some versions of Hinduism）do not see a problem with killing animals．
－All other religions teach a permanent heavenly existence（or permanent existence in Hell）．That is one of the 10 types of wrong views（micchā ditthi）in \＃5 above．

## What Is the Deeper Buddha Dhamma？

7．As we can see，dhammā arise due to＂good or bad kamma．＂Good kamma lead to good vipāka and bad kamma lead to bad vipāka．However，both types are associated with＂this world．＂
－In contrast，＂Buddha Dhamma＂is＂bhava uddha dhamma．＂It mainly refers to the teachings of the Buddha that lead to Nibbāna，i．e．，the results（vipāka）of actions taken according to Buddha Dhamma lead to＂stopping of future existence／rebirths．＂

- The word Buddha comes from "bhava" + "uddha"; here, "bhava" means "existence (in the 31 realms)" and " $u d d h a$ " means "removal." Therefore, a Buddha figures out how to stop the rebirth process and thus end future suffering.
- Now the question is: What kind of "deeper dhamma" would lead to the stopping of the rebirth process and the permanent elimination of future suffering?


## Paticca Samuppāda Is Buddha Dhamma!

8. The "WebLink: suttacentral: Mahāhatthipadopama Sutta (MN 28)" ends with the statement, "Yō Paṭiccasamuppādam passati, so Dhammam passati; yo Dhammaì passati so paṭiccasamuppādamं passatī"ti." That means, "One who sees patticca samuppāda sees the Dhamma; one who sees the Dhamma sees pațicca samuppāda." To understand Buddha Dhamma, one needs to know how future suffering arises via the Paticca Samuppāda process.

- In other words, Pațicca Samuppāda is the same as Buddha Dhamma. To be precise, Akusala-mūla Paticca Samuppāda explains how existences and rebirths arise due to the accumulation of "lokiya dhamma" or "good/bad dhamma" that we discussed in \#2 and \#3 above. As we know, those Paticca Samuppāda processes start with "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra," i.e., actions based on avijjā or ignorance of the Four Noble Truths. Thus, comprehension of Paticca Samuppāda will lead to the stopping of such processes. That is the "lokuttara dhamma" or the deeper version.
- Therefore, in many cases, "dhamma" (without the "long a") refers to either version of Buddha Dhamma.
- For example, "Dhammo ha ve rakkhati dhammacārï̀" means, "Dhamma will protect those who follow (Buddha) Dhamma."


## Anudhamma at the Deeper Level - Tilakkhana

9. As we have already discussed, Paticca Samuppāda is closely related to Tilakkhaṇa (anicca, dukkha, anatta.) Those are the three characteristics of this suffering-filled world (in the rebirth process.)

- We will discuss that in detail, with sutta references, in the next post.


## Dhammānudhamma Paṭipatti - Connection to Paṭicca Samuppāda/Tilakkhaṇa

November 21, 2021
Dhammānudhamma Patipatti Leads one to Nibbāna.

## What Is Dhammānudhamma Paṭipatti?

1. The Pāli word dhammānudhammappaṭipatti (dhamma anudhamma patipatti) is the combination of three words: dhamma, anudhamma, and paṭipatti. In the previous post, we did an overview: "Dhamma Different Meanings Depending on the Context."
i. Dhamma here is Buddha Dhamma. The "WebLink: suttacentral: Mahāhatthipadopama Sutta (MN 28)" ends with the statement, "Yō Pațiccasamuppādam passati, so Dhammam passati; yo Dhammaí passati so pațiccasamuppādaì passatī"ti." That means, "One who sees paṭicca samuppāda sees the Dhamma; one who sees the Dhamma sees paṭicca samuppāda." To understand Buddha Dhamma, one needs to know how future suffering arises via the Paṭicca Samuppāda process.
ii. We discussed "anudhamma" briefly in the previous post. Those are other aspects (one could say, subcategories) that fall under dhamma. There are four suttas that clarify "anudhamma" at a deeper
level. They are "WebLink: suttacentral: Anudhamma Sutta (SN 22.39)" through "WebLink: suttacentral: Catutthaanudhamma Sutta (SN 22. 42)" We will discuss them below. Simply stated, "anudhamma" means "according to Dhamma" or "according to Paṭicca Samuppāda."
iii. Patipatti is conduct or practice.

Therefore, the literal translation of dhammānudhammappatipatti is "to live according to dhamma and anudhamma."

## Requirements for the Sotāpanna Stage

2. We listed the four requirements for someone to attain the Sotāpanna stage in a previous post, "Yoniso Manasikāra and Paticca Samuppāda." There we discussed the first three requirements.

- The first two requirements reflect that one must hear the "previously unknown teachings of the Buddha" from a Buddha or a true disciple of a Buddha who has understood those teachings. The framework of Buddha Dhamma can be stated in three inter-related ways: Four Noble Truths, Paṭicca Samuppāda, Tilakkhaṇa.
- The third condition (yoniso manasikāra) is to UNDERSTAND those concepts, i.e., how the sufferingfilled rebirth process continues because the true nature of this world is not understood.
- The fourth condition (dhammānudhammappațipatti) is where that understanding becomes established permanently in mind. That happens when it becomes clear without a doubt that the word of 31 realms has the three characteristics of anicca, dukkha, anatta, and thus it is not possible to stop future suffering until stopping of the rebirth process.


## Anudhamma - At Deeper Level

3. As we discussed in the previous post, "anudhamma" - at the primary level - means "moral living." After comprehending the deeper Dhamma, one would realize that just moral living is not enough to stop suffering in future lives.

- Deeper level anudhammā are concepts related to Paṭicca Samuppāda. Tilakkhaña (anicca, dukkha, anatta) are those anudhammā.
- It is important to note that "moral living" is based on mundane versions of alobha, adosa, and amoha have "hidden ignorance." That is ignorance of Tilakkhana.

4. Anudhamma at the deeper level is discussed in a series of four suttas, as mentioned in \#1 above. Following is the English translation of the "Anudhamma Sutta (SN 22.39)":

- "A bhikkhu lives by the Dhamma (Dhammānudhammappatipadā), after he understands what is meant by Dhamma (i.e., Paticca Samuppāda). Then he lives without attaching (nibbidābahulo) to rūpa, vedanā, sañ̃̄̄, sañkhāra, viññāna. He fully understands the real nature of rūpa, vedanā, saññā, sañkhāra, viññāna and thus he is freed from rebirth, aging, and death; he is free from sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure, and despair; he is free from all suffering (through future rebirths)."
- The Päli verse is in Ref. 1 below.
- The next three suttas in that series explain why a bhikkhu would not attach to (or crave) anything in this world (rūpa, vedanā, saññā, sañkhāra, viññāna)


## Connection to Tilakkhana

5. The REASON why someone would not attach to (or crave) rūpa, vedanā, sañ̃̄̄ $\bar{a}$, sañkh $\bar{a} r a$, viñ̃ñana is he has understood that they all have anicca, dukkha, anatta nature! That is explicitly stated in the three suttas of Ref. 2 , Ref. 3, and Ref. 4 below.

- "WebLink: suttacentral: Dutiva Anudhamma Sutta (SN 22.41)" states that such a bhikkhu would have seen the anicca nature of rūpa, vedanā, sañ̃̄̄a, sañkhāra, viññāna (the five aggregates or pañcakkhandha.)
- "WebLink: suttacentral: Tatiya Anudhamma Sutta (SN 22.42)" states that such a bhikkhu would have seen the dukkha nature of $r \bar{u} p a$, vedanā, sañ̃̄ $\bar{a}$, sañkhāra, viññāna (the five aggregates or pañcakkhandha.)
- "WebLink: suttacentral: Catuttha Anudhamma Sutta (SN 22.43)" states that such a bhikkhu would have seen the anatta nature of rūpa, vedanā, sañ̃̄̄a, sañkhāra, viññāna (the five aggregates or pañcakkhandha.)


## Connection to the First Discourse - Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta

6. We note that the Buddha is referring to the five aggregates (pañcakkhandha) above.

- Attaching to pañcakkhandha is pañcupādānakkhandha (pañca upādāna khandha). That is the root cause of future suffering.
- One would lose the craving for things in this world when he sees the dangers of such desires. As we have discussed, "this world" means $r \bar{u} p a$ in this world and our mental impressions of them (vedan $\bar{a}$, sañña $\bar{a}$, sañkhāra, viññāṇa.) That is pañcupādānakkhandha.
- We have discussed the fact that the Buddha summarized suffering as "saṃkhittena pañcupādānakkhandhā dukkhā." See, "Essence of Buddhism - In the First Sutta."
- The main task in studying Buddha Dhamma is to understand the truth of the above statement. There are many ways to tackle that.


## Different Approaches

7. The puredhamma.net website is tailored to provide that understanding. I have presented it in several ways.

The most recent approach started with the section, "Basic Framework of Buddha Dhamma." Then we proceeded to the next step: "Paticca Samuppāda, Tilakkhana, Four Noble Truths." This current post is in the second section.

- In those sections, we discussed Tilakkhaṇa (anicca, dukkha, anatta) or three characteristics of this world. We can summarize them as follows: Anicca means our expectation to get rid of suffering cannot be achieved within this world. Dukkha means what we perceive to be desirable in this world leads to suffering. Anatta means "therefore, any efforts to get rid of suffering would be in vain."
- Ignorance of Tilakkhaṇa (avijjā) leads to unwise actions via sañkhāra. In an 11-step process that leads to future births and, thus, the continuation of suffering. That process is Paticca Samuppāda. It describes how our efforts (sañkhāra) based on avijijā WILL INEVITABLY lead to rebirth among the 31 realms. While some of those existences are mostly suffering-free, they are only temporary, AND the probability of such "good births" is very low. Most rebirths are in the suffering-filled four lowest realms (apāyās.)


## Dhammānudhamma Patipatti Leads to Nibbāna

8. The "WebLink: suttacentral: Nalakalāpī Sutta (SN 12.67)" has the following verse at the end (see Ref. 5 below): "If a bhikkhu is practicing for the purpose of release from aging-and-death via losing attachment (virāgāya) and cessation (nirodhāya), he can be called a bhikkhu who is practicing in accordance with the Dhamma (dhammānudhammappatipanno). If through such practice a bhikkhu has lost attachment (virägāya) and attained cessation (nirodhāya), he can be called a bhikkhu who has attained Nibbāna in this very life.."

## References

1. The "WebLink: suttacentral: Anudhamma Sutta (SN 22.39)" states:
"Dhammānudhammappațipannassa, bhikkhave, bhikkhuno ayam anudhammo hoti yaì rūpe nibbidābahulo vihareyya, vedanāya nibbidābahulo vihareyya, sañ̃n̄aya nibbidābahulo vihareyya, sañkhāresu nibbidābahulo vihareyya, viñ̃n̄ạe nibbidābahulo vihareyya. Yo rūpe nibbidābahulo viharanto, vedanāya ... sañ̃n̄āya ... saǹkhāresu nibbidābahulo viharanto, viññāne nibbidābahulo viharanto rūpai் parijānāti, vedanai் ... saññai் ... sañkhāre ... viññānaím parijānāti, so rūpaì parijānam், vedanaì ... saññai் ... sañkhāre ... viññānamं parijānai் parimuccati rūpamhā, parimuccati vedanāya, parimuccati saññāya, parimuccati sañkhārehi, parimuccati viññānamhā, parimuccati jātiyā jarāmaranena sokehi paridevehi dukkhehi domanassehi upāyāsehi, parimuccati dukkhasmāti vadāmı̄"ti.
2. The "WebLink: suttacentral: Dutiva Anudhamma Sutta (SN 22.40)" states: "Dhammānudhammappatipannassa, bhikkhave, bhikkhuno ayam anudhammo hoti yaì rūpe aniccānupassī vihareyya ...pe (vedanāya ... saññāya ... sañkhāresu...viñnāṇe aniccānupassī) ... parimuccati dukkhasmāti vadāmū"ti.
3. The "WebLink: suttacentral: Tatiya Anudhamma Sutta (SN 22.41)" states: "Dhammānudhammappațipannassa, bhikkhave, bhikkhuno ayam anudhammo hoti yaí rūpe dukkhānupassī vihareyya ...pe (vedanāya ... saññāya ... sañkhāresu...viññāṇe dukkhānupassī)... parimuccati dukkhasmāti vadāmū"ti.
4. The "WebLink: suttacentral: Catuttha Anudhamma Sutta (SN 22.42)" states (full version as in Ref. 1): "Dhammānudhammappațipannassa, bhikkhave, bhikkhuno ayam anudhammo hoti yaì rūpe anattānupassī vihareyya, vedanāya ... saññāya ... sañkhāresu ... viñnāṇe anattānupassī vihareyya. Yo rūpe anattānupassī viharanto ...pe... rūpaì parijānāti, vedanaì ... saññà் ... sañkhāre ...
 parimuccati rūpamhā, parimuccati vedanāya, parimuccati sañ̃̄āya, parimuccati sañkhārehi, parimuccati viññānamhā, parimuccati jātiyā jarāmaraṇena sokehi paridevehi dukkhehi domanassehi upāyāsehi, parimuccati dukkhasmāti vadāmū"ti.
5. The verse from the "WebLink: suttacentral: Nalakalāp̄̄ Sutta (SN 12.67)" : "Jarāmaraṇassa ce, $\bar{a} v u s o, ~ b h i k k h u ~ n i b b i d a ̄ y a ~ v i r a ̄ g a ̄ y a ~ n i r o d h a ̄ y a ~ d h a m m a i ̀ ~ d e s e t i, ~ d h a m m a k a t h i k o ~ b h i k k h u ̄ t i ~$ alaìvacanāya. Jarāmaraṇassa ce, āvuso, bhikkhu nibbidāya virāgāya nirodhāya paṭipanno hoti, dhammānudhammappațipanno bhikkhūti alaìvacanāya. Jarāmaraṇassa ce, āvuso, bhikkhu nibbidā virāgā nirodhā anupādā vimutto hoti, diṭṭhadhammanibbānappatto bhikkhūti alaìvacanāya."
6. I have discussed only a few suttā pertaining to this subject. Some other relevant suttā are: SN 12.16, 12.67; SN 22.115, 22.116; SN 35.155; SN 51.10; SN 55.25; Ud 6.1; MN 113; AN 4.6, 4.7, 4.97; AN 7.68; AN 8.25, 8.26, 8.62, 8.70, 8.78, 8.82, AN 10.83, DN 16, DN 29.

### 9.6 Understanding the Terms in Paṭicca Samuppāda

January 6, 2021<br>Distortion of Pāli Keywords in Paticca Samuppāda<br>Sañkhāra - Many Meanings<br>Sañkhāra - Should Not be Translated as a Single Word<br>Kamma and Sañkhāra, Cetanā and Sañcetanā<br>Kusala-Mūla Sañkhāra Are Needed to Attain Nibbāna<br>Rebirths Take Place According to Abhisañkhāra<br>Viññāna - Two Critical Meanings<br>Abhisañkhāra Lead to Kamma Viññāna<br>Two Types of Kamma Viññān̄a<br>Summary of Key Concepts About Viñ̃nāna and Sañkhāra<br>Anidassana, Appatigha Rūpa Due to Anidassana Viññān̄a<br>Memory, Dhammā, and Viññāna Dhātu<br>Critical Influence of Wrong Views on Akusala Citta<br>Near-Death Experiences (NDE): Brain Is Not the Mind<br>Gandhabba (Mental Body) Separating from Physical Body in Jhāna<br>Where Are Memories Stored? - Viññāna Dhātu<br>Citta Vithi - Fundamental Sensory Unit<br>Does any Object (Rūpa) Last only 17 Thought Moments?<br>Phassa (Contact) - Contact With Pasāda Rūpa<br>Arising of the Five Aggregates With an Ārammana

### 9.6.1 Distortion of Pāli Keywords in Paṭicca Samuppāda

## November 29, 2021; revised October 16, 2022

Distortion of Pāli keywords in Paṭicca Samuppāda is quite common in current English translations. I will analyze two critical suttas to make that clear.

## First Two Suttas in Udāna

1. The suttas in the Udāna section are the "joyful utterances" of the Buddha and many of his disciples. Let us look at the first two suttas in Udāna. They describe how the Buddha comprehended anuloma and patiloma Paticca Samuppāda during the night of the Enlightenment. First, I will reproduce the English translations of the two suttas verbatim. [patiloma : [adj.] reverse; opposite; contrary.]

The following verse is from the first sutta. The Pāli version of the corresponding verses is in Ref. 1 :
"In the first part of the night, he reflected on dependent origination in forwarding order:
When this exists, that is, due to the arising of this, that arises. That is: Ignorance is a condition for choices. Choices are a condition for consciousness. Consciousness is a condition for name and form. Name and form are conditions for the six sense fields. The six sense fields are conditions for contact. Contact is a condition for feeling. The feeling is a condition for craving. Craving is a condition for grasping. Grasping is a condition
for continued existence. Continued existence is a condition for rebirth. Rebirth is a condition for old age and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress to come to be. That is how this entire mass of suffering originates."

- The complete English translation: "WebLink: suttacentral: Upon Awakening (1st) by Sujato (KN Ud 1.1)." The second translation is almost the same: "WebLink: suttacentral: The First Discourse about the Awakening Tree by Anandajoti (KN Ud 1.1)."

2. The following verse is from the second sutta. The Pāli version of the corresponding verses is in Ref. 2 :
'In the second part of the night, he reflected on dependent origination in reverse order:
When this doesn't exist, that is not; due to the cessation of this, that ceases. That is: When ignorance ceases, choices cease. When choices cease, consciousness ceases. When consciousness ceases, name and form cease. When name and form cease, the six sense fields cease. When the six sense fields cease, contact ceases. When contact ceases, feeling ceases. When feeling ceases, craving ceases. When craving ceases, grasping ceases. When grasping ceases, continued existence ceases. When continued existence ceases, rebirth ceases. When rebirth ceases, old age and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress cease. That is how this entire mass of suffering ceases."

The complete English translation: "WebLink: suttacentral: Upon Awakening (2nd) by Sujato (KN Ud 1.2)." The second translation there is almost the same: "WebLink: suttacentral: The Second Discourse about the Awakening Tree by Anandajoti (KN Ud1.2)."

## Overview of the Two Suttas

3. Those two suttas summarize the key findings of the Buddha upon his Enlightenment.

- The first sutta describes how future suffering arises via future rebirths. It all starts with the step, "avijja paccayā sañkhārā."
- The second sutta explains that removing ignorance from a mind prevents future rebirths.

4. Both English translations of the second sutta are blatantly incorrect. Buddha's mind became free of ignorance ( $a v i j j \bar{a}$ ) upon Enlightenment that night. Does that mean he stopped all the subsequent steps as stated in the translation of \#2 above?

- If so, he would not have generated any sañkhāra from the moment of attaining Enlightenment (Buddhahood.) Vedanā and sañ̃n̄̄are in ALL types of sañkhāra. Does that mean he would not feel anything or be unable to perceive and identify anything?
- The literal word-by-word translation is blatantly wrong for all the steps in the second sutta.
- The cessation of those steps would also hold for any Arahant since they have no trace of avijj $\bar{a}$ left in their minds!


## Insane Discussions in Discussion Forums

5. There is a recent discussion at Dhamma Wheel: "WebLink: dhammawheel.com: Do Arhats experience contact with their sixfold sense media? What about vedanā??" It is a clear example of the confusion caused by such translations. The participants are understandably confused by the above translation of the second sutta in \#2.

- The translation in \#2, without a doubt, says that when avijjā is not there, choices (sañkhāra), consciousness, name and form, six sense fields, contact (with the sense fields), feeling, craving, grasping (upādāna), continued existence (bhava), rebirth, and the entire mass of suffering ceases.
- We all agree that the Buddha and Arahants do not have even a trace of avijjā (ignorance about the Four Noble Truths) left.
- Then, according to the translations in \#2 above, they would not generate any more sañkhāra. They do not experience the six sensory facilities (i.e., don't hear, taste, smell, touch, or think) and will not feel anything. That means they would essentially not be living!
- On the contrary, we know that the Buddha lived for 45 years after Enlightenment. He experienced all six sensory faculties, used them optimally, and had the best mind. He could recall any event in the past as far as he desired. But he also felt all types of vedana $\bar{a}$, including bodily dukkha vedan $\bar{a}$ (he had back problems and once was injured by Devadatta)

6. So, where is the problem? Is that second sutta wrong?

- Both suttas are perfectly fine. Such problems arise when translators start translating Pāli suttas word-by-word without paying attention - - or not understanding the basic concepts in Buddha Dhamma.
- As I have repeatedly emphasized, each Pāli word (especially in deep suttas) needs to be handled in the context of the discussed issue. We run into similar situations, even in English. The word "park" means two different things in the same sentence, "She will park the car so we can walk in the park."


## Sutta Interpretation - Uddesa, Niddesa, Paṭiniddesa

7. The steps in Patticca Samuppāda (and those in the reverse or the Pațiloma Pațicca Samuppāda) are in the "utterance (uddesa)" form. That is to recite the 11 steps.

- Those steps need explanations in either the niddesa (brief descriptions) or the patiniddesa (detailed explanations.) Details at "Sutta Interpretation - Uddesa, Niddesa, Patiniddesa."
- There are many verses like that in the Tipiṭaka. Another is "Ye dhammā hetuppabhavā, Tesaì hetum் tathāgato āha; Tesañca yo nirodho, Evainvād̄̄ mahāsamaṇo." Upatissa (Ven. Sāriputta before becoming a bhikkhu) attained the Sotāpanna stage just by hearing the "uddesa version." Of course, he was the chief disciple of the Buddha and had the sharpest mind next to the Buddha.
- For a few other people at the time of the Buddha, the niddesa version would have been enough to understand the meaning of that verse.

8. However, for most people, that verse needs to be explained in detail, i.e., the patiniddēsa version is required. Most current English translations provide word-by-word translations of that "uddēsa version" without any explanation. That can have disastrous outcomes, as illustrated by the translation of the second sutta in \#2 above.

The following chart illustrates the problem I am trying to highlight. The first column shows the "uddesa version" of the sutta in the Tipitaka. The Sutta Central "word-by-word translation" of that uddesa version is in column 2, which is incorrect.

## Download pdf: "WebLink: PDF Download: Paticca Samuppāda Figure"

## Niddesa and Paṭiniddesa Versions of Some Steps in Paṭicca Samuppāda

9. I have explained those 11 steps in Pațicca Samuppāda in many posts. Below I will briefly state the correct interpretations. It is impossible to discuss even a single term with a single essay.

- First, sañkhāra in the step "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" refers to "abhisañkhāra." "WebLink: suttacentral: Paticcasamuppāda Vibhañga (Abhidhamma Vb 6))" explains the step "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" as, "Tattha katame avijjā paccayā sañkhārā? Puñn̄ābhisañkhāro, apuññābhisañkhāro, $\bar{a} n e n ̃ j a ̄ b h i s a n ̃ k h a ̄ r o . " ~ T r a n s l a t e d: ~ " W h a t ~ i s ~ m e a n t ~ b y ~ ' a v i j j a ̄ ~ p a c c a y a ̄ ~ s a n ̃ k h a ̄ r a ̄ ? ? ' ~ T h a t ~ m e a n s ~$ Puññābhisañkhāra, apuññābhisañkhāra, āneñjäbhisañkhāra." For details, see "Sañkhāra - What It Really Means."
- Abhisañkhāra leads to the cultivation of "kamma viññāna," which are different from cakkhu viññāṇa, sota viññāna, etc. The latter are the six sensory fields, which are "vipāka viññāna."
- Therefore, an Arahant would have the six sensory fields intact (contrary to the translation in \#2 above) but would not generate kamma viññāna. See, "Viññāna - What It Really Means."
- Nāmarūpa in the step "viññ̄ṇa paccayā nāmarūpa" is a bit harder to explain. See: "Kamma Viññāna and Nāmarūpa Pariccheda Ñāna." I may get to address all these terms again, but let us finish our overview.

10. In the next step, "salāyatana" does not refer to the "six sense fields" but only when those sensory fields (indriya) are used as "āyatana." For example, an Arahant would have "cakkhu indriya," i.e., he can see just like anyone else. But an Arahant would not use eyes for pleasure-seeking, and thus it will not become "cakkhu āyatana" (or "cakkhāyatana.") See, "How Do Sense Faculties Become Internal Āyatana?"

The above becomes clear when we look at the next step, "saḷāyatana paccayā phasso." Here, "phassa" means "samphassa." The contact between cakkhu and rūpa is "phassa," and that leads to "seeing" or "cakkhu viññāna." Details at "Indriya Make Phassa and Āyatana Make Samphassa."

- A special kind of "phassa" (samphassa) comes into play JUST AFTER that "seeing" or "cakkhu viññāna." As I explained in that post, "samphassa" means "contact of the mind with lobha, dosa, moha (defilements in mind called anusaya.)" That will happen ONLY IF one gets attached to that sight. Such "samphassa" then leads to "samphassa-jā-vedanā." That is a type of vedanā made up by a defiled mind. Therefore, the niddesa version of "phassa paccay $\bar{a}$ vedan $\bar{a} "$ is "samphassa paccay $\bar{a}$ samphassa-jā-vedanā."
- It is samphassa-jā-vedanā that leads to taṇhā in the step "vedanā paccayā taṇhā." Therefore, not all vedana $\bar{a}$ lead to taṇh $\bar{a}$. It is only those samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedana $\bar{a}$ that lead to tanhh $\bar{a}$.


## Correct Explanation of the Second Sutta

11. Now, one should get at least an idea of the real meaning of the second sutta.

- A living Arahant would not generate abhisañkhāra (which involves lobha, dosa, and moha to various degrees.) But an Arahant can think, speak, and do bodily actions. Those involve mano, vacī, and kāya sañkhāra. But they will not become abhisañkhāra!
- Living Arahants can see, hear, etc., as anyone else. Thus, they will have all six sensory faculties. But they will not use them seeking sensory pleasures, i.e., they will not become "āyatana."
- Each sensory event will have vedanā cetasika. That means an Arahant can "feel" just like anyone else. But there will be no "samphassa-jā-vedana $\bar{a}$."
- Of course, since there is no tanhhā, the rest of the steps will not materialize, i.e., there will be no upādāna, bhava, or $j \bar{a} t i$ (fiture rebirths.)

12. Any rebirth ( $j \bar{a} t i$ ) leads to "old age and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress," as stated in \#1. Since an Arahant would not be reborn, all such suffering would not arise. That is the "parinibbāna" (or "full Nibbāna") reached by an Arahant at the death of the physical body.

- However, focusing on "ending rebirths" is not advisable at the beginning of the Path. If a child thinks about getting a Ph D. in nuclear physics, she will be quickly discouraged. She must first go through primary and secondary schools. One's first goal should be the Sotāpanna stage; even then, one must first learn the basic concepts. See, "Is It Necessary for a Buddhist to Eliminate Sensual Desires?" Still, it is a good idea to have the "big picture" laid out by the Buddha (and the ultimate goal of Nibbāna) in the back of the mind.


## Summary

13. We can reach two critical conclusions.
i. Paṭicca Samuppāda IS Buddha Dhamma. Simply stating the 11 steps is useless. A detailed explanation of each step is necessary.
ii. There is danger in translating Pāli verses word-by-word without understanding their meanings which depend on the context.

- It is sad to go through discussions in various "Buddhist discussion forums" to"see how many people struggle to figure out the true meanings/concepts in multiple suttas. But they run into problems because most translations are wrong, and there are apparent contradictions.
- This "mindless word-by-word translation process" has been going on for years. Just read old posts at Dhamma Wheel. Many topics have been repeatedly discussed, citing the identical wrong translations! But those translations are not consistent with other translations (by even the same author) because the translators do not understand the meanings of keywords in the context of some suttas. Many words have different meanings depending on the context. For example, "viñ̃̃āna" DOES NOT mean the same thing everywhere! That is the problem. See my recent post, "Dhamma - Different Meanings Depending on the Context."
- It is time for those translators to come to their senses and learn the genuine and pure Buddha Dhamma and not continue cranking out meaningless translations of highly-condensed suttā!


## References

1. Relevant verse from "WebLink: suttacentral: Pathamabodhi Sutta (KN Ud 1.1)":
"Atha kho bhagavā tassa sattāhassa accayena tamhā samādhimhā vuṭthahitvā rattiyā paṭhamaì yāmaì pațiccasamuppādaín anulomai் sādhukai் manasākāsi:

Iti imasmim sati idaì hoti, imassuppādā idamं uppajjati, yadidai்-avijjā paccayā sañkhārā, sañkhāra paccayā viññānaim, viñn̄āna paccayā nāmarūpaì, nāmarūpa paccayā salāyatanaí, salāyatana paccayā phasso, phassa paccayā vedanā, vedanā paccayā taṇhā, taṇhā paccayā upādānamं, upādāna paccayā bhavo, bhava paccayā jāti, jāti paccayā jarāmaraṇam sokaparidevadukkhadomanassupāyāsā sambhavanti. Evametassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa samudayo hotī"ti."
2. Relevant verse from "WebLink: suttacentral: Dutivabodhi Sutta (KN Ud 1.2)"
""tha kho bhagavā tassa sattāhassa accayena tamhā samādhimhā vuṭthahitvā rattiyā majjhimaì yāmà் pațiccasamuppādaìm paṭilomaì sādhukai் manasākāsi:

Iti imasmimं asati idamं na hoti, imassa nirodhā idamं nirujjhati, yadidaím-avijja nirodh $\bar{a}$ sañkhāranirodho, sañkhāra nirodhā viñ̃āạa nirodho, viñ̃āṇa nirodhā nāmarūpa nirodho, nāmarūpa nirodhā saḷāyatana nirodho, saḷāyatana nirodhā phassa nirodho, phassa nirodhā vedanā nirodho, vedanā nirodhā taṇhā nirodho, tanhhā nirodhā upādāna nirodho, upādāna nirodhā bhava nirodho, bhava nirodhā jāti nirodho, jāti nirodhā jarāmaraṇaim sokaparidevadukkhadomanassupāyāsā nirujjhanti. Evametassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa nirodho hot $\vec{\imath}$ 'ti.

### 9.6.1.1 Sañkhāra - Many Meanings

## December 14, 2021

Sañkhāra - Should Not be Translated as a Single Word
Kamma and Sañkhāra, Cetanā and Sañcetanā
Kusala-Mūla Sañkhāra Are Needed to Attain Nibbāna
Rebirths Take Place According to Abhisañkhāra

### 9.6.1.1 <br> Sañkhāra - Should Not be Translated as a Single Word

## December 7, 2021; revised December 10, 2021 (\#3); August 27, 2022

Sañkhāra is a critical Pāli word with different meanings depending on the context. It should not be translated with a single word, like choices, processes, activity, mental formations, etc., as commonly done these days.

## Introduction

1. In the previous post, I referred to a couple of English translations of two key suttas. They translated "sañkhāra" as "choices" and "mental formations." See "Distortion of Pāli Keywords in Paticca Samuppāda."

- According to those translations, ALL sañkhāra would stop from arising if a mind is devoid of avijjā. In the two English translations quoted in the above post, "avijjā nirodhā sañkhāra nirodho" is translated as "When ignorance ceases, choices cease" and "from the cessation of ignorance, there is the cessation of volitional processes."
- We all know that the Buddha's mind became free of avijjā upon attaining Buddhahood. But then he lived for 45 years. Did not the Buddha generate any sañkhāra during that whole time?
- As discussed below, one cannot think, speak, or do anything without generating sañkhāra!
- That would clearly illustrate the dangers of mindlessly translating Pāli suttas word by word without understanding the meaning of the sutta in the context of the topic.


## Several Types of Sañkhāra

2. The "WebLink: suttacentral: Cūlavedalla Sutta (MN 44)" discusses three types of sañkhāra: kāya sañkhāra, vacī sañkhāra, citta sañkhāra. The last type is (almost) the same as mano sañkhāra.

- In the English translations of this sutta at Sutta Central, three translators translate those three types of sañkhāra in three different ways: "Physical, verbal, and mental processes," "bodily process, the speech process, the mental process," and "physical activity, verbal activity, and mental activity."
- However, all three types of sañkhāra are MENTAL; they arise in mind. They are NOT physical processes, but they can control physical processes.
- Kāya sañkhāra arises in the mind and controls bodily actions. Vacī sañkhāra also occurs in mind and may lead to speech. All three types of sañkhāra appear in mind.
- It is NOT POSSIBLE to find a single English word representing the different meanings of sañkhāra in various suttas. We will discuss another way to categorize sañkhāra below, but let us first briefly examine these three types of sañkhāra.


## Any Thought Has Mano Sañkhāra

3. In the WebLink: suttacentral: Cūlavedalla Sutta (MN 44), citta (mano) sañkhāra defined as, "vedanā and sañ̃̄̄̄." See Ref. 1 below.

- In most English translations, vedanā and sañ̃̃̄a are feelings and perception (or recognition).
- But vedanā is more like "sensing an external sensory input." Sañ̃̄̄ $\bar{a}$ is the recognition of the sensory input (but includes one's biases for such a sensory event.)
- For example, tree roots feel vedanā (of nutrients in the soil), and the leaves of a tree feel the sunlight. Each can respond to such stimuli. For instance, we know that a plant 'turns" towards sunlight over time, and tree roots "pull-in" suitable nutrients.
- Therefore, plants and trees have a basic form of vedanā and sañ̃̃ā. A plant can "feel" when sunlight falls on it (vedana $\overline{\text { ) }}$, and recognize that as sunlight (saññ $\bar{a})$. However, a plant CANNOT generate sañkhārā
(in thoughts or $\operatorname{cittt\overline {a})\text {aboutthose}vedanā~and~saññā.~See,~"Contact~Between~Āyatana~Leads~to~Vipāka~}$ Viññāna."
- Only sentient beings (like people and animals) can generate sañkhāra. For example, we know that a dog becomes joyful when seeing its owner but is aggressive towards strangers. A dog can generate lobha (affection for the owner) or dosa (in this case aversion toward the stranger.)

4. Therefore, only living beings generate mano sañkhāra. In other words, mano sañkhāra are in any citta ("thought.")

- Abhidhamma clarifies this issue. Any citta (loosely translated as a thought) will ALWAYS arise with seven cetasika (mental factors.) Two of those seven are vedanā and saññā. Therefore, any "thought" is ALWAYS associated with vedanā and sañ̃n̄̄
- In other words, it is impossible to think without generating mano sañkhāra!


## Vacī Sańkhāra That Arise in the Mind Lead to Speech

5. The WebLink: suttacentral: Cūlavedalla Sutta (MN 44) defines vacī sañkhāra as, "vitakka vicārā vacī sañkhāro"; see Ref. 1.

- Vitakka and vicāra are two cetasika that MAY ARISE in a citta. They arise when we consciously start thinking about something. Simply put, vitakka means to "turn attention to an ārammaṇa," and vicāra is to "stay on that ārammaṇa to investigate."
- When we do that, we either "talk to ourselves" or "speak out." Both involve vacī sañkhāra. See "Correct Meaning of Vacī Sankhāra."
- Since the Buddlha spoke to others for 45 years after attaining the Buddhahood, it is clear that he generated a lot of vacī sañkhāra.


## All Bodily Actions Are Based on Kāya Sañkhāra That arise in the Mind

6. Kāya sañkhāra is defined as "Assāsa passāsā kāya sañkhāro" in Ref. 1. Which means, "breathing in and out is due to kāya sañkhāra."

- All bodily activities are due to kāya sañkhāra. Breathing is just one aspect. The mind controls breathing, but we don't need to breathe consciously. Then why is it called a type of sañkhāra?
- Again, we need to refer to Abhidhamma. All mental activities involve citta vīthi. A single citta does not arise by itself. Cittas ALWAYS occur in a series of citta (citta vīthi). However, we "feel" only those citta vīthi that contain javana citta. Those citta vīthi that maintain breathing do not have javana citta, and they are atiparittārammaṇa citta vīthi (ie., "weak citta vīthi").
- The fact that citta vīthi are involved in breathing becomes apparent when you think about asthma patients. They need to breathe willfully, i.e., "make an effort to breathe."
- That sutta is mentioned because it happens all the time, except when unconscious. When unconscious, citta vīthi cannot arise, and kammic energy keeps the body alive.
- The critical point is that ANY body movement involves kāya sañkhāra. To write, wallk, run, or move any body part, we must do that with kāya sañkhāra.


## Avijjā Is Not Involved in Most Sañkhāra!

7. Therefore, we generate numerous sañkhāra during the day. That was true for the Buddha and Arahants as well. As long as one lives in this world, one will generate $k \bar{a} y a, ~ v a c \bar{l}$, and mano sañkhāra.

- That is why it is foolish to translate "avijjā nirodhā saǹkhāra nirodho" as "When ignorance ceases, choices cease" or "from the cessation of ignorance, there is the cessation of volitional processes" in
the two translations cited in the post, "Distortion of Pāli Keywords in Paticca Samuppāda." We can also see that the English words "choices" and "volitional processes" are not applicable for some types of sañkhāra. For example, there is no need to make "choices" or "mental formations (consciously)" to breathe, but breathing involves kāya sañkhāra.
- Those translators don't seem to realize that only abhisañkhāra will cease to arise in an Arahant. An Arahant would not have a trace of aviijā but obviously would generate all three types of sañkhāra discussed above!
- That type of translation distorts Buddha Dhamma! I have repeatedly pointed out that it leads to much confusion in discussion forums.
- Now, let us discuss another way to categorize sañkhāra that is directly relevant to "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra." These types are sañkhāra are abhisañkhāra, some of which (apuññābhisañkhāra) can lead to "bad kamma vipāka" as various forms of suffering. Some kinds of abhisañkhāra (puññäbhisañkhāra) can lead to temporary relief from suffering (and even bouts of happiness) but will NEVER lead to a permanent end of suffering.
- Let us discuss the special categorization of abhisañkhāra now.


## Akusala-Mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda Involves Abhisañkhāra

8. Sañkhāra in the step "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" refers to "abhisañkhāra." "WebLink: suttacentral: Paticcasamuppāda Vibhañga (Vb 6)" explains the step "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" as, "Tattha katame avijjā paccayā sañkhārā? Puñn̄ābhisañkhāro, apuññābhisañkhāro, āneñjābhisañkhāro."

Translated: "What is meant by 'avijjā paccayā sañkhārā?' That means Puññābhisañkhāra, apuñn̄ābhisañkhāra, āneñjābhisañkhāra." For details, see "Sañkhāra - What It Really Means."

- Such abhisañkhāra can be kāya, vacī, or mano sañkhāra that we discussed above. But only a part of $k \bar{a} y a, ~ v a c \bar{l}$, and mano sañkhāra are abhisañkhāra.
- In other words, abhisañkhāra lead to kamma done with lobha, dosa, moha. They are dasa akusala (three with the body, four with speech, and three with the mind). They are kāya kamma, vacī kamma, and mano kamma. See, "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)."

9. Then a question arises: How can puñ̃̄ābhisañkhāra (puñ̃na abhisañkhāra or MORAL ACTIONS) be done with lobha, dosa, moha?

- Puññābhisañkhāra leads to puñña kamma that can bring "good results" in this world.
- That means such "good kamma" leads to "good kamma vipāka" (like health and wealth) during such "good existences." Stronger ones can lead to rebirth in "good realms."
- However, such benefits are only temporary. Such births in "good realms" are rare. Even if we think we only do good deeds in this life, we may have done many "bad deeds" in past lives, which can still bring rebirths in "bad realms." Puñña kamma becomes kusala kamma (that leads to Nibbāna) ONLY with the comprehension of Tilakkhaṇa; see \#11 below.


## Examples

10. As we already noted, breathing takes place via kāya sañkhāra. Raising one's hand involves kāya sañkhāra. Eating food involves kāya sañkhāra. All these activities are NECESSARY to live life. We cannot categorize them as "good" or "bad." Those are kammically neutral activities.

- On the other hand, hitting another person with anger involves the apuñ̃̄ābhisañkhāra version of $k \bar{a} y a$ sañkhāra. So does stealing or sexual misconduct. Telling a lie is done with the apuñ̃āabhisañkhāra version of vacī sañkhāra.
- Preparing a meal and offering that to a bhikkhu or a homeless person involves the puññābhisañkhāra version of kāya sañkhāra. Teaching Buddha Dhamma (or anything valuable) to others involves kāya and vacī sañkhāra that belong to the category of puññäbhisañkhāra.
- Having a greedy or angry mindset is a mano sañkhāra belonging to the apuñnāāhisañkhāra version. The same is true for having the ten types of wrong views. The opposites of those belong to the puññābhisañkhāra category.


## Doing Good Deeds (Puñña Kamma) Is Not Enough to Stop Future Suffering

11. The point is that while "good deeds (puñña kamma)" can lead to periods of happiness in good realms, that would not remove the possibility of future rebirths in the apāyās.

- Another way to say this is: "rebirths the apāyās will stop only upon understanding the dangers in the rebirth process, i.e., that this world is of anicca, dukkha, anatta nature (Tilakkhana.) That is when one becomes a Sotāpanna. Attempts to overcome past "bad deeds" by ONLY engaging in "good deeds" or puñña kamma will not be successful. However, it is necessary to engage in puñ̃na kamma to gain that insight.
- Instead, (while engaging in puñña kamma with puñ̃̃ābhisañkhāra) one MUST try to understand the three characteristics of this world of 31 realms. That is the ONLY WAY to avoid severe suffering in the future.
- Understanding Tilakkhaṇa leads to the cultivation of "kusala-mūla Pațicca Samuppāda," which leads to various stages of Nibbāna. See, "Kusala-Mūla Paticca Samuppāda."


## Difference Between Puñña Kamma and Kusala Kamma

12. It is essential to understand the difference between puñ̃̃a kamma and kusala kamma. Puñ̃a kammā BECOME kusala kammā IF one comprehends Tilakkhana!.

- Puññābhisañkhāra lead to puñña kamma.
- The same puñña kamma done with the comprehension of Tilakkhaṇa are NOT puññābhisañkhāra. They can be called "kusala-mūla sañkhāra."
- That is why the Kusala-Mūla Paticca Samuppāda process (that leads to Nibbāna) starts with "kusalamūla paccayā sañkhāra."
- For details, see, "Kilesa - Relationship to Akusala, Kusala, and Puñña Kamma" and "Kusala-Mūla Paticca Samuppāda."
- For those unfamiliar with these terms, it may take a repeated reading of relevant posts to understand these concepts. Things will fall into place once one can get a foothold (like in a jigsaw puzzle).


## Reference

1. In the "WebLink: suttacentral: Cūlavedalla Sutta (MN 44)":
"Tayome, āvuso visākha, sañkhārā-kāya sañkhāro, vacī sañkhāro, citta sañkhāro"ti.
"Katamo panāyye, kāya sañkhāro, katamo vacī sañkhāro, katamo citta sañkhāro"ti?
"Assāsapassāsā kho, āvuso visākha, kāya sañkhāro, vitakka vicārā vacī sañkhāro, saññ̄ ca vedanā ca citta saǹkhāro"ti.

### 9.6.1.1

 . 2
## Kamma and Sañkhāra, Cetanā and Sañcetanā

## December 14, 2021; August 27, 2022

Kamma and sañkhāra are related. Kāya, vacī, and mano sañkhāra with cetanā lead to kāya, vacī, and mano kamma. However, only kāya, vacī, and mano abhisañkhāra with sañcetanā lead to akusala kamma and are responsible for the rebirth process.

## Introduction

1. Most people use the word "kamma" to indicate "bad deeds" or even "results of past bad deeds." When something bad happens, they say, "Oh, this is my kamma."

- But kamma is a generic word that means "action." That could mean moving the body, speaking, or thinking ( $k \bar{a} y a, v a c \bar{l}$, and mano kamma.) Kamma can be of mainly three types:
(i) Neutral kamma: like using a knife to cut vegetables or asking directions from someone.
(ii) Akusala (or pāpa) kamma: e.g., stabbing someone with a knife or telling a lie to make money.
(iii) Kusala (or puñña) kamma: e.g., using a knife to cut loose a trapped animal or teaching something useful to others.
- All three types are done with a certain intention. We all need to engage in various types of kamma of the first type in our daily lives. The "intention" in the second type is bad or immoral, while that in the third type is good or moral.
- The first type of kamma yields results that do not have "kammic consequences." The second/third type can bring "bad/good results" at that time or in the future.
- The "intention" is connected to the cetana cetasika (mental factor) per a verse in the Nibbhedika Sutta (AN 6.63). Let us discuss that next.


## Cetanā Is In Every Citta!

2. "Nibbedhika Sutta (AN 6.63)" is a vital sutta that explains many keywords in Buddha Dhamma. Toward the end, it defines kamma: "Cetana $\bar{a}$, I tell you, is kamma. With intention, one does kamma by way of body, speech, and mind." See Ref. 1.

- Now, cetanā is a "universal cetasika" meaning it is in every citta. This is a CRITICAL observation. We don't do good or bad kamma at all times. Thus, kamma means any bodily activity, speech, or even thoughts. For example, we saw that even breathing happens with cittā.
- Therefore, even any action, like lifting an arm is a kamma. One may also speak and think about getting some task done that would NOT have morally good or bad intentions. Those would NOT belong to akusala, pāpa, puñña, or kusala kamma. They are just kamma. Such "neutral kamma" would have just cetanā cetasika in cittās without sobhana (good) or asobhana (bad) cetasika.

3. Any action, speech, or thought would have kammically-neutral kāya, vacī, and mano sañkhāra associated with them.

- If one does that task with lobha, dosa, moha, then it is an akusala (or pāpa) kamma. Another subtle way to say that is any action done with chandarāga (with a mindset that says worldly pleasures are worthwhile pursuing) has at least a trace of akusala nature.
- A particular activity involving generosity, compassion, etc. is a puñña kamma. A kusala kamma is a "better version" of a puñ̃̃a kamma done with an understanding of Tilakkhaṇa. In some places in the Tipiṭaka, puñ̃na kamma done without an understanding of Tilakkhana are referred to as, "kāmāvacara kusala kamma." That means those are "good kamma" done with the expectation of "better rebirths/good vipāka" in the higher realms of the kāma loka (human and Deva realms.)
- The same "good deeds (kamma)" are done by someone with the comprehension of the Four Noble Truths/Pațicca Samuppāda/Tilakkhana, they would be pure kusala kamma. Such kusala kammā are done WITHOUT expectations for worldly benefits, but ONLY with the expectation of attaining Nibbāna and, thus, stopping the suffering-filled rebirth process.


## What Is Cetanā?

4. Cetana $\bar{a}$ is a cetasika that is in every citta. There are seven such "universal cetasika" that is in every citta: Phassa (contact with an (ārammana); vedanā (feeling); saññā (perception); cetanā (putting together all suitable mental factors); Ekaggatā (One-pointedness); jīvitindriya (life faculty); manasikāra (memory.) [jīvitindriya : [(jīvita + indriya), nt.] the faculty of life; vitality.]

- A citta vīthi arises when a new ārammaṇa comes in. That contact with the new ārammaṇa is phassa. The mind "feels" that (vedanā) and recognizes it (sañ̃̄ $\bar{a})$ with the help of the manasikāra cetasika that can recall similar past events. Ekaggatā helps keep the mind focused on that ārammaṇa.
- That is a very complex process that happens within a billionth of a second (lifetime of a citta.) See, "Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)." It is critical to read that post to understand this basic process.
- Now we can begin to see the role of the cetanā cetasika. If the ārammana is mind-pleasing, lobha (greed) can arise in mind. When the cetanā cetasika "puts together the citta" it becomes a "lobha citta." On the other hand, seeing an enemy would generate dosa (anger), and the corresponding citta would be angry because cetana would incorporate the dosa cetasika into the citt $\bar{a}$.
- Going back to the types of kamma in \#1 above, now we can make sense of the role of the cetana cetasika. The "intention" comes from the types of cetasika that arise in mind based on $\bar{a} r a m m a n a$. Since it is the cetanā cetasika that "constructs" a citta, such added cetasika will dictate the "intention." This is a CRITICAL point to understand. I highly recommend reading the abovesuggested post and the links in that post.


## Kammic Energy Arises In the Mind

5. As we know, the three types of kamma are k $\bar{a} y a, v a c \bar{l}$, and mano kamma. Therefore, all three types of kamma accumulation occur in mind, with cetanā incorporating other mental factors (cetasika) such as lobha, dasa, alobha, and adosa.

- Note that cetan $\bar{a}$ is a cetasika in every citta, together with vedana $a$ and saññ $\bar{a}$; see Ref. 2. The cetanā cetasika "incorporates other relevant cetasika such as lobha, dosa, alobha, amoha" to a citta. The "intention" comes from the types of cetasika included. For example, stealing happens with a "greedy intention in mind," where cetanā has included the lobha cetasika to that citta. Thus, cetana $\bar{a}$ is like a supervisor/administrator who adds other relevant cetasika (good or bad) based on the "state of mind." It is good to read the post referred to in Ref. 2.

6. Since cetana cetasika is ANY citta, it is in ALL cittas of an Arahant or a Buddha. They also do things, speak, and think with specific "intentions."

- But an Arahant would not do anything, speak, or think about hurting or deceiving others. That happens only when "asobhana cetasika" like lobha and dosa are incorporated into cittā by the cetana $\bar{a}$ cetasika. That gives rise to "sañcetanā." Thus, Arahants do not generate sañcetana
- Even when "sobhana cetasika" like alobha and adosa are incorporated into cittā by the cetanā cetasika they are still "sañcetan $\vec{a}$ " IF one has not comprehended the dangers of the rebirth process, i.e., since one still has a (weaker level) of avijj $\bar{a}$. That is why one needs to comprehend the Four Noble Truths/Paticca Samuppāda/Tilakkhana. See, "Kilesa - Relationship to Akusala, Kusala, and Puñ̃̃a Kamma."


## How Cetanā Become Sañcetanā

7. The word "sañcetanā" comes from "san" + "cetanā." Thus, it means cetanā cetasika has incorporated "san" that can contribute to generating kammic energy for future rebirths. I have discussed the importance of "san" in many posts. See "San - A Critical Pāli Root."

- Therefore, sañkhāra are associated with cetanā and abhisañkhāra (those that contribute to the rebirth process) involve sañcetanā.
- A Buddha or an Arahant would not generate abhisañkhāra with sañcetanā, but they do generate sañkhāra with cetanā until Parinibbāna.
- This is why the types of sañkhāra that arise due to the ignorance of the Four Noble Truths (i.e., "avijjāa paccayā sañkhārā") are kāya sañkhāra, vacī sañkhāra, and citta sañkhāra that involve kāya $\boldsymbol{s a n ̃ c e t a n a ̄ , ~ v a c i ̄ ~ s a n ̃ c e t a n a ̄ , ~ a n d ~ m a n o ~ ( o r ~ c i t t a ) ~ s a n ̃ c e t a n a ̄ . ~ S e e , ~ R e f . ~} 3$.
- It is imperative to understand these basic concepts.


## References

1. From WebLink: suttacentral: Nibbedhika Sutta (AN 6.63): "Kammaï, bhikkhave, veditabbaì ... pe... kammanirodhagāmin̄̄ paṭipadā veditabbāti, iti kho panetaì vuttamं. Variant: kammanirodhagāmin̄̄ $\rightarrow$ sabbatthapi evamevaKiñcetaì pațicca vuttamं? Cetanāhaì, bhikkhave, kammaì vadāmi. Cetayitvā kammaì karoti-kāyena vācāya manasā."
2. The "WebLink: suttacentral: Sammāditthi Sutta (MN 9)" defines nāma (mentality) as, "Vedanā, sañ̃n̄̄, cetanā, phasso, manasikāro-idaì vuccatāvuso, nāmaì." In Abhidhamma, two more cetasika of $j \bar{\imath} v i t i n d r i y a$ and ekaggatā are listed together with the above five cetasika. Thus, there are seven cetasika in every citta. The point here is that "intention" is not strictly a good translation for cetanā. One's "intention" comes through the types of other good or bad cetasika (such as lobha or alobha) included in the citta. The cetanā cetasika "puts together appropriate cetasika and builds the citta." See "What is a Thought?"
3. "WebLink: suttacentral: Paticcasamuppāda Vibhañga (Vb 6)" states: "Kāya sañcetanā kāya sañkhāro, vacī sañcetanā vacī sañkhāro, mano sañcetanā citta sañkhāro. Ime vuccanti "avijjā paccayā sañkhārā."

## Kusala-Mūla Sañkhāra Are Needed to Attain Nibbāna

December 20, 2021; revised August 31, 2022
"Kusala-mūla sañkhārā" lead to Nibbāna. This category of sañkhāra is generated via wisdom or pañ̃̄̄̄, the opposite of $a v i j j \bar{a}$.

## We Live Life with Sañkhāra

1. As discussed in recent posts, everyone (including Arahants) generates sañkhāra while living in this world.

- Sañkhārā are, in simple terms, THOUGHTS.
- Everything we do involves thoughts. Thoughts can vary: compassionate, loving, greedy, angry, jealous, etc. Then we speak and do things with such thoughts with an intention.
- Mano sañkhāra are thoughts that arise in the mind automatically according to one's gati (character/habits). If the sensory input (an ārammana) is interesting, one starts thinking about it and vaci sañkhārā arise; such vacī sañkhāra also lead to speech. If then one decides to take action, corresponding body movements happen via $k \bar{a} y a$ sañkhārā.
- For example, you automatically start looking at an item in a shop if your gati matches it. Then if you think it is worthwhile to investigate it further, you keep looking at it, debating whether to buy it. If you lean toward buying it, you may decide to pick it up and look at it more carefully. Those involve mano, vaci , and $k \bar{a} y a$ sañkhārā, respectively. Such THOUGHTS related to attachment to worldlly things (i.e., with chandarāga) are Abhisañkhāra. Arahants generate sañkhāra, but not abhisañkhāra.


## Chandarāga Lead to Abhisañkhāra

2. The easiest way to see the difference between sañkhāra and abhisañkhāra is as follows. Sänkhāra with chandarāga are abhisañkhāra.

- The correct "pada nirutti" (etymology) of "rāga" comes from "ra" + "agga" where "ra" means to "travel (in the samisāric journey)" and "agga" is to "give priority." Thus, "rāga" means to "willingly engage (in the samisāric journey.)
-"Chanda" ("ca" + "anda") means "blinded mind." Therefore, one with "chandarāga" has not comprehended the dangers of remaining in the rebirth process. See, "Lobha, Rāga and Kāma chanda, Kāma rāga."
- Chandarāga is of three types: Kāma rāga (attachment to kāma loka), rūpa rāga (attachment to rūpa loka, the 16 rūpāvacara Brahma realms), and arūpa rāga (attachment to the four arupāvacara Brahma realms.)
- Note that kāma rāga, rūpa rāga, and arūpa rāga are three samiyojana (samisāric bonds) that bind one to the rebirth process - Kāma rāga broken at the Anāgāmi stage and the other two bonds broken at the Arahant stage.
- Thus, the removal of chandarāga leads to Nibbāna; see Ref. 1.


## Three Main Types of Sañkhāra

3. The following categorization could be helpful:
i. Our thoughts, speech, and actions involved in daily activities are "kammically neutral." Thus they involve "kammically-neutral sañkhāra."
ii. Abhisañkhāra keeps one on the rebirth process. These are sañkhāra arising due to avijjā, i.e., "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" in the Akusala-mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda process; see, "Akusala-Mūla Uppatti Paticca Samuppāda.،
iii. Then there are "kusala-mūla sañkhāra" cultivated by those on the Noble Path (Noble Persons above the Sotāpanna Anugāmi stage.) Those sañkhāra arise with the comprehension of the Noble Truths. Those are the "kusala-mūla paccayā sañkhāra" in the Kusala-mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda process; see, "Kusala-Mūla Paticca Samuppāda."'

## We Have to Attain Nibbāna While in This World

4. We cannot do ANYTHING in this world without generating sañkhāra. Thus, working toward Nibbāna also involves sañkhāra.

- To work towards attaining Nibbāna, one needs to engage in physical activities (with kāya sañkhāra), and discuss Dhamma concepts (with vacī sanंkhāra.) Furthermore, when the mind is in an appropriate state (samādhi), certain Dhamma concepts automatically come to mind as mano sañkhāra.
- Those are "kusala-mūla sañkhāra." One would start cultivating kusala-mūla sañkhārra from the Sotāpanna Anugāmi stage. However, until the Arahant stage, some abhisañkhāra can arise via the Akusala-mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda process.
- Once attaining the Arahanthood, abhisañkhāra would not arise at all. However, Arahants would still generate sañkhāra after attaining Nibbāna, until Parinibbāna. See, "Sañkhāra - Should Not be Translated as a Single Word."


## Three Types of $\boldsymbol{A b h i s a n} k h \bar{a} r a$

5. In the post, "Sañkhāra - Should Not be Translated as a Single Word," we discussed three types of abhisañkhāra that can come into play in "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra." See \#8 there.

- First, there are apuññäbhisañkhāra ('bad sañkhāra") involving lobha, dosa, moha (and other related cetasika like jealousy. They are "apuñña abhisañkhāra" that can lead to rebirths in lower realms ( apāyās.) Such apuññ̄ābhisañkhāra will move one away from Nibbāna. That is easy to see.
- However, we saw that two other types of "good sañkhāra" can move one away from Nibbāna. Those "relatively good" abhisañkhāra that can lead to rebirths in the "good realms" at or above the human realm. Those are puññābhisañkhāra and $\bar{a} n e n ̃ j a ̄ b h i s a n ̃ k h a ̄ r a . ~$

6. Puñña kamma with puññābhisañkhāra can bring "good results" in this world, including rebirths at or above the human realm. Giving, moral living, and meditation come under puñña kamma; see, "Puñña Kamma - Dāna, Sīla, Bhāvanā." Puñ̃̃ābhisañkhāra also includes the cultivation of rūpāvacara jhāna (first four $j h a \overline{n a}$ ) that lead to rebirths in the 16 rūpāvacara Brahma realms.

- Āneñjābhisañkhāra comes into play in the cultivation of the four higher (arupāvacara) jhānas that lead to rebirths in the four arupāvacara Brahma realms.

Per \#2 above, all three types of abhisañkhāra arise due to chandarāga.

## How Can Puñ̃̄ābhisañkhāra and Āneñjäbhisaṅkhāra Arise Due to Avijjā?

7. For those who do not have a solid background in the basics, it will be difficult to see why
 MAY act with avijjā until one understands the Four Noble Truths/Paṭicca Samuppāda/Tilakkhaṇa. When one starts comprehending the Noble Truths, one would see why striving for future rebirths even in the higher realms can be dangerous in the long run.

- That is related to the fact that one would understand many deep suttas ONLY after one gets that critical understanding.
- That is also why it is dangerous to translate deep suttas word by word without understanding the deeper concepts in Buddha Dhamma.
- I hope to discuss those in detail soon. Let us now discuss another related issue.


## All Religions Encourage Doing Good Deeds to Achieve Happiness

8. Before the Buddha, people believed in morally good, morally wrong, and neutral deeds. All religions (to some extent) taught that one must abstain from evil deeds and engage in good deeds. In Pāli terms, that means one should avoid apuññābhisañkhāra and need to cultivate puñ̃̄ābhisañkhāra.

- The principle behind that rationale is that doing good will lead to good results, and the opposite will happen to those engaged in evil deeds. That is the "BASE LEVEL of understanding of laws of kamma."


## Difference Between Buddha Dhamma and Major Religions

9. Buddha also advised people to live moral lives and to cultivate puñ̃āāhisañkhāra.

- But there is a DEEPER LEVEL of understanding in Buddha Dhamma. That involves understanding the "real nature" of this world of 31 realms embedded in the Three Characteristics of Nature or Tilakkhana. That understanding goes hand-in-hand with understanding Paṭicca Samuppāda and the First Noble Truth on Suffering. That DEEPER teaching says that suffering will NEVER come to an end until the true nature of this world is understood. That truth says it is foolish (avijja) to assume that one can stop future suffering by just doing "good deeds" and by abstaining from "bad deeds."
- The deeper point (that may be initially hard to understand) is the following: The Buddha saw the real suffering in this world at his Enlightenment. There is a broader world with 31 realms among which rebirths occur. Living beings commit "bad deeds" pursuing worldly pleasures and end up in the four lowest realms (apāyās.) He explained the process (Paticca Samuppāda) by which future rebirths occur.
- Until that process is understood (and thus one can comprehend Tilakkhana,) one would still have that "subtle wrong view" of our world. That is the deeper level micchā ditṭhi removed at the Sotāpanna stage! That is the DEEPER LEVEL of understanding mentioned above.


## Doing Good Deeds Is Not Enough to End Suffering

10. The CRITICAL point is that "good results" from "good deeds" do not last forever. Since we all have done "bad deeds" in past lives, their results can bring "bad births."

- Suppose person X avoids doing ANY evil deeds in this life. When this life ends within 100 years or so, there will be two possibilities:
(i) Kammic energy for this human bhava has not been exhausted, and thus X will be reborn human again. Suppose X can avoid doing any evil deeds in that life and possibly a few more human lives. Eventually, X has to face option (ii) below.
(ii) X will be reborn in a new existence (bhava,) and it will be determined not only by the "good kamma" that X has accumulated in the current human bhava but also by any "bad kamma" accumulated in previous lives extending to billions of years to the past.
- That danger is evident in some accounts in the Tipitaka. Even after stating the Arahanthood, Ven. Moggallāna was beaten to death. That was due to a trace of kamma vipāka leftover from killing his parents in a previous life. Angulimāla killed almost a thousand people and would have been born in an apāya if he could not attain the Arahanthood. If such highly-regarded Arahants had committed such heinous crimes in the past, how can we say that we have not?

11. That is why Buddha Dhamma needs to be understood in the context of the rebirth process. Of course, it is up to each individual to decide the validity of the rebirth process.

- Not believing in rebirth is one of the ten types of wrong views (micchā dittthi) in Buddha Dhamma. Thus, it would be impossible to make ANY progress with that wrong view. One gets to mundane Sammā Dittthi by getting rid of such wrong views. Only then would one be able to comprehend more profound concepts like Pațicca Samuppāda and Tilakkhaṇa and get to the lokuttara Sammā Ditṭhi and start on the Noble Path.
- It is a good idea to contemplate the above. It is a waste of time to discuss deep suttas without understanding these basic concepts.


## Difference Between Kusala Kamma and Puñ̃̃a Kamma

12. Any "good deed" done with the BASE LEVEL of understanding is a puñ̃̃a kamma. The same deed done with the DEEPER LEVEL of understanding is a kusala kamma. Let us discuss that briefly next.

Let us start with ten types of akusala kamma (dasa akusala.) Three by actions: pānātipātā (killing), adinnādān $\bar{a}$ (taking what is not given), kāmesu micchācār $\bar{a}$ (not just sexual misconduct, but also excessive of sensory pleasures.) Four by speech: musāvāda (Lying), pisuṇā vācā (slandering), pharusā vācā (harsh
speech), and sampappalāp $\bar{a}$ (frivolous talk). Then there are three directly by the mind: Abhijjh $\bar{a}$ (covetousness; greed for other's belongings), Vyāpāda (ill-will, hatred), and Micchā Diṭthi (wrong views.) [See Ten Immoral Actions - Dasa Akusala.]

- Those ten become stronger IF THEY ARE DONE WITH micchā ditṭhi. Such strong versions of akusala kamma are pāpa kamma. They involve apuññäbhisañkhāra that can DIRECTLY lead to rebirths in the apāyās. In Abhidhamma, such "apāyagāmi deeds" are done with "ditṭhi sampayutta citta" or "citta that arise with wrong views." We can also say that they involve apuñnäbhisañkhāra. Yet another way to say that a stronger version of avijjā (or moha) is in play when one has one or more of the ten types of micchā ditthi or wrong views.
- The ten types of wrong views are discussed in "Micchā Ditthi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage."
- Again, if one has any of the ten types of micchā ditṭhi, one can act with moha (under high temptations) and do "apāyagāmi pāpa kamma." Note that it DOES NOT mean one with micchā diṭthi will always act with wrong views and will inevitably do pāpa kamma. But the possibility is there.


## Akusala Kamma May Be Done by Anyone Except a Arahant

13. The critical point is that even if one does not have the ten types of miccha ditthi, one could act with avijja and still do p $\bar{a} p a$ kamma and be reborn in an apāya. But the possibility of that is much less than that for someone with the ten types of micchä ditṭhi.

- That is why only those above the Sotāpanna Anugāmi stage are genuinely free from rebirths in the apāyās. In addition to losing the ten types of wrong views, they have understood the following: The possibility of Future suffering in the ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a} s$ will be there as long as one believes that one can achieve permanent happiness within the rebirth process.
- (However, even a Noble Person below the Arahant stage can do "mild akusala kamma" that can lead to rebirths in the human or higher realms.)
- What if one does not believe that there is a rebirth process?
- Then there is no need to read deep suttas about Nibbāna. One WOULD NOT be able to understand them. But even more importantly, why bother reading about Nibbāna if one does not believe in the concept of Nibbāna?
- That is why not believing in the rebirth process is one of the ten wrong views.


## Wasting Time Discussing (Incorrectly Translated) Deep Suttas

14. Many people can save time by carefully reading and understanding what I discussed above. Of course, word-by-word translations of such deep suttas make it worse. The problem is that even the translators do not understand the concepts I discussed above. If they did, they would not do such nonsensical translations.

- I see many people have engaged in the same discussion in discussion forums over many years. They have wasted a lot of valuable time. Of course, some people do not even take these discussions seriously. It is like discussing philosophy for them.
- But if one even starts to understand the key message of the Buddha, one would not waste any time. We have a limited time of fewer than 100 years to use this rare opportunity.


## Summary

15. The "Kusala-Mūla Paticca Samuppāda" process leads to Nibbāna. That process starts with "kusalamūla paccayā sañkhāra."

- On the other hand, the rebirth process continues with "Akusala-Mūla Paticca Samuppāda. "That process starts with, "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra." Good, moral deeds done without comprehending the Noble Truths (i.e., puñña kamma) also fall under this category.
- The same kind of moral deeds done with the comprehension of Four Noble Truths/Paṭicca Samuppāda/Tilakkhaṇa are kusala kamma.
- But many people believe moral, good deeds by anyone belong to the kusala kamma category. That is not correct. Kusala kamma can be done only with the comprehension of the Noble Truths.


## Reference

1. "WebLink: suttacentral: Chandarāga Sutta (SN 22.25)." English translation there: "WebLink: suttacentral: Desire and Lust (SN 22.25)." Note that "chandarāga" is translated as "desire and lust." That is not correct, as I explained in \#2 above.

## Rebirths Take Place According to Abhisañkhāra

December 27, 2021; revised December 28, 2021; June 15, 2022; July 2, 2022
Rebirths take place according to abhisañkhāra cultivated. That mechanism is explained in Akusala-mūla Paticca Samuppāda.

## Three Types of Abhisañkhāra Leading to Rebirth in the 31 Realms

1. As we have discussed, the 31 realms in this world (loka) are distributed among three levels: kāma loka, rūpa loka, and arūpa loka.

- Kāma loka has 11 realms: the four lowest realms (apāyās,) the human realm, and the six Deva realms.
- Rūpa loka consists of the sixteen rūpāvacara Brahma realms.
- Arūpa loka has four arūpāvacara Brahma realms.
- In previous posts, we saw that three types of abhisañkhāra are generated with the Akusala-mūla Paticca Samuppāda process that leads to rebirths among the 31 realms. See, \#8 of "Sañkhāra - Should Not be Translated as a Single Word."

2. Those three types of abhisañkhāra lead to rebirths among the 31 realms as follows:

- The worst type, apuññābhisañkhāra, lead to rebirths in the four lowest realms.
- The next higher level of puñ̃ñābhisañkhāra leads to rebirths in the higher seven realms in the kāma loka and the 16 realms in the $r \bar{u} p a$ loka.
- The best type of āneñjābhisañkhāra lead to rebirths in the highest four realms of this world belonging to the arūpa loka.


## Akusala-Mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda Dictates the Rebirth Process

3. The Akusala-Mūla Patticca Samuppāda describes how rebirths (jāti) take place in this world starting with "avijjā paccayā (abhi)sañkhāra" step.

As we discussed, sañkhāra in the step "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" refers to "abhisañkhāra." "WebLink: suttacentral: Paticcasamuppāda Vibhanga (Vb 6)" explains the step "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" as, "Tattha katame avijjā paccayā sañkhārā? Puñ̃ābhisañkhāro, apuñn̄ābhisañkhāro, āneñjābhisañkhāro."

Translated: "What is meant by 'avijjā paccay"̄ sañkhārā̃?' That means puññābhisañkhāra, apuññābhisañkhāra, āneñjābhisañkhāra." For details, see "Sañkhāra - What It Really Means."

- Such abhisañkhāra can be $k \bar{a} y a, v a c \overline{1}$, or mano sañkhāra that we discussed above. But only a part of $k \bar{a} y a, v a c \overline{\text {, }}$, and mano sañkhāra are abhisañkhāra.
- In other words, abhisañkhāra leads to kamma done with lobha, dosa, moha, and mundane versions of alobha, adosa, amoha.
- They are akusala kamma or dasa akusala (three with the body, four with speech, and three with the mind). They can be kāya kamma, vacī kamma, and mano kamma. See, "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)


## Apuñ̄̄̄̄bhisañkhāra - Connection to Lobha, Dosa, Moha

4. Apuñ̃̄ābhisañkhāra ("worst abhisañkhāra") can lead to rebirths in the four lower realms (apāyās.) Such "bad abhisañkhāra" arise due to lobha, dosa, moha (and other related cetasika like jealousy.)

- Such apuññābhisañkhāra ("apuñña abhisañkhāra") lead to apuñña kamma (or "pāpa kamma.") That is the worst form of akusala kamma based on lobha (greed), dosa (hate/anger), moha (worst than avijjā).

5. "WebLink: suttacentral: Paticcasamuppāda Vibhañga (Vb 6)" explains apuññ̄abhisañkhāra as follows: "Tattha katamo apuñn̄ābhisañkhāro? Akusalā cetanā kāmāvacarā-ayaì vuccati "apuññābhisañkhāro" OR "apuññābhisañkhāra are akusala cetanā associated with the kāma loka."

- Akusala cetanā (or intention of doing an akusala kamma) is in "akusala citta" or "defiled thoughts."


## Puñ̃̄ābhisañkhāra and Āneñjābhisañkhāra - Connection to (Mundane) Alobha, Adosa, Amoha

6. Then there are two types of "good sañkhāra" that lead to rebirths in the higher 27 realms. Those "relatively good" abhisañkhāra lead to rebirths in the "good realms" at or above the human realm. Those are puñ̃̃̄abhisañkhāra and āneñjābhisañkhāra. Those two categories arise based on the mundane versions of alobha, adosa, and moha (i.e., without comprehension of the Four Noble Truths/TilakkhanalPaṭicca Samuppāda.)

- Puñña kamma with puññābhisañkhāra can bring "good results" in this world, including rebirths in the human realm and the six Deva realms. Giving, moral living, and meditation come under puñña kamma; see, "Puñ̃ña Kamma - Dāna, Sila, Bhāvanā." Puññäbhisan̉khāra also includes the cultivation of $r \bar{u} p \bar{v} v a c a r a ~ j h a ̄ n a ~ t h a t ~ l e a d ~ t o ~ r e b i r t h s ~ i n ~ t h e ~ 16 ~ r u ̄ p a ̄ v a c a r a ~ B r a h m a ~ r e a l m s . ~$
- Āneñjäbhisañkhāra comes into play in the cultivation of the four arūpāvacara samāpatti that lead to rebirths in the four arupāvacara Brahma realms: ākāsānañcāyatana, viññānañcāyatana, ākiñcaññāyatana, and nevasaññānāsaññ̄̄yatana.
- Akusala kamma is any kamma that keeps one in the rebirth process. Thus, puñña kamma done without comprehension of the Four Noble Truths/Tilakkhaṇa/Paṭicca Samuppāda belong to akusala kamma. That is why puññābhisañkhāra and āneñjābhisañkhāra also arise due to avijjā.


## Three Levels of Abhisañkhāra

7. Therefore, now we have an easy way to remember what types of abhisañkhāra lead to rebirths among the 31 realms in this world. To summarize:

- Worst form of akusala kamma are apuñña kamma or pāpa kamma. They are done with apuñña abhisañkhāra (apuñ̃̃äbhisañkhāra) and lead to the rebirths in the lowest four realms. Those four realms are collectively called apāy $\bar{a} s$ and deliver the worst forms of suffering.
- The next (higher) level of abhisañkhāra are puñña abhisañkhāra (puñ̃ābhisañkhāra.) Puñña kamma (like giving to charity, taking care of parents/elders/bhikkhus, etc) lead to rebirths in the human
realm and the six Deva realms. There is a higher level of puññābhisainkhāra that leads to rebirths in the 16 rūpāvacara Brahma realms; those involve the cultivation of rūpāvacara jhāna. Thus, puñ̃̄äbhisañkhāra lead to rebirths in 23 realms.
- The highest level of abhisañkhāra is āneñja abhisañkhāra (āneñjäbhisañkhāra.) Those involve the cultivation of the four arupāvacara samāpatti. They, of course, lead to rebirths in the four arupāvacara Brahma realms.

Thus we can now clearly see how the rebirth process takes place among the 31 realms according to the types of abhisañkhāra cultivated via "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra."

## All Types of Abhisañkhāra Arise Due to Avijjā!

8. As explained in \#1 above, all types of abhisañkhāra within the three categories arise due to avijja. What is $a v i j j \bar{a}$ ?

- "WebLink: suttacentral: Paticcasamuppāda Vibhañga (Vb 6)" explains avijija as follows: "Tattha katamā avijjā? Dukkhe aññānaỉ, dukkhasamudaye añ̃̃ānain, dukkhanirodhe aññānaim, dukkhanirodhagāminiyā patipadāya aññānaim-ayaì vuccati "avijjā".

Translated: "What is $a v i j j \bar{a}$ ? It is the ignorance of the Four Nobel Truths or the absence of four types of knowledge ( $\tilde{n} \bar{a} n a)$ : knowledge about the Truths on suffering (Dukkhe añ̃̄ānaì), the origin of suffering (dukkha samudaye añ̃̄ānaì), cessation of suffering (dukkha nirodhe aññānaì), and the way to reach the cessation of suffering (dukkha nirodha gāminiyā patipadāya aññānaí.)

- As we saw above, starting with the "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" step in Akusala-mūla PS different types of existences (bhava) and corresponding rebirths ( $j \bar{a} t i$ ) arise among the 31 realms.


## Connection to Tilakkhaṇa and Paṭicca Samuppāda

9. The key here is to understand the First Noble Truth. In other words, instead of "dukkhe añnānaim" (not comprehending the Noble Truth on Suffering) get to "dukkhe ñānaim" (knowledge of the Noble Truth on Suffering.)

- What is dukkha (suffering)? It is not the relatively minor sufferings that we experience in this life. Most people are happy with their lives.
- To understand the REAL suffering, one must understand the "wider worldview" seen by the Buddha upon his Enlightenment. He saw that most living beings are trapped in the four lowest realms for very long times. That is the suffering referred to by the Buddha!
- Even though relatively reduced levels of suffering manifest in the higher realms at or above the human realm, ANY given "sentient being" spends most time in the apāyās.
- More details at, "Paticca Samuppāda, Tilakkhana, Four Noble Truths."


## Apuñ̃̄ābhisañkhāra Done With Moha or Avijjā

10. The worst form of apuñ$\tilde{n} \bar{a} b h i s a n k h a ̄ r a$ is done with the worst form avijjā of moha. One may FREQUENTLY act with moha if one still has one or more of the ten types of micchā dittthi.

- With the removal of the ten types of micch $\bar{a}$ ditt th i the tendency to act with moha and generate apuñ̃ābhisañkhāra will be reduced.
- But as long as one has not comprehended the Four Noble Truths/Tilakkhana/Paticca Samuppāda, one may act with avijjā and may generate abhisañkhāra of all three types.
- As we saw above, Pațicca Samuppāda clearly explains how different types of rebirths arise due to $a v i j j \bar{a}$. That is why it is critical to understand that process.


## Cultivation of Anāriya Jhāna Done With Avijjā

11. We can clearly see now that the cultivation of all types of anāriya jhāna is done with avijjā ("anāriya" means "non-Buddhist"). Such anāriya jhāna are cultivated using anāriya meditation techniques such as kasiña mediation (using kasiṇa objects) and breath meditation (which is NOT Ānāpānasati meditation.) The sole purpose of such efforts is to attain such jhānās, and NOT Nibbāna. Cultivation of such jhāna leads to rebirths in the Brahma realms, as we saw above.

- Any effort to seek a rebirth anywhere in the 31 realms is done with avijija because ANY such existence will have a finite lifetime.
- When that existence in such Brahma realm comes to an end, rebirths in lower realms will take place, inevitably ending up in the apāyās. That is why such efforts will NOT lead to the ending of samisāric suffering.
- The only way to stop future suffering is to stop the rebirth process.
- Thus, we can see that another way to describe $a v i j j \bar{a}$ is as follows: As long as one has the mindset that "existence ANYWHERE among the 31 realms is beneficial," one would have avijja. That is why the cultivation of (anāriya) jhāna is done with avijjā!

12. Note that Ariya jhāna is NOT cultivated with the goal of getting a rebirth in a Brahma realm. Ariya $j h a ̄ n \bar{s} s$ are realized automatically by some people with magga phala (if one has cultivated anāriya jhānās in recent past lives.)

- But some Arahants have cultivated Ariya jhāna deliberately and the Buddha had recommended that too. A good example is Ven. Moggallāna. After the cultivation of such jhānās, he developed abhiñ̃ñ̄a powers. Then he frequently visited Deva and Brahma realms to teach Dhamma to those Devas and Brahmas.
- By the way, there is a series of suttas that describe how Ven. Moggallāna attained all jhānās in sequence. That series starts with the "WebLink: suttacentral: Pathamajhānapañhā Sutta (SN 40.1)." Those who have questions about the terms vitakka/vicāra, avitakka/avicāra, and savitakka/savicāra should read that series of suttas.


### 9.6.1.2 Viññāna - Two Critical Meanings

January 3, 2022
Abhisañkhāra Lead to Kamma Viññāna
Two Types of Kamma Viññāna
Summary of Key Concepts About Viññāna and Sañkhāra
Anidassana, Appatigha Rūpa Due to Anidassana Viññān̄a

### 9.6.1.2 Abhisañkhāra Lead to Kamma Viññ̄āna

January 3, 2022; revised August 31, 2022
All viñãāṇa belong to either six types OR two types: vipāka viññāṇa and kamma viññāṇa.

## Two Categories of Viññạ̣̄a

1. Viññāna needs to be understood based on the context. All viññanna belong to either six types OR two types:
i. The six types of viñnāṇa [sensory experience] are: cakkhu viññaṇa, sota viññāna, jivhā viññāna, ghāna viññāna, kāya viññāṇa, and mano viññāna.
ii. The two types of viññāna [resultant and action] are: vipāka viññāna and kamma viññāna.

- Five types of viññāna in the first category are ALWAYS vipāka viññāna. Mano viññāṇa can be either vipāka viñ̃̄āna or kamma viññāna.
- Kamma viññāṇa are ALWAYS mano viññāṇa.


## Sensory Experience (Vipāka Viññāṇa) Versus Abhisañkhāra Generation (Kamma Viññāña)

2. An easy way to remember those categories is as follows.

- The six types of viñnāña arise when sensory inputs come in through the six senses: cakkhu, sota, jivhā, ghāna, kāya, and mano. I have discussed them in "Chachakka Sutta - Six Types of Vipāka Viññ̄̄na." They are just sensory experiences and no kammic energy is produced. These are all vipāka viññāna.
- Kamma viññāna are strictly mano viññāna. These are the viññāna that arise in Paticca Samuppāda. They generate kammic energies that can lead to future vipāka and even "power up" future rebirths. They arise in "Akusala-Mūla Uppatti Paticca Samuppāda," and "Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda ."
- Therefore, the five types of sensory experiences involving the five physical senses (cakkhu viññāna, sota viññāna, jivhā viññāna, ghāna viññāna, kāya viññāna) are ALWAYS vipāka viñ̃̃āṇa.
- On the other hand, mano viñnạ̄̂a can be either vipāka viñ̃̃āña or kamma viññāna.


## All Viññāna Arise in the Mind

3. The six types of viññāna ALL arise in mind. The six types indicate the "sense doors" through which they comes in. For example, a sensory input coming through the eyes is a cakkhu viññāna, one coming through the ears is a sota viñ $\tilde{n} a \underline{n a}, .$. one comes through the mind is a mano viññana (six types.)

- Such six types of viññāna only give rise to an experience. We see something with cakkhu viññāna, hear with sota viññ̄ạna, .. and recall something with mano viññāna (six types.)
- Note: Vipāka viññanna DOES NOT mean that each sensory event has a one-to-one correspondence with a past kamma. When born with a human body due to past kamma, that body will be subjected to all kinds of sensory experiences associated with the human bhava. That is a result (vipāka) of being born human.
- Based on vipāka viññāna, we may start accumulating "new kamma" with kamma viññāna.


## Kamma Viññāṇa - More Than Experience

4. BASED ON vipāka viññāṇa (i.e., sensory input,) we may start thinking, speaking, and doing things thereby accumulating new kamma (mainly leading to vacī and kāya kamma based on vacī and kāya abhisañkhāra, as we have discussed.)

- All those initiate with mano viññāna that arise via "avijjā paccayā abhisañkhāra" followed by "abhisañkhāra paccayā kamma viñ̃n̄ạa" in Paṭicca Samuppāda.
- In the course of that process, the mind generates kammic energy. That is why it will be easy to remember that by calling those "kamma viññāna."

5. The categorization of vipāka and kamma viñãāna is not mentioned explicitly in the Tipiṭaka. But it helps separate the two types.

- Otherwise, it can lead to much confusion even for the translators as I pointed out in the post, "Distortion of Pāli Keywords in Paticca Samuppāda" among many others.
- Kamma viññaña is the type of viññāna that bhikkhu Sāti said would 'travel from bhava to bhava" (presumably from his Vedic background) in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Mahātanhāsañkhava Sutta (MN 38)." But we know that various types of kamma viññāna are cultivated by us, and only one of them can give rise to existence at a time.
- Just like bhikkhu Sāti was confused, present-day translators are also confused (or may be not even aware of) that viññāna CAN BE many types. When they translate viññaña as "consciousness" that would only include vipāka viññāna. That leave out viññāna arising via, "abhisañkhāra paccayā kamma viññāna" in Paṭicca Samuppāda.


## Vipāka Viññą̣̄a Do Not Involve Abhisañkhāra

6. Any mental EVENT (involving vipāka or kamma viññāna) will have associated vedanā, saññ̄a, sañkhāra, and viññāṇa.

- Vedanā "detects" the sensory event and sañ̃̄̄̄ identifies what it is. Sañkhāra means to "prepare" that citta (loosely called "thought"), and that is done with the cetanā cetasika, as we have discussed. See, "Kamma and Sañkhāra, Cetanā and Sañcetanā."
- That is why vedanā, sañ̃̄ $\bar{a}$, and $\operatorname{cetana} \bar{a}$ are three of seven "universal cetasika" that arise in ANY citta. In other words, ANY mental event (involving vipāka or kamma viññạna) will have vedanā, saññā, and sañkhāra. The totality of that experience is viññāna.
- That is also why vedanā, saññā, sañkhāra, and viññ̄ạna are the principle "mental aggregates."
- Now, when the cetanä cetasika "prepares the citta," that is sañkhāra. Thus, we can now see that mano sañkhāra are in EVERY citta because vedanā and saññā are in every citta! Now, if we consciously think (with vacī sañkhāra) about doing something and then do it (with kāya sañkhāra) that could lead to new kamma. See Ref. 1.
- Note: Breathing is via kāya sankhāra (so is raising a hand) but those do not lead to new kamma.


## Mano Sañkhāra Cannot be Abhisañkhāra Leading to Rebirth

7. The critical point here is that mano sañkhāra are in vipāka viñ̃āạa as well as in kamma viññāna, i.e., in any type of viññāna. In fact, they are also in "pure citta" or "pabhassara citta" of an Arahant in Arahant-phala samādhi.

- Mano sañkhāra can NEVER become abhisañkhāra that can lead to rebirth.
- To generate kammic power (in javana citta), we need to generate defiled thoughts CONSCIOUSLY. Those involve vacī and kāya sañkhāra. Kamma viññ̄ạna (in javana citta with kammic energy) arises only in Paticca Samuppāda.
- It is not necessary to fully understand the above in \#7. It is there for completeness.


## First Two Steps in Paṭicca Samuppāda in the Niddesa Version

8. I have pointed out that "avijja paccayā sañkhāra" is the uddesa version (or the brief version) frequently used in the suttas. The niddesa (or a bit more descriptive) version is "avijja paccayā abhisañkhāra."

- In the same way, we can now see that the next step of "sañkhāra paccayā viñ̃̃āna" would be a bit more explanatory (niddesa version) in "abhisañkhāra paccayā kamma viññāna." In fact, we used that
terminology in \#4 above. The three different ways of explaining concepts discussed in, "Sutta Interpretation - Uddesa, Niddesa, Patiniddesa."
- As discussed above, our conscious thoughts (with vacī and kāya sañkhāra) in the Paṭicca Samuppāda processes create kammic energy. Some kammic energies may result in kamma vipāka during life, but some can lead to future rebirths.
- On the other hand, no kamma viñ̃ān̄na can arise when an ārammana comes in via one of the six sense faculties. Those are vipāka viññāña (just seeing, hearing, etc.)


## Difference Between Kammic Energy and "Food-Produced" Energy

9. Some people get confused when I say kāya sañkhāra are needed to take bodily actions, i.e., to move body parts. They may be asking, "how can thoughts move body parts?"

- That is a valid question from a mundane perspective. I have seen many materialistic scientists and philosophers ask the same question.
- The key is to understand that the mind only INITIATES the movement of body parts. That body movement is carried by the brain. The energy needed to move body parts comes from the food we eat.
- The brain is made of inert matter and is like a computer. All body movements are coordinated by the brain. The food we eat provides energy not only to move body parts but also, to keep the brain working. Since the brain is the interface between the mind and the body, it consumes a lot of energy by itself, about $25 \%$ of all the energy from the food we eat.
- Consider the following analogy of a soldier (mind/mental body or the gandhabba) driving a fullyenclosed military tank (physical body.) The soldier can see the outside only with the video cameras (eyes.) To drive the tank, to see outside, and fire artillery, the soldier depends on the on-board computer (brain.) The amount of work by the soldier ( $\mathrm{mind} / \mathrm{mental}$ body or the gandhabba) is minuscule compared to that generated by oil powering the vehicle and the guns (food powering body movements.)
- See "Gandhabba in a Human Body - an Analogy" for further details. It is critical to understand that analogy.


## Connection Between Kamma and Sañkhāra

10. In other words, kāya kamma (like offering food) involves moving body parts; one has to prepare and offer the food. Those are bodily actions. Those activities are powered by the food we eat.

- The mind only makes the decision to make the offering. It directs the body to do certain tasks with kāya sañkhāra. Since they involve alobha/adosa/amoha, those are kāya abhisañkhāra.
- This is why cetanā determines kamma. Bodily movements are BASED ON cetanā (sañkhāra.) If we see a man carrying a big knife we don't know what his intention is. It could be cut loose a trapped animal (good deed) or to kill someone (bad deed.)
- The same holds for speech. One intends to utter certain words with vacī sañkhāra. Then the brain gets the words out by moving the tongue and lips with vacī kamma. Now, if one generates such vaci sañkhāra with an angry mindset, they would be apuñ̃̃ābhi vacī sañkhāra (i.e., vacī abhisañkhāra.) Just asking someone for directions would involve just vacī sañkhāra (no abhisañkhāra.)


## Only Kamma Viññāṇa via Abhisañkhāra Generate Kammic Energy

11. As we have discussed, a vipāka viññāna can only "bring in a sensory input" and we just experience it. Our minds do not generate any abhisañkhāra or kammic energy.

- But, based on such a sensory input, we may get attached to it and start generating abhisañkhāra and accumulate kamma (or more correctly kammic energies). Such kammic
energies are unimaginably TINY compared to the energy required to move a hand, for example.
- Then such kammic energies can bring in future kamma vipāka, some of which can lead to rebirth.


## Mental Aspects Are with the Mental Body (Gandhabba)

12. The fact that the brain is NOT the mind is quite apparent from numerous rebirth accounts and Near-Death-Experience (NDE) studies.

- With more rebirth accounts published worldwide, it is becoming impossible to avoid their validity. The same is true for NDE studies.
- Furthermore, scientists have been trying hard to come up with an explanation of how consciousness can arise in the brain. Despite many studies and proposals, they have not been able to make ANY progress. A popular approach is to say consciousness arises in neurons.
- But they seem to ignore the following basic question: "How can joy or sorrow arise in inert atoms/molecules? Anything in the brain is made of atoms/molecules!
- No one will ever be able to prove that consciousness can arise in the brain. Some philosophers are beginning to see the truth of that; see Ref. 2.


## References

1. In the "WebLink: suttacentral: Cūlavedalla Sutta (MN 44)":
"Tayome, āvuso visākha, sañkhārā-kāya sañkhāro, vacī sañkhāro, citta sañkhāro"ti.
"Katamo panāyye, kāya sañkhāro, katamo vacī sañkhāro, katamo citta sañkhāro"ti?
"Assāsapassāsā kho, $\bar{a} v u s o ~ v i s a ̄ k h a, ~ k a ̄ y a ~ s a n ̃ k h a ̄ r o, ~ v i t a k k a ~ v i c a ̄ r a ̄ ~ v a c i ̄ ~ s a n ̉ k h a ̄ r o, ~ s a n ̃ n ̃ a ̄ ~ c a ~ v e d a n a ̄ ~$ ca citta sañkhāro"ti.

The last verse says: 'breathing involves kāya sañkhāra, vitakka/vicāra are vacī sañkhāra, and vedanā/saññ̄ā are mano sañkhāra."
2. Here are a couple of papers on the subject related to the "mind-body problem" for those who are interested (click on them to open):

What is it Like to be a Bat - $\operatorname{Nagel}(1974)$

## All machine and no ghost- McGinn-2012

A recent book by Nagel shows that he leans further toward the possibility that mind is primary: "Mind \& Cosmos: Why the Materialist Neo-Darwinian Conception of Nature Is Almost Certainly False" by Thomas Nagel (Oxford University Press, 2012).

### 9.6.1.2 Two Types of Kamma Viññāṇa

January 9, 2022
There are two types of kamma viñ̃āṇa. One brings vipāka at that time [Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda] and the other in the future [Akusala-Mūla Uppatti Paticca Samuppāda].

## Overview of Types of Viñ̃āāna

1. As we have discussed in recent posts, kamma viñnān̄a is different from vipāka viññāna. Kammic energy created via kamma viññāna can bring vipāka in this life or future lives. Vipāka viññ̄āna are just sensory experiences (consciousness.)

- Kamma viññāna are strictly mano viññāna. These are the viññāna that arise in Paṭicca Samuppāda. They generate kammic energies that can lead to vipāka and even "power up" future rebirths.
- "Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda "describes how kamma viññāṇa can bring vipāka in the present life itself at that time. "Ida" (or "idha") means "here" or "at that time." "Ida paccaya"" (based on the conditions at this time) rhymes as "idappaccayā." [idappaccayat $\bar{a}$ : [f.] having its foundation based on the conditions at this time, i.e., causally connected.]
- On the other hand, arising of future rebirths via kamma viññanạa is described in "Akusala-Mūla Uppatti Paticca Samuppāda."
- In Abhdhammic language, those two types of kammic energies (kammic potential) are nānākkhaṇik $\bar{a}$ (for rebirth) and sahajāt $\bar{a}$ (in the present life); see Ref. 1. No need to go into such details for our discussion.
- To refresh memory on kamma viññāna, see, "Abhisańkhāra Lead to Kamma Viññāna."


## Simple Example 1

2. A strong kamma (say hitting a human) originates with abhisañkhāra arising in mind (say in person X.) Of course, X does such a deed without knowing (or forgetting about) the harmful consequences. Due to either reason, avijjā had arisen in mind leading to "avijjā paccayā abhisañkhāra" and "abhisañkhāra paccayā kamma viññāna." Kamma viñ̃āṇa is the mindset to achieve a particular goal (in this case, to hurt the other person.)

- He may hurt that person based on that intention (by becoming a violent person.)
- "Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda" describes that process. However, his INTENTION to hurt the other person will generate kammic power that will bring back vipāka to HIMSELF in the future, well into future lives. "Akusala-Mūla Uppatti Paticca Samuppāda" explains that second process.
- Let us see how X is "born" a violent person in this life via "Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda."


## Idappaccayatā Paṭicca Samuppāda Example

3. First, hatefil thoughts (with dosa) arise in X's mind, and those are vacī abhisañkhāra. That gives rise to a defiled mindset (kamma viññāna). As one keeps generating vacī abhisañkhāra, anger grows and that kamma viññāṇa will become strong.

- Those defiled thoughts create javana power (kammic energy) in javana citta. This energy accumulates in the "kamma bhava" (we will discuss that in the future.) Part of that energy leads to vipāka in the present life by turning him into a violent person at that moment. The rest of that kammic energy can bring $v i p a \overline{k a}$ in the future.
- Now, as X keeps getting angrier, part of that kammic energy brings vipāka by transforming him into a temporary bhava (state of a violent person in this case). His face becomes dark, and he will be visibly agitated. "Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda" describes that process.
- If he gets "worked up," he may get into physical violence with kāya abhisañkhāra, and that could lead to even killing of the other person. Kāya abhisañkhāra are even more potent. The accumulated kammic energies can bring a future rebirth in a lower realm. "Akusala-Mūla Uppatti Paticca Samuppāda" explains that process.


## Birth Within Birth - Innocent Teenager to a Drunkard

4. "Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda "can also explain the transformation of an innocent teenager to a drunkard over a longer time (still within the present life.) Suppose X is a teenager growing up in a nice family. At school, he starts hanging out with bad friends and starts drinking. In the beginning, he is reluctant even to taste the alcohol but cannot resist the "peer pressure."

- Once getting started, he develops a new "gati" (habit) to like drinking and related activities. The more he wants to get drunk, the more he starts thinking about it (i.e., frequently generating vacī abhisañkhāra.) Here he starts building a new kamma bhava that can make him born a "drunkard" again in this life. On the other hand, future vipāka will contribute to a rebirth in a lower realm.
- A kamma viñãāna is the desire to get something done or work toward a specific goal. X is cultivating a "viññāna of a drunkard" or the "mindset of a drunkard." The more X thinks about getting together with friends and drinking, the more "drunkard viññạ̄a" grows and contributes kammic energy to the corresponding kamma bhava.
- That is a CRITICAL point that differentiates kamma viññaña from a vipāka viññāña. It is discussed (as usual in the summary or "uddesa" form) in the Cetanā Sutta (SN 12.38); see below.


## Establishment and Growth of a Kamma Viññāṇa

5. As we have discussed, kamma accumulation does not start until the following two conditions are satisfied:
(i) A sensory input (ārammanaa) comes in, which could be through any of the six senses.
(ii) Mind gets attached to that sensory input. It could be seeing an attractive person, hearing a pleasing sound, etc.

- Note that step (i) involves a vipāka viñ̃ãaña. There is no kamma accumulation. It is just seeing, hearing, etc.
- Step (ii) would not occur unless the mind gets attached to that arammana. Once getting attached, the mind starts generating citta (thoughts) about that sensory input (how to enjoy it more/get possession of it, etc.). Such citta develop (within a billionth of a second) into a kamma viññāna. That kamma viññāna (expectation) can grow with more abhisañkhāra.


## Correct Translation of Cetanā Sutta (SN 12.38)

6. Let us see how the "WebLink: suttacentral: Cetan $\bar{a}$ Sutta (SN 12.38)" explains the above process. The link at Sutta Central provides both the English translation by Bhikkhu Sujato and the Pāli version side-byside.

- The third verse there is: "Ārammaṇe sati patitṭhā viññanassa hoti." That means a kamma viñnāạna establishes upon the mind getting attached to an ārammana. Note that it is a vipāka viññāña that had started the process. "Ārammañe sati" means focusing the mind on that ärammaṇa.
- Next verse, "Tasmim patițthite viññāne virūḷe āyatim punabbhavābhinibbatti hoti" means "when that kamma viññāna is established and grows, it will produce kammic energy for future renewed existence" (punabbhava means repeated existence.) Of course, bhava would be according to the type of kamma.
- Note that the English translation at Sutta Central says: "When consciousness is established and grows, there is rebirth into a new state of existence in the future." How can consciousness grow? Consciousness means awareness. Most translators translate it the exact wrong way without distinguishing between the initial vipäka viññāna and the subsequent kamma viñnäna. Only vipāka viññāna fall into the category of "consciousness."
- (By the way, I was not trying to pick on Bhikkhu Sujato above. Bhikkhu Bodhi also has a translation (about the same as Bhikkhu Sujato), but it does not have the Pāli text side-by-side.


## Simple Example 2

7. Let us take a simple example to illustrate the sequence of events when person X sees his arch-enemy Y .

- "Seeing Y " is a vipāka viññāṇa and Y becomes the ārammaṇa (thought object) for X .
- X starts generating angry thoughts (vacī abhisañkhāra) about Y, resulting in the establishment of a kamma viññāna (an expectation.) Because of that mindset, X says something terrible to Y ; that is an escalation of vacī abhisañkhāra, and the kamma viññanna grows. X has now started accumulating kammic energy that brings him to an "angry bhava." His face becomes dark, and he is visibly getting upset.
- If Y also says something hostile in return, the situation can escalate. X may become angrier, generating more vacī abhisañkhāra, and the kamma viññāna grows to the extent that X may decide to attack Y physically. Such an attack involves kāya abhisañkhāra and even more kammic energy generated. Of course, part of that energy would also bring vipāka in the future.


## Summary

8. Understanding Buddha Dhamma means understanding Pațicca Samuppāda. That requires knowing what is meant by each term in Paticca Samuppāda. Most translators don't seem to understand what is meant by basic terms like sañkhāra and viññāna, let alone more complex nāmarūpa, bhava, etc.

- In previous posts, I pointed out that "sañkhāra" is a generic term, and in some instances, it is necessary to use abhisañkhāra even though the "uddesa version" just says "sañkhāra."
- In the same way, viññāna is a generic term. One needs to know the difference between vipāka viñ̃̄āṇa (consciousness or awareness) and the kamma viñnäna (mindset to achieve a goal/expectation.)
- Translating deep suttas word by word without understanding those differences has hindered many, particularly those in the Western world who rely on English translations. Also, see, "Distortion of Pāli Keywords in Paticca Samuppāda."
- Up to now, such incorrect translations could have been justified because correct interpretations had not been available. But I, and a few others, have been trying to point these issues over the past few years. We are not saying to accept our explanations blindly. But if our descriptions are not correct, those errors need to be pointed out. Such comments can be made at the discussion forum.


## Reference

1. In WebLink: suttacentral: Patthānapakarana, toward the end of the page under the sub-heading "Kamma":

Ajjhattārammaṇo dhammo ajjhattārammanassa dhammassa kammapaccayena paccayo- sahajātā, nānākkhaṇikā. Sahajātā-ajjhattārammaṇā cetanā sampayuttakānaì khandhānaì
 vipākānaì ajjhattārammaṇānaì khandhānaì kammapaccayena paccayo.

### 9.6.1.2 Summary of Key Concepts About Viññāṇa and Sañkhāra

January 16, 2022; revised August 31, 2022
We have discussed several key concepts about viñ̃̄āna and sañkhāra in the recent series of posts. It could be beneficial to summarize them in one post.

Difference Between a Vipāka Viññạna and a Kamma Viñ̃̄āṇa

1. It is CRITICAL to distinguish between recognizing a sensory input and thinking about it to achieve a particular goal.

- The first is just a sensory experience called consciousness or awareness. One becomes aware of sight, sound, taste, smell, touch, i.e., "eye-consciousness through body-consciousness (touch sensation.)."
- The second is MORE THAN consciousness/awareness. The mind wants to accomplish something based on that sensory input. The second type occurs ONLY IF the mind is attracted/attached to that sensory experience.
- It is essential to see the connection between the two cases and the time sequence. A kamma viñ̃āṇa may arise only after a vipāka viññāṇa.


## Vipāka Viññ̄āna - Initial Sensory Experience

2. The first type is a vipāka vi $\tilde{n} \tilde{n} \bar{a} n a$. Any person living in the human world (whether it is an average human or a Buddha) will experience this type of viññ̄ạna.

- For example, imagine our Buddha Gotama living in Jetavanārāmaya (a luxurious residence offered to the Buddha and the bhikkhus by the wealthy merchant Anāthapinḍika.) He would see and hear the same things as anyone else there. If someone offered a good meal, they all would agree that it was tasty.


## Kamma Viññāṇa - Expectation (Goal) Based on the Vipāka Viññāṇa

3. The second type, kamma viñnāṇa, will take place ONLY IF one got attracted/attached to the sensory experience of the first type, a vipāka viñ̃̄̄̄ṇa.

- The mind MUST first be made aware of "something attractive thing," whether it is a sight, sound, taste, smell, or a touch to get attached. Of course, it could also be a MEMORY of a previous sensory experience. For example, the memory of a tasty food eaten last week may come to the mind as a vipāka viñ̃ān̄a too. That is why a vipāka viññāna can be cakkhu, sota, jivhā, ghāna, kāya, or mano viññāna.
- However, we don't get attached to all we see, hear, etc. We get enticed by only a fraction of such sensory inputs (ārammana.) But if we do attach, we start building expectations along with that. We do that by thinking about acting on that arammana (how to enjoy it more if it is enjoyable.) All that happens at the mind-door (manodvāra), and thus kamma viññāna is always a mano viññana.


## Sañkhāra and Abhisañkhāra - Critical Difference

4. Thus, the cultivation of a kamma viññ̄ạna starts with vitakka/vicāra. In simple terms, vitakka is to "focus on that ārammaṇa" and vicāra is to "think along that ārammaṇa." For example, if we see an appealing person, we may think about approaching that person.

- Thus the initiation/cultivation of a kamma viññāna starts with "vitakka/vicāra." Such vitakka/vicāra are vacī sañkhāra. If such thoughts involve lobha, dosa, and moha, they become vacī abhisaǹkhāra.
- If that kamma viññāna becomes more assertive, we may take physical action to fulfill that kamma viññāna (expectation.) In the above example, we may walk to that person and start talking to the person. Such activities involve kāya sañkhāra. Again, if such thoughts also involve lobha, dosa, and moha, they become kāya abhisañkhāra.
- Thus, we can see that abhisañkhāra are associated only with kamma viññāna and NOT with vipāka viñ̃̄āna.


## It Is Necessary to Understand Those Key Concepts

5. I hope the above summary on sañkhāra/abhisañkhāra and their relationships to vipāka viñ $\tilde{n}$ ănalkamma viññanna is clear. If you go back and read the previous posts, that may solidify your understanding.

- It is essential to understand those critical concepts before being able to comprehend Patticca Samuppāda or Tilakkhaṇa or the Four Noble Truths.
- The English words "consciousness" or "thoughts" do not convey the meaning of viññāna, especially kamma viññāna. Learning about the relationship between citta and viññāna could be helpful


## A Citta Evolves to a Viññāṇa

6. Why did the Buddha analyze our world with five entities (five aggregates) of rūpa, vedan $\bar{a}$, sañ $\tilde{n} \bar{a}$, saṅkhāra, viññāṇa?

- The world offers sensory inputs with six types of rūpa: rūpa rūpa (sights), sadda rūpa (sounds), rasa rūpa (tastes), gandha rūpa (smells), photthabba rūpa (touches), and dhamma rūpa or dhammā (kammically-produced fine $r \bar{u} p a$ ).
- That last category of dhammā includes rūpa below the suddhatṭhaka stage. A suddhaṭthaka is the smallest $r \bar{u} p a$ belonging to the other five types of rūpa. In other words, modern science can detect the first five types of rūpa with their instruments but will never detect dhammā.
- For details, see "Chachakka Sutta - Six Types of Vipāka Viññāna" and "What are Rūpa? - Dhammā are Rūpa too!"
- The suttas refer to dhammā as "anidassana appatigha rūpa" (which cannot be seen or detected with the physical instruments). I will discuss how dhamma $\overline{a r e}$ related to kamma viñ $\bar{n} \bar{n} n a$ in the next post. An intro to the next post is in \#10 below.

7. When any of those six types of rūpa makes contact with the mental body (gandhabba), then vedanā, sañ̃̄̄̄, sañkhāra, viñ̃̃āna arise as vipāka viññāna. That is how we experience such a rūpa. The brain plays a crucial role in the above process; see, "Brain - Interface between Mind and Body."

- All four of those mental aggregates rise in citta. A citta arises with a certain number of cetasika (mental factors.) At least seven cetasika arise with a citta, and vedanā and sañ $\tilde{a} \bar{a}$ are two of those "universal cetasika."
- The inclusion of more cetasika in a citta comes under "sañkhāra." If any sobhana (good or "mundane alobha, adosa, amoha") or asobhana (bad or lobha, dosa, moha) cetasika arise, then those become abhisañkhāra. That is a simple way to remember the difference between sañkhāra and abhisañkhāra.
- The overall sensory experience is viññāna. Any citta starts with the seven universal cetasika and will incorporate more cetasika (sañkhāra generation) and ends up as viñ̃āāna. That happens very fast (within a billionth of a second), and only a Buddha can "see" such a rapid process.
- That is a bit of very basic Abhidhamma that everyone needs to know. It is not necessary to learn the details at the beginning.

8. I hope now you can see the inter-relationships among the five aggregates.

- The six types of rūpa bring sensory experiences via vipāka viññāna.
- The four aggregates of vedanā, sañ̃̃̄, sañkhāra, ans viññāna help describe such a sensory experience.
- If we attach to such sensory experiences, the mind will generate kammic energies (dhammā) via kamma viññāna.
- Such dhamm $\bar{a}$ can lead to future rebirths of a sentient being AND more of the six types of $r \bar{u} p a$. That is all explained by Paticca Samuppāda.


## Paṭicca Samuppāda Can Be Deep and Explain Everything in This World

9. That is also the critical meaning of the first two verses in Dhammapada: "Manopubbangamā Dhammā.." It is the mind that creates the future lives and the physical world. That is a profound subject, and we are at the beginning of such a discussion.

## - Of course, it is NOT necessary to learn such processes in detail.

- But it is good to realize that Buddha Dhamma (Paṭicca Samuppāda) should not be taken lightly, as the Buddha admonished Ven. Ananda in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Mahānidāna Sutta (DN 15)." The first few verses in the English translation recount that exchange between the Buddha and Ven. Ananda.


## Anidassana Viñ̃nāṇa - What Does That Mean?

10. As we discussed above, it is a kamma viññāna that creates dhamma rūpa or dhamm $\bar{a}$ - the sixth type of $r \bar{u} p a$ in Buddha Dhamma addressed in \#6 above.

- The phrase "viññānaim anidassanaì" has invoked many discussions; see, for example, "WebLink: suttacentral: Viññāna anidassana: the state of boundless consciousness."
- However, it has a simple meaning, "viññāṇa is not visible." Yet, for those who assume viññāṇā can only mean "consciousness" it is intriguing. They think, "of course, consciousness is invisible. So, why did the Buddha say that?" The answer is that a kamma viññāna is much more than just consciousness.
- That phrase "viññānam anidassanaì" appears in the WebLink: suttacentral: Brahmanimantanika Sutta (MN 49) and the WebLink: suttacentral: Kevatta Sutta (DN 11) and refers explicitly to kamma viññāna. The CRITICAL POINT to understand is that a kamma viññāna can generate "anidassana rūpa" (dhammā).
- That discussion in "Anidassana, Appatigha Rūpa Due to Anidassana Viññāna."


## Summary

10. A sensory experience starts with a vipāka viññāna. If the mind gets attached to it, then it may begin to generate abhisañkhāra and thereby generate kammic energies via kamma viññāna. Such kammic powers bring future vipāka, and thus the saimsāric process drags on.

- Any type of viññāna starts as a citta, "the primary unit of cognition" in Buddha Dhamma. A set of cetasika arises with a citta that defines the citta as good, bad, or neutral.
- That citta evolves into a complex entity called viñãāna (by incorporating various cetasika) within a billionth of a second. During that astonishingly short time, the original citta gets contaminated depending on two factors: (i) the sensory input and (ii) the gati (character/habits) of the person. See "Gati (Habits/Character) Determine Births - Samsappanīya Sutta."
- Comprehending Buddha Dhamma requires studying various interconnected aspects. It is like working on a jigsaw puzzle. With time and effort, a clear picture will emerge.

9.6.1.2 Anidassana, Appaṭigha Rūpa Due to Anidassana Viññāṇa

January 23, 2022

The famous verse, "viññannaì anidassanaì anantaì sabbato pabhaì" in Kevatṭa Sutta (DN 11) and Brahmanimantanika Sutta (MN 49) refers to the creation of anidassana appatigha rūpa (dhammā) by kamma viññāna.

## Viññānàm anidassanaím anantain sabbato pabhaím - Correct Translation

1. The phrase, "anidassana viññāna" needs to be analyzed within the longer verse, "viññānaìn anidassanam் anantamं sabbato pabham." "

- That extended verse appears in two suttas, "WebLink: suttacentral: Brahmanimantanika Sutta (MN 49)" and "WebLink: suttacentral: Kevatta Sutta (DN 11)"; see Ref. 1 and Ref. 2.
- That verse means: "Viññ̄ạna is unseen, infinite, and is the origin of all existence (bhava)." Here, it refers specifically to kamma viññ̄āna that arises via "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra," "sañkhāra paccayā viññāna" in Paticca Samuppāda. As we know, that leads to "upādāna paccayā bhava."
- The "WebLink: suttacentral: Dutivabodhi Sutta (Ud 1.2)" and many other suttas confirm that. It states that avijja nirodhā (cessation of avijjā) lead to the cessation of kamma viñnāna that, in turn, lead to the cessation of bhava and future suffering.
- See, "Distortion of Pāli Keywords in Paticca Samuppāda" where I pointed out the problem with translating "viññāna" as just "consciousness." The six types of vipāka viññāna do not cease with the cessation of $a v i j j a \bar{a}$ and will exist until Parinibbāna.
- Now, let us see how most translators have incorrectly translated that verse, "viññānaim anidassanai் anantaim sabbato pabham," in both those suttas.


## Viññānaim anidassanaí anantaim sabbato pabhaím - Incorrect Translations

2. Bhikkhu Sujato translates, "viññānaì anidassanaím anantai் sabbato pabhaï" as "consciousness that is invisible, infinite, entirely given up;" "WebLink: suttacentral: On the Invitation of Brahmā (MN 49)." I have no idea how he translated "pabhaim" as "given up."

- Bhikkhu Bodhi translates the same verse as, "consciousness non-manifesting, boundless, luminous allaround;" see Ref. 3.
- I have seen others translate "pabha" as "luminous," too. That confusion comes from equating "pabha" to "pabh $\vec{a} "$ (with a "long a.") Those two words have very different meanings; see \#3 below.
- All of us agree that the first part means, " viññāṇa is unseen, infinite." As I show below, those are general characteristics of viñnānaa dhātu.


## Pabha Is Different from Pabhā

3. The "WebLink: budsas.org: Concise Pāli-English Dictionary" by Buddhadatta Mahathera defines "pabhava" as "origin, source" and "pabha" (with a long " a ") as "light, radiance."

- Both those are correct. It is also good to know that the word "pabhava," " $p a$ " means again and again, "bha" is related to" bhava." Thus pabhava means "repeated existence" that arises via Paticca Samuppāda, as pointed out in \#1 above.
- The word "pabha" appears in another critical verse, "Ye dhammā hetuppabhavā;" see Ref. 4, Ref. 5, and Ref. 6.
- The meaning of "pabhä" (with a long "a") as "light" is easily seen in the short "WebLink: suttacentral: Pabhā Sutta (AN 4.142)."
- To get a good idea of how bad the translations of \#2 are, we need to look at the background of the two suttas where the verse "Viññānaim anidassanaì anantaì sabbato pabhaì" appear.


## Brahmanimantanika Sutta (MN 49)

4. This sutta describes an account of a "debate" between the Buddha and Baka Brahma, the "leader" of the Mahā Brahma realm. Baka Brahma thought that his existence was eternal and he was superior to the Buddha.

- During that discussion, the Buddha explained to the Brahma that Baka Brahma was not even aware that there are realms above the Maha Brahma realm.
- Then they discussed how attachment to worldly things made of pathavi, āpo, tejo, vāyo would lead to various existences. The Buddha pointed out to Brahma that did not understand the fundamental nature of the four primary elements (pathavi, $\bar{a} p o, t e j o, v \bar{a} y o$ ) present in all the realms.

5. That is when the Buddha made the general statement in Ref. 1 to point out that it is (kamma) viññana that leads to the continuation of the rebirth process among all those realms where the four primary elements are present.

- Translation of the first part of the verse in Ref. 1: "Viñ̃̄̄āna is unseen, infinite, and leads to the rebirth process for all. With viññāna one cannot comprehend the real nature of pathavi, āpo, tejo, vāyo, bhūtā, deva, pajāpati brahma, abhassara brahma, subhakinha brahma, vehapphala brahma, etc. (in any realm) in this world (sabba)".
- The last part of the verse in Ref. 1, "sabbassa sabbattena ananubhūtam" means the following. Without comprehending kamma viññaña (that it is invisible, infinite, and gives rise to existences based on the four primary elements), one would not be able to comprehend the fundamental nature of this world.
- The verse in Ref. 1 is the critical part of this relatively long sutta. Even though the rest of the sutta could be translated word by word, that verse requires a detailed explanation.
- Next, the Kevatṭa Sutta directly states that cessation of (kamma) viññāna leads to the stopping of the rebirth process.


## Kevațta Sutta (DN 11)

6. Kevatta Sutta is even longer. But most of this sutta can also be translated word by word. The Buddha explains to Kevatta that it is not good to try to convert people of other faiths by performing miracles/supernatural deeds like flying through the air. When people understand the deeper aspects of the Buddha Dhamma, they will not give any value to such miracles.

- It is Section 4 of the sutta, where the background story starts leading to the verse in Ref. 2. The following question arose in the mind of a certain bhikkhu: "Where do these four primary elements (pathavi, āpo, tejo, vāyo) cease to exist?"
- Then the Buddha explains to Kevatta how that bhikkhu (who had abhiññā powers) went to higher realms looking for the answer to his question. No one knew the answer, and he returned to ask the Buddha. That account takes most of Section 4.
- The verse of importance to us comes at the end of the sutta in Section 4.1. There, the Buddha explains that the question needs to be re-phrased, as we discuss next.


## Nibbāna Reached with the Cessation of Kamma Viñnāạa

7. The point is that one cannot find any existence where those four primary elements are absent. Rather, one should re-phrase the question as, "How would those four primary elements (pathavi, āpo, tejo,
$v \bar{a} y o$ ) not find a footing anywhere (among the 31 realms)?" That is the same as asking, "How can one stop the rebirth process?"

- The answer is at the end of the verse: "Viññānassa nirodhena etthetaim uparujjhatī'ti." "They (the four primary elements) will cease to exist with the cessation of viññāna." Of course, it refers only to kamma viññāna.
- The four primary elements will cease to exist in Parinibbāna or "full Nibbāna" (realized after the death of an Arahant.) Once the Arahant dies, they would not be reborn in this world made of the four primary elements.

8. As we have discussed, kamma viññāna ceased to exist for the Buddha upon his Enlightenment. But he lived in this world for another 45 years until Parinibbāna and experienced vipāka viññāna during that whole time! Thus, "cessation of the four primary elements" was realized only after the Parinibbāna. See, "Distortion of Pāli Keywords in Paticca Samuppāda."

- I hope now you can see why the English translations in \#2 above of the verse "viññānám anidassanaí anantaim sabbato pabhaï" are wrong. Of course, there are several more wrong translations of the same verse. We will discuss one more next.


## Anidassana Viññạ̣a Is the Second Arupāvacara Jhāna?

9. In the previous post, I mentioned the fact that there have been many discussions at discussion forums on anidassana viññāṇa. See, for example, "WebLink: discourse.suttacentral.net: Viññāna anidassana: the state of boundless consciousness." The author points out to a reference that equates anidassana viññāna to Nibbāna!

- The author of the above essay does not go that far, but says, "I show here that viñnāna anidassana is not nibbāna, but a poetic description of the state of boundless consciousness, the second "formless" meditation state."
- So, the author attempts to prove that anidassana viññaña is a state of higher consciousness, the second arupāvacara jhāna or the "viñ̃n̄ạnañcāyatana."
- It is also interesting to read the comments following that essay. Bhikkhu Sujāto agrees with the author of the essay, saying, "It makes a lot of sense, especially the idea of anidassana being equivalent to arūpa.." Bhikkhu Brahmāli states, "Excellent essay! It is clear, and I think the conclusion you arrive at is solid."

10. That is why I have been emphasizing that most translators of the Tipitaka do not even understand basic concepts like viññāna and sañkhāra. I hope those bhikkhus and other translators will think through the FACTS presented here.

- One can get a good idea of the sad state of Buddha Dhamma in the present day by reading the above essay and the series of comments that follow. It was a depressing experience for me.


## Ananta Viññāṇa - Characteristic of Viññāṇa Dhātu

11. The author of the essay in \#9 above extracted "boundless consciousness" from the next word, anantaim, in verse: "viññānāàm anidassanamं anantaì sabbato pabhaín.." The Pāli word "ananta" does mean "infinite."

- However, viññanna dhātu itself is boundless and that characteristic is NOT limited to the second arūpāvacara jhāna. In the transition from ākāsānañcāyatana (the first arupāvacara jhāna) to the viññānañcāyatana, viñ̃̄̄̄ṇa dhātu separates from the ākāsa dhātu. At that point, the mind separates from any rūpa and perceives ONLY the "ananta (infinite) viñ̃̃āṇa."
- Note that everything in this world is represented by the five aggregates (pañcakkhandha), twelve $\bar{a} y a t a n a$, or six types of dhātu. Those six types of dhātu are pathavi, āpo, tejo, vāyo, ākāsa, viñ̃̄āṇa. Both $\bar{a} k \bar{a} s a$ and viññāna dhätu are infinite.

12. Any type of viññāna is "spread out" without bounds. A mind has access to its own viññana dhātu from anywhere. That is why whether we are on Earth, go to the Moon, or even to another planetary system at the other end of the universe, we will be able to recall memories and to think just like while we are on Earth. On the other hand, the five physical senses detect only localized, dense $r \bar{u} p a$.

- The astronauts who went to the Moon could not see, hear, smell, taste, or touch anything that is not on the Moon. But they could recall their memories as if they were on the Earth. That is because viññanna is infinite.
- Put it another way, dense rūpa (experienced by the five physical senses) are localized, but the nāma category (vedanā, sañ̃̄̄a, sañkhāra, viññāna) is NOT localized. In between such dense (sappatigha) rūpa and anidassana/appatigha nāma, there are anidassana/appatigha rūpa (dhammā.)
- Both nāma and dhammā are not localized and are included in viñnāna dhātu. See, "What are Rūpa? - Dhammā are Rūpa too!"‘


## Sappatigha Rūpa and Appatigha Rūpa (Dhammā)

13. In modern terms, sappaṭigha rūpa can be detected with five physical senses AND scientific instruments. On the other hand, appatigha rūpa (dhammā) and appatigha nāma cannot be detected with scientific instruments and can be detected only by the mind.

- Note that out of the five types of sappatigha rūpa, only rūpa rūpa (visual objects) can be seen (dassana) because sounds (sadda rūpa), tastes (rasa rūpa), odors (gandha rūpa), and touches (phoṭthabba rūpa) cannot be seen (anidassana).


## Anidassana Viññāṇa Means "Viñ̃̃āṇa Cannot Be Seen"

14. The phrase, "viññānāàm anidassanam"" simply means, "viññāṇa is invisible."

- If any viñ̃n̄ana is purely mental belonging to the nāma category (i.e., just consciousness or awareness), then what is the point of saying, "viññāna is invisible"?
- As I have explained in previous posts, it is only the vipāka viñ̃āạa that pertains to just consciousness (strictly within the nāma category.) In contrast, kamma viñnāana is more than consciousness and has energy. Kamma viñ̃̃āna gives rise to subtle rūpa (dhammā,) the sixth type of rūpa in Buddha Dhamma.

15. In this world, there are nāma and rūpa and nāmarūpa (for example, living beings have nāmarūpa represented by the five aggregates). There are different meanings of all three words depending on the context.

- The verse in question, "viññānāàm anidassanamं anantaim sabbato pabhamं.." refers to the unique property of a kamma viññāna. It is "in the middle between the category of pure nāma (vedanā, sañ̃̄̄̄, sañkhāra, vipāka viññāna) and dense (sappaṭigha) rūpa (rūpa rūpa, sadda rūpa, gandha rūpa, rasa rūpa, and photthabba rūpa.)
- In Buddha Dhamma, there is a sixth type of fine (appatigha) rūpa called "dhammā," as we have discussed, for example, in "What are Rūpa? - Dhammā are Rūpa too!" Dhammā are invisible and arise due to kamma viñ $\tilde{n} \bar{n} a$. That is why the need to emphasize that kamma viññana is also invisible.

Kamma Viññāṇa = Paṭisandhi Viññạṇa = Gandhabba (Mental Body)
16. Thus, a kamma viññāna that comes to play in Patticca Samuppāda is MORE THAN consciousness. It CREATES kammic energies (dhammā or kamma bija) to power future rebirths. That kammic energy creates the "seed" of a future human at the cuti-patisandhi moment. That "seed" is the "mental body" or "gandhabba." That gandhabba is so tiny that it is invisible to the naked eye or even the most powerful scientific instruments.

- Note that gandhabba is not a kamma viñ̃āṇa, but the RESULT of a kamma viññāna. At the cutipatisandhi moment (grasping a new existence or bhava, that kammic energy creates the "seed" of the sentient beings in the new existence. In many cases, like a Deva or Brahma, that seed itself is the new living being, i.e., a Deva or a Brahma. We would not be able to see them.
- In the case of humans and animals, that seed (gandhabba) needs to get into a womb to grow into a human with a dense physical body. See "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception."
- That gandhabba is "anidassana" too, i.e., invisible. Even though some suttas refer to a gandhabba descending to a womb (e.g., WebLink: suttacentral: Mahā Tanhāsankhava Sutta (MN 38), other suttas (e.g., WebLink: suttacentral: Mahā Nidāna Sutta (DN 15)) refer to a "paṭisandhi viññāna" descending to a womb. Thus, both refer to the "seed" of a human, which grows inside a womb taking food from the mother.


## Summary

17. "Anidassana viññāṇ"" in the verse, "viññānaaiं anidassanaì anantamं sabbato pabhaम்" specifically refers to kamma viññāna that creates kammic energy (or dhammā or kamma bija.)

- We may have created numerous such kamma viññāna (or kamma bija) that can "power up" births in various realms in the future. When it is time to grasp a new existence (at the end of the current bhava) one kamma bija comes to the mind as an arrammaṇa.
- If that ārammaṇa is grasped, that creates the mental body/gandhabba/paṭisandhi viñ̃ñaṇa. Thus, pațisandhi viññāna is actually not a viññanna, but the result of a kamma viññāna.
- More details at, "Anidassana Viññāna - What It Really Means."


## References

1. In the "WebLink: suttacentral: Brahmanimantanika Sutta (MN 49)": "Viñnānamín anidassanaì anantai் sabbato pabhaì, taì pathaviyā pathavattena ananubhūtaim, āpassa āpattena ananubhūtaì, tejassa tejattena ananubhūtaì, vāyassa vāyattena ananubhūtaì, bhūtānaì bhūtattena ananubhūtaì, devānai் devattena ananubhūtaì, pajāpatissa pajāpatittena ananubhūtaì, brahmānaì brahmattena ananubhūtaì, ābhassarānaì ābhassarattena ananubhūtaì, subhakinhhānaì subhakiṇhattena ananubhūtaì, vehapphalānai் vehapphalattena ananubhūtaì, abhibhussa abhibhuttena ananubhūtaì, sabbassa sabbattena ananubhūtaì."
2. In the "WebLink: suttacentral: Kevatta Sutta (DN 11)": "Viñnāāai் anidassanaì, anantaim sabbatopabhaì-Ettha āpo ca pathavī, tejo vāyo na gādhati. Ettha dīghañca rassañca,aṇum thūlaì subhāsubhaì; Ettha nāmañca rūpañca,asesai் uparujjhati; Viñnāānassa nirodhena, etthetaì uparujjhatī’ti."
3. Bhikkhu Bodhi, "The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha" Wisdom Publication (2009), p. 428. A lengthy footnote on p. 1249 (footnote 513) describes how he has agonized over choosing from three different explanations for this verse.
4. "Ye dhammā hetuppabhavā,

Tesaì hētù̀ tathāgato āha;
Tesañca yo nirōdhō,

Evaìv $\bar{a} d \bar{\imath}$ mahāsamaṇō." (See Ref. 5 below)

- Upon hearing this verse uttered by Ven. Assaji, Upatissa (later Ven. Sāriputta) became a Sotāpanna. That is the fundamental concept of Buddha Dhamma and explained in detail in the Patticca Samuppāda.
- The correct translation is the following. "Buddha declared that all dhamm $\bar{a}$ (some of which are kamma $b \bar{y} a$ ) that give rise to everything (including the rebirth process,) are caused by "three san" (lobha, dosa, moha); he has also explained how we can stop those causes from arising (and thus end the rebirth process)."
- That is essentially the translation of the above verse given in many English texts; see, for example, the following from Ref. 6 below: "Of all those things that from a cause arise, Tathagata the cause thereof has told; And how they cease to be, that too he tells, This is the doctrine of the Great Recluse."

5. From "WebLink: suttacentral: Petakopadesa (KN Pe 1)" (around the midway in the link):
"Tattha katamāni cattāri ariyasaccāni? "Ye dhammā hetuppabhavā,Tesamं hetum tathāgato $\bar{a} h a ; T e s a n ̃ c a ~ y o ~ n i r o d h o, ~ E v a i n v a ̄ d \bar{u} ~ m a h a ̄ s a m a n ̣ o " t i . ~ H e t u p p a b h a v a ̄ ~ d h a m m a ̄ ~ d u k k h a \dot{m}$, hetusamudayo, yaì bhagavato vacanaim."
6. "WebLink: accesstoinsight.org: The Life of Sāriputta"

### 9.6.1.3 Memory, Dhammā, and Viññāṇa Dhātu

February 1, 2022
Critical Influence of Wrong Views on Akusala Citta
Near-Death Experiences (NDE): Brain Is Not the Mind
Gandhabba (Mental Body) Separating from Physical Body in Jhāna
Where Are Memories Stored? - Viñ̃̃āna Dhātu

### 9.6.1.3 Critical Influence of Wrong Views on Akusala Citta

## February 1, 2022

Wrong views (micchā diṭthi) play the dominant role in akusala cittā. The same akusala kamma done by someone with wrong views leads to a much stronger kamma vipāka compared to the same kamma done by another person without wrong views.

## Critical Role of Wrong Views

1. Wrong views in Buddha Dhamma refer to wrong views about the nature of our world.

- The Buddha taught that our world operates on a set of natural laws based on the laws of kamma.
- The first level of wrong views is not believing in the laws of kamma. They include not believing that immoral deeds (akusala kamma) will bring dire consequences (bad kamma vipāka) and good kamma will bring good kamma vipäka. Another is not believing in the rebirth process. They fall under the ten types of micchā diṭthi. See, "Micchā Ditthi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage."
- Someone who does not have the ten types of micchā dittthi can learn the correct version of Buddha Dhamma and get rid of the second and deeper layer of micchā dittthi. An average human thinks that the world is of nicca, sukha, atta nature, i.e., it is possible to have a future with happiness. However, "future" in Buddha Dhamma is not restricted to this life, but also future lives. Realizing the true anicca, dukkha, anatta nature will remove that deeper layer of wrong views.


## Akusala Kamma Based on Akusala Citta

2. There are ten types of akusala kamma, three by the mind, four by speech, and three by bodily actions. However, akusala kamma by speech and bodily actions also originate in the mind. In other words, 12 types of cittā (loosely called "thoughts") are responsible for all akusala kamma.

- Thus, all ten akusala kamma are done with these 12 akusala citt $\bar{a}$. There are eight greed-rooted, two hatred-rooted, and two delusion-rooted citt $\bar{a}$. Of course, cittt $\bar{a}$ (pronounced "chiththā") are thoughts; any speech or bodily action starts with a thought.
- As we know, all akusala cittā arise in the mind due to lobha (greed), dosa (anger), and moha (delusion). Out of 12 akusala citt $\bar{a}, 8$ arise due to greed, 2 with anger, and 2 with delusion (a worse form of avijjā.)


## Lobha (Greedy) Citta (Also has the moha root)

1. Citta connected with wrong views, accompanied by pleasure, and done with the habit (gati).
2. Citta connected with wrong views, accompanied by pleasure, and done reluctantly (with encouragement by others.)
3. Citta without wrong views, accompanied by pleasure and done with habit.
4. Citta without wrong views, accompanied by pleasure and done reluctantly.
5. Citta connected with wrong views, accompanied by a neutral feeling, and done with habit.
6. Citta connected with wrong views, accompanied by a neutral feeling, and done reluctantly.
7. Citta without wrong views, accompanied by neutral feeling and done with habit.
8. Citta without wrong views, accompanied by neutral feeling and done reluctantly.

Dosa (Angry/Hateful) Citta (Also has the moha root)
9. Citta associated with hate, accompanied by displeasure, done with habit.
10. Citta associated with hate, accompanied by displeasure, done reluctantly.

Moha Citta (only with the moha root, i.e., without greed or anger)
11. Citta accompanied by a neutral feeling and associated with vicikicch $\bar{a}$ (not aware of bad consequences)
12. Citta accompanied by a neutral feeling and associated with $u d d h a c c a$ (excited/scattered mind).

## The Strong Influence of Wrong Views

3. One starts on the Noble Eightfold Path as a Sotāpanna (or Sotāpanna Anugāmi) by getting rid of both layers of wrong views discussed in \#1 above.

- At the Sotāpanna stage, three of the ten samyojana (fetters) are removed, and thereby akusala citt $\bar{a}$ $\# 1,2,5,6$, and 11 stop arising. Furthermore, apāyagāmi strength in the other types of cittā goes away.
- Thus, a Sotāpanna does not need to control the arising of such cittā consciously. Such cittā WILL NOT arise for any reason.
- Therefore, only the remaining seven types of cittā can arise in the mind of a Sotāpanna.


## Effect of Attaining Higher Stages of Nibbāna

4. The remaining akusala citt $\bar{a}$ are progressively removed as one gets to the higher stages of Nibbāna.

- The potency of the two patigha-rooted cittā, and the remaining four greed-based citta, i.e., kāma rāga, are reduced at the Sakadāgāmi stage.
- Those two patigha-rooted cittā (\#9, \#10) stop from arising at the Anāgāmi stage. Also, the potency of the remaining four greed-based citta, i.e., $\boldsymbol{k} \overline{\boldsymbol{a} m a} \boldsymbol{r} \bar{a} g a$, is reduced to just $\boldsymbol{k} \overline{\boldsymbol{a} m a}$ level.
- Finally, the remaining four greed-based citta (\#3, \#4, \#7, \#8) and the uddhacca citta (\#12) stop from arising at the Arahant stage. Thus an Arahant will never experience any akusala cittā.


## Key Observations

5. Generally, the kammic strength of cittā in each category decrease in descending order. Thus citta \#1 is stronger than any other in that category. citta \#9 is stronger than \#10. Citta \#11 is stronger than \#12.

- With higher magga phala, the strengths of ALL cittā are reduced, and some cease arising altogether.
- As we can see, a Sotāpanna mainly removes wrong views. But that will also reduce the strength of other types of citt $\bar{a}$. Thus kāma rāga is reduced too for a Sotāpanna; it is further reduced for a Sakadāgāmi and stops at the Anāgāmi stage.


## Role of Gati/Anusaya and Association with Asappurisa ("Bad People") with Wrong Views

6. As we can see, the strongest lobha citta (\#1) arises due to one's bad gati (character/habits.) Such cittā arise automatically.

- A common question that arises is: "Where are those gati/anusaya or defilements stored?"
- They stay with each person. Each person has their own nāma loka or viññāna dhātu.
- Records of all memories (nāmagotta) remain intact in the nāma loka. We will discuss that in the next post.

7. In some cases, one may engage in evil deeds due to the influence of immoral friends (asappurisa), and cittā of type \#2 can arise. Such citta have weaker strength. However, if one continues to associate with such friends, one may cultivate those bad gati and thus start generating the worse type (\#1) of akusala cittā.

- On the other hand, if one associates "good/Noble friends" (sappurisa) one will get rid of bad gati and cultivate good gati.
- Several suttas point out the importance of choosing one's associates/friends. See, for example, "WebLink: suttacentral: Dutivaasappurisa Sutta (SN 45.26)." More at, "WebLink: suttacentral: 30 results for asappurisa."


## Value of Abhidhamma

8. The above analysis of akusala citta is in basic Abhidhamma.

- Abhidhamma can become very useful in resolving "knotty issues." Once the basics are understood, it is possible to avoid lengthy explanations of certain concepts.
- See p. 32 of Ref. 1 for further details. Also, see "Akusala Citta and Akusala Vipāka Citta" and "Conditions for the Four Stages of Nibbāna."


## REFERENCES

1. "WebLink: PDF Download: Bhikkhu Bodhi-Comprehensive_Manual of Abhidhamma," by Bhikkhu Bodhi (2012); this is a revised and updated version of Ref. 2 below. There is a pdf file that can be downloaded (click the link to open the pdf).
2. "WebLink: PDF Download: A Manual of Abhidhamma," Fifth Edition by Narada Thero (1987).

### 9.6.1.3 Near-Death Experiences (NDE): Brain Is Not the Mind

February 7, 2022; August 31, 2022
Recent studies show that near-death experiences (NDE) are common occurrences while the brain is inactive. That means consciousness does not arise in the brain.

## Materialistic View - A Dangerous Wrong View in Buddha Dhamma

1. In the prevalent materialistic view (especially in the western world,) consciousness arises in the brain. Thus, when a person dies, the brain dies with it, the END. That means a materialist only needs to worry about any suffering we experience in this life (of course. That is a wrong conclusion based on an incorrect view.

The Buddha taught that life continues after the death of this physical body. The following birth is according to the causes and conditions prevailing at the moment of death and is according to Paṭicca Samuppāda. Most future existences/births are in the four lowest realms (apayās), where suffering dominates.

- That "future suffering" associated with rebirth stops only after attaining Nibbāna.
- The materialistic view is a STRONG wrong view (micchā ditṭhi) in Buddha Dhamma and will lead to rebirth in the apayās. How can one even start learning about "how to stop future suffering" if one does not believe in future lives?
- Therefore, evaluating the evidence for and against the rebirth process is a good idea.

2. If the materialist view of consciousness arising in the brain is correct, that assumption leads to the following inferences: (i) ALL rebirth accounts and NDE accounts are fake, and (ii) ALL our memories are stored in the brain.

- Therefore, it is critical to look at the following two related issues.
(i) How strong is the evidence for past lives? How reliable are the NDE accounts where brain activity is confirmed to have ceased?
(ii) Is it possible for a brain to store ALL our memories?


## One White Crow Is Enough to Disprove the Hypothesis, "All Crows Are Black"

3. If even a SINGLE rebirth account or an NDE is valid, then the hypothesis "consciousness arises in the brain" is false. American philosopher William James stated the following that is widely quoted today (Ref. 1):

## In order to disprove the assertion that all crows are black, one white crow is sufficient.

- That is a logical statement. It is unnecessary to prove that all or even many rebirth accounts/NDE accounts are true. Even if just one account is valid, that is enough to conclude that the brain is not the "seat of the mind."
- We have thousands of rebirth/NDE accounts scrutinized by scientists/physicians.

In rebirth accounts: Since a brain can store only the memories from this life, there is no way to recall memories from a previous life. Instead, the brain helps in recalling memories (from viñnäña dhātu) while the gandhabba is inside the body. I will discuss that in future posts.

In NDE accounts: Since the patient's brain activity had ceased (and even pronounced dead for a short time), the subject could not have "seen" and "heard" what was happening with the inactive brain. Furthermore, many saw their physical bodies "from the above (close to the ceiling)."

- Therefore, even if just ONE rebirth/NDE account is accurate, the hypothesis "consciousness arises in the brain" is wrong!


## Recent Developments

4. Several scientific findings within the past 50 years have converged to THREE types of investigations that point to the fact that the brain is not the "seat of consciousness." These findings indicate that while the brain plays a crucial role in consciousness, it is NOT where our thoughts arise, i.e., the brain is not the mind!

ONE: Rebirths accounts by children have been common knowledge in many Asian countries for ages. Most people in those countries were Buddhists who accepted those accounts without question. Only recently, Western countries became interested after two significant developments: Systematic studies conducted by Professor Ian Stevenson (Ref. 2) and easy access to rebirth accounts via the internet. Also, see "Evidence for Rebirth."

TWO: Accounts of Near-Death Experiences (NDE) in the absence of any brain activity. Some NDE accounts are by those declared dead for periods ranging from a few minutes to many minutes. They say that "they were outside of the physical body." They were looking down at their bodies from the ceiling!

THREE: Reports of "extraordinary memory recall" by several people. They can recall the past several years in great detail, and it is unlikely that the brain could have "stored" such minute details as a video recorder.

- We will discuss the second category in this post and the third in the next post.


## What Are Near-Death Experiences (NDE)?

5. Near-death experiences (NDE) occur when someone "almost dies" under a medical condition. For example, it may happen during a coma induced by cardiac arrest or someone badly injured in an accident.

- Of course, only a tiny fraction of such patients experience NDE. However, "..estimates put the number of people who have had one in the past fifty years at more than 25 million worldwide." (Ref. 3, p. 9)
- In such cases, the "mental body" (gandhabba) comes out of the physical body, and the patients can watch their physical bodies from above! Furthermore, they correctly reproduced the conversations among the doctors and nurses while their brains were not functioning.


## Accounts of NDE

6. Physicians have conducted several systematic studies on NDE within the past 20-30 years.

WebLink: youtube: A Cardiologist and Life after Death | An interview with Pim van Lommel
WebLink: youtube: The Joy of Dying: Understanding Near Death Experience

- In the second video, make sure to watch the following segments:
@ 36.30 mins: addressing the objections by skeptics of NDE. In particular, he talks about his patients looking at their bodies from above while the body is "lifeless."
(a) 40 mins: Most compelling evidence for Dr. Long is the account of one of his patients born blind but was able to see for the first time in her life.
(a) $\mathbf{4 1 . 1 5}$ mins: The patient's vision was not restricted to the forward direction. She had $360^{\circ}$ vision, i.e., she could see all around. That is consistent with a gandhabba (mental body) seeing all around, not just the forward direction. See \#8 below.
@43 mins: Based on the accounts of NDE, Dr. Long believes in the afterlife and thinks that the afterlife will be wonderful. I will also discuss this in \#8 below.


## Seeing for the First Time in Life!

7. I am unsure whether the following video is from the woman Dr. Long referred to in the above video. But she was born blind and could see for the first time in her life during an NDE.

WebLink: youtube: Near Death Experience - Blind woman 'sees' while out of body

## Seeing and Hearing Is Better During an NDE

8. The mental body (gandhabba) is trapped inside the physical body. The brain processes the visuals captured by the eyes and passes them to the mental body trapped inside. I have discussed that complex process in "Brain - Interface between Mind and Body."

- Humans are born with dense physical bodies because such a body is required to sense smells, tastes, and body touches, including sex. The mental body (gandhabba) is almost devoid of matter and cannot be seen by an average human. However, once outside the physical body, the capability for seeing and hearing is vastly enhanced. Furthermore, the woman in the above video verified that her "weightless" mental body could go through the ceiling. Thousands of people have experienced those phenomena. See Ref. 4.
- We don't realize the burden of "bearing a dense physical body." But those who experience NDEs were especially experiencing bodily pains. Thus, it is an indescribable relief to be outside that "suffering-filled physical body." That is why some even say they visited heaven!
- But they were not in heaven but in "paraloka" that world of the gandhabbas. They have been in that state only for a brief time, several minutes. If they stay there for long times, they will "miss" the ability to smell, taste, and touch bodily, including sex. That is why even Brahmas are "itching to come back to kāma loka" at the beginning of a "new Earth"; see."Buddhism and Evolution - Aggañña Sutta (DN 27)."
- There are many youtube videos and books on the subject. See Ref. 5 for a sample.


## References

1. "WebLink: journals.sfu.ca: After the White Crow: Integrating Science and Anomalous Experience," Jerry E. Wesch (click on the link to download pdf)
2. "WebLink: PDF Download: Twenty Cases Suggestive of Reincarnation" by Ian Stevenson (Second Edition, 1974.)
3. Pim van Lommel, "WebLink: PDF Download: Consciousness Beyond Life - The Science of the NearDeath Experience" (HarperOne, 2010).
4. Jeffrey Long, "WebLink: puredhamma.net: NDE-Evidence for Their Reality-Jeffrey Long-2014" (click on the link to download pdf)
5. "Brain Wars" by Mario Beauregard (2012) is a book by a scientist on NDE, OBE, and the mind-body problem in general.

- "WebLink: PDF Download: Dying to be Me: My Journey from Cancer, to Near Death, to True Healing" is a book by Anita Moorjani (2012.) She is a cancer survivor who had been diagnosed to die
within a few weeks but had an "unexplainable recovery" within days. During this time, she had an out-of-body experience. She describes her experiences in the following video.
WebLink: youtube: Near Death Experience Showed Me Something I Could've Never Imagined $\mid$ Anita Moorjani (NDE)
- According to the following videos, more scientific researchers are getting involved in conducting scientific research on NDE.
WebLink: youtube: Near Death Experiences \& Evidence of the Afterlife
WebLink: youtube: From life to death, beyond and back | Thomas Fleischmann | TEDxTUHHSalon


### 9.6.1.3 Gandhabba (Mental Body) Separating from Physical Body in Jhāna

## February 14, 2022

The "mental body" (gandhabba) may automatically come out of the physical body during near-death experiences (NDE.) A meditator (yogi) can willfully do that in the fourth $j h a \bar{a} n a$.

## Materialistic View of the Mind

1. The "brain is the mind" materialistic hypothesis CAN explain the fact that we can recall memories even when we are on the Moon; we carry the brain with us everywhere.
i. Of course, that hypothesis cannot explain memories of past lives, because the brain could not have stored memories from past lives.
ii. It cannot explain NDEs experienced while the brain was inactive.
iii. It also cannot explain memory recall with such precision by some people. We will postpone that discussion to the next post.

- We discussed the above framework in the previous post "Near-Death Experiences (NDE): Brain Is Not the Mind."
- However, all those observations can be explained in Buddha Dhamma.


## Explanation in Buddha Dhamma

2. There are THREE key points:
(i) Consciousness arises in the "mental body" (manomaya kāya or gandhabba), not in the brain. "Human life" is in the "mental body" and not in the "physical body." The physical body is just a shell, energized by the mental body.
(ii) Memory records (nāmagotta) of ALL our past experiences are in viññāna dhātu. We can recall them from anywhere.
(iii) While the mental body (gandhabba) is inside the physical body, memories come to the gandhabba via the brain. While outside the physical body, gandhabba can directly recall memories.

- "Mental body," "manomaya kāya," "gandhabba", "gandhabba kāya" all mean the same. I will use them interchangeably.

3. Our nāma loka (viñ̃̄āṇa dhātu) is VERY DIFFERENT from our rūpa loka. Our manomaya kāya can access the memory records from anywhere. It is as if we are "carrying" all those records with us.

- If the gandhabba is outside the physical body (as in NDE) memories can be directly accessed and are much clear. This is why many NDE subjects say "their life events flashed vividly in their minds."
- If the gandhabba is inside the physical body, then the brain plays a critical role in extracting memory records (nāmagotta) from the viṇ̃̃̄̄̄̄a dhātu. When certain parts of the brain are damaged, the ability to recall memories - even from this life - stops.
- In the case of NDEs, the gandhabba comes out of the physical body accidentally. It happens only on occasion.
- However, there is a way to come out of the physical body with the mental body (gandhabba) willfully. Those who can cultivate (Ariya or anāriya) jhāna can come out with the gandhabba kāya while in the jhāna.


## Just Like a Sword Is Pulled Out of a Scabbard (or Sheath)

4. There are several suttas that describe pulling the gandhabba kāya out of the physical body at any time.

- One must cultivate the fourth jhāna to the highest level to be able to do that. The "WebLink: suttacentral: Sāmaññaphala Sutta (DN 2)" (among a few other suttas) describes the process step-by-step. One starts with abstaining from immoral deeds, abstain from excessive sensual pleasures, and starts cultivating $j h a \overline{n a}$ one by one until getting to the fourth $j h \bar{a} n a$ and then being able to get into that jhāna instantly.
- The English translation gives enough details: Section "4.3.3.2. Mind-Made Body" has the following description (I am slightly revising the translation in the above link):
"When their mind has become immersed in samādhi like this-purified, bright, flawless, rid of defilements, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable-they extend it and project it toward the "mental body" (manomayaì kāyaì). From this physical body, they (come out with) that "mental body", complete in all its various faculties, not deficient in any faculty."
- Then three analogies are provided to get an idea of how that manomaya kāya or gandhabba $\boldsymbol{k} \bar{a} y a$ comes out of the physical body: (i) a person was pulling out a reed from its sheath or (ii) drawing a sword out from its scabbard, and (iii) a snake shedding its skin. The following youtube video makes the third process clear.


## WebLink: suttacentral: How a Snake Sheds its Skin

- Of course, you can easily visualize a sword being pulled out of its sheath/scabbard. I am not sure how many people have seen the first analogy.


## "Miracles" Performed With the Gandhabba Kāya

5. Once coming out with the manomaya kāya or gandhabba kāya the yogi can perform many types of "miracles."

- One of those "miracles" of course is to be able to see and hear without physical eyes and ears over long distances. They can see and hear much better than with the physical body. That is what is meant by "From this physical body, they (come out with) that "mental bodly", complete in all its various faculties, not deficient in any faculty" in the quoted verse in \#4 above.
- Another is the ability to go through solid objects like ceilings and walls. Some NDE accounts verify that too.

6. The critical point associated with that last ability is that the manomaya kāya or gandhabba kāya has only a trace of matter. It is a "body that cannot be seen." It can go through walls, mountains, water, etc., as confirmed by some NDE accounts.

- For example, when a heart patient is having an NDE, they are floating above their physical body and no one in the room can see him/her.
- Another special aspect of such a manomaya kāya is the ability to travel anywhere just by thinking. Several NDE accounts say they were able to get to distant places "instantly."
- For details on what other "miracles" are possible with a manomaya kāya, see "Pātihāriya (Supernormal Abilities) of a Buddha - Part I"


## Kammic Energy Creates the Manomaya Kāya

6. The most important thing to remember is that the manomaya kāya (gandhabba) is the essence of a human. It is created by kammic energy at the moment of grasping the human bhava.

- That gandhabba consists of just six suddhatthaka (hadaya vatthu and five pasāda rūpa). But they are very special suddhatthaka WITH LIFE. That is the essence of a living being and it CAN NOT be created anyway other than by kammic energy. That is why Artificial Intelligence (AI) is NEVER going to be a reality.
- Human bhava can last many thousands of years. As we know, these days a physical human body can last only around 100 years or less. The initiation of a physical body is the manomaya kāya being pulled into a suitable womb. It merges with the zygote cell in the womb and grows into a baby by taking in food from the mother. Once born, the baby grows by eating food. Thus, the physical body grows due to food intake, just like a seed growing to a tree.


## Gandhabba/Para Loka Concept Is Critical to Understand!

7. That manomaya kāya or gandhabba will last for thousands of years until that kammic energy is exhausted. During that time, the gandhabba can be born in "this world" (i.e., with a physical body) many times. When in a physical body, it is in "this world" or "ayam loka." In between two consecutive lives with physical bodies, gandhabba is in the "other/nether world" or "para loka" and is invisible to us.

- Note that not believing in "ayamं loka" and "para loka" are two of the ten types of micchā ditt thi that can lead to rebirths in the apāyās. See, "WebLink: suttacentral: Pathamaniravasagga Sutta (AN 10.211)"
- The following is the translation of the relevant verse: "They have the wrong view. Their perspective is distorted: "There's no meaning in giving, sacrifice, or offerings. There's no fruit or result of good and bad deeds. This world is not real. There's no afterlife (para loka). There's no obligation to mother and father. No beings are reborn spontaneously. And there's no ascetic or brahmin who is well attained and practiced, and who describes this world and afterlife (para loka) after realizing it with their own insight. Someone with these ten qualities is cast down to hell. (Pāli verse in Ref. 1.)
- Thus, it is critical to understand that our physical bodies are secondary and the manomaya kāya or gandhabba is primary. Also see, "Micchā Ditthi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage."


## Mental Body (Gandhabba) Is Primary!

8. Human existence (bhava) is NOT limited to one life with a physical human body.

- Some children die very early, even within weeks. Are their human existences limited to a few weeks or even just a day?
- Human existence can last thousands of years. Within that time, there is a single human gandhabba. When one physical human body dies (in a few days to 100 or so years) that gandhabba comes out of the dead body. It will be pulled into another womb by kammic energy. While waiting for another womb, that gandhabba is not in "this world" but in "para loka."
- Thus, there can be many births ( $j \bar{a} t i$ ) with a human body within a single human existence (bhava.) That is the "bhava paccayā jāti" step in Paticca Samuppāda.
- At the end of the human bhava, that human gandhabba dies and that is the cuti-patisandhi moment, where a new existence (bhava) is grasped. It is very important to understand this relationship between bhava and $j \bar{a} t i$. See, "Bhava and Jāti- States of Existence and Births Therein."


## Experiences of Yogis Are Superior to those With NDE

9. People with NDE are average humans with many defilements. Thus, even when they come out of the physical body with the gandhabba kāya their abilities are much less. They just experience the unbelievable "relief/lightness" of being outside the heavy and pain-ridden physical body. That is why many of them say they were "in heaven" during the NDE.

- Those yogis who can come out of the physical body can stay in that state for long times. That is an optimum "jhānic sukha" discussed in suttas. But they need to successfully cultivate the fourth jhāna with SUPPRESSION of defilements (anariya yogis) or REMOVAL of defilements (at least at the Anāgāmi stage.)
- Therefore, only those yogis will be able to perform other types of "miracles" discussed in "Pātihāriya (Supernormal Abilities) of a Buddha - Part I."
- One such miracle is to recall past lives.

10. Depending on how well the fourth jhāna is cultivated, they can recall many previous lives. The Buddha was able to look as far back as he wanted, and also could access the nāmagotta of other people. He provided accounts of the lives of many previous Buddhas in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Mahāpadāna Sutta (DN 14)."

- That is another indication that memories from past lives could not be in the brain of the current physical body.
- During the time of the Buddha, people did not know much about the brain. So, the Tipitaka does not have an explanation of memory recall with the aid of the brain. However, we can put together a reasonable explanation; see "Patient H.M. - Different Roles of Brain in Memory."


## References

1. Micchādiṭthiko hoti, viparītadassano: "natthi dinnamं, natthi yitṭhamं, natthi hutaì, natthi sukatadukkaṭānaì kammānaì phalaì vipāko, natthi ayamं loko, natthi paro loko, natthi mātā, natthi pitā, natthi sattā opapātikā, natthi loke samanabrāhmaṇā sammaggatā sammāpatipannā ye imañca lokaì parañca lokamं sayaì abhiññā sacchikatvā pavedentī’ti. Imehi kho, bhikkhave, dasahi dhammehi samannāgato yathābhataì nikkhitto evaì niraye."
9.6.1.3 Where Are Memories Stored? - Viññāṇa Dhātu

February 21, 2022
Viññāna dhātu represents the nāma loka. It has no spatial location. That is why we can recall memories from anywhere.

## Nāma Loka (Viñ̃̃āṇa Dhātu) Is Different Compared to Rūpa Loka!

1. A question that comes up frequently is: "Where are our memories stored?" Are they stored in the brain?

- The Buddha could recall memories of previous births trillions of years to the past. See, for example, "WebLink: suttacentral: Mahāpadāna Sutta (DN 14)." Those memories could not possibly have been in his brain of his last birth!
- Below, we will discuss scientific evidence that the brain cannot possibly hold our memories.
- Then we will discuss the Buddha's explanation of "memory storage/recall." The brain plays a crucial role in recalling memories, but the memories are in our nāma loka (viññāṇa dhātu.)
- We are used to thinking in terms of the rūpa loka represented by the other five types of dhātu (pathavi, $\bar{a} p o, t e j o, ~ v \bar{a} y o, \bar{a} k \bar{a} s a)$ where objects remain in specific locations. But viññāna dhātu has no specific location in space. We will discuss some unique properties of our nāma loka or viññāna dhātu.


## Recent Evidence Against "Brain as the Mind" Hypothesis

2. As we discussed in the recent posts, scientific findings within the past 50 years have converged to THREE types of investigations that point to the fact that the brain is not the "seat of consciousness." These findings indicate that while the brain plays a crucial role in consciousness, it is NOT where our thoughts arise, i.e., the brain is not the mind! In addition, our memories are not "stored" in the brain either.

ONE: Rebirths accounts by children have been of common knowledge in many Asian countries for ages. Most people in those countries were Buddhists who accepted those accounts without question. Only recently, Western countries took an interest after two significant developments: Systematic studies conducted by Professor Ian Stevenson (Ref. 1) and the easy access to rebirth accounts via the internet. Also, see "Evidence for Rebirth."

TWO: Accounts of Near-Death Experiences (NDE) in the absence of any brain activity. Some NDE accounts are by those declared dead for periods ranging from a few minutes to many minutes. They say that "they were outside of the physical body." They were looking down at their bodies from the ceiling!

- We discussed the second category in recent posts; see "Near-Death Experiences (NDE): Brain Is Not the Mind" and "Gandhabba (Mental Body) Separating from Physical Body in Jhāna."

THREE: Reports of "extraordinary memory recall" by several people. They can recall the past several years in great detail, and it is unlikely that the brain could have "stored" such minute details as a video recorder.

- Let us discuss briefly the third now.


## Extraordinary Memories - Impossible to be Stored in the Brain!

3. Strong evidence has emerged recently that there is indeed a "complete record" of one's past, just like a videotape. These studies started with Jill Price, who contacted a team of scientists in the early 2000's about her ability to recall anything from 1974 onwards. Here is a video of her interview with Diane Sawyer on an ABC program:

## WebLink: suttacentral: The woman that never forgets - Jill Price First Interview!

- Note that she says she can "see" what happened on any day in the past. It is not like she recalls a "summary" or the gist of what happened. She can recount the whole episode in detail. Even the date and time come out effortlessly. That is amazing!
- @2:50 minutes: Diane Sawyer tests Jill's ability to recall past events. She passes all tests.

4. Since then, several more such individuals have been studied in detail. More details at "Recent Evidence for Unbroken Memory Records (HSAM)," "Autobiographical Memory - Preserved in Nāma Loka," and "Where Are Memories "Stored"? - Connection to Pañcakkhandha."

- It is evident that the brain cannot "store" that much information in such detail. Scientists are unable to explain these amazing accounts.
- The point is that even one such account of "detailed memory recall" (as by Jill Price above) is enough to negate the "memories in the brain" hypothesis. In the words of the American philosopher William James, "If you wish to upset the law that all crows are black. it is enough if you prove one single crow to be white."

5. A mind has access to its own viññāña dhātu from anywhere.

- That is why whether we are on Earth, go to the Moon, or even to another planetary system at the other end of the universe, we will be able to recall memories and to think just like while we are on Earth.
- The brain helps to extract memories from the nāma loka (viñnāạa dhātu) and pass them to hadaya vatthu, the seat of the mind.
- On the other hand, the five physical senses help detect localized, dense rūpa. Again, the brain plays a key role in that process; see, "Brain - Interface between Mind and Body." Of course, it is the mind that experiences all $r \bar{u} \bar{p} \bar{a}$ and memories.


## Our World - Rūpa Loka and Nāma Loka

6. Our world consists of rūpa loka and nāma loka. Rūpa loka, of course, consists of physical rūpa that we can see, hear, smell, taste, or touch. Other humans and animals are included in one's rūpa loka. They are at specific locations in $\bar{a} k \bar{a} s a ~ d h \bar{a} t u$ (space.)

- The nāma loka includes the "mental aspects" or nāma, specifically vedanā, saññ̄a, sañkhāra, and vipāka viñ̃āṇa.
- Kamma viññāna (associated with dhammā ) do not strictly fall into the nāma category but are also in nāma loka (viññāṇa dhātu.)
- We all share the same rūpa loka. However, each person has their own nāma loka, because vedanā, saññā, sañkhāra, viññāna are one's own.
- Unlike rūpa (located in specific places in space), nāma in nāma loka (viññāna dhātu) can be recalled from anywhere in space ( $\bar{a} k \bar{a} s a ~ d h a ̄ t u$.)

7. The astronauts who went to the Moon could not see, hear, smell, taste, or touch anything that was not on the Moon. But they could recall their memories as if they were on the Earth. That is because we can access viññāna dhātu from anywhere.

- Put it another way, dense rūpa (experienced by the five physical senses) are localized, but the nāma category (vedanā, sañña, sañkhāra, viñ̃n̄āna) is NOT localized.
- In addition to those dense $r \bar{u} \bar{a} \bar{a}$ and $n \bar{a} m a$, there is another category that makes the bridge between nāma and rūpa. Those are the dhammā in "manañca paticca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviññānam"" in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Chachakka Sutta (MN 148)"
- In between such dense (sappatigha) rūpa and anidassana/appaṭigha nāma, there are anidassana/appaṭigha rūpa (dhammā.) These dhammā are kammic energies created by kamma viññāna; see, "Dhammā, Kamma, Sañkhāra, Mind - Critical Connections."
- Both nāma and dhammā are not localized and in viññāna dhātu. See, "What are Rūpa? - Dhammā are Rūpa too!"


## The Sixth Type of Rūpa in Buddha Dhamma

8. As discussed below, nāma (or "thoughts with nāma") arise when an external rūpa comes into contact with an internal $r \bar{u} p a$.

- Our thinking process always starts with an ārammaṇa that comes to a "sense door." We discussed the five physical sense doors above.
- The sixth sense door is the mind itself. It can become active upon receiving a "dhamma" as we have discussed previously; see, for example, \#6 in "Summary of Key Concepts About Viñ̃n̄āna and Sañkhāra" and the two posts referred to there.
- Dhammā (with a "long a") are memory records (nāmagotta) with embedded kammic energies. They are kamma bija (kammic energies) that bring vipāka. The contact of such dhammā directly with the hadaya vatthu is described in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Chachakka Sutta (MN 148)" as "manañca paticca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviññānam." See "Chachakka Sutta - Six Types of Vipāka Viññāna."
- Where are such dhammā or kamma bīja "stored"?


## Dhammā Are in Viññāṇa Dhātu (or Nāma Loka)

9. Our world consists of six types of dhātus: pathavi, āpo, tejo, vāyo, ākāsa, viññāṇa.

- We are familiar with the rūpa loka associated with the first five types of dhātus. "Things" made of pathavi, āpo, tejo, vāyo are in specific places in ākāsa dhātu or "space."
- The Buddha described a nāma loka associated with the viññāna dhātu. Nāmagotta and dhammā in the nāma loka do not have spatial locations. They can make contact with the hadaya vatthu from anywhere in space. We discussed that starting with \#11 in the recent post "Summary of Key Concepts About Viññāna and Sañkhāra."
- Let us think about that a bit more because it can provide more insights.


## Difference Between "Dense Rūpa" in $\overline{A k} \bar{a} s a$ Dhātu and "Nāmagotta/Dhammā" in Viññāṇa Dhātu

10. If you want to see the great wall in China, you need to go to China. If you need to see a concert you need to go there. To experience any of the five types of "dense rupa" DIRECTLY with the five corresponding physical senses, we need to "bring them together" at the appropriate location.

- However, we can recall memories of any of the above experiences from anywhere. Even if you go to the Moon, you can recall such experiences (nāmagotta) from the past. Does that mean you took all those memories with you to the Moon?
- Some scientists believe that all memories are in the brain. But no one has proven that despite the efforts, especially during the past several decades.
- Furthermore, there is an ever-increasing collection of evidence from the accounts of past lives and neardeath experiences. Even if just one of those accounts is true, we can rule out the "memory storage in the brain" hypothesis.


## Internal (Ajjhatta) and External (Bahiddha) Rūpa

11. There are five types of rūpa in the external world (bahiddha rūpa): rūpa rūpa or vaṇna rūpa, sadda rūpa, gandha rūpa, rasa rūpa, and phoṭthabba rūpa.

- Then there are subtle internal $r \bar{u} p \bar{a}$ (ajjhatta rūpa) associated with a living being. The seat of the mind (hadaya vatthu) and a set of pasāda rūpa arise at the beginning of a new bhava (existence.)
- Note that the external vanṇa rūpā are experienced (or sensed) with the internal cakkhu pasāda rūpa; external sadda rūpa experienced with internal sota pasāda rūpa, etc.
- Both internal and external rūpā are made of the four fundamental elements (pathavi, āpo, tejo, vāyo) and other types of $r \bar{u} p a$ derived from the fundamental elements (upādāya rūpa.)


## The uniqueness of the Set of Internal $R \bar{u} p a$

12. These internal $r \bar{u} p \bar{a}$ are very special. They can be created only by kammic energy.

- Materialists think thoughts ( $\overline{\bar{a} m a \text { ) arise in the brain. But they have not found ANY evidence of that }}$ despite intensive research over the past 60 plus years.
- How can feelings of joy or sorrow arise in inert molecules, no matter how complex they become?
- As I discussed in the first few posts in the "Origin of Life" series, even the first cells are created by kammic energy!

13. Note that pasāda rūp $\bar{a}$ are in the mental body or gandhabba. They cannot be seen even with the most powerful microscopes.

- The eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and physical body only capture the external sensory inputs. Those signals get processed by the brain and transmitted to the mental body with the hadaya vatthu and a set of pasāda rūpa.
- Nāma (vedanā, sañ̃̄̄̄, sañkhāra, viññāna) arise at hadaya vatthu in the mental body (gandhabba.) See, "Brain - Interface between Mind and Body." It is not necessary to learn such details. But it is necessary to understand the difference between the sensory system on the physical body (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and brain) and that in the mental body (hadaya vatthu and five pasāda rūpa.) Thoughts (nāma) arise in the mental body.


## Contact Between External and Internal Rūpa Give Rise to Nāma (Mental Attributes)

14. Nāma arises when an external $r \bar{u} p a$ comes into contact with an internal $r \bar{u} p a$. For example, when an external rūpa is seen with the cakkhu pasāda rūpa, cakkhu viñ̃ān̄na arises. That "seeing sensation" is felt with vedanā, sañ̃ña, sañkhāra, and the overall experience is cakkhu viññanna. All five "physical senses" work the same way.

- By the way, those five types of sensory experiences (cakkhu, sota, ghāna, jivhā, and kāya viññāna) are vipāka viññāna.


## What Are Nāmarūpa?

Nāma loka includes two types of "nāmarūpa":
(i) The primary type of nāmarūpa is "in-between nāma and rūpa" and arises in Uppatti Paṭicca Samиррāda. This is the "mental body" or "gandhabba" produced by kammic energy!
(ii) The second type belongs to the "n $\bar{a} m a$ " category and arises in the Idappaccayat $\bar{a}$ PS.

- In this post, we will refer only to the first type of nāmarūpa.

15. The set of ajjhatta rūpa defines a living being. It is also the primary type of nāmarūpa because it can generate nāma!

- "Nāma" arises at the "seat of the mind" (hadaya vatthu) with the help of the five pasāda rūpa. Each pasāda rūpa is a "doorway" to the hadaya vatthu. For example, vaṇna rūpa makes contact with the cakkhu pasāda rūpa, and that contact is transferred to the hadaya vatthu.
- We can see that this primary type of nāmarūpa has the remarkable ability to generate nāma or "mental attributes": vedanā, sañ̃̃̄̄, sañkhāra, and vipāka viñ̃̄̄ạna.
- That is why the hadaya vatthu and the five pasāda rūpa go by the name "mental body" or gandhabba. It has the unique ability to generate nāma upon interactions with the five types of external rūpa.

16. Some living beings, particularly the Brahmas in the highest 20 realms, have only such a "mental body." They do not have dense physical bodies like humans or animals.

- Rūpāvacara Brahmas in the first 16 Brahma realms have hadaya vatthu and two pasāda rūpa (cakkhu and sota.) Thus they can only see and hear.
- Arupāvacara Brahmas in the four arupāvacara Brahma realms have only the hadaya vatthu. They cannot see or hear either. But they can think! That brings up another type of rūpa that we discuss now.
- The hadaya vatthu of any Brahma (or any living being) is unique; it is formed in accordance with the specific kammic energy that gave rise to its existence.


## External Rūpa are Inert; Internal Rūpa Are Not Inert

17. The critical observation is that the set of internal rūpa (hadaya vatthu and the set of pasāda rūpa) are not inert. That set is the "mental body" or "manomaya kaya" or "gandhabba."

- Those are the ONLY rūpa that can give rise to nāma (vedanā, saññā, sañkhāra, vipāka viññāna.)
 by kammic energy to be compatible with that existence.
- Our big, dense physical bodies are made of inert matter, just like plants. "Consciousness" arises in the "mental body."

18. For each human, kammic energy creates a manomaya kāya with a hadaya vatthu and five pasāda rūpa. Until it is pulled into a suitable womb, that gandhabba or manomaya kāya lives in the "para loka." That means those of us in "this loka" (ayam loka) cannot see them; they are in a "different loka" (para loka) that is unseen.

- While in para loka, a gandhabba can see and hear just like a rūpāvacara Brahma. Even though a human gandhabba has ghāna, jivhā, and kāya pasāda rūpa, those cannot make contact with gandha, rasa, and phott habba until getting a physical body.
- A physical body starts when the gandhabba enters a womb and merges with a zygote in the womb. Then it grows inside the womb getting food from the mother. Once that baby comes out of the womb, it grows into an adult eating food.
- Thus, our physical bodies are made of inert matter, just like plants or rocks. They are all made of pathavi, $\bar{a} p o, t e j o, v \bar{a} y o$. That is why it becomes inert as soon as the gandhabba leaves.
- It is CRITICAL to have this basic understanding; see, "Micchā Ditthi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage."


## References

1. WebLink: PDF Download: "Twenty Cases Suggestive of Reincarnation" by Ian Stevenson (Second Edition, 1974.)
2. Related posts: "Where Are Memories "Stored"? - Connection to Pañcakkhandha" and "Memory Recall for Gandhabba in a Human Body."

### 9.6.2 Citta Vīthi - Fundamental Sensory Unit

January 6, 2021; revised January 10, 2021 (\#9)
Citta vithi is the smallest sensory unit that is experienced by the mind. It is a series of citta with 17 citta for a pañcadvāra citta vīthi. A manodvāra citta vīthi can have a variable number of citta.

## Introduction

1. This subsection is a continuation of the series of posts in "Buddha Dhamma - A Scientific Approach."

- In this bottom-up analysis, we will get to the fundamentals of Buddha Dhamma. That involves tackling some basic features of Abhidhamma. Thus it will require some effort.
- But it will be a rewarding experience for those who make an effort.

Buddha Dhamma can be understood via the Four Noble Truths or Tilakkhaṇa or Paṭicca Samuppāda. If one understands any one of those three, one would understand all three.

- Our approach here is to look at the fundamental processes involved in a sensory event. That will provide invaluable insights to Paticca Samuppāda.


## A Citta Lasts Only a Billionth of a Second

2. What we call a "thought" is the cumulative effect of billions of citta flowing through a mind. The mind which processes citt $\bar{a}$ - is the fastest entity in the world (Ref. 1)

- Furthermore, a single citta does not arise in isolation. A citta ALWAYS arise in a citta vīthi (series of citt $\bar{a}$ ), some with 17 cittā; see below. Billions of such citta vīthi can flow through a mind in a second. What we "feel" is the cumulative effect of billions of such citta vīthi.
- When exposed to a new ārammaṇa (new sensory input), the first series of citta vīthi arises without even being aware. We will start experiencing them within a short time, and when we do, we CAN have control over the SUBSEQUENT citta vith related to those that arose first.
- But if we don't pay attention, such citta vithi can progress on their own and induce us to speak badly or even do bad things.
- That is why the need to be "mindful."
- For example, when someone says something nasty, we may automatically respond with bad speech or even bodily actions. Some people are prone to do that more than others. But ANYONE can cultivate mindfulness and be able to have control over one's speech or actions. Of course, it will take time to cultivate mindfulness. Our analysis here will help understand that process too.


## 

3. To emphasize, we DO NOT have control over how citta vith first arise due to new sensory input. They arise AUTOMATICALLY based on two things: The particular ārammaṇa (sense object) and one's habits/character (gati.) Note that "gati" is pronounced "gathi" as in "Thailand." That is easier to explain with a few simple examples.

- Consider a husband who likes alcohol and his wife, who dislikes alcohol. A friend visits them and brings a bottle of alcohol.
- That bottle of alcohol is the arrammaṇa. When the husband sees it, he feels happy. His wife sees the bottle at the same moment and becomes unhappy. Therefore, that same ārammana induced different types of citta vithi in the husband and the wife's minds! That means different types of cetasika (mental factors) arise in the citta in those two types of citta vithi.
- Prior experiences of the husband with alcohol are "happy occasions" for the husband. He has a gati to be attracted to alcoholic drinks. On the other hand, his wife cannot even stand the smell of alcohol, and she believes alcohol is bad to drink.
- However, gati can change. At a later time, the husband may give up alcoholic drinks after seeing the bad consequences of drinking. It is also possible that the wife may start associating with a group of friends who drink alcohol and gradually begin to form a liking for alcohol taste.
- See Ref. 2 for details on the critical roles of ārammaṇa and gati.


## One Sensory Unit (Citta Vīthi) At a Time - But They Flow Incredibly Fast

4. Let us consider that sensory event of "seeing a bottle of alcohol" when a friend brings that bottle. Let us consider the thoughts that flow through the husband's mind at that time of the visit.

- At the time of seeing the bottle, he is likely to be talking to that friend. It appears that talking, hearing the friend's words, and seeing the bottle in the friend's hands all happen simultaneously.
- They may happen at ABOUT the same time. But even just two sensory events CANNOT happen simultaneously (say, hearing the friend say "hello" and seeing the bottle in his hands).
Hearing his friend say "hello" happens with a citta vīthi of 17 citt $\bar{a}$. That auditory sensory input comes through the ears. It is a "sotadvāra citta vīthi." The sensation of "hearing" or sota viññạ̄na arises in such a sotadvāra citta vīthi.
- Seeing the friend with the bottle happens with a TOTALLY DIFFERENT citta vithi triggered by the visual event coming through the eyes. It is a "cakkhudvāra citta vīthi." The sensation of "seeing" or cakkhu viñãāṇa arises in such a cakkhudvāra citta vīthi.


## Mind Can Process Numerous Citta Vīthi Very Fast

5. A given citta vīthi is based on ONE ārammana. Until that series of citta run its course, another citta vith $h$ WILL NOT start.

- In the above example, hearing the sound "hello" was based on one citta vithi. The sight of the friend was with another citta vithi. But since they happened so fast that one would think they happened simultaneously.
- Countless citta-vīthi involving ALL SIX senses can flow alternatively in a split-second!
- The mind is capable of "sorting out" different types of ārammaṇa (sights, sounds, smells, etc.) That is why the Buddha said that the mind is the fastest entity in the whole world.
- Because these citta-vithis flow VERY FAST, and the mind can keep up with fast processing, we feel as if they all happen simultaneously! For details, see Ref. 3.


## Each "Data Packet" From a Sense Door Analyzed by a Citta Vīthi

6. As discussed in Ref. 3, the following sequence of events happens before we experience a sensory input. Consider seeing the bottle of alcohol in the above example. (1) Eyes capture the scene of the friend holding the bottle. That captured frame is of about 10 -millisecond duration. (2) That signal is sent to the brain via the optic nerve. (3) Brain processes that "data packet" and transfers to the gandhabba's "invisible body." (4) That signal is transferred to the "cakkhu pasāda rūpa." (5) The cakkhu pasāda rūpa transfers the signal to the hadaya vatthu (seat of the mind.")

- We also discussed the above aspects briefly in \#7 and \#8 of Ref. 4. Now, let us see in a bit more detail what happens when the cakkhu pasāda rūpa hits hadaya vatthu and transfers the signal to hadaya vatthu.
- The best way to understand this process is to visualize the hadaya vatthu surrounded by five pasāda rūpa. Only one pasāda rūpa can "hit" (or make contact) with the hadaya vatthu at any given time.
- Of course, those entities (pasāda rūpa and hadaya vatthu) can never be seen, even by the most sensitive instruments. Thus, the following is just an analogy to visualize the process easier.


## The "Bell Analogy"

7. Imagine a big metal ball (hadaya vatthu) surrounded by five smaller balls (five pasāda rūpa.) When one smaller metal ball hits the big metal ball, that big metal ball will "ring" (vibrate) a certain number of times. For a pañcadvāra citta vīthi, that number is ALWAYS 17.

- This is similar to the "ringing" of an old fashioned bell (like the Liberty Bell in Philadelphia) when hit by a metal object.
- In fact, Buddhist temples have bells that were originally designed to convey this idea of a citta vīthi: One pulls a rope tied to a small metallic ball inside a metal dome so that the metal ball hits the dome, and that emits a "ringing sound."
- At the very fundamental level, such a "contact" of a pasāda rūpa with hadaya vatthu is the only brief moment of sensory experience! (see Ref. 5.)
- The Pāli word "phassa" represents that "contact."


## Phassa - Contact Between a Pasāda Rūpa and Hadaya Vatthu

8. Therefore, that "contact" (phassa) DOES NOT happen, for example, between the physical eyes and a physical object ( $r \bar{u} p a$.) First, the brain processes that picture captured by the eyes and transfers it to the cakkhu pasäda; See Ref. 4. It is only then the cakkhu pasäda transfers that signal to hadaya vatthu by "hitting" the hadaya vatthu (just like the dome of a bell getting hit by the mental ball.)

- This is what is meant by the Pāli term "phassa." For example, in the Pāli verses, "salạyatana paccay $\bar{a}$ phasso" and "phassa paccay $\bar{a} v e d a n \bar{a} "$ refer to the "contact of an external sensory input with the mind (hadaya vatthu)" and "that contact leading to experiencing the sensory input."


## Contact (Phassa) by a Pasāda Rūpa Makes Hadaya Vatthu Vibrate 17 Times

9. When the hadaya vatthu is "hit" by a given pasāda rūpa (i.e., when it transfers the sensory signal to hadaya vatthu, that leads to 17 vibrations of hadaya vatthu; no more and no less. That is a citta niyāma or a universal law. With each "vibration," the hadaya vatthu generates a citta.

- That is the source of a citta vīthi with 17 cittā ("thought moments") in a sensory event involving pañcadvāra or the five physical doors (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body.)
- The duration of those 17 thought-moments is how long that sensory experience lasts in reality (see Ref. 5). It is a billionth of a second! Of course, billions of such citta vithi flow through the mind it appears to us as if we are continuously experiencing it. But the mind falls to the bhavanga state numerous times in between those citta vīthi.
- Note that a pasāda rūpa plays a role ONLY in signals coming through the pañcadvāra (five physical senses), i.e., the rule of 17 cittā per citta vīthi holds ONLY for pañcadvāra citta vīthi.


## Manodvāra Citta Vīthi Do Not Have the 17-Citta Limit

10. When a dhamm $\bar{a}$ comes to the mind or hadaya vatthu (via the mana indriya in the brain,) there is no pasäda rūpa involvement. That signal goes directly to hadaya vatthu. Furthermore, the "17-citta rule" does not apply to manodvāra citta vīthi. They can have ANY number of citta, usually more than 10 citta.

- For example, in jhāna samāpatti, manodvāra citta vīthi can run for many hours continuously (as long as one is in that samāpatti.)
- But when in a "regular jhāna," there could be pañcadvāra citta vithi running between manodvāra (jhānic) citta vīthi. That means one could hear external sounds, for example, while in a regular jhāna.
- But when in a jhāna samāpatti, that $j h a ̄ n i c ~ c i t t a ~ v i ̄ t h i ~ r u n s ~ c o n t i n u o u s l y . ~ P a n ̃ c a d v a ̄ r a ~ c i t t a ~ v i ̄ t h i ~ d o ~$ not get a chance to "interfere." Thus, when one is in a jhāna samāpatti, one is totally oblivious to what happens around him/her.


## Citta Vīthi - Building Block of Thoughts

11. It is a good idea to get some familiarity with citta vīthi. That will make it easier to understand future discussions and get a deeper insight into Paṭicca Samuppāda. Further details on citta viththi in the post, "Citta Vithi - Processing of Sense Inputs."

- Of course, the descriptions of citta vīthi is not in the Sutta Pitaka but the Abhidhamma Piṭaka. The easiest way to review my description above is to consult Bhikkhu Bodhi's "A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma" (Ref. 6.)
- However, the explanation in \#6 - \#8 is not in Bhikkhu Bodhi's book. That explanation was based on Waharaka Thero's discourses and my own incorporation of current scientific knowledge. I have explained that approach in "Interpretation of the Tipitaka - Gandhabba Example."


## References

1. Buddha said it is hard to find any phenomena in this world that change faster than the mind: "WebLink: suttacentral: Aṅguttara Nikāya (1.48)."
The short sutta says: "Nāhaín, bhikkhave, aññai் ekadhammampi samanupassāmi yä் evai் lahuparivattaì yathayidamं cittam். Yāvañcidamं, bhikkhave, upamāpi na sukarā yāva lahuparivattaì cittan"ti."

Translated: "I consider, bhikkhus, that there is no phenomenon that comes and goes so quickly as citta. It is not easy to find an analogy (a simile) to show how quickly citta can change."
2. "Ārammana Plays a Critical Role in a Sensory Event."
3. "Vision Is a Series of "Snapshots" - Movie Analogy."
4. "How Do We See? - Role of the Gandhabba."
5. This is the very brief sensory experience that the Buddha explained to Bāhiya Dāruciriya with the verse, "ditṭhe ditṭha mattaim bhavissati." It means, "what is seen is seen only for a brief moment." Mattain is "mātra" in Sinhala or Sanskrit or a "trace of something." What we feel is the cumulative effect of such a large number of contacts that take place in a short time. Yet, the "real experience" lasts only a billionth of a second! See "Does any Object (Rūpa) Last only 17 Thought Moments?"
6. Bhikkhu Bodhi, "A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma." This downloadable version is from https://www.pariyattiorg. The above material is discussed in detail in Chapter IV (p. 149.)

## Does any Object (Rūpa) Last only 17 Thought Moments?

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## Does Any Object Live Only For 17 Thought-Moments?

1. I have seen the following statement by many when discussing Abhidhamma: "Anything in this world lasts only a brief moment. Then it is re-formed, and the process continues ceaselessly."

- Here is a direct quote from a couple of sources, one of which is a popular book on Abhidhamma: "..a rūpa is very short-lived - it endures only for 17 conscious moments. Whatever object formed is almost instantly gone". Thus it is a widespread misconception.
- I Googled the following: "Abhidhamma ..a $r \bar{u} p a$ is very short-lived - it endures only for 17 conscious moments." Here is the search result: WebLink: google search: Abhidhamma ..a rūpa is very short-lived it endures only for 17 conscious moments - Google Search. As you can see, several links make that statement.


## The origin of Confusion

2. "Anything in this world" has a common name in Buddha Dhamma: a sañkhata.

- A sankkhata arises due to causes and lasts until those causes are there. Therefore, a sañkhata has a finite lifetime. That lifetime can range from a split-second (for thought) to billions of years (for a star like our Sun.) Everything in this world is sañkhata.
- The arising of a sañkhata is due to Paticca Samuppāda. That is the "udaya" (or "arise") part described in udayavaya ñāna.
- A sañkhata can be STOPPED from arising IF the causes and conditions are removed, i.e., by stopping the Pațicca Samuppāda process. That is "vaya."


## Stopping of Paṭicca Samuppāda with Paṭiloma Paṭicca Samuppāda

3. Paṭiloma Paṭicca Samuppāda is the "reverse" of the standard Akusala-Mula Paṭicca Samuppāda process. Which means it is the way to Nibbāna. See, "Patiloma Paticca Samuppāda - Key to Nibbāna."

- In other words, the standard Akusala-Mula Paticca Samuppāda process leads to the continuation of the rebirth process. It is also known as the Anuloma Paticca Samuppāda. The opposite (or the stopping of the rebirth process via eliminating avijjā) is Patiloma Pațicca Samuppāda. That is the "destruction" or "vaya" of the process that leads to the arising of all sañkhata (including our future births.) [paṭiloma : [adj.] reverse; opposite; contrary.]
- Therefore, udayavaya ñanna is a deeper concept. It describes, in yet another way, how the rebirth process can be stopped. It is a bit more complicated and is discussed in the section "Udayavaya Ñāna."
- So, why do some people say that any rūpa (sañkhata) has a lifetime of only 17 thought-moments (lasting only a split-second)?

4. It seems that this misinterpretation comes from taking the life of a "hadaya rūpa" and applying that to ANY rūpa!

- As we discussed in "Citta Vithi - Fundamental Sensory Unit," the lifetime of "vibration" of the hadaya vatthu (seat of the mind) is 17 thought moments. In Abhidhamma, that vibration is called a hadaya rūpa.
- First, let us clarify that a sañkhata (ANY rūpa in the external world) may have a lifetime as long as billions of years!


## Some Sañkhata May Have Lifetimes of Billions of Years!

5. Different sañkhata have different lifetimes. A fly may live for a few days, a human for about 100 years; a building may last hundreds of years, the Earth will last about 4-5 billion more years, etc. However, a sañkhata will be decaying gradually over time.

- An inert object, like a building, will start slowly decaying. If a building lasts 1000 years, then each day, it will "decay" by a little bit, though the decay will accelerate towards the end.
- From the present time to the final destruction (or until death in the case of a living being), any given sañkhata will change. If we consider a baby born today, it will first grow to become a young person. Then it will gradually start weakening while becoming an older adult and eventually die one day. Therefore, the critical aspect is not destruction but change. While the baby is growing, the cells in the body will multiply; but more cells will be dying in an older person's body.


## A Sañkhata Keeps Changing - Not "Appear and Disappear"

6. This constant change is not discernible to us on a real-time basis. A person does not age while we are watching him/her. But we can see the change over several years, especially if they are very young or over the middle age.

- Mayflies have a lifetime of the order of a day (after the larval stage), and some live only several hours; here is a short video by the National Geographic channel:
WebLink: youtube: The 24-Hour Life of the Mayfly | Nat Geo Wild
- Thus there is a HUGE difference in saying that a given material object CHANGES moment-tomoment versus saying that the object is "RECREATED" every 17 thought moments.
- During an Abhidhamma discourse that I listened to, the presenter showed a pen and said that the pen is "destroyed and recreated" EVERY 17 thought moments! By extending that logic, one could say that any entity (say, the Earth) is vanished and "recreated" within 17 thought moments! A complete misunderstanding of the Udayavaya process of a sañkhata.
- The 17 thought moments' origin is explained in the post "Citta Vithi - Fundamental Sensory Unit."
- As explained there, those 17 thought moments (or 17 citt $\bar{a}$ ) arise when the seat of the mind (hadaya vatthu) vibrates 17 times when one of the 5 pasāda rūpa transfers a sensory input. Those 17 vibrations make up a "hadaya rūpa" in the Abhidhamma language. Note that a "hadaya rūpa" is different from "hadaya vatthu." A hadaya rūpa arises every time the hadaya vatthu gets hit by a pasāda rūpa in the process of transferring a sensory signal. See "Citta Vithi - Fundamental Sensory Unit."


## A Hadaya Rūpa Has a Life of 17 Thought-Moments

7. So, where does this incorrect statement come from? ".. rūpa is very short-lived - it endures only for

17 conscious moments. Whatever object formed is almost instantly gone."

- The confusion arises when one does not understand the concept of a hadaya rūpa. A hadaya rūpa is generated in the hadaya vatthu by a sensory event through one of the five physical senses. The life time of a hadaya rūpa is the time taken to experience that external sense event. That takes 17 thought moments (during which an impression of the external rūpa is made in mind by a citta vithi).
- It is WRONG to take this time to be the lifetime of an external object (a sañkhata).


## Huge Difference Between a Rūpa (a Sañkhata) and a Hadaya Rūpa

8. Therefore, It is critical to understand the difference between ANY rūpa (sañkhata) and a hadaya rūpa that lasts only for a blink of an eye.

- The lifetime of a hadaya rūpa is just the time it takes for the mind to be AWARE of any sañkhata. We experience outside material things (sañkhata) in our world through our five physical senses. We see with eyes, hear with ears, smell with the nose, taste with the tongue, and touch with our body.
- During the lifetime of a hadaya rūpa, our minds only catch a very brief (a thought moments worth) of the seeing, hearing, etc., experience at a time. It is not that the object lives a short time; it is just that we sense it only for a brief moment at a time!
- It is unnecessary to spend time on the concept of a hadaya rūpa unless one is deep into Abhidhamma. However, it is good to know about it because one may come across it and may confuse it with a hadaya vatthu.
- The main point is that any object in the world (conventionally called a rūpa) is a sañkhata. Some sañkhata (like the Earth or a star) have lifetimes of billions of years. That is not to be confused with the hadaya rūpa (or a citta vīthi) that lasts only 17 thought-moments!


### 9.6.4 Phassa (Contact) - Contact With Pasāda Rūpa

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Phassa (Contact) comes in the middle of the Paticca Samuppāda (PS) process. However, PS processes start with "salāyatana paccaȳ $\bar{a}$ phasso" or "an $\bar{a} y a t a n a ~ m a k i n g ~ c o n t a c t . " ~ T h a t ~ c o n t a c t ~ i s ~ b e t w e e n ~ a ~ r u ̄ p a ~$ and one of the six $\bar{a} y a t a n a(c a k k h u, ~ s o t a, ~ g a n d h a, ~ j i v h a ̄, k \bar{a} y a$, mano.) At the fundamental level, a rūpa makes contact with the mind via one of the five pasāda rūpa or directly with the mind (hadaya vatthu.)

## Importance of Phassa (Contact) in Paṭicca Samuppāda

1. The standard PS cycle starts with "avijjā paccayā sañkhārā." However, we do not just start generating sañkhāra. Furthermore, avijja is not there in a mind all the time. Only when we see, hear, taste, smell, touch, or think about an enticing "thought object" (ārammaṇa) that we start generating sañkhāra due to avijjā.

- For example, if we eat something tasty, we may generate greedy thoughts (sañkhāra) of eating more even if we are not hungry. If we see an enemy $\mathbf{X}$, we may generate angry thoughts (sañkhāra) about that person.
- Do those two "contacts" occur between the food and the tongue/eyes and person $\mathbf{X}$ ?
- In other words, does the vedana (feeling) of "good taste" arise in the tongue? Does "seeing of X" happen in the eyes? No.
- Some say those vedanā arise in the brain. But the brain is also made of inert atoms/molecules. Those cannot SENSE anything!
- Only a Buddha can accurately describe the actual sensing process. That "experience" takes place in the mental body (gandhabba.)


## Contact (Phassa) Is Between a Rūpa and an Ayatana (Pasāda Rūpa)

2. When we see person X , for example, that is contact (phassa) between our internal ayatana (eyes or more correctly, cakkhu pasāda rūpa) and external āyatana (an image of person X in this case). That is the process stated in verse, "cakkhuñca paticca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññānam்." The word "paticca" here refers to that contact (phassa).

- Due to that contact, a series of cittca flow in mind. That is a citta vīthi. We discussed that in detail in "Citta Vithi - Fundamental Sensory Unit." Also, see Ref. 1.
- That leads to a mental phenomenon that we call consciousness (in this case, cakkhu viñ̃āana). When we look at person X , we can instantly identify that person. This is amazing because the image that falls in the back of the eye is tiny. See Ref. 1 .
- Humans and animals generate such "awareness" or consciousness when seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, or thinking about an external $r \bar{u} p \bar{a}$.


## Cakkhāyatana Is Cakkhu Pasāda Rūpa

3. Cakkhāyatana is not the eyes. The "seeing" takes place in the mind, and the "seat of the mind" is the hadaya vatthu. The image captured by the eyes gets transmitted to the cakkhu pasāda rūpa, which transfers the image to the hadaya vatthu. See the previous post, "Citta Vithi-Fundamental Sensory Unit." It is a good idea to review that post.

- All five physical senses (cakkhu, sota, ghāna, jivhā, kāya) work that way. See Ref. 2 for a Tipiṭaka reference.
- Memories and other concepts come to the mind via mana indriya in the brain. Those signals get directly transferred to the hadaya vatthu. We may get to those details in future posts.


## What Is Meant by "Cakkhu, bhikkhave, aniccain"?

4. Many suttas state, "Cakkhu, bhikkhave, aniccaim." (and similarly for sota, ghāna, etc.) It should be clear that "cakkhu" does not refer to the physical eyes. The cakkhu pasāda rūpa in the gandhabba can last many thousands of years.

- After the human bhava, we get another cakkhu pasāda rūpa (with another mental body corresponding to the new bhava).
- However, what kind of bhava we get will NOT be due to our liking/expectations. It will be due to our past kamma and will be dictated by the upapatti PS process; see Ref. 3. That is what is meant by "anicca."


## Vedanā and Saññ̄ā Can Arise Without a Mind

5. There are a couple of "mental factors" (or cetasika) that may arise without a "mind." Crude versions of $v e d a n \bar{a}$ and sañ̃̄ $\bar{a}$ can arise even without a mind in "living things" (like plants) in the absence of a mind.
 aware of something." When we make contact with an "external āyatana" via our six senses, we become aware of that external rūp$\overline{\boldsymbol{a}}$; that is vedana $\bar{a}$. See, "Vedanā (Feelings)."

- At the fundamental level, Saññā means "recognition" of an object or a person, or a concept, for example. In general, it is the recognition of an "external āyatana" or "external rūpā." See, "Saññā What It Really Means."
- Therefore, plants and trees have a crude basic form of vedanā and sañ̃̃ā. A plant can "feel" when sunlight falls on it (vedana $)$, and "recognize" (sañña) that as useful for its survival.


## Awareness in Living Things (Plants) and in Living Beings

6. Therefore, plants and trees also seem to be aware of the external world and can even respond in some cases. For example, a plant or a tree can "turn" towards sunlight. Their roots grow towards water sources and away from dry soil. One may ask: "Then how does a plant turn towards sunlight?."

- Plants are like robots. A moving robot may have sensors that can detect obstacles in the way. That involves vedana and saññā in the elementary sense.
- A robot has a built-in computer that can instruct how to go around an obstacle, for example.
- The working of a plant is very similar. A plant seed has necessary "programs" installed in its cells to deal with the external environment. We discussed this in the section on "Origin of Life."


## Plants Do Not Generate Sañkhāra and Viññāṇa

7. Therefore, some "live things" like plants can generate rudimentary versions of vedanā and sañ $\tilde{n} \bar{a}$. However, a plant CANNOT generate sañkhārā (thoughts) about those vedanā and saññā.

- Sañkhārā arises via "avijjā paccayā sañkhārā." Based on avijjā, a mind generates defiled thoughts. Plants do not generate sañkhārā and viññāṇa via "avijjā paccayā sañkhārā" and "sañkhārā paccayā viññāna."
- Of course, totally inert things like rocks do not have vedanā and sañ̃ña either.


## Living Beings Have All Four Nāma Dhammāa (Vedanā, Sañn̄ā,Sañkhāra, Viññạ̄a)

8. Now, let us go back to the discussion in \#1 above. A sensory contact (phassa) leads to some mental activity in a living being. We are happy to encounter "pleasing sights, sounds, etc." and dislike the opposites.

- As we discussed in \#1, if we eat something tasty, we may generate greedy thoughts of eating more even if we are not hungry. If we see an enemy $\mathbf{X}$, we may generate angry thoughts about that person.
- First, in both cases, an idea about enjoying/disliking that contact comes to mind. That is the mano sañkhāra stage.
- Then we start thinking about enjoying/getting rid of that sensory input. This is the vacī sañkhāra stage, EVEN IF we are not saying anything out loud. Talking oneself - as well as talking - involves vacī sañkhāra. In this case, two types of cetasika (vitakka and vicāra) are involved.
- If one really gets "attached" (via like or dislike) to that ārammana, one may take physical actions. Such physical actions are done with kāya sañkhāra that arise in mind.


## Two Types of Viññāna

9. In the beginning of a cakkhudvāra citta vīthi, we "see" the image. This is the cakkhu viññaña. It is a visual sensing experience, and it is a vipāka viñ $\tilde{n} a n a$. These citta DO NOT have javana power to create new kamma. They experience the presence of a rupa (sight, sound, taste, etc.). Thus cakkhu, sota, ghāna, jivhā, and kāya viññāna are ALWAYS vipāka viññāṇa.

- If we "attach" to what we saw/ate, etc., we start generating vaci and $k \bar{a} y a$ sañkhāra. That is when we start acting with avijjā and generate kamma viññāna via "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" and "sañkhāra paccayā viññāna." Such kamma viññāṇa are EXCLUSIVELY mano viññāṇa. The unique aspect here is the presence of javana citta.
- That kamma generation happens with javana citta in the second stage of a citta vīthi, as we will discuss. However, mano viññāna can be vipāka viñ̃̃āṇa too (for example, when we recall memories).
- Such javana citta (generating new kamma via kamma viññāna) are absent in the citta vithi of Arahants. However, Arahants do experience the vipāka viññāna. That is another way to see the difference between kamma viññāna and vipāka viññāna.
- We will be able to clearly see that there are two types of viññaña when we analyze a citta vīthi in upcoming posts.


## References

1. "How Do We See? - Role of the Gandhabba,"
2. "WebLink: suttacentral: Āyatanavibhanga" explains a a yatana as follows:

Dvādasāyatanāni- cakkhāyatanaim, sotāyatanaí, ghānāyatanaí, jivhāyatanaí, kāyāyatanaim, manāyatanaì, rūpāyatanaì, saddāyatanaì, gandhāyatanaì, rasāyatanaì, phoṭthabbāyatanaì, dhammāyatanaì.

Tattha katamaí cakkhāyatanain? Yai் cakkhu catunnai̇ mahābhūtānai̇ upādāya pasādo attabhāvapariyāpanno anidassano sappaṭigho, yena cakkhunā anidassanena sappatighena rūpà் sanidassanaì sappaṭighaì passi vā passati v $\bar{a}$ passissati $v \bar{a}$ passe $v \bar{a}$, cakkhumpetaì cakkhāyatanampetaì cakkhudhātupesā cakkhundriyampetaì lokopeso dvārāpesā samuddopeso panḍarampetaì khettampetaì vatthumpetaì nettampetaì nayanampetaì orimaì tīrampetaì suñño gāmopeso. Idaì vuccati "cakkhāyatanaì".

- The others are explained similarly.
- In the above verse, "anidassano" means "cannot be seen." Thus, cakkhāyatana is not the physical eye. It refers to cakkhu pasāda rūpa in the mental body (gandhabba) that cannot be seen. As we know, in Out-of-Body Experiences, that gandhabba comes out of the physical body and can see without physical eyes. Details at "How Do We See? - Role of the Gandhabba."


## 3. "Akusala-Mūla Upapatti Paticca Samuppāda."

### 9.6.5 Arising of the Five Aggregates With an Ārammaṇa

January 20, 2021; revised January 21, 2021 (\#2, \#6, \#8, \#9); October 3, 2021
Arising of the Five Aggregates (pañcakkhandha) happens with the creation of a "mental image" of a thought-object ("ārammana.") For example, when we see an object, the mind re-creates its own version of that object. When we taste the food, the mind prepares its own version of that taste. All six sensory inputs work that way. In other words, pañcakkhandha ("Five Aggregates") are one's own. This is why different people respond differently to the same sensory event. [ärammana (where the mind dwells) is also called älambana (to hang [hold] on to)]

- This is a critical post to understand. It may take repeated readings and understanding of previous posts in this series: "Understanding the Terms in Paticca Samuppāda" and the references provided here. Don't hesitate to ask questions.


## Paṭicca Samuppāda (PS) Cycles Start with an Ārammaṇa (Focus of Thoughts)

1. The standard PS cycle starts with "avijjā paccayā sañkhāāa." However, we do not spontaneously start generating sañkhāra. We start generating sañkhāra based on an ārammaña (thought object) that we like or dislike.

- Cakkhu viññāna, for example, arises when cakkhu (cakkhu pasāda rūpa) makes contact (phassa) with the rūpa (an image of the object seen). In the suttas, that is stated as, "cakkhuñca paticca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhu viññannam்." See the previous post, "Phassa (Contact) - Contact With Pasāda Rūpa."
- Different people respond differently to the same sensory input. Furthermore, that response is swift. We have discussed several examples in Ref. 1.
- A new series of thoughts (citta vīthi) starts with a new ārammaṇa.


## Figuring Out Which Sense Faculty (Pañcadvārā̄vajjana Citta)

2. For example, suppose person $X$ is relaxing at his desk during his lunch break. His mind is not focused on any specific task. It is said to be in the "bhavañga" state. I have discussed the "bhavaña"" state in "State of Mind in the Absence of Citta Vithi-Bhavañga."

- Now, an unfriendly co-worker walks into the office. Person X looks up from the desk, sees the unfriendly co-worker. There are two cittas involved here. One is the pancadvaravajjana citta to investigate "which of the five senses causes the disturbance." Then X realized that it is coming through the eye indriya, i.e., it is a cakkhudvāra citta giving rise to cakkhu viññāna.
- We discussed the basic aspects of a citta vithi in the previous post; see Ref. 2. Up to now, the citta $\boldsymbol{v} \bar{t} h i$ has gone through 5 cittā in a citta vīthi with 17 citt $\bar{a}$. "Releasing the mind from the bhavañga state" takes 3 citt $\bar{a}$. I will discuss that later.
- So, the series of events start with "seeing the unfriendly co-worker." That is a cakkhu viñ̃̃āṇa. That happened without X taking the initiative. Any event that happens without taking the initiative is a kamma vipāka. Therefore, that cakkhu viñ̃n̄ạna is a vipāka viññāna. His focus of attention was shifted due to the sight of the co-worker.
- That sight led to the arising of "bad thoughts with anger" in his mind instantaneously. He may then possibly react by saying something bad to the co-worker. That development (response to the cakkhu viññanna) happens at the later stage of the same citta vithi!
- First, we discuss what happens with a single citta bringing a new sensory input, i.e., the cakkhudvāra citta giving rise to cakkhu viññāna.


## Initiation of a Sensory Event Can be at One of Six Senses

3. In the above example, seeing the co-worker started with "cakkhuñca paticca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññānà்."

- Our attention abruptly changes when we encounter a new sensory input. That could come via any of the six senses, including the mind by itself. For example, we may be doing something, and all of a sudden, thoughts about an old friend may come to mind. That happens via "manañca paṭicca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviññānam.".
- Of course, switching among several different ārammaṇa can happen in rapid succession. When we watch a movie, we see the movie screen and hear the dialogues. They switch so rapidly that we feel that watching and hearing happen simultaneously! We discussed a simple example in \#4 of Ref. 2.


## Two Possible Meanings of "Paṭicca"

4. Going back to our example, seeing the co-worker starts with "cakkhuñca paticca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhu viññannaị." Therefore, a cakkhu viñ̃n̄ạa arises when a rūpa (the figure of the co-worker) makes contact (paṭicca) with cakkhu pasāda rūpā.

- That cakkhu viññāna arises with a single citta, which is one of the 17 cittā in a citta vīthi.
- By the way, "paticca" has TWO possible meanings, depending on the context. In the term "Paticca Samuppāda," it means "getting attached willingly" or "pati" + "icca" ("pati" means to "bind.") See Ref. 3.
- However, in the above verse, paticca implies "two entities (that are compatible) making contact." A $r \bar{u} p a$ does not "make contact" with one of the other four indriya like ears or nose. Similarly, a sound does not "make contact" with the eyes or the nose. The Buddha explained that a wick would soak up oil because wick and oil are compatible and will "paṭicca" (Ref. 4.)


## The Role of Universal Cetasika

5. A complex process happens in mind during the event of "cakkhuñca paticca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhu viññānam." That process happens in that single citta which lives only for less than a billionth of a second. Only a Buddha can discern something that can happen that fast. We can verify that to be true only by seeing that it is compatible/consistent with nature.

- That "contact" between "the image of a rūpa" and "cakkhu pasāda rūpa" is made by the "phassa" cetasika that arises with that citta.
- Then that "event" is registered in the mind as a sukha, dukkha, or adukkhamasukha vedanā (pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral feeling.) The "vedana"" cetasika is responsible for that.
- Then the mind recognizes the object with the "sañ̃̃ä" cetasika.
- During the SAME citta (where cakkhu viññāṇa arises,) a bit more complex process happens that involves the "cetanā" cetasika.


## How Does Cognition/Recognition (Sañ̃̄ā) Happen In a Single Citta?

6. An unimaginably complex process occurs during that SAME cakkhudvāra citta, which lasts only a billionth of a second.

- The mind needed to compare it with previous experiences to identify that object. For example, recognition of the co-worker in the example discussed in \#2 above requires comparing the image just received with one's previous experiences. Otherwise, how does the mind recognize the person who walked in to be a co-worker and that one has had bad experiences with him in the past?
- That ultra-fast recognition (sañ̃ña) happens with the aid of the manasikāra cetasika. To get an idea of what happens when we recognize an object, see the video below (especially starting at 3:30 minutes):


## WebLink: youtube: What is a Thought? How the Brain Creates New Ideas |Henning Beck | TEDxHHL

7. At 3:30 minutes, we see a "face" made up of fruits and vegetables. Even though it is not a real human face, it takes us just a split second to realize that it represents a face.

- But as Mr. Beck points out, a computer will never recognize the human face's representation depicted there.
- At 9:00 minutes, he starts a discussion on identifying a chair. Again, a computer runs into a problem identifying "less obvious" structures that can serve as chairs.
- In both these instances, what the computer is missing is sañ̃̃̄ $\bar{a}$ (loosely translated to English as "perception"). Even animals can recognize objects relevant to their survival. For example, a dog can instantly recognize its owners and any other pets living in the house. It can recognize foods that it likes, etc. See "Sañ̃ña - What It Really Means." Also, see Ref. 5.
- During that same citta, more processes happen to make that recognition possible.


## Creation of an Image of the External Object in the Mind by the Cetanā Cetasika

8. For that recognition to occur, another important cetasika of "cetana" comes into play. It CREATES a "cittaja rūpa" in mind (a rūpa created by the mind) according to one's gati/anusaya. This is a CRITICAL point that we will discuss in more detail. The "sañkhār $\vec{a}$ " aggregate represents this process. For those familiar with Abhidhamma, this is where "mano sankh $\bar{a} r a \bar{a}$ " arises AUTOMATICALLY.

- It is the manasikāra cetasika that helps incorporate one's past experiences, future hopes, etc. (represented by gati/anusaya) and helps the cetana make that "cittaja rūpa" or the "mental picture." It is that "mental picture" that we "see" or "experience."
- There are two more cetasika that ALWAYS arise with any citta: ekaggatā and jīvitindriya. The $j \bar{v}$ itindriya cetasika keeps the hadaya vatthu alive (with kammic energy). Ekaggatā cetasika keeps the mind on that particular ārammaṇa (in this case, a rūpa rūpa or a sight.)
- The above description is at the heart of all mental phenomena, i.e., creating a "mind-made image." In the recent post, "How Do We See? - Role of the Gandhabba," we asked the question, "How do we see?" The answer is in the above description. Please re-read that post, and things will become more clear.


## Connection to the Five Aggregates

9. The above description also explains how the five aggregates arise in that single cakkhudvāra citta representing the first instance of "experiencing a visual sensory input."

- The "rūpa aggregate" is represented by the "phassa" cetasika.
- Vedanā and saññā cetasika generate the "vedanā aggregate" and the "saññā aggregate."
- The cetanā cetasika plays a key role in generating "sañkhāra aggregate" with the help of the other six cetasika. This is where the mind CREATES its own version of the sense object, a visual $r \bar{u} p a$ in this case.
- We experience only a "mind-made image" of the external rūpa that is out there in the physical world. Thus, the viñ $\tilde{n} \bar{a} n a$ aggregate arises from the above processes' overall effect.
- That is how the Five Aggregates arise with ANY sensory input via one of the six senses.


## The Arising of the Five Aggregates (Pañcakkhandha) in a Single Citta!

10. That is how the five aggregates arise within that single cakkhudvāra citta. The same process takes place for any ārammana coming through any of the six senses.

- The five aggregates arise due to the cetasika of phassa, vedanā, sañña, and cetanā. However, all SEVEN cetasika (phassa, vedanā, saññā, cetanā, manasikāra, ekaggatā, and jīvitindriya) are essential ingredients of ANY citta.
- Those 7 cetasika arise with all citta and thus are universal (sabba citta sādhāraṇa) cetasika.
- The above process takes place in all types of sensory experiences. The sound we hear is not the "real sound," but it is "modified" according to one's gati/anusaya. The same is true for all 6 sensory experiences, including smells, tastes, touches, and concepts (dhamma $\bar{a}$.)


## The Same Person Could be Perceived as Likeable or Unlikeable

11. Suppose two strangers (with opposite political views) watch TV in a bar while having their drinks. A famous politician comes on TV.

- At that moment, one person's face gets darkened, and angry thoughts arise in him. Simultaneously, the other person's face brightens up, and pleasant thoughts arise in him.
- How is that possible? It was the same picture that they were looking at.
- The reason is what we discussed above. The "mental image" formed in one person's mind depicts a "bad person." On the other hand, the other person's mind had created a "bad picture" that gave rise to bad thoughts.
- We can think of many examples. I have discussed another example in Ref. 1.


## Viññāna Is a Magician!

12. The above description explains why the Buddha called viññaña a "magician" (Ref. 6). What we experience as cakkhu, sota, ghāna, jivhā, kāya, and mano viãñāna DO NOT represent reality. It is like looking at the world with tinted glasses. Depending on the level of defilements in the mind is (i.e., gati/anusaya), the sensory experience is biased.

- This was explained with examples in the posts, "Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)" (especially see \#4 to \#6) and "The Amazing Mind - Critical Role of Nāmagotta (Memories)." It is essential to read all relevant posts and understand these fundamental ideas.
- I will continue the discussion in the next post. Please make sure to read all the relevant posts. Otherwise, future posts will not make sense.
- The mind is an amazing entity. It is unbelievably fast. That is why we are fooled into thinking that there are fruitful things that will please us. However, the reality is different. There is unimaginable suffering hidden in enticing "sense pleasures" or kāma rāga.
- That can be seen not with eyes but with wisdom. That is the yathābhūta ñaña, the wisdom to "see" the real nature with wisdom. As we discuss further, that real picture will become clear.


## References

1. See \#4 through \#6 in "Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)."
2. "Citta Vithi - Fundamental Sensory Unit."
3. "Paticca Samuppāda - "Pati+ichcha" + "Sama+uppāda""
4. In the "WebLink: suttacentral: Saimyojana Sutta (SN 44.9)," the Buddha explains, "Seyyathāpi, bhikkhave, telañca paṭicca vattiñ̃ca paṭicca telappadīpo jhāyeyya" OR "Bhikkhus, an oil lamp burns in dependence on oil and a wick." An old fashioned oil lamp has a wick partially immersed in oil. That oil soaks the wick and gets to the tip of the burning wick, and sustains the flame. Therefore, oil and wick are compatible and will "paticca." If one puts a metal rod in oil, the oil will not soak the metal, i.e., they are not compatible and thus would not paticca.
5. The above video is also discussed in "Citta - Basis of Our Experience and Actions." It is a good idea to read that post too.
6. 6. "WebLink: suttacentral: Phenapindūpama Sutta (SN 22.95)"

Other posts in this subsection are at, "Understanding the Terms in Paticca Samuppāda."

### 9.7 Paticca Samuppāda - Overview

## Revised November 4, 2018; August 27, 2022

1. Nothing can happen without a cause ("hetu" in Pāli or Sinhala). Everything happens for reasons or causes. Usually, many things simultaneously arise due to multiple causes.

- However, if one cause dominates, it appears to have happened due to one cause.

2. Due to our ignorance of the true nature of this world, we keep initiating new causes. If we do not add more fuel to the fire, the fire will extinguish when existing fuel runs out.

- Akusala kammā is fuel to the saṃsāric journey or the rebirth process.
- Sainsāric journey does not end because we keep adding "fuel to the fire," i.e., keep doing akusala kamma.

3. The Paticca Samuppāda (let us shorten it as PS) describes that process. It explains the arising of future births due to accumulated kammic energies.

- Ācariya Buddhaghosa understood only one aspect (the akusala-mūla PS) of the numerous applications of PS. Since Theravāda Buddhism adopted Visuddhimagga as the basis of Dhamma, this deep knowledge of PS went underground. [äcariya : [m.] teacher.]
- Many variations of PS can be found in the WebLink: suttacentral: Paticcasamuppādavibhañga (Vb 6) of the Vibhañgappakarana in the Abhidhamma Pitaka.

4. Here are the main subsections in this section:

- Several PS cycles are discussed in this section: "Paticca Samuppāda Cycles." However, please read \#7 below before going there.
- For those who want to avoid too many Pāli words: "Paticca Samuppāda in Plain English."
- What is meant by "paccay $\vec{a}$ " (conditions) and discussions on different types of conditions: "Patthāna Dhamma." An introduction to "paccay $\vec{a}$ " is in \#5 below.
- "Imasmim Sati Idam Hoti - What Does It Really Mean?"

5. Even if there is a cause, its result (effect) does not manifest until the right conditions ("paccay $\vec{a}$ " in Pāli) appear.

- For details, see "What Does "Paccayā" Mean in Paticca Samuppāda?." We can get the basic idea from a few examples here.
- A matchstick has the potential to bring about a fire. But unless it is heated by striking on a hard surface, fire does not ignite.
- A bomb can explode and create much destruction. But it will not go off until triggered.
- We all have bad habits, but they do not manifest until triggered by an ārammaṇa or a "thought object" (a picture, sound, smell, touch, or thought). See "Worldview of the Buddha."

6. Therefore, if one acts mindfully, one can PREVENT many akusala vipāka and FORCE many kusala vipāka.

- We all have innumerable akusala accumulated in this samisāra;
- See, "What is Kamma? Is Everything Determined by Kamma?," and "The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Āsavā)."

7. It is necessary to understand that the terms in the standard PS cycle: "avijj $\bar{a}$ paccay $\bar{a}$ sañkhāra; sañkhāra paccayā viññāna; viññāna paccayā nāmarūpa, nāmarūpa paccayā saḷāyatana, saḷāyatana paccayā phasso, phassa paccayā vedanā, vedanā paccayā taṇhā, taṇhā paccayā upādāna, upādāna
paccayā bhavo, bhava paccayā jāti, jāti paccayā jarā, marana, soka-parideva-dukkhadomanassupāyasā sambhavan'ti'' are highly condensed.

- One could write a book on each term.
- At a minimum, one needs to get the basic idea of each keyword: avijjā, sañkhāra, ..bhava, jāti.

8. Most modern texts in English translate those keywords to single words in English, which often leads to misinterpretations.

- It is better to understand the meaning of each of those Pāli worlds and use those words. They can have different meanings based on the context.

9. In the following, I will provide a few posts to read to get an idea of what those Pāli words mean. The following terms are associated with the akusala-mūla PS.

Avijjä: "What is Avijīā (Ignorance)?."
Sañkhāra: In most cases, what comes to play is abhisañkhāra or "strong sañkhāra." But it is necessary to get the basic idea of "sañkhāra" first: "Sañkhāra - What It Really Means."

Viñ̃nāna: One of the complex Pāli words: "Viñ̃nān̄a - What It Really Means."
Nāmarūpa: Another complex word: "Viññāna paccayā Nāmarūpa."
Salāyatana: Saḷāyatana (six āyatana) are not six sense faculties, "Nāmarūpa paccayā Salāyatana."
Phassa: What comes into play in PS is not "phassa" but "defiled contact" or samphassa, "Difference between Phassa and Samphassa."

Vedanā: Vedanā in PS does not mean "feelings," but "samphassa jā vedana": "Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways."

Tanhā: "Tanhā - How We Attach Via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance."
Upādāna: "Difference Between Tanhā and Upādāna."
Bhava and Jäti: "Bhava and Jāti - States of Existence and Births Therein" and "Gati to Bhava to Jāti Ours to Control."

- Of course, gati is another key Pāli word not discussed much these days. See "The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Āsava)."
- You can find more posts on each word using the "Search" box at the top. Note: only for online website.

10. It is clear from \#7 above that all future suffering (jar $\bar{a}$, marana, soka-parideva-dukkhadomanassupāyasā sambhavan'ti) will stop with the stopping of the akusala-mūla PS.

- It is also clear that all future suffering ends when there is no rebirth, i.e., when the step "bhava paccaya $j \bar{a} t i "$ stops and thus "jāti paccay $\bar{a}$ jarā, maraña, soka-parideva-dukkhadomanassupāyasä" step stops.
- As long as there are $j \bar{a} t i$ (or births), the suffering will not end.

11. The akusala-mūla PS can be terminated by working on two main targets: $a v i j j \bar{a}$ and taṇh $\bar{a}$.

- It is pretty clear why we need to remove $a v i j j \bar{a}$. If there is no $a v i j j \bar{a}$ (i.e., if one comprehends the Four Noble Truths), then an akusala-mūla PS will not even get started.
- Tanhha gradually reduces with changing our gati. That is discussed in the post: "Difference Between Tanhhā and Upādāna."


### 9.8 How Are Paṭicca Samuppāda Cycles Initiated?

November 6, 2015; Major revision October 13, 2017; \#12 added November 3, 2017; January 8, 2021

Paticca Samuppāda (PS) cycles have many varieties and can be analyzed in great detail and can reveal subtle aspects and clarify our understanding about the world we live in.

## Two Categories of PS Cycles

1. There are two broad categories of PS cycles.
i. The standard Pațicca Samuppāda describes how our actions (sañkhāra) lead to the generation of new kammā. Thus they could be called "kamm $\bar{a}$ generating"' PS cycles.
ii. The other category of PS cycles is responsible for bringing in kamma $\bar{a}$ ipāka, and thus could be called "vipāka generating" PS; this type of a PS cycle is labelled in the Tipiṭaka as an avyākata PS; $a v y a ̄ k a t a$ means "kammicaly neutral"; not generating new kamm $\bar{a}$. The Pāli word is $a v y \bar{a} k a t a$, and the Sinhala word is avyäkruta. But in many places, it is written as abyākata.

## Sensory Experience Starts With Avyākata PS

2. Everything that we INITIALLY EXPERIENCE is due to a kammā vipāka and is brought in by an avyākata PS. That PS process makes us see, hear, smell, taste, experience bodily sensations, and bring in new thoughts to the mind.

- However, the feelings (vedanā) that we experience due to such sense inputs are not the same for different persons, except in the case of bodily sensations. Everyone feels the same if getting hit (pain), or getting a good massage (pleasure).
- In other five sense inputs, the vedanā generated depends on the person. For example, a teenager may like a heavy metal song, but his grandfather may not.
- In all cases, each person RESPONDS to the sensory input in one's own way. This response may lead to new kamm $\bar{a}$ and is described by the "kamm $\bar{a}$ generating" PS cycles.


## We Don't Have Control Over Avyākata PS

3. We do not have control over the avyākata PS - which brings kammā vipāka by initiating new sense events; once started, they cannot be stopped. Even Arahants cannot avoid kammā vipāka.

- But the "kammā generating" PS cycles that arise as our response to such sense events can be controlled by us based on our gati (samisāric habits). This is the basis of Satipatṭhāna/Ānāpāna meditations.
- Avyākata PS bring kammā vipāka when suitable conditions are available; see, "Anantara Samanantara Paccaya."


## Avyākata PS May Lead to New Kamma

4. Now, depending on what we see, hear, etc due to a kammā vipāka, we MAY start making sañkhāra and a new "kammā generating" PS cycle may be initiated; then we make more kammā vipāka.

- For example, when we see an appealing object, we may generate lobha (greedy) thoughts (apuññābhi sañkhāra); when we see a distasteful object, we may generate hateful thoughts (apuññābhi sañkhāra). If we see a beggar on the street, we may generate alobha thoughts (puññābhi sañkhāra), which may lead to a meritorious act (giving some money to that person).
- All those "seeing events" arose due to avyākata PS cycles. But those different responses, generating sañkhāra, were done by "kammā generating" PS cycles, that operate based on one's gati (samisāric habits), as will discuss below.


## Not All Avyākata PS Lead to New Kamma

5. ALL our actions are initiated by avyākata PS cycles; but not all avyākata PS cycles lead to "kammā generating" PS cycles generating new $\operatorname{kamma} \bar{a}$. You may want to think about this and see that indeed that is true.

- Thousands of people see an item on display in a shop. Many glance at it and don't give it another thought. Some will stop and take another look since they like it. There could also be someone who really wanted it, but may not have money, and even think about stealing it!
- There is no "fixed person with avijjā." Avijjā can arise in any normal human (without magga phala), if the sensory input is strong enough! You may also want to read the post on "'Self' and 'no-self' A Simple Analysis - Do We Always Act with Avijijā?."
- Whether $a v i j j \bar{a}$ arises depends on the particular sense input and the person (more correctly, the person's gati).

6. We do not even notice most of these sense events. When we travel in a car, we see a million things, but only a few "catch our attention." Only those few events lead to the initiation of "kammā generating" PS cycles.

- But even one initiation of a "kammā generating" PS cycle can, in turn, initiate many "follow-up" PS cycles. For example, while walking, we may see a house by the road we really like (due to a kamm $\bar{a}$ $v i p a ̄ k a$ ). We may get attached to it (form tanh $\bar{a}$ ), and then start thinking about building a house like that. Then we may remember a nice house that belongs to a friend, and then start thinking about that friend, which could lead to thinking about a common enemy. Suddenly, we have started a stronger "kamma $\bar{a}$ generating" PS cycle that could lead to a worse kammā vipāka.
- This is the "wheeling process" that we discussed in the post, "Nibbāna - Is it Difficult to Understand?" and many other posts; enter the keywords "wheeling process" in the Search box at the top right, and you will get many posts. Our sansaric journey is fueled by an uncountable "kammā generating" PS cycles.


## Kamma to Vipāka to Kamma - Samsāric Journey

7. This vicious cycle of "vipāka" leading to "kammä" leading to more "vipāka" is the process that binds us to the sainsāra of endless rebirths, or perpetuates our "world" of suffering.

- The Buddha describes this as, "kammā vipāk $\bar{a}$ vaddanti, vipāko kamma sambhavo, tasmā punabbhavo hoti, evan loko pavattati."
- That means, "kammā lead to vipāka, vipāka, in turn, lead to kamm $\bar{a}$ and thus to rebirth (punabbhavo), and that is how the world (existence) is maintained."
- There "sambhava" is "san" + "bhava," or "adding more existences." Also, "loka" is the world, and "pavatta" means "maintain."


## "Moral" Is Relative - Any Pothujjana Can Act Morally or Immorally

8. We normally call a person "moral" when he/she acts morally in most cases.

However, that does not mean that a "moral person" will not generate immoral thoughts at times. If a "tempting sense input comes in" via any of the six senses, he/she may act with avijjā and start an akusalamūla PS.

- Similarly, one labeled as a criminal (because of his prior acts) may see someone in danger and act with kindness, initiating a meritorious deed.
- This is why the Buddha said that there is no "unchanging self," but there is no "self" either. What happens at a given moment depends on what kind of PS cycle is "triggered," and the level of avijja triggered. avijjā can range from moha (morally blind) to just not knowing the anicca nature.
- Any "average human (pothujjana) is considered to be "moral" might act with moha and commit a severely immoral act if the trigger was tempting enough.


## Stopping the Sainsāric Journey

9. The key point is that unless one has at least attained the Sotāpanna stage, one COULD act with avijjā at the level of moha, and generate kamm $\bar{a}$ (sañkhāra) that COULD generate kammā bhava corresponding to possible birth in the four lowest realms (apāy $\bar{a}$ ).

- In other words, depending on the trigger, it is possible for the pancan̄̄varana to "cover the mind" and initiate strong akusala-mūla PS cycles for any human being not yet attained the Sotāpanna stage.
- For example, we have heard stories about people with "good moral backgrounds" committing rape, under conditions that led to kāmacchanda n̄̄varana taking over their minds. Kāmacchanda comes from "kāma $+i c c a+$ andha," where icca is liking and andha is blind; thus kāmacchanda means "blinded by liking for kāma or sense pleasures."
- We have also heard stories about murders that were committed by "moral people" who were enraged by the sight of their spouse in bed with another person. Here the second nīvarana, vyāpada, covered their minds.
- Those two are the strongest $n \bar{v} v a r a n a$, but we can think about cases when the other three also could lead to immoral acts: thina middha (frozen or lazy mind), uddhacca kukkucca (tendency to do lowly things with high-mindedness), and vicikicch $\bar{a}$ (tendency to do unwise things due to not knowing the anicca nature).

10. When one attains the Sotāpanna stage, these pañcanīvaraṇa are permanently removed.

- That is why potent akusala-mūla PS cycles — which could lead to rebirths in the apāy $\bar{a}$ — are not triggered for a Sotāpanna; see, "Key to Calming the Mind - The Five Hindrances."
- One's gati permanently change with magga phala. More changes happen at higher magga phala.


## More Information

11. Different types of PS cycles are discussed at: "Paticca Samuppāda Cycles."

- The "vipāka generating" avyākata PS is discussed in the post, "Avyākata Paticca Samuppāda for Vipāka Viññ̄na."
- The "kammā generating" PS processes can be divided into two broad categories again: those generating "bad kamm $\vec{a} "$ and "good kamm $\vec{a} "$ " "Akusala-mūla Paticca Samuppāda" and "Kusala-mūla Paticca Samuppāda."
- Those "kammā generating" PS processes where one can see the consequences during this life itself are discussed in "Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda."
- There can be many other types too. But one can get a good idea of how PS works in different situations can be grasped by understanding those key processes.
- A bottom-up approach to PS processes discussed at "Understanding the Terms in Paticca Samuppāda."

12. Finally, there is another important way that we get started with generating new kamma. This is when we "get random thoughts coming to our minds that get us started on a pleasurable activity."

- For example, we may be doing something, and all of a sudden, we get a thought about watching a movie or even start thinking about an enemy and what can be done to him/her. These are initiated by "manañca paticca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviññanạa,"," where dhammā coming to our minds; see, "What are rūpa? - Dhamma are rūpa too!."
- These are also kamma vipāka. But these are more common than just seeing an enemy by chance or hearing something that one likes, etc.
- In either case, we need to be mindful always, and catch such "new kamma generations." This is the key to Ānāpāna/Satipaṭthāna Bhāvanā.


### 9.9 What Does "Paccayā" Mean in Pațicca Samuppāda?

## Revised April 27, 2016; August 25, 2019

Before we start discussing the various forms of Paticca Samuppāda (PS), it is essential to be clear about what is meant by "paccayä" (pronounced "pachchayā"). Paṭ!hāna Dhamma provides a complete description. We will introduce the concept here.

## Introduction

1. The PS cycle starts as: "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra, sañkhāra paccayā viññāna, viññāṇa paccayā nāmarūpa, nāmarūpa paccayā saḷāyatana,....."

- And since PS describes the "cause and effect" in Buddha Dhamma, most people think "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" means "avijjā causes sañkhāra" or "ignorance causes one to acts that generate bad kamma."
- Even an ordinary person has $a v i j j \bar{a}$, he/she will not ALWAYS act accordingly; most of the time, people act appropriately or morally. However, as long as avijja is there, at times one WILL likely act with $a v i j j \bar{a}$ and do inappropriate or immoral things.
- Similarly, many people think that "sañkhāra paccayā viññāna" means "sañkhāra causes viññāṇa" or "bad kamma lead to corresponding consciousness", and so on down the whole PS cycle.
- As we discuss below, the steps should be translated as, "with avijjā (ignorance) as condition, sañkhāra arise", "with sañkhāra as condition viññāna, etc.


## Key Role Of Conditions

2. It will clarify a lot of things down the line if one understood that PS does not refer to a "direct link" between causes and effects. Just because we have done many good/bad kamma (generated via sañkhāra) DOES NOT mean they ALL lead to kamma vipāka.

- That was pointed out in item \#5 in the previous post "Paticca Samuppāda - Overview." But in case the point was missed, I wanted to emphasize the point in this post.
- Any effect must have a cause. But there can be possible causes without leading to any results. Otherwise, Nibbāna would not be possible. That needs some contemplation, and I will give some examples below.
- However, without suitable CONDITIONS, causes (kamma) cannot automatically bring results (vipāka).

3. The easiest way is to consider the following example: A seed contains necessary causes (ingredients) for bringing up a new tree. But just because a seed is there, a tree is not going to come to existence. If the seed is in a cool, dry place, one could keep it that way for a long time. Or one could burn or crush it, and it will not bring up a tree.

- SUITABLE CONDITIONS must be present for causes to bring about corresponding effects. That is what paccayā means.
- When such suitable conditions are present, causes WILL bring about corresponding effects. Thus when some effect is brought about, it is called "paccuppanna", i.e., born ("иррапnа") via suitable conditions ("paccay $\vec{a}$ "); of course, if the root causes must be there, to begin with).
- In the above example, the seed could germinate and grow to a tree if one plants that seed (cause) in the ground and provides water, nutrients, and sunlight (suitable conditions).


## Not All Kamma Lead to Kamma Vipāka

4. When causes are there, corresponding effects (results) are LIKELY if suitable conditions for the effects of taking place. That is why kamma is not deterministic; see, "What is Kamma? - Is Everything Determined by Kamma?."

- However, the critical point in PS is that the effect - IF AND WHEN IT HAPPENS - is in accordance with the cause, and also the CONDITIONS was one's choosing: "Pati ichcha" leads to "sama uppāda" or simply: "when one gets attached, that leads to a new birth of similar characteristics." If and when the causes bring forth the consequences, they will be of the similar nature.

5. It is not necessary to get into further details unless one is interested in "digging deeper", but there are 24 "paccay $\bar{a} "$ or "conditions" that can actually cause the effect to materialize; these are "Patthāna Dhamma").

- Let us briefly discuss three such paccayā, "hetu paccay $\bar{a} "$, "anantara samanantara paccay $\bar{a} "$, and "aññamañña paccayä" to see what happens.


## Three Important Conditions (Paccayā)

6. Nothing happens without a root cause or a hetu (pronounced "hãthu"; see the pronunciation key in "Pāli Glossary (A-K) and Pāli Glossary (L-Z)").

- For example, a bomb causes damage because of the explosives in it; but someone has to trigger it to go off. If the bomb sits somewhere for a long time, its propellants may degrade, and then the "cause" may disappear; most kamma seeds are like that too.
- Thus, without the root cause, there will not be an explosion. That is "hetu paccayā."

7. My favorite example of the "anantara samanantara paccaya" is the germination of a seed that I discussed above in \#3. Just because there is an apple seed, it will not cause an apple tree to appear.

- An apple seed will stay without germinating for many years in a cool, dry place. But if planted in the ground with water and sunlight present, it will sprout and give rise to an apple tree; see, "Anantara and Samanantara Paccaya" for details.
- Of course, just like with the bomb, if the apple seed sits there for too long, it may lose its potency and may not yield an apple tree at all. Thus the hetu paccayā must always be satisfied.

8. The third one, "aññamañna paccayā," means dependent on each other: For example, viññ̄ạna and nāmarūpa depend on each other:

- It usually is stated that "viññāna paccayā nāmarūpa" or "depending on the viññāṇa, nāmarūpa arise." For example, viññāna of the cuti citta at the moment of death causes a matching nāmarūpa to rise in the next birth: a hatefil thought could lead to birth in the niraya or the animal realm.
- However, viññāna in turn, depends on the type of nāmarūpa: with the nāmarūpa of an animal, it is not possible to get into j jhāna. Only certain types of nāmarūpa can "support" certain types of viññạ̄a.
- Depending on the situations one or more of 24 paccay $\bar{a}$ (or conditions) can simultaneously come into play. We will discuss this in future posts.


## Pațṭhāna Dhamma

9. I just wanted to give a brief introduction to the complex "Patthāna Dhamma" which describes 24 such "paccayä" involved in Paticca Samuppāda. In other words, cause(s) and effect(s) have complicated relationships. We can only discern significant relationships. Only a Buddha can sort out all such complexities.

- But there is no need to analyze everything in great detail to understand the message of the Buddha. One can become a Sotāpanna just by comprehending the Tilakkhana: anicca, dukkha, anatta.

10. So why am I also providing information on these complex topics? It is for three reasons:

- First, it helps build saddhā (faith) in Buddha Dhamma. Anyone who takes time to examine these concepts can see that it provides a COMPLETE explanation for everything that we experience and more.
- Secondly, it is intellectually satisfying to see how all pieces nicely fit into the "big picture": I hope I have been able to give the sense of joy that I have experienced in "seeing how these pieces fall into place."
- Finally, this "self-consistency" is critical in the process of sorting out which version of Buddha Dhamma is the correct one. As the Buddha himself pointed out, any version that is not self-consistent should be discarded; see, "Saddharma Pundarika Sutra (Lotus Sutra) - A Focused Analysis."
Next in the series, "Anantara and Samanantara Paccaya", ..


### 9.10 Paṭicca Samuppāda Cycles

Avyākata Paticca Samuppāda for Vipāka Viññāna
Akusala-Mūla Upapatti Paticca Samuppāda
Uppatti Paticca Samuppāda (How We Create Our Own Rebirths)
Kusala-Mūla Paticca Samuppāda
Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda

### 9.10.1 Avyākata Paṭicca Samuppāda for Vipāka Viññāna

## October 17, 2017

1. First, a word about the nomenclature: The Pāli word is $a v y a \bar{k} a t a$ (or $a b y a \bar{k} a t a$ ) and the Sinhala word is avyākruta. It means "not designated as kusala or akusala, i.e., kammicaly neutral": there are no javana citta involved that generate abhisañkhāra.

- Kamma vipāka are kammically neutral. But based on those kamma vipāka, we initiate new kamma; see, "How Are Paticca Samuppāda Cycles Initiated?." I recommend reading that first, before continuing on this post.
- Both categories - kamma vipāka and kamma generation - can be described by paṭicca samuppāda (PS).
- Another key point I want to point out is that avyākata PS cycles NEVER start with a pabhassara citta [Radiant Mind]; see below.

2. Past kamma vipāka bring sense inputs via the six senses and IF we get attached - taṇh $\bar{a}$ - to those sense inputs, THEN that leads to new kamma by us. That is why it is a never-ending process, until one attains Nibbāna. After the Arahanthood, one will still experience such kamma vipāka, but WILL NOT get attached to them, i.e., no new kamma will be generated.

This cyclic process can be described in three steps:
i. One sees, hears, smells, tastes, makes body contacts, or a "dhamma" comes to one's mind. These do not "just happen"; they happen due to reasons (causes). They come about due to kamma vipāka, and those thoughts that arise due to them are called vipāka citta OR avyākata citta, since they are kammically neutral.
ii. Then, based on one's gati (pronounced 'gathi'), āsava, anusaya, one's mind may automatically get interested in a sense input (called an arrammana), and may get attached to that sensory input. This happens within a billionth of a second and we DO NOT have control over that initial response either; mano sañkhāra are generated AUTOMATICALLY in one's mind. These are also part of the avyākata citta since they arise AUTOMATICALLY within the same citta vīthi.
iii. IIF we one gets attached, then one starts generating new kamma by thinking CONSCIOUSLY about that sense input (generating vacī sañkhāra), i.e., one starts "wheeling around" accumulating "san" that contribute to new kamma; see, "Sańkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka." That new kamma can get stronger if we may also start doing kāya sañkhāra via speech and bodily actions.
3. All those three steps may start even before our minds register that we have started accumulating new kamma. This is because citta vithi are very fast, and all those happen within a single citta vithi; see below. But if we are mindful, we can "catch" such "wheeling around" within a few seconds and stop just the apuññābhi sañkhāra (we should not stop puññābhi sañkhāra or moral thoughts).

- But that requires careful monitoring of our "automatic responses" to such sense inputs; this is what is called "being mindful." With practice, one can "catch" them quickly and stop bad thoughts/speech/actions.
- If we keep doing that, then OVER TIME, our gati will change for the better, and our attachments to "bad things" will fade away; see, "Difference Between Tanhā and Upādāna." What is described in that post is the basis of Satipaṭ!hāna/Ānāpāna Bhāvanā. If one can grasp this concept, and implement it diligently over a few months, one will be able to see for oneself the benefits!
- Also see, "Gati, Bhava, and Jãti" to read about the very important concept of gati. It is not correct to say we have a "self" or "no-self"; we just have gati that can be changed.
- That is the basis of SatipatthhānalĀnāpāna bhāvanā. If one can grasp this concept, and implement it diligently over a few months, one will be able to see for oneself the benefits!
- One can try it with "bad habits" (smoking, drugs, over-eating, etc) first to see the power of it, and then extend to other dasa akusala. This is also the way to Sotāpanna stage because then one will be able to grasp Tilakkhana too.

4. It is very important to understand the above steps, and the post "Tanhā - How We Attach Via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance" is a necessary first read too. What happens is explained in a bit more detail in "Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways," "Kāma Assāda Start with Phassa paccayā vedanā or Samphassa Jā vedanā," and has been discussed in a more fundamental way in the subsection: Living Dhamma Fundamentals."

- Grasping this cyclic process of how we have traversed this suffering-filled rebirth process can be quite helpful but one must be willing to spend some time on those posts.

5. All PS processes can be broadly divided into three categories:
i. What we will discuss in this post is how past kamma vipāka bring in sense inputs via avyākata (Sinhala: avyākruta) PS process, and also automatically generate mano sañkhāra.
ii. Then akusala-mūla PS processes may contribute to generating new kamma that extends the rebirth process. These also start within seconds, but as mentioned above, we can catch and stop them if we are mindful (Satipaṭ!hāna/Ānāpāna).
iii. The kusala-mūla PS process describes how one can accumulate new "good kamma" that will eventually help us attain Nibbāna by following the Noble Path. If the kamma vipāka generated such a "good PS" process, we should cultivate those. That is also part of Satipaṭthāna/Ānāpāna.

The akusala-mūla and kusala-mūla PS processes are discussed in: "Paticca Samuppāda Cycles." So, this post on avyakata (abyākata in Sanskrit) (Sinhala: avyakruta) PS process will complete that subsection.
6. Now we can make the connection between the categories in $\# 2$ to categories in $\# 5$.

- The sense inputs initiation \#2 (i), and the initial response to it \#2(ii), are generated by the avyākata PS process of \#5(i).
- Our CONSCIOUS response to those sense inputs in creating new kamma (apuññābhisañkhāra or puññābhisañkhāra) in \#2(iii), are carried out by the two kinds of PS processes in \#5(ii) and \#5(iii).

7. This avyäkata PS process is not discussed in current Theravāda texts including Visuddhimagga. It is of course in the Tipitaka, and only the Pāli version is available at: "WebLink: suttacentral: Paticca Samuppāda Vibhañga (Vb 6)" (Section 2.11 on Abyākata Niddesa is about three-quarters of the way down from the top).

- I have not seen any current texts or internet sites in English that describe the avyākata PS process. But is needed to complete the picture of how kamma vipāka bring in sensory inputs to us AND initiate new kamma.

8. Here is the initiation of the avyākata PS process per Tipitaka reference in \#7 above: "..vipākaim cakkhuviññānai் uppannaì hoti upekkhā sahagatain rūpārammañaì, tasmim samaye sañkhāra paccayā viññāṇain, viññāna paccayā nāmain, nāma paccayā chaṭthāyatanaín, chaṭthāyatana paccayā phasso, phassa paccayā vedanā, vedanā paccayā bhavo, bhava paccayā jāti, jāti paccay $\bar{a}$ jarāmaranaì. Evametassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa samudayo hoti." [Weblink: suttacentral: 2.11. Abyākataniddesa 2.11 Ahetukakusalavipākacitta 2.11.1.1 Ahetukakusalavipākacitta 2.11.1.1.1. Cakkhuviññānacitta]

- We can translate the initial part of this verse as, "..when a rupārammana (seeing an object) gives rise to a vipāka cakkhu viñ̃n̄ạna with ne utrall feelings (i.e., just seeing)..."
- Thus, "seeing" event is a neutral vedanā, as are all vipāka that come through all senses except the body: Only kāya viññāna - coming through the physical body - can directly generate sukha or dukha vedana due to kamma vipāka (as in getting hit by something or getting a massage).
- The other five types sensory inputs, at the moment of receiving, generate only neutral feelings (upekkha vedana $\overline{\text { }}$. This is an important point to grasp. All these like seeing, hearing, could generate "good or bad feelings" based on our gati, and those secondary feelings arise moments later (even though we cannot perceive that because it is so quick).
- But we can clearly see that, for example, some may generate "good feelings" and others may generate "bad feelings" upon hearing the same song. Seeing the same politician may cause "good feelings" in his supporters and "bad feelings" in those in the opposite party, and neutral feelings in others.

9. Unless it is pre-planned, a seeing event (any sense event) is initiated by a kamma vipāka. (However, going to see a movie is a deliberate action, in which case the real starting point is an idea or a dhamma coming to the mind as a kamma vipāka; think about it!)

- Again, it is important to grasp that a seeing event itself is a neutral event (upekkhāsahagataim rūpārammanaini) EVEN IF it is the seeing of a good object or a bad object. "Good or bad" is a relative thing depending not on the object but only on one's gati, as explained in \#8 above.
- One way to think about it, this initial cakkhu viñ̃̃āna is just the "seeing", i.e., it is like taking a picture with a camera.

10. In the same way, sota viñ̃̃āṇa is just the "hearing", ghāṇa viñ̃̃āna is just the "smelling," etc. Whether they are "good or bad vedan $\vec{a}$ " depends on the individual.

- When that image is presented to the mind, it instantly matches the image with one's cravings, likes, dislikes (i.e., gati), and mano sañkhāra are generated AUTOMATICALLY, leading to viññāna.
- Now, this second viññāna is the viññāna which has incorporated one's gati, not the cakkhu viñ̃̃āṇa captured by the eyes; of course, cakkhu viñ̃āṇa is also registered in the mind.

11. This is explained in the next step in \#8 above, "tasmim samaye (at that time) sañkhāra paccay $\bar{a}$ viññānain, viññāna paccayā nāmain, nāma paccayā chatthāyatanain, chaṭhāyatana paccayā phasso, phassa paccayā vedanā, vedanā paccayā bhavo, bhava paccayā jāti, jāti paccayā jarāmaranaim. Evametassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa samudayo hoti."

This is the avyākata PS due to the kamma vipāka.

- Note that this PS process is different than the akusala-mūla and kusala-mūla PS processes; see the highlighted part of the abyākata PS above.
- First, it does not start with "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra." There will be no kamma done with avijjā. This is just a kamma vipāka.

12. Without going into this complex process, only the mindset of the person is changed based on the contact (phassa) of the ārammana with the gati of the individual.

- We note here that there are no "nāmarūpa" involved here, but just "nāma." This is a deeper point, but the generation of "nāmarūpa" involves javana citta which actually performs kamma. In this vipāka cycle, no kamma is done by the mind; the mind just matches the "picture" that it received against one's gati, and automatically recognizes if it is an object that one likes/dislikes.
- For example, if an alcoholic sees a bottle of his favorite alcohol, he will be temporarily be "born" ( $j \bar{a} t i)$ as an alcoholic at that instant. But if it was a person who has no such gati, this process will end right there (just seeing).
- But if it did lead to the person being born in the "alcoholic state", then a new akusala-mūla PS process will run inside that avyākata PS process starting at "bhava paccayā jāti" step.

13. Therefore, subsequent to that avyākata PS, new akusala-mūla PS processes may start. That is the "new kamma generation." Even though an Arahant will experience a similar avyākata PS, that WILL NOT lead to an akusala-mūla PS process.

- An akusala-mūla PS process MAY NOT be initiated even in a normal human if he/she did not have gati to be attached to that sense input (ārammana).
- But that does NOT mean that the avyākata PS in that case involved "pabhassara citta" [Radiant Mind] or "pure uncontaminated citta." It just means that person did not have gati to be interested in that particular sensory input.

14. Both the initial avyākata PS and the subsequent akusala-mūla PS process will take place within the same citta vīthi (in the above example a cakkhudvāra citta vith $h i$ with 17 citta), which lasts only a billionth of a second!

- Such fast processes are not discernible to any human other than a Buddha. But we have the ability to study it and realize that indeed that must be correct. In that sense, we must not focus on just this process, but realize that it fits in nicely with any phenomenon that we experience.
- As one learns deeper concepts, it will be difficult not to be amazed by the capabilities of a Buddha. This is how one builds one's faith (saddh $\bar{a}$ ).
- The following discussion will illustrate how the processes that we discussed above fit in nicely with the concept of a citta vìthi.

15. The following may not be fully graspable by someone who is not familiar with the details of citta vīthi. But just read on and try to get the basic idea without worrying about the details.

- The following figure shows a typical thought process (citta vīthi) that is started when eyes capture a "seeing event" (rūpa aramanna or rūpārammana).

Avyakata PS Akusala-mula PS

B B "AB BC BU PD CV Sam San V J J J J J J J T T" B B Kamma Vipaka $\uparrow$ New Kamma

Decision Making According to Gati
$\mathrm{B}=$ bhavanga, $\mathrm{AB}=$ atita bhavanga, $\mathrm{BC}=$ bhavanga calana,
$B U=$ bhavanga upacceda, $P D=$ pancadvara vajjana, $C V=$ cakkhu vinnana,
Sam = sampticcana, San = santirana, $\mathrm{V}=$ vottapana, $\mathrm{J}=$ javana, $\mathrm{T}=$ tadanga

Click the following link to magnify and download: WebLink: PDF File: Avyākata Piticca Samuppāda

- For a discussion on citta vithi, see, "Citta vithi - Processing of Sense Inputs."

16. In between citta vīthi, the mind is in the "bhavañga state"; see, "Pabhassara Citta, Radiant Mind, and Bhavañga." That post is also a bit advanced, and I will try to make a new section on "simple Abhidhamma" in the future.

- If you see someone not active and just staring into space (not really thinking or concentrating on an idea), then that person's mind is likely to be in the bhavañga state ( $\mathbf{B}$ in the figure). This is also explained in the post, "Citta vithi - Processing of Sense Inputs."
- When the mind switches from this bhavanga state to a picture that is brought to its attention, it takes three thought moments to "break away" from that bhavanga state and to focus the attention on the new sensory input.
- With the PD citta, the mind sees that it is coming through the "eye door" (cakkhu dvāra) and in the next citta captures that picture. This is the initiation of the avyākata PS process: "..vipākain cakkhuviññānain uppannain hoti" in \#8 above.

17. Then, during the next two citta ("Sam" for sampaticcana, and "San" for santirana), the mind matches that picture (sense input) with its own gati and may get attached to it. This is what is described in "tasmim samaye sañkhāra paccayā viññannaì, viññāna paccayā nāmaì, nāma paccayā chaṭthāyatanaìn, chatṭhāyatana paccayā phasso, phassa paccayā vedanā, vedanā paccayā bhavo, bhava paccay $\bar{a}$ $j a \bar{t} i . "$

- Then the person is "temporarily born" in a different state (a person with "alcoholic gati" will be born instantly as an alcoholic upon seeing his/her favorite drink), and may start a new akusala-mūla PS process, as discussed below.
- That decision to acting with avijjā based on that "matching" happens at the all-important votthapana (V) citta.

18. Then a new akusala-mūla (or kusala-mūla) PS process starts and one starts generating kamma with javana citta (J), as shown in the above figure. So, this new PS process starts with the standard, "avijj $\bar{a}$ paccayā sañkhāra, sañkhāra paccayā viññāṇa...."

- When this initial citta vīthi ends, more such akusala-mūla PS cycles will follow, if one got "attached." Even within a second, there could be thousands of such akusala-mūla PS cycles running (and each becoming stronger due to the past ones), even before one is fully consciously aware of it.
- But as humans (with the neocortex that slows down this fast processing; see, "Truine Brain: How the Mind Rewires the Brain via Meditation/Habits," we have the ability to stop those akusala-mūla PS cycles from building up to doing bad speech and bad actions.
- This is the key to Satipaṭthāna/Ānāpāna Bhāvanā: to be mindful and catch any "impulsive wrong actions" before they get out of hand. With practice, one will be able to "catch oneself" very early in this process.

19. This is also why Satipațthāna/Ānāpāna bhāvanā cannot just be limited to a "sitting meditation session." One needs to be engaged during all waking hours and be mindful. Then with time, our gati will change for the better, and we will stop doing "foolish and damaging things."

- Then our minds will become pure and we will be able to grasp more of Buddha Dhamma. It is a gradual process, especially initially.
- Now it should also be clear that one will NOT have a "pabhassara citta" [Radiant Mind] at any time unless one is an Arahant. It should be clear that one can never stop that initial avyākata citta vithhi. It is gone within a billionth of a second.
- However, we do need to stop those akusala-mūla PS processes, as soon as we become aware of them. Terminology does not matter if one is doing the correct procedure.

20. Don't be discouraged if you find this post too technical. Paticca samuppāda can go to very deep levels. Just get the overall idea and things will become clear with time if you read the other posts referenced.

### 9.10.2 Akusala-Mūla Upapatti Paṭicca Samuppāda

This is an early post; revised May 10, 2018; March 13, 2021; May 10, 2021; May 13, 2021; rewritten May 21, 2021; revised August 18, 2021

Akusala-mūla upapatti Pațicca Samuppāda describes how our present actions dictate the rebirth process among the 31 realms. [upapatti :[f.] birth; rebirth; approach.]

## Six Root Causes That Determine Future Births

1. One is born in this world due to the six root causes.

- One is born in the apāyā or dugati (and also subjected to suffering even when born in good realms) due to bad gati arising mainly due to lobha, dosa, moha. The two main version of akusala-mūla PS operate when actions, speech, and thoughts occur with these three root causes; see \#2.
- One is born in the remaining "good realms" or sugati (and experience mundane sense pleasures) due to good gati due to alobha, adosa, amoha. The kusala-mūla PS operates when actions, speech, and thoughts occur with these three root causes with the comprehension of the Noble Truths; see "KusalaMūla Paticca Samuppāda." In particular, that post explains why puñ̃̄ābhisañkhāra (moral deeds) become kusala (i.e., truly alobha, adosa, amoha) only with an understanding of the Four Noble Truths/Paticca Samuppāda/Tilakkhaṇa.
" Also, see "Six Root Causes - Loka Samudaya (Arising of Suffering) and Loka Nirodhaya (Nibbāna)."


## Two Types of PS Processes Based on Lobha, Dosa, Moha

2. Akusala-mūla PS describes the PS process when one acts with lobha, dosa, moha, the three root causes that bring "bad outcomes." It is also two-fold:

- The upapatti PS describes how a "lifestream" or a being makes the samisāric journey via repeated births in the 31 realms.
- The Idappaccayat $\bar{a}$ PS describes the moment-to-moment progression of a "lifestream" or a being. This is discussed at "Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda."
- It is important to note that Buddhaghosa (in Visuddhimagga) described only the upapatti PS. In recent times, Waharaka Thero has discussed the Idappaccayatā PS in detail.


## Upapatti Paṭicca Samuppāda Process

3. Let us now discuss the upapatti PS, which describes how the PS cycle goes through a new birth at the end of current life. The steps in this cycle are:
"avijjā paccayā sañkhāra; sañkhāra paccayā viññāna; viñn̄ạna paccayā nāmarūpa, nāmarūpa paccayā saḷāyatana, salāyatana paccayā phasso, phassa paccayā vedanā, vedanā paccayā taṇhā, tanh $\bar{a}$ paccayā upādāna, upādāna paccayā bhavo, bhava paccayā jāti, jāti paccayā jarā, maraṇa, soka-parideva-dukkha-domanassupāyasā sambhavan'ti" [Weblink: suttacentral: Majjhima Nikāya 115 Bahudhātukasutta]

And that is how this whole mass of suffering arises: "Evametassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa samudayo hoti "

Let us briefly discuss those steps.

## Sañkhāra - Thoughts, Speech, Actions Due to Avijjā

4. With ignorance of the Four Noble Truths as a condition, one thinks, speaks, and acts with those "bad root causes" of lobha, dosa, moha. Such thoughts, speech, and actions arise due to mano, vacī, and kāya sañkhāra. We must note that these are really abhisañkhāra, i.e., they are strong sañkhāra; "abhi" means "strong." See, "Sañkhāra - What It Really Means."

- We are born without ANYTHING material other than our tiny baby body, which actually started as a single cell in the mother's womb. We grow up and start acquiring "stuff" both material and non-material: knowledge, material things, friends, spouse, children, fame, etc.
- While we acquire these "things" we also acquire new habits (gati) or strengthen ones that we brought from previous lives; these take place according to the Idappaccayatā PS at every moment: "pati + ichcha sama uppāda," i.e., we do things that we like and get similar kind of results.
- When we die, we take with us only the kamma seeds (both good and bad) from our actions; the habits (gati) and cravings ( $\bar{a} s a v \bar{a}$ ) are embedded in them. These are in the manomaya k $\bar{a} y a$, and the manomaya kāya (or gandhabba) leaves the dead physical body with those "updated" kamma seeds. This is basically the "net result" of our life here.
- One of the existing kamma seeds (from this life or previous lives) gives rise to the next life, where we acquire more of them BASED ON the gati and āsavas. So the cycle perpetuates.


## Viññāna in Upapatti PS Is Paṭisandhi Viññāṇa

5. With sañkhāra as a condition, energy for a new bhava or a patisandhi viññāna arises.

- This viññāna of the new life arises according to the nature of the kamma seed that gave rise to it. If that kamma seed was due to some hateful act(s), then the viññanna will be matching: "pati + ichcha sama uppāda." If it is a seed due to an act of generosity done with loving kindness, it could be the viññāna of a Brahma.
- Thus the "base level of viññāna" for animal life is VERY DIFFERENT from that of human life, even for the same "lifestream," i.e., when a human is reborn as an animal the "base level of viñ̃̄āna" makes a huge downward transition. This is why it is NOT correct to say that "viññāna is transferred from life to life." See, "What Reincarnates? - Concept of a Lifestream."


## What Are Nāmarūpa?

6. With viññāna as condition, nāmarūpa arise.

- Nāmarūpa in the upapatti PS is different from those come to play in the Idappaccayatā PS.
- For clarification of nāmarūpa, see "Viññāna Paccayā Nāmarūpa."
- A deeper discussion at "Kamma Viñ̃n̄āna and Nāmarūpa Paricceda Ñāna."


## Salāyatana Means To Use the Sensory Faculties With a "Unpurified Mind"

7. With nāmarūpa as a condition, salāyatana arises.

- In upapatti PS, salāyatana (six sense doors) refers to those that arise for the new existence. For example, six sense doors arise for an animal while just three sense doors (eye, ear, and mind) arise for a Brahma.
- See, "Nāmarūpa Paccayā Salāyatana" for details.


## Phassa, in This Case, Is "Defiled Contact" or Samphassa

8. With salāyatana as a condition, phasso arises.

- The meaning of the root word "phassa" is "contact." Any living being sees with eyes, hears with ears, etc.
- However, in akusala-mūla PS, phassa is really "samphassa" or "sañ phassa." See \#9.
- This is why this Akusala-mūla Pațicca Samuppāda is not applicable for an Arahant (and also for other Ariyā too at most times). An Arahant does not generate "samphassa" but just "phassa" without "sañ."
- Many posts on the website on this important concept; see, "Search Results for samphassa."


## Vedanā Is Samphassa-Jā-Vedanā

9. With (sañ) phassa as condition, vedana arise.

- The root level of vedanā arises due to phassa for living beings, including Arahants.
- It is important to realize that NOT all vedanā play a role in akusala-mūla PS. Only those vedana that arise due to samphassa ("samphassa ja vedanā") play a role here.
- When greed, anger, or ignorance take over, a mind generates samphassa-j $\bar{a}-v e d a n \bar{a}$.
- Such "samphassa jā vedanā" depend on the gati and $\bar{a} s a v a s: ~ s e e, ~ " V e d a n a ̄ ~(F e e l i n g s) ~ A r i s e ~ i n ~ T w o ~$ Ways." Also, see step \#3 in "Tanh $\bar{a}$ - How We Attach Via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance."
- We discussed this recently in the post, "Dukkha Samudaya Starts With Samphassa-Jā-Vedanā."


## "Attaching" or Tanhh $\bar{a}$

10. With samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedanā as a condition, tanhh $\bar{a}$ arise.

- Tanhha arise when one gets "attached," or 'fused" into a thing or situation: with sukha vedana $\bar{a}$, one attaches with greed; with displeasure, one attaches with hate; one also attaches with not knowing what to do (with a highly agitated mind); see, "Tanhā - How We Attach Via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance."


## The Key Step of Upādāna

11. With taṇhā as condition, upādāna arise.

- At the moment of death, in the last citta vithi, the dying person gets a kamma nimitta. This is normally a vision or a sound that depicts the nature of the strong kamma seed that came to the forefront of the mind.
- For example, if the kamma seed that is about to give the next birth was due to killing, then the person may see a gun or hear the sound of it, or even see himself as getting ready to shoot; thus, the person will have the same hateful thoughts arise and just like at the time of the crime, the person embraces that situation automatically (upādāna) because one has such "gati" or habits.
- I highly recommend the subsection on "Concepts of Upādāna and Upādānakkhandha" that will also clarify the previous steps.


## Kammic Energy Accumulation in the Step "Upādāna Paccayā Bhavo"

12. With upādāna as condition, a new existence (bhava) is grasped at the cuti-patisandhi moment.

- The next citta vith $h i$ starts with the new existence or "bhava" matching that state of mind: "pati $+i c h c h a$ sama uppāda." Depending on the kamma nimitta that was grasped, a matching existence, a human, animal, deva, etc. arise; see, "Paticca Samuppāda - "Pati+ichcha"+"'Sama+uppāda."
- More details in "Concepts of Upādāna and Upādānakkhandha." A deeper analysis of "Difference Between Tanhā and Upādāna."


## Bhava Paccayā Jāti - Kammic Energy Giving Rise to Rebirth in a New Realm

13. With bhava as a condition, $j \bar{a} t i$ (new birth) arises. Note that except for human and animal realms, bhava and jāti are essentially the same. See, "Bhava and Jāti- States of Existence and Births Therein."

- At this step, a birth matching the bhava starts for the human and animal realms. The selected "human/animal bhava" will last until the kammic energy associated with that kamma seed is exhausted, as explained in the above post.
- Thus, if the kamma seed has the potential for thousands of years of life, the next birth will still be in the human realm when the current life ends.


## Each Birth Ends Up With "Various Types of Suffering"

14. With $j a \bar{a} t i$ as condition, "jarā, maraṇa, soka-parideva-dukkha-domanassupayasa sambhavan' $t i$ ".

- Jāti inevitably results in decay and eventual death. Therefore, this process describes how dukkha arises in the rebirth process.
- No matter where one is born in the 31 realms, one grows old and eventually dies. During that time, one goes through all kinds of suffering, particularly in the human realm and below. Aging and death are certainties.
- And at death, the whole cycle re-starts unless the Arahanthood had not been realized. One WILL BE born somewhere in the 31 realms, and the whole process will continue.

15. The above steps describe the upapatti PS. The other aspect, i.e., what happens during a given lifetime, is described in "Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda."

- Of course, ALL kamma accumulation happens in the Idappaccayatā PS. The upapatti PS explains how rebirths take place according to such accumulated kammic energies.
- All the steps in the akusala-mūla Paticca Samuppāda are described in detail in the series: "Paticca Samuppāda in Plain English."
- Also, see the new subsection, "Paticca Samuppāda - Essential Concepts."


### 9.10.3 Uppatti Paṭicca Samuppāda (How We Create Our Own Rebirths)

July 6, 2019; revised October 4, 2021

## Rebirths Arise Due to Our Actions

1. Uppatti Paṭicca Samuppāda describes how we create our rebirths. Idappaccayatā Paṭicca Samuppāda explains how we make our kamma vipāka. The post, "Bhava paccayā Jāti....Jarā , Marana,...." discusses the differences between kamma bhava and uppatti bhava. [upapatti : [f.] birth; rebirth; approach.][uppatti: :[f.] rebirth; coming forth; origin.]

- Both types of bhava or existences arise due to the generation of (abhi)sañkhāra due to avijjā. We remember that we do all kinds of kamma (kāya kamma, vacī kamma, mano kamma) with sañkhāra ( $k \bar{a} y a, v a c \overline{\text {, }}$, and mano sañkhāra) or "how we think and then act on such thinking."
- ALL sañkhārā arise in the MIND. As we know, sañkhārā make kammā that lead to future rebirths with physical bodies. That is why the Buddha said: "Mano pubbangamā dhammā.." or "ALL dhammā arise with the mind as precursor..."
- When we generate (abhi)sañkhāra that creates a "future expectation" or a viññ̄ạna; see, "Viññāna Aggregate." That ALWAYS leads to a kamma bhava, which is a "seed" to bring about a future existence in this life or future life.
- A kamma bhava can become a uppatti bhava if it becomes strong enough to give rise to rebirth. For example, killing a parent WILL generate a uppatti bhava that WILL bring in birth in an apāya in the very next rebirth.

2. That is the crucial difference between Idappaccayatā Paṭicca Samuppāda and Uppatti Paṭicca Samuppāda; see, "Paticca Samuppāda Cycles."

- Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda generates kamma seeds or kamma bhava moment-to-moment.
- Those bhava (or kamma seeds or kamma bija) that bring kamma vipāka during a lifetime (whether in this life or WITHIN a future life) are called a "kamma bhava."
- Some bhava are strong enough to bring in a new future existence (whether in a bad realm or a good realm) are called "uppatti bhava."
- Regardless of whether it is a kamma bhava or a uppatti bhava, we generate them every time we act with avijjā and make viñ̃n̄ạna via the steps, "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" and "sañkhāra paccayā viññāna."
- Then subsequent Paticca Samuppāda steps invariably lead to "bhava paccayā jāti" and "jāti paccayā jarā, marana, soka, perideva, dukkha, domanassa, upasaya sambhavanti. Evametassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa samudayo hoti." or "the whole mass of suffering."


## Grasping a Bhava Happens Automatically

3. We do not have any control over which "uppatti bhava" is selected at death. The strongest with the most "upādāna" associated with it gets to the front automatically. The Buddha gave a simile to explain how this selection of a "uppatti bhava" or a potent kamma seed happens at the cuti-patisandhi transition at death.

- Imagine a barn that keeps the cows in for the night. In the morning, all the cows are anxious to get out and roam around. When the gate opens, the strongest cow has come to the front and is out of the gate first. The weaker cows don't even make an effort to go to the gate.
- Just like that, it is the most potent "kamma seed" or a "patisandhi bhava" that wins at the cutipatisandhi transition.
- We discussed the case of a teenager in the previous post, "Bhava paccayā Jāti....Jarā, Marana, ...". Suppose he created a potent kamma seed with an action depicting "animal-like" behavior. In that case, it will bring about an animal's existence at the cuti-patisandhi transition.

4. A Buddha could analyze such a patisandhi Paticca Samuppāda cycle in detail to pinpoint even the type of animal. That is because a Buddha can see not only a person's whole history in the present life but going back to many eons. Thus, he could see which kamma seed will bring the following existence and exactly which kind of "gati" are associated with that kamma seed. We can only discuss the general trends, and here we have discussed only the main ideas of how these Paticca Samuppāda cycles operate.

- Going back to the teenager, In this case, it is the pattisandhi Paticca Samuppāda cycle that operates, and "bhava paccaya $\bar{j} \bar{a} t i$ " here leads to the birth in a new existence as an animal using that uppatti bhava.


## Difference Between Bhava and Jāti

5. It is essential to realize that cuti-patisandhi transition DOES NOT necessarily happen when a human dies. They can be reborn many times as humans within a given "human bhava"; see, "Bhava and Jāti - States of Existence and Births Therein."

- Once born ( $j \bar{a} t i)$ in such an animal existence (bhava), that animal will grow and then start the old age ("jara"), and eventually, die ("marana").
- Since most violent animals have shorter lifetimes, only a fraction of that kammic energy is likely to have been spent. That animal will keep going through many similar births (" $j \bar{a} t i$ ") until the power of that kamma seed is consumed. Many animals keep coming back to the same life many hundreds of times.

6. That is the difference between "bhava" and " $j \bar{a} t i$." Once one gets a new existence or "bhava," one could have many births (" $j \bar{a} t t$ ") in that existence until the energy in the kamma seed runs out. I keep repeating this because it is essential to understand the difference between "bhava" and "jāti."

- Thus, we can see that the last step of "jāti paccayā jarā, marana, soka, parideva, dukkha, domanassa, upasaya sambhavanti. Evametassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa samudayo hoti." will be with that "teenager" for a long time to come. It is not just one birth but many that will correspond to that existence as that animal.
- In general, when one is in the human "bhava" one could be reborn many times before the energy of that "good kamma seed" is depleted. That is why some people can recall memories from recent past lives. A human bhava can last thousands of years, but each human birth ( $j \bar{a} t i$ ) lasts only about 100 years.
- However, getting another "human bhava" is difficult; see "How the Buddha Described the Chance of Rebirth in the Human Realm."


## How Are Certain Rebirths Stopped?

7. We mentioned earlier that anyone would have accumulated numerous good and bad kamma seeds strong enough to give rise to good and bad rebirths. Then the following question arises. Does a person attain the Sotāpanna stage by eliminating all those corresponding bad kamma seeds?

- While it is possible to reduce the potency of kamma seeds and maybe even eliminate some, it may not be possible to remove all. The Ariya metta bhāvan $\bar{a}$ - discussed in the "Bhavana (Meditation)" section - can lessen the potency of some kamma seeds. Even the Buddha had 11 instances of bad kamma vipāka, including a back problem.
- Therefore, it is very likely that we all have many good and bad kamma seeds strong enough to energize many good and bad rebirths.

8. What happens at the cuti-paṭisandhi moment involves the "upādāna paccayā bhava" step in the uppatti Pațicca Samuppāda cycle.

- Suppose a person dies, and that was the last possible human birth for them. Then at the dying moment, that poten kamma seed will generate a corresponding nimitta (or sign of that kamma).
- Whether they will willingly grasp that nimitta will depend on whether they still have such "gati."

9. Let us again consider the case of the violent teenager discussed in \#3 in the previous post, "Bhava paccayā Jāti. ...Jarā , Marana,...." Suppose he continued with his violent acts and built up a "uppatti bhava" suitable for a fierce animal. Then, at the dying moment, he would see in his mind (like in a dream), a rival gang member trying to "steal a drug deal"; he would also see a gun close-by. That is the nimitta.

- If that person still has the same gati, he will get angry, grab the gun, and shoot that person by his instincts.
- That is the "upādāna paccayā bhava" step for the new existence. That person has willingly grasped the mindset of an animal, and he will be born as an animal.
- This process is explained from beginning to end in detail in the series of posts, "Paticca Samuppāda in Plain English."


## How Does a Sotāpanna Avoid Bad Rebirths?

10. Let us now go back to the question of how a Sotāpanna avoids such bad rebirths even if they have many bad kamma seeds. Suppose that Sotāpanna has the same kind of strong (and bad) kamma seed as that teenager (could be from a previous life).

- What happens is that a Sotāpanna will not grab the gun and shoot that person even if it is their worst enemy. His mindset or "gati" has permanently changed. Thus "upādāna paccayā bhava" step will not be executed for that kamma seed.
- In that case, now the next potent uppatti bhava will come to the forefront. If that is also a bad one suitable for rebirth in the lowest four realms, Sotāpanna's mind will rejected that too. Eventually, he will grasp a rebirth that is compatible with his "gati" at that dying moment. A Sotāpanna has removed the "gati" of a being in one of the four lowest realms.
- All that happens automatically and very quickly. We do not have any conscious control over it.

11. How one lives this life AND how one lived previous lives can contribute to future rebirths. One would generate "kamma seeds" or "uppatti bhava" for possible future existences according to how one lives a life.

- However, bad bhava will not result if one has changed one's gati PERMANENTLY (via attaining at least the Sotāpanna stage). EVEN IF one had committed bad kamma suitable to bring in a 'bad bhava," one's mind will not be grasped that "bad bhava"at the cuti-patisandhi moment.
- That is why Paṭicca Samuppāda means "pati + ichcha" leading to "sama" + "uppāda." What one grasps willingly and habitually is what one that will operate automatically at the dying moment; see, "Paticca Samuppāda - "Pati+ichcha"+"Sama+uppāda."
- It is better to use Paticca Samuppāda even in English rather than "dependent origination." Most Pāli words have "built-in" explanations (pada nirutti). One needs to understand what is meant by those words and use the Pāli words. [pada :[nt.] foot; foot-step; a word; position; place; reason; cause; a line of stanza; the final rest. nirutti : (f.) [Sk. nirukti, nis+vac] one of the Vedāngas (see chalanga), expln of words, grammatical analysis, etymological interpretation; pronunciation, dialect, way of speaking, expression.]
- I have explained this with sañ̃̄ā, sañkhāra, and viññ̄ạna as well; see, "Mental Aggregates." Those DO NOT have corresponding SINGLE English words. In particular, it is WRONG to translate viñũāna as just "consciousness"; see, "Viññāna Aggregate."


## Relevance to "Origin of Life" Issue

12. I hope it is clear now how we create our future births by doing strong kamma. Good kamma lead to good vipāka and good births. Bad kamma leads to bad vipāka and bad births.

- Not only that, but we can avoid bad births (in the lower four realms) by removing our 'bad gati that could lead to such births." Attainment of Sotāpanna stage ensures this.
- In the same way, we can stop births in the human and deva realms (remaining realms in kāma loka). Removal of "kāma gati" or cravings for sense pleasures get one there. The need to take this step may not become clear until one attains the Sotāpanna stage.
- Even the higher brahma realms have some of suffering (especially at the moment of death). Future suffering is completely removed by removing "all gati" including those based on craving for jhānic pleasures in brahma realms. This happens of course at the Arahant stage.

13. It should also be clear that "new lives" do not randomly come into existence. A new $j \bar{a} t i$ based on a new bhava arises ONLY as a continuation of an existing lifestream; see, "What Reincarnates? Concept of a Lifestream."

- A living being automatically grasps a new bhava when one bhava ends (except for an Arahant.)
- That is how the rebirth process continues. And that is also why there is no "traceable beginning to life."
" A detailed discussion in a new series of posts on "Origin of Life."


### 9.10.4 Kusala-Mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda

This is an early post; revised May 10, 2018; re-written February 6, 2021; \#2 revised February 10, 2021; May 28, 2022; August 27, 2022

## What Is Kusala-Mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda?

1. Kusala-mūla version of Paticca Samuppāda (PS) describes the way to Nibbāna. It is not described in even the current Theravāda texts, even though it is in the Tipitaka. Since the time Buddhaghosa wrote Visuddhimagga, all Theravāda texts followed his books instead of Tipitaka.

- That means the PS process for attaining Nibbāna has NOT been described for over 1500 years. No wonder the Nibbāna has been hidden for all these years.
- Kusala-mūla (pronounced "moola") PS describes the PS process for acting with alobha, adosa, and amoha with an understanding of the Four Noble Truths. That goes beyond the mundane versions of alobha, adosa, and amoha. We will discuss that below.
- Of course, the kusala-mūla PS process is unknown to the world without Buddha's true teachings.
- By the way, the word "kusala" comes from "ku" (defilements)+ "sala" (abandon.) Thus kusala kamm $\bar{a}$ lead to the removal/abandonment of defilements (akusala.)


## Regular Version of Alobha, Adosa, Amoha Keeps One in the Rebirth Process

2. One is born in this world due to the six root causes.

- One is born in the apāyā or dugati (and also subjected to suffering even when born in good realms) due to bad gati arising MAINLY due to lobha, dosa, and moha. The akusala-mūla PS operates when actions, speech, and thoughts occur with these three root causes; see, "Akusala-Mūla Patticca Samuppāda. "
- One is born in the "good realms" or sugati (and also experiences mundane sense pleasures) due to "good gati" developed by acting with conventional or mundane alobha, adosa, and amoha. For example, one can engage in "good deeds" like giving, helping out others, etc., or cultivate jhāna. Those are done with mundane versions of alobha, adosa, and amoha and can lead to rebirths in human, Deva, and Brahma realms. However, they WILL NOT lead to Nibbāna, i.e., stopping the rebirth process.
- It is ONLY when one is acting with alobha, adosa, and amoha (and comprehension of Four Noble Truths/Tilakkhana/Paṭicca Samuppāda) that those actions lead to Nibbāna via 'Kusala-Mūla Pațicca Samuppāda" that e are discussing now.
- The above points are also discussed in detail in "Six Root Causes - Loka Samudaya (Arising of Suffering) and Loka Nirodhaya (Nibbāna)."


## There Are Two Tiers of Alobha, Adosa, Amoha

3. The uniqueness in Buddha Dhamma reveals two tiers (or levels) of alobha, adosa, and amoha.

- All religions teach that it is good to act with alobha, adosa, and amoha. Of course, the Buddha advised that too.
- However, if one is to stop future suffering in the rebirth process, one MUST see the dangers of remaining in the rebirth process. This can be stated in three different ways of understanding: Four Noble Truths, Paṭicca Samuppāda, and Tilakkhaṇa.
- With that understanding, alobha, adosa, and amoha elevate to a new level. One is now engaged in "good deeds," not seeking "good rebirths" but to be released from the rebirth process. In other words, now, one's goal is to attain Nibbāna.
- Good deeds done without a deeper understanding of the Four Noble Truths are puñña kammā. One gets "good rebirths" with puñña kammā. When one starts understanding the Four Noble Truths, such actions AUTOMATICALLY become kusala kammā and help attain Nibbāna.
- This is discussed in detail in "Kamma, Sañkhāra, and Abhisańkhāra - What Is "Intention"?."


## Kusala-Mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda Involves Kusala Kamma

4. It is the kusala-mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda process that leads to Nibbāna. That is why this PS process starts with "kusala-mūla paccayā sañkhāra."

- As we know, the akusala-mūla Pațicca Samuppāda process maintains the rebirth process. Puñña kamma done with mundane versions of alobha, adosa, amoha are ALSO included in "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" in the akusala-mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda process. See "Kilesa - Relationship To Akusala, Kusala, And Puñña Kamma."
- It is critical to understand this distinction. The mundane versions of alobha, adosa, and amoha still lead to akusala-mūla PS cycles that keep one in the rebirth process. It is ONLY AFTER one starts comprehending the Four Noble Truths (or the working of the Patticca Samuppāda processes or Tilakkhaṇa) that one will start operating under the kusala-mūla PS process leading to Nibbāna.
- Now we can look at the steps in the kusala-mūla PS process.


## Steps in the Kusala-Mūla Pațicca Samuppāda Process

5. The steps in this kusala-mūla cycle are (WebLink: suttacentral: Paticcasamuppāda Vibhanga):
"kusalamūla paccayā sañkhāro, sañkhāra paccayā viññanạam, viññāna paccayā nāmarupaín, nāmarupa paccayā salāyatanaì, salāyatana paccayā phasso, phassa paccayā vedanā, vedanā paccayā pasādo, pasāda paccayā adhimokkho, adhimokkha paccayā bhavo, bhava paccayā jāti, jāti paccayā jarā maranaìi. Evametesain dhammānain samudayo hoti."

Here I have marked in orange-red the terms that are different from those in the akusala-mūla PS. Let us briefly translate the terms. Here I am describing both pavutti and upapatti PS together. [pavutti: [fr. $\mathrm{pa}+\mathrm{vrt}$, cp. Class. Sk. pravrtti] happening, proceeding, fate, event.] and upapatti [also written as upapatti which means rebirth]

- With kusala-mūla as a condition, one accumulates puññābhi sañkhāra WITH the comprehension of the Four Noble Truths. Those may be called kusala-mūla sañkhāra.
- Such kusala-mūla sañkhāra arises in a mind when doing deeds with lokuttara alobha, adosa, and amoha. THEREFORE, one does not wish for anything other than Nibbāna because one's mind automatically rejecting anything within the 31 realms.


## Kusala-Mūla Sañkhāra Lead to Kusala-Mūla Viññạ̣̄a

6. With kusala-mūla sañkhāra as condition, a kusala-mūla viññāna arises.

- Because the sañkhāra was generated with a kusala-mūla deed, only a kusala-mūla viññāṇa arises: "paṭi +ichcha sama uppāda." The characteristic of this kusala-mūla viññāna is the desire (chanda, not kāmacchanda) for Nibbāna.
- The only expectation in one's mind is to attain Nibbāna and be free of all future suffering.

Kusala-Mūla Viññ̄ạa Lead to Corresponding Nāmarūpa
7. Such kusala-mūla viññāna lead to corresponding "good" or "kusala-mūla" nāmarūpa in pavutti Paṭicca Samuppāda or in upapatti Pațicca Samuppāda.

- Those "kusala-mūla nāmarūpa" are the "mental pictures" that arise in the mind and are associated with people and deeds relevant to one's efforts in attaining Nibbāna. For example, one may think about talking to a Noble friend, and he/she comes to mind. Or, one could be planning an alms-giving, etc.
- At death, the pațisandhi viññāna is again according to the kusala-mūla viññaṇa. Thus a birth in the lower four realms is avoided for a Sotāpanna, and a birth in the lower 11 realms (kāma loka) is avoided for an Anāgāmi, for example.


## Kusala-Mūla Nāmarūpa Lead to Kusala-Mūla Salāyatana

8. With such nāmarūpa as a condition, corresponding salāyatana arises.

- They are attuned to only meritorious deeds tailored towards Nibbāna in pavutti Paṭicca Samuppāda.
- In the case of new (Ariya) birth, the new existence's sense faculties arise accordingly. They can never be sense faculties for a realm in the apāyās.


## Subsequent Steps Arise in the Same Way

9. With a salāyatana as a condition, phasso (contact with that sense faculty) arises.

- Note that this is just "phassa" and NOT "san phassa" or "samphassa" as in "Akusala-Mūla Paticca Samuppāda."
- Contacts with the outside world are attuned to seeking Nibbāna. To learn dhamma and to practice dhamma.

10. With phassa as a condition, vedanā arises.

- Through such interactions, one enjoys contact with dhamma, true knowledge, and understanding.


## Such Contacts Lead to Citta Pasäda Followed by Adhimokkha (Instead of Taṇhā and Upādāna)

11. With such a vedanā as a condition, citta pasāda arises.

- The "tranquility of consciousness" is the standard translation for citta pasāda. It is of joyous feeling, lightness of heart.

12. With increasing citta pasāda adhimokkha results.

- Adhimokkha is normally translated as "decision" or "resolve" where saddhā peaks. Here it means the mind is decisively attracted to Nibbāna. The mind cools down.


## Ariya Bhava and Ariya Jāti

13. With adhimokkha as a condition, (Ariya) bhava arises. Note that an Ariya bhava arises via ELIMINATING a uppatti bhava. For example, one is "born" an Anāgāmi by eliminating the possibility of rebirths in the 11 realms of kāma loka.

- The resulting existence (or "bhava") matches that state of mind: "patitichcha sama uppāda"; one "lives" that experience. In the above example, an Anāgāmi does not have the mindset to be reborn in kāma loka.
- If it is a rebirth at patisandhi, an appropriate "bhava" is selected according to the kamma nimitta. Here any "apāyagāmi" kamma seeds acquired in the distant past do not get a chance to come to the forefront, and thus a rebirth in the lower four realms is prevented.
- Of course, at Arahant's death, the kusala-mūla PS process stops (forever) without grasping a new bhava.

14. With bhava as a condition, $j \bar{a} t i$ arises.

- The appropriate $j \bar{a} t i(S o t a ̄ p a n n a, ~ S a k a d a ̄ g a ̄ m i, ~ A n a ̄ g a ̄ m i) ~ w i l l ~ r e s u l t ~ i n ~ a n ~ a p p r o p r i a t e ~ r e a l m . ~$

15. With $j \bar{a} t i$ as condition, "jāti paccayā jarā maraṇam. Evametesain dhammānaỉ samudayo hoti."

- Any Ariya is also subject to decay and death as long as he/she is in one of the 31 realms.
- But here, the connection to dukkha is not shown because one is destined to attain Nibbāna. Thus, instead of "jāti paccayā jarā, maraṇa, soka-parideva-dukkha-domanassupāyasā sambhavan'ti" in the akusala-mūla PS process, here it ends with "Evametesam dhammānaim samudayo hoti."
- Instead of future suffering, conditions for attaining Nibbāna result in the kusala-mūla PS process.


## Difference Between Adhimokkha and Upädāna

16. In the Akusala-mūla PS that feeds the rebirth process, the critical step of "upādāna paccayā bhavo" leads to the creation of the kamma bhava (energy to feed future rebirths.)

- That upādāna forces the mind to act with avijjā repeatedly and to strengthen that kamma bhava. That is explained in detail in "Difference Between Tanhhā and Upādāna."
- In contrast, in the Kusala-mūla PS, that step is replaced by "adhimokkha paccayā bhavo." That bhava is an Ariya bhava (existence as a Noble Person) that makes any existing kamma bhava (created via Akusala-mūla PS processes) ineffective.


### 9.10.5 Idappaccayatā Paṭicca Samuppāda

Re-written with a new title May 18, 2019; revised May 20, 2019; March 13, 2021; re-written May 10, 2021; added \#16 on April 30, 2022

Akusala-mūla upapatti Pațicca Samuppāda (that describes future rebirths) is the only version of Patticca Samuppāda (PS) described in even the current Theravāda texts, even though the other versions are in the Tipiṭaka. Idappaccayatā Pațicca Samuppāda is a critically important one that describes kamma accumulation in real-time. [upapatti : [f.] birth; rebirth; approach.]

## Idappaccayatā - At a Given Moment

1. Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda is another important teaching that has been hidden for hundreds of years. The word "Idappaccayat $\bar{a}$ " comes from "ida" for "here" and the closest English word for "paccay $\bar{a}$ " is "condition." Thus Idappaccayatā implies "based on this condition at this moment." [idappaccay $\bar{a}$ : From an assignable cause, from an ascertained cause.]

- Therefore, Idappaccayatā Paṭicca Samuppāda describes how "pati icca" leads to "sama uppāda" moment by moment based on the conditions present at that moment; see, "Paticca Samuppāda "Pati+ichcha"+"Sama+uppāda"."
- The additional "p" in "idappacayāt $\bar{a}$ " comes from the combination of "ida" and "paccayā." This is similar to "dammacakka" and "pavattana" combined to yield "dhammacakkappavattana" in the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta.
- Another important point is that ""The first point of ignorance, bhikkhus, cannot be seen. Afterward, it came into being. Ignorance can arise at any time when the conditions are right" or "Purima, bhikkhave, koṭi na paññāyati avijjāya: 'ito pubbe avijjā nāhosi, atha pacchā samabhavī’ti. Evañcetaì, bhikkhave, vuccati, atha ca pana paññ̄ayati: 'idappaccayā avijjā̀ti."
- See "WebLink: suttacentral: Avijj $\bar{a}$ Sutta (AN 10.61)" for details.


## Idappaccayatā Versus Upapatti Paticca Samuppāda

2. As mentioned in earlier posts (see, "Paticca Samuppāda"), Paṭicca Samuppāda (PS) or "cause and effect" can describe various stages of life in multiple ways. At a deeper level, 16 PS cycles operate inside a thought-moment.

- The Buddha said that the PS is deep as a deep ocean and can apply it to any situation because everything "in this world" obeys the basic principle of cause and effect. It is no wonder that only one PS has been studied for over a thousand years while the true Dhamma remained hidden.
- In the previous post, we discussed the upapatti PS, which describes that latter process, i.e., how the PS cycle operates between lives; see, "Akusala-Mūla Upapatti Paticca Samuppāda."
- The other extreme of a swift PS process involved within a thought moment (citta) is very complex, and we do not need to examine it right now. We can learn it, but it can be "seen" only by a Buddha.
- This post will discuss the idappaccayatā PS cycle, which describes phenomena in real-time without getting into what happens within a citta (within a thought moment). This process - just like the PS cycle operates between lives - can also be easily understood by anyone.


## Paṭi+icca Leading to Sama+uppāda

3. As mentioned in the introduction to PS, whenever we willingly grasp something, whatever results from that action has a corresponding nature. Because one got attached willingly, a similar bhava will result: i.e., pati+icca leading to sama+uppāda or Paṭicca Samuppāda (PS). Here, "icca" is pronounced "ichcha."

- In the most fundamental sense, a "greedy state of mind" will result when we attach via greed, i.e., one develops a habit or gati or bhava corresponding to that state of mind; a 'hateful state" (habit/gati/bhava) results via hateful attachment; acts of greed and/or hate are always done with ignorance.
- Three examples of upapatti bhava for those three cases illustrate the principle: An excessively greedy person is likely to get a "peta bhava" and be born as a peta (hungry ghost); a person who is often engaged in hateful actions towards other beings is likely to develop a "hateful bhava" and is likely to be born in the niraya (hell) where there is a lot of hate due to extreme suffering; an animal bhava has developed with both greed and hate. Since ignorance is always there, an animal bhava is cultivated with all three "sans"; this is the root of the word "tirisan = three sans" for an animal in Sinhala.


## An Example of Idappaccayatā PS

4. Now, let us look at the Idappaccayatā PS, which describes how we develop certain habits or gati during a given lifetime and make "kamma bhava." That "kamma bhava" can become a "upapatti bhava" at the cuti-patisandhi moment of grasping a new bhava. It is often easier to use an example to illustrate these PS cycles. Let us examine how a teenager becomes an alcoholic.

- The teenager becomes friendly with a group of other teenagers who are into drinking. Initially, he may be reluctant to join in, but due to ignorance, he joins them and starts drinking.
- If a good friend or a family member came to know about the situation, they could have prevented the teenager from associating with such bad company, i.e., ignorance could have been dispelled by explaining to him the adverse effects of drinking but also of associating with such a group.

5. The PS cycle thus starts with "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" (of course triggered in a party setting). Due to ignorance of the adverse results, the teenager starts drinking with that group (sañkhāra $=$ "san $+k h a \bar{r} a$ " or actions of accumulating, in this case, bad kamma).

- The more he is involved with such drinking activities, the more he thinks about it and develops a "mindset" or viñ̃̄āṇa for that activity. This is "sañkhāra paccayā viññāṇa"; see, "Kamma are Done with Sañkhāra - Types of Sañkhāra."

6. When he really begins to like drinking, he starts thinking about it even while doing other things. This is "viññāna paccayā nāmarūpa."

- In this case, nāmarūpa are the mental images associated with that viññāna, i.e., the names and shape of particular alcohol bottles, the places where he normally drinks, the friends who drink with him, etc.
- He thinks about the next "event" and visualizes the scene; all these are associated with nāmarūpa. Thus, here nāmarūpa are the mental images of "things" and "concepts" that one would like to enjoy.

7. Now his six senses become "involved" to provide reality to those nāmarūpa; to provide the desired sensory pleasures.

- In Pāli, the six indriya (senses) become "āyatana." For lack of a single English word, I will call an "āyatana" an "import/export facility" and really get involved in the actions associated with drinking events.
- His mind is often thinking about the next "event" (where, when, with whom, etc), he makes necessary preparations for the "event" using all six senses (now āyatanas.)That happens per the nāmarūpa in the previous step, i.e., "nāmarūpa paccayā salāyatana," where salāyatana means the six āyatana: the eye is now not merely for seeing, it has become an assistant in the lookout for a "good drink" or a "good friend to chat with," etc.

8. Thus, we have "salāyatana paccayā phassa," i.e., all six āyatana become actively engaged making contact with relevant sense objects. His eyes are on the lookout for a favorite drink or a favorite person to chat with, etc.

- However, "salāyatana paccayā phassa" is just the "uddesa" or short version given in the standard PS steps. It needs to be explained in detail; see "Sutta Interpretation - Uddesa, Niddesa, Patiniddesa."
" Here instead of phassa, it is really called "samphassa" (= "san" + "phassa"), where "san" implies it not just contact, but a "san" contact; see, "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Samisāra)."

9. Such "samphassa" lead to vedanā, i.e., "(san)phassa paccayā vedanā." He experiences "good (but immoral) feelings" with all those sense contacts.

- Because of such "good feelings," he gets further attached: "vedanā paccayā taṇhā"; see, "Tanhā - How We Attach via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance."

10. Now comes, "tanhhā paccayā upādāna." Upādāna means "grabbing or pulling it close," like an octopus grabbing its prey with all its eight legs.

- In the present case, the teenager wants very much to re-live this experience. He gets immersed in it; when he is experiencing the event, his mind is totally absorbed; he does not think and does not have the mindset to think about any adverse consequences.
- This is the critical "habit-forming" or "bhava forming" step.
- If this habit becomes very strong, it could lead to a new bhava as an animal via the upapatti Paticca Samuppāda process;see,"Akusala-Mūla Upapatti Paticca Samuppāda."

11. So, the next inevitable step is "upādāna paccayā bhavo"; this particular state of getting drunk becomes more and more ingrained in his mind. It becomes "a bhava" or "existence" or habit that is of importance to him. He very much wants to re-live that experience.

- And that is exactly what he gets: "bhava paccayā jāti." This "bhava" or the kamma seed is now well established, and he can be born in that "drunken state" quite easily. All he needs is an invitation from a friend, or even a sight of a bar while traveling, for example.
- It is natural to get into that state or be "born" in that state. So, he gets drunk at every opportunity. See "Bhava and Jāti - States of Existence and Births Therein" for more details.

12. However, like everything else, any birth is subjected to decay and suffering: "jāti paccayā jarā, marana, ... dukkhakkhanda samudhayo hoti." This happens in many stages, as we describe below.

- But in the case of a single drinking event, that state of intoxication comes to an end, possibly with a big headache and a huge hangover. That episode ends with nothing to show for it but a hangover.
- Even worse, now he is "hooked." He has formed a bad habit, which only strengthens even more if he does it repeatedly. Because each time the PS runs, the viñ̃ñana for that habit gets more fuel, and the bhava gets stronger.


## Uncountable Idappaccayatā PS Cycles During a Lifetime

13. It is important to realize that the above PS cycle does not run to its conclusion when the drinking "event" is over. Rather the cycle can repeatedly occur unless it is stopped willfully, deliberately.

- And the way to do that is to learn Dhamma and develop good habits and become a "sampajanno"; see, "Kāyānupassanā - The Section on Habits (Sampajanapabba)."
- However, if the teenager keeps his bad habit, he gets trapped in that bhava, the more $j \bar{a} t i$ that occurs, i.e., more frequently he will be drunk. When one gets really drunk, one tends to behave like an animal without any sense of decency, and the long-term consequences could be rebirth as an animal; see below.
- Furthermore, such Idappaccayat $\bar{a}$ PS cycles run numerous times, even during the day, whenever we act with avijjā.


## Memories Can trigger Idappaccayatā PS Cycles.

14. And it is not even necessary to participate in a "drinking event" to run another PS cycle. He may be sitting at a desk trying to study, and may start going through the PS cycle just by recalling a past event or a scheduled future event.

- He would start with mano sañkhāra and vacī sañkhāra (vitakka/vicāra or planning), thus generating (and strengthening) the viñ̃āạa for drinking, generating nāmarūpa (visuals of places, friends, alcohol bottles, etc.), and thus going through the rest of the cycle: saḷāyatana, samphassa, vedana $\bar{a}$, tanhh $\bar{a}$, upādāna, bhava, jāti ('living it'), repeatedly.
- Thus numerous such PS cycles can run at any time, probably increasing their frequency as the bhava or the habit builds up.
- The stronger the bhava or habit is, it will be harder to break it. This is why meditation, together with another good habit to work on, should be undertaken to replace a bad habit. While in meditation, one can contemplate the adverse consequences of the bad habit. Developing a good habit will keep the mind away from the bad habit. See "Habits and Goals" and also "Bhāvanā (Meditation)."


## Connection to Upapatti PS Cycles

15. If the teenager keeps his bad habit, that "viññāna of a drunkard" will only grow with time. If it stays strong at the cuti-patisandhi moment (at the end of his human bhava), it could lead to a new upapatti bhava via the upapatti Paṭicca Samuppāda process mentioned in \#1 above "Akusala-Mūla Upapatti Paticca Samuppāda."

- Such a viññana is likely to give rise to rebirth in the animal realm, as mentioned in \#13.

16. Details on Idappaccayatā Pațicca Samuppāda in a new subsection, "Paticca Samuppāda During a Lifetime."

Note: This post was re-written to replace an early post, "Akusala-Mūla Pavutti (or Pravurthi) Paṭicca Samuppāda." I had not realized at that time that what the Waharaka Thero had described in Sinhala as "Pavutti (or Pravurthi) Pațicca Samuppāda" is really the Idappaccayatā Pațicca Samuppāda in the Tipitaka.

### 9.11 Pațicca Samuppāda in Plain English

Introduction - What is Suffering?
Introduction - 2 - The Three Categories of Suffering
Avijiā paccayā Sañkhāra
Sañkhāra paccayā Viññ̄n̄a - 1
Sañkhāra paccayā Viññ̄āna - 2
Viññāna paccayā Nāmarūpa
Nāmarūpa paccayā Salāyatana
Difference between Phassa and samphassa
Phassa paccayā Vedana....to Bhava
Bhava paccayā Jati. ...Jara, Marana,...

### 9.11.1 Introduction - What is Suffering?

Revised June 6, 2021; re-written June 14, 2021

## "Dukkha Sacca" Means "The Truth About Suffering"

1. "Dukkha sacca" (the latter pronounced "sachcha") refers not only to suffering hidden in the rebirth process but also to the elimination of it.

- Buddha never denied that there are "pleasures to be had" in this world. In fact, he pointed out that there are Deva and Brahma realms where there are enhanced sensual (kāma) and jhānic pleasures compared to the "pleasures" available in the human world.
- But the problem is that ANY given sentient living being spends much more time in the four lowest realms (apāyās) than the time spent in the human, Deva, and Brahma realms (in the rebirth process.) See, "Rebirth - Connection to Suffering in the First Noble Truth."
- Therefore, there is NET suffering in the rebirth process by a HUGE margin.


## Misconceptions About Dukkha Sacca (First Noble Truth)

2. Many people are addicted to the temporary "peace of mind" achieved by breath meditation or similar "meditation techniques." But that deals with only "superficial suffering." The Buddha pointed out that there is much harsher suffering in the rebirth process.

- Buddha Dhamma is all about ending that harsher and longer-term suffering AND getting to a state with ABSOLUTELY NO suffering. "Nibbānic bliss" or "happiness in Nibbāna" refers to the bliss of not having to experience even a trace of suffering.
- A crude analogy is someone who has had a migraine headache all his life and finally getting rid of it. However, it is only an analogy, because rūpa, vedanā, saññā, sañkhāra, viññāna are all ABSENT in Nibbāna (after the death of an Arahant.)
- That is the implication of not having the 3 ultimate realities of citta, cetasika, rūpa in Nibbāna. So while Nibbāna exists, we cannot describe it in terms of our terminology.
- See \#4 of the post, "Six Root Causes - Loka Samudaya (Arising of Suffering) and Loka Nirodhaya (Nibbāna)."


## Nibbānic Bliss Is About Total Absence of Suffering

3. This is also explained, for example, in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Nibbānasukha Sutta (AN 9.34)." The verse "Nibbānaì paramaí sukhamं" DOES NOT refer to a "sukha vedanä" in the sense of a feeling because there are no vedanā in Nibbāna. See, "Nibbāna "Exists," but Not in This World."

- Many people equate "jhānic experiences" with Nibbāna. Jhāna are the mental states of Brahma worlds, and thus, jhānic experiences belong to "this world of 31 realms." Any sentient being, including any animal, had attained jhāna and had been born in Brahma worlds many times in their deep past!
- Nibbāna is simply the total absence of ANY suffering. That is the "Nibbānic bliss." We cannot compare that to any "sukha vedana" experienced by any person, Deva or Brahma. That is why Prince Siddhattha and many kings and wealthy people gave up those "princely lives" to seek Nibbāna.
- So, how bad is this suffering in the rebirth process?


## Understanding "True Suffering" - It Is in the Rebirth Process

4. In the post "Rebirth - Connection to Suffering in the First Noble Truth"" we discussed references in the Tipitaka that MOST rebirths are in the four lowest realms (apāyās.) We can only see the suffering in one of them, the animal realm.

- The Buddha has discussed, in detail, the types of suffering in the other three apāyās. For example, in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Bālapandita Sutta (MN 129)" and "WebLink: suttacentral: Devadūta Sutta (MN 130)" the Buddha explains, in detail, the kind of suffering encountered in various lower realms.
- English translation of the first one: "WebLink: suttacentral: The Foolish and the Astute (MN 129)." That sutta explains that a person who engages in immoral activities ("bālo" or a "fool") can expect the consequences (kamma vipāka) both in this life and in future existences in the apāyās. The account of the experiences in the niraya (lowest realm) is terrifying.
- A related sutta is the "WebLink: suttacentral: Pāyāsi Sutta (DN 23)." It is about the wrong views that there is no rebirth process, etc. See the English translation there: "WebLink: suttacentral: With Pāyāsi (DN 23)." For those who have doubts about the validity of the rebirth process or the existence of apāy $\bar{a} s$, it is a good idea to read the above suttās.


## Luckily We Don't Remember Our Previous "Bhava"

5. As we discussed in the post "Rebirth - Connection to Suffering in the First Noble Truth"" we are reborn with human bodies many times during a "human bhava" that can last many thousands of years is why some children can recall their past HUMAN lives. Those rebirths took place during the SAME human bhava.

- Some yogis with abhiññā powers can see their RECENT bhava just before the current bhava. Almost all of them are likely to have had Brahma bhava just before the current human bhava. As we have discussed, it is unimaginably hard to get a human bhava FROM a human or lower bhava (ie.., from the apāyās.) Furthermore, those who can easily cultivate jhāna are VERY likely to have had a Brahma bhava just before this human bhava. Therefore, such yogis may be able to see their previous Brahma bhava. But there are no accounts of anyone recalling an animal or other existences in the apayy $\bar{a}$.
- Thus, different bhava are isolated, and it is difficult to "look back," especially past existences in the lower realms.
- That is fortunate because it would give nightmares to recall such levels of suffering in the ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a} s$ described in \#4 above. However, we can get an idea about the level of suffering in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a} s$ also from the following sutta.


## Sattisata Sutta (SN 56.35) - Take That Deal!

6. In the "WebLink: suttacentral: Sattisata Sutta (SN 56.35)," the Buddha advised bhikkhus to commit all their waking time to strive for Nibbāna. To drive the point home, the Buddha gave an analogy. It is a short sutta, and I will translate it below. Good English translation at Sutta Central: "WebLink: suttacentral: A Hundred Spears (SN 56.35)."
"Bhikkhus, suppose there was a man with a remaining life span of a hundred years. Someone would say to him: 'Come, good man, in the morning they will strike you with a hundred spears; at noon they will strike you with a hundred spears; in the evening they will strike you with a hundred spears. And you, good man, being struck day after day by three hundred spears will live a hundred years. Then, after a hundred years have passed, you will make the breakthrough to the Four Noble Truths and Nibbāna. That is guaranteed if you agree to bear that suffering."
"It is a wise decision, bhikkhus, for that man to accept the offer. For what reason? Because this samisāra is without a discoverable beginning. You have suffered mightily by uncountable blows by spears, blows by swords, blows by axes, etc. (and will do so in the future too unless you attain Nibbāna.)

However, bhikkhus, I do not say that the path to Nibbāna is accompanied by suffering or displeasure. Rather, the path to Nibbāna is accompanied only by happiness and joy.
"Therefore, bhikkhus, you should strive to understand: 'This is suffering. These are causes for that suffering. The removal of those causes will lead to the cessation of suffering. This is the way to the cessation of suffering.""

## Mistranslations of Some Suttās and Suppression of Selected Suttās

7. As you all would have seen, many people ignore those suttās. They say those suttās are "later additions" or "have been distorted after the Buddha." Then they pick and choose a few suttās and mistranslate them to prove their point! For example, in his first discourse, Buddha stated, "..ayamantimā jāti, natthi dāni punabbhavo 'ti." OR "..this is the last birth. There is no more gasping of a repeated bhava." Is "WebLink: suttacentral: Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta (SN 56.11)" a later addition?

- I am willing to discuss ANY sutta in Tipiṭaka. But please refrain from just expressing OPINIONS or quote other mistranslations. We are discussing Buddha's teachings. You may disagree, and that is fine, but don't distort his teachings. Buddha's teachings ARE contrary to the "accepted norms" and that is exactly why we all have been trapped in this suffering-filled rebirth process for SO LONG! The verse, "pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhum udapādi, ñānaì udapādi, paññā udapādi, vijjā udapādi, äloko udapādi..." ("such was the vision, knowledge, wisdom, penetrating vision, and the way to separate from the world, that arose in me regarding these teachings not heard before..") appears 8 times in that first discourse of the Buddha for this reason.
- The Buddha explained what kind of suffering to be expected and explained HOW such horrible suffering arises (dukkha samudaya) and HOW we can stop it from arising (dukkha nirodhaya.) Of course, the way to achieve that is the Noble Eightfold Path. To follow that Path, one MUST first understand the first 3 Noble truths.
- By the way, Buddha also explained that suffering is not caused by one's soul (or ātman in Hinduism.) There is no such thing, to begin with. Paṭicca Samuppāda starts with "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra." That process will proceed irrespective of a specific "soul." There is only a "satta (satva)" engaged in generating sañkhāra due to $a v i j j \bar{a}$. See \#3 of "Five Aggregates and Tilakkhana - Introduction." This is a deeper point that I will discuss in detail in upcoming posts.


## Dukkha Samudaya - Explained by Akusala-Mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda

8. The two main akusala-mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda schemes describe the mechanisms whereby suffering in this world arises (dukkha samudaya.)

- The "Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda" describes how we accumulate kammic energies during our lives. Such kammic energies "pile-up" and lead to future existences, mostly in the apāyās, and that is described in "Akusala-Mūla Upapatti Paticca Samuppāda."
- As we have seen, any birth "in this world" WILL lead to suffering: Starting with "avijja paccaya sañkhāra" those cycles ALWAYS end up with "jāti paccayā jarā, marana, soka-parideva-dukkhadomanassup $\bar{a} y a s a \bar{a}$ sambhavan'ti" and the "whole mass of suffering."


## Dukkha Nirodhaya - Explained by Kusala-Mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda

9. The "Kusala-Mūla Paticca Samuppāda" describes the process of eliminating suffering.

- "Kusalamūla paccayā sañkhāra" WILL lead to births of Ariyās (Sotāpanna through Arahant.) But, since they are also born into this world, the cycle still ends with old age and death: "jāti paccay $\bar{a}$ jar $\bar{a}$ maranaain. Evametesain dhammānain samudayo hoti."
- But upon the death of an Arahant, there is the total absence of suffering. Thus, it will lead to the end of suffering.


## Two Types of Sañkhāra in Dukkha Samudaya and Dukkha Nirodhaya

10. Those sañkhāra generated with $a v i j j \bar{a}$ (we can call them "akusala sañkhāra") will perpetuate the rebirth process and will lead to more suffering.

- On the other hand, "kusala sañkhāra" generated with paññā (comprehension of the Noble Truths) will lead to the Arahanthood and the stopping of the rebirth process. That is Nibbāna, the total absence of suffering!


## Connection to the Root Causes

11. As we saw in the previous post, "Six Root Causes - Loka Samudaya (Arising of Suffering) and Loka Nirodhaya (Nibbāna)" "akusala sañkhāra" arise due to lobha, dosa, moha, and the mundane versions of alobha, adosa, amoha.

- To generate "kusala sañkhāra" one must cultivate the lokuttara (deeper) versions of alobha, adosa, amoha with comprehension of the Noble truths/Paticca Samuppāda/Tilakkhana. Note that those three (Noble truths/Pațicca Samuppāda/Tilakkhana) are equivalent, and I may just refer to just any one of them in most cases.
- To complete the discussion on suffering, we need to discuss the three categories of suffering.


## Three Categories of Suffering

12. The three categories of suffering are stated in the WebLink: suttacentral: Dukkhatā Sutta (SN 45.165):
"...Dukkha dukkhatā, sañkhāra dukkhatā, vipariṇāma dukkhatā-imā kho, bhikkhave, tisso dukkhatā."

- It does not make sense to try to translate the names of the 3 categories: Dukkha dukkhatā, sañkhāra dukkhat $\bar{a}$, viparināma dukkhat $\bar{a}$. Instead, it is better to understand the meanings of those 3 types of suffering. Here, dukkhatā means "type of dukkha."
- Thus, we can say that the 3 categories of suffering are dukkha-dukkha, sañkhāra-dukkha, and vipariṇāma-dukkha.


## Worst Is the Dukkha-Dukkha

13. As the name implies, the strongest suffering is the dukkha-dukkha that arises DIRECTLY due to kamma vipāka. That category is associated with major types of suffering (serious injuries, diseases like
cancer, etc.) that we face DURING a lifetime. Of course, when born in an apayya, most of that existence is filled with dukkha-dukkha.

- Therefore, most of the suffering that we discussed above comes under dukkha-dukkha.
- We will discuss all three categories in more detail in the next post: "Introduction -2 - The Three Categories of Suffering."


## Introduction-2 - The Three Categories of Suffering

June 20, 2021; revised June 10, 2022; October 12, 2002
The three categories of suffering are dukkha dukkhatā, sañkhāra dukkhatā, and vipariṇāma dukkhat $\bar{a}$.

## Three Categories of Suffering

1. In the previous post, "Introduction - What is Suffering?" we discussed what is meant by suffering in Buddha Dhamma. Here we continue that discussion. The three categories of suffering are stated in the WebLink: suttacentral: Dukkhat $\bar{a}$ Sutta (SN 45.165): "...Dukkha dukkhatā, sañkhāra dukkhatā, vipariṇàma dukkhat $\bar{a}-i m a \bar{a} k h o$, bhikkhave, tisso dukkhatā."

- It does not make sense to try to translate the names of the three categories: Dukkha dukkhat $\bar{a}$, sañkhāra dukkhatā, viparin̄āma dukkhatā. Instead, it is better to understand the meanings of those three types of suffering. Here, dukkhatā means "type of dukkha."
- Thus, we can say that the three categories of suffering are dukkha-dukkha, sañkhära-dukkha, and vipariṇāma-dukkha.

2. The three types of suffering are associated with the characteristics of a sankhata, as pointed out in the Tipitaka Commentary Peṭakopadesa, "5. Hāravibhañgapañcamabhūmi:"
"Tattha tīni sañkhatalakkhaṇāni tisso dukkhatā: uppādo sañkhatalakkhaṇaì sañkhāradukkhatāya dukkhatā ca, vayo sañkhatalakkhaṇaì viparin̄āmadukkhatā ca, añnathattaì sañkhatalakkhaṇaì dukkhadukkhatāya dukkhatā ca, imesaì tinṇà் sañkhatalakkhaṇānaì.."

## Translation:

"Three sañkhata lakkhaṇa correspond to three types of suffering (tisso dukkhatā):
(i.) uppāda is a sañkhata lakkhaṇa that corresponds to sañkhāra dukkhatā. A sañkhata arises due to (avijja paccaya) sañkhāra. That itself takes effort (suffering). Furthermore, it will also lead to future suffering.
(ii.) vayo is a sañkhata lakkhaṇa corresponding to vipariṇama dukkhatā. Any sañkhata is destroyed (vaya), and that leads to viparināama dukkhatā.
(iii) añ̃̃athatta is a sañkhata lakkhaṇa corresponding to dukkha dukkhatā. Any sañkhata undergoes unexpected changes (aññathatta) during existence, and that is dukkha dukkhata .

- All three types of dukkha WILL NOT stop until sañkhāra-generation via "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" stops.


## What Is Suffering Based on?

3. What is our whole world? We sense external rūpa through our five physical senses (internal rūpa) and then think about them. Thus we can sum up our world as what we experience through our INTERNAL six senses (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, mind). If our six internal senses stop working or weaken, we suffer.

- Using those sensory faculties, we experience six types of rūpa in the external world: visuals, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and dhamm $\bar{a}$. If those are not to our liking, we suffer. On the sixth type of $r \bar{u} p a$, see "What are Rūpa? - Dhammā are Rūpa too!"
- Those twelve (six INTERNAL and six EXTERNAL) make up "our world." Everything is included in those twelve - all 12 lead to suffering, not only in this life but also in future lives.
- Let us first discuss the three types dukkha that we experience during a lifetime.


## Three Types of Dukkha During Lifetime

4. Any rūpa changes (sometimes unexpected), leading to suffering. First, let us consider whether we can keep our physical bodies (internal $r \bar{u} p a$ ) and their associated sensory faculties to our satisfaction.

- We may be able to maintain our five physical senses to our satisfaction for many years. And this is why people do not even take the time to think about these concepts.
- We start feeling this hidden suffering when we pass middle age. For example, eyesight, hearing, and tastes will get weaker. Our bodies start sagging and the brain becomes weaker too. That is vipariṇamadukkha.
- So, what do most of us do? We start looking for ways to "prop them up": We can take temporary measures by wearing glasses and hearing aids, adding more spices/flavor to food, and doing cosmetic procedures to maintain the body's appearance. There is absolutely nothing wrong with some of these "fixes"; for example, we need to see, so we must take precautions to protect our eyes and start wearing glasses. Ditto for hearing aids and even for adding spices to food. Even doing some cosmetic procedures (coloring the hair, for example) may be needed to maintain a level of self-confidence, as may be the case.
- These "remedies" require effort and are part of sañkhāra-dukkha.

5. Note that those two types of dukkha can also arise due to external rūpa.

- For example, our houses, cars, or other "valuable things" are also sañkhata, just like our physical bodies. They also undergo (both expected and unexpected) change and will cease to exist in the future. That also contributes to our viparinā̄ma-dukkha.
- Here also we need to work to repair them and try to maintain them to our satisfaction. That is also part of saǹkhāra-dukkha.
- During both types of sañkhāra generation, we will generate kamma that will lead to kamma vipāka. Those manifest as dukkha-dukkha. For example, if a woman gets a "facelift" she must go to a surgeon and also needs to pay. If we need to repair a car, we must take it to a mechanic and pay him. All these activities involve dukkha-dukkha.


## Mental Stress - Big Part of Sañkhāra-Dukkha

6. The leading cause of suffering is in our MINDS. For example, a wealthy person may suffer due to losing of something he own, and a poor person may suffer due to the inability to get what he wants. Either person becomes distraught due to his/her mind activities: attachment to what one has or craving for what one desires. This is another aspect of the Pāli term anicca. It is primary mental and is called "sañkhāra dukkha." It arises through the struggles we engage in, to maintain things to our satisfaction.

- For example, when we buy a lovely house, there are endless things that need to be done to "maintain it to our satisfaction"; this is also part of sañkhāra dukkha. Sometimes we don't even realize this suffering. Think about how much work we do to prepare a nice meal; then we enjoy it in 10-15 minutes, and then we need to spend more time cleaning up. We slaved through hours to get a brief sensory pleasure.


## We Engage in Saṅkhāra Due to Avijjā

7. The suffering that we discussed so far arises from one aspect of anicca: Anything in this world is subjected to decay, and destruction, and nothing in this world is exempt from that. That is part of "viparin̄āma dukkha," suffering that arises due to changes and decay (both expected and unexpected.)

- Sañkhāra-dukkha is associated with maintaining our internal rūpa and acquiring and maintaining external rūpa. All such efforts require thinking, speaking, and bodily actions; they involve mano, vacī, and kāya sañkhāra. See, "Sañkhāra - What It Really Means."
- Dukkha-dukkha arises even without us realizing it, while we seek remedies for viparināma dukkha with various activities involving involve mano, vacī, and kāya sañkhāra. That leads to the kamma generation. Part of those $k a m m \bar{a}$ will bring vipāka into this life, primarily as physical work.
- As we will discuss, if they involve abhisañkhāra, those will lead to kamma vipāka in future lives.


## Three Types of Dukkha in the Rebirth Process

8. "Sañkhāra" means "san" + "khāra" or our efforts to accumulate/maintain things in this world (both internal and external) to our satisfaction. Any sañkhata (both internal and external) arises due to due to such efforts. See, "Sañkhāra - What It Really Means."

- (Note that any action to live in this world involves sañkhāra. For example, breathing is a kāya sañkhāra that does not have kammic consequences. Those that involve lobha, dosa, and moha are a particularl type of sañkhāra; they are abhisañkhāra. But this distinction is not always emphasized (like in "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra," but one needs to be able to figure that out. )
- In the end, all such efforts are in vain. No matter how much effort we make, our bodies will fall apart at old age (or even earlier), and when we die, we will have to leave behind all those external "valuables" that we accumulated with much effort. That is why we say sañkhāra arise due avijjā, i.e., "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra." All our efforts (based on "san" (greed, anger, and ignorance) are due to avijjā!
- "Abhisañkhāra" generation is the root cause for the generation of all types of sañkhata, internal and external. That takes place via Akusala-mūla Paticca Samuppāda.

9. In that broad sense, the three types of dukkha can be attributed to the three stages of a sankhata: uppāda (arising,) vaya (destruction,) and existence (thiti.) The three stages are stated in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Sañkhatalakkhana Sutta (AN 3.47)."

- The three types of dukkhatā correspond to the three lakkhaṇa of a sañkhata.
- A sañkhata arises due to Paticca Samuppāda starting with "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra." Thus the "uppāda lakkhaṇa" of a sañkhata is associated with sañkhāra dukkhatā.
- Any sañkhata will eventually be destroyed and has the "vaya lakkhaṇa." That is the viparināma dukkhatā.
- In between birth and death, a sañkhata exists (țithi). However, it undergoes unexpected change (aññathā), and that gives rise to Dukkha dukkhatā. That is expressed by, "titthassa sañkhata lakkhaṇain, dukkha dukkhata."
- Note that such unexpected changes (aññathā) take place due to vipāka of kamma done previously with (abhi)sañkhāra via "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra." Thus, Dukkha dukkhatā manifests as kamma vipāka.

10. The Petakopadesa - a Commentary in the Tipitaka - explains how the three types of dukkhatācorrespond to the three lakkhaṇa of a sañkhata. See "WebLink: suttacentral: 5. Hāravibhañgapañcamabhūmi' in the first paragraph. It is sort of hidden!
"Tattha tīni sañkhatalakkhaṇāni tisso dukkhatā uppādo sañkhatalakkhaṇam், sañkhāradukkhatāya dukkhatā ca sañkhatalakkhaṇaì, viparin̄āmadukkhatāya dukkhatāti aññathattaì ca sañkhatalakkhaṇà̇, dukkhadukkhatāya ca dukkhatā,."

## Dukkha-Dukkha

11. The worst category of suffering in the rebirth process arises as kamma vipāka giving rise to rebirth in the ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$. Beings in the apa $\bar{y} \bar{a}$ encounter harsher suffering; in the niraya (lowest realm), that is all one feels.

- A person who made money by killing another or stealing from another may live well in this life (at least outwardly) but will be subjected to much suffering in the upcoming births. This is the worst category of dukkha-dukkha, which arises due to past immoral actions. Until the death of the physical body, even an Arahant is subjected to dukkha-dukkha.
- Therefore, the third category of suffering, dukkha-dukkha, arises from immoral acts (pāpa kamma/akusala kamma.) The severity of suffering depends on the severity of the violation. Paticca samuppāda ("pati+ichcha" leading to "sama"+"uppāda") describes the underlying mechanism; see, "Paticca Samuppāda - "Pati+ichcha" + "Sama+uppāda"," where it is briefly discussed how one’s actions lead to effects that are similar "in-kind."
- The results of our actions will not be according to our wishes. Instead, they will be according to root causes (lobha, dosa, moha) and prevailing conditions at any time. Paticca samuppāda is Nature's lawenforcing mechanism.


## Dukkha-Dukkha in Rebirth Process Is Delayed Results of "Bad Saǹkhāra"

12. All our actions (including speech and thoughts) are initiated by sañkhāra. Thus, dukkha-dukkha arises from the worst forms of sañkhāra (involving lobha, dosa, and moha,) which we call immoral actions (pāpa kamma/akusala kamma.) This dukkha-dukkha is the main form of suffering discussed in the previous post, "Introduction - What is Suffering?"

- Everything happens due to a reason (causes). Doing a good deed, that will lead to good results, and evil deeds will lead to bad results. This is the basis of science and also how nature works. "Every action has a reaction." It is guaranteed, sooner or later.
- This is why rebirth is a reality of nature. Some people live lavishly with money earned by immoral deeds. They WILL suffer the consequences in future rebirths.
- It also explains why different people are born with different levels of health, wealth, beauty, etc., and why there are innumerable varieties of animals with different levels of suffering. Those are all results of evil deeds done in previous lives.


## Puredhamma Twitter Account

13. Twitter account for the website: pure dhamma (@puredhamma1) / Twitter

- Twitter handle: puredhamma1
- Will Tweet a new or re-written post.

Next, "Avijijā paccayā Sañkhāra",

### 9.11.3 Avijjā Paccayā Sañkhārā

## Revised April 26, 2019; August 29, 2019

"Avijjā paccayā sañkhārā" (Ignorance as root cause for immoral/unfruitful actions and thoughts). That is the same as saying "avijjā nirodha" leads to "sañkhāra nirodha." All following terms in the akusala-mūla pațicca samuppāda cycle will stop arising and thus all suffering stop arising with the complete removal of avijjā.

1. Avijja (loosely translated as ignorance), is defined in many ways: not knowing the Four Noble Truths, not understanding the Noble Eightfold Path, not understanding the Three Characteristics of nature, not understanding dukkha, etc.

- All these are correct, but just reading about them is not going to help. The mind needs sees how suffering arises due to immoral and unwise actions (and thoughts).
- The paticca samuppāda cycle clarifies how the three kinds of suffering arise. One does not comprehend the true nature of the world, and think (and do) immoral/unfruitful things.

2. You may be wondering whether I was untruthfil when I said this series will be in "plain English." Especially If you have not read the first two posts. I did describe these three terms in plain English, and there is no easy way to get the same meaning across without using Pāli words.

- So, once I clarify them, I have to use these Pāli terms in order to keep a post to a reasonable length. One can always go back and read previous introductory posts to refresh memory.

3. The standard interpretation of "avijjā paccayā sañkhārā" reads "ignorance leads to mental formations." That does not get the underlying ideas across and also misleading. I believe that "ignorance as root cause and condition for immoral/unfruitful actions" is a better translation, and I will explain why.

First let us look at the difference between immoral acts and unfruitfil acts.

- We saw that dukkha dukkha in the four lower realms is the worst form of suffering. And we saw the cause of that as the immoral acts done with the ten defilement or dasa akusala. Thus worst types of sañkhāra are responsible for dukkha dukkha in the lower four realms.
- Why do we do any of such potent immoral acts that give rise to dukkha dukkha of the worst kinds in the lower four realms? Because to a very high degree of ignorance of the consequences of such acts. For example, if one does not believe in rebirth, then it is hard to see how such immoral acts can have consequences. After all, there are many people engaged in unethical behavior who seem to be enjoying life.
- Such high level of ignorance is called moha (which means totally covered, totally blind mind), and the closest English word is "delusion."
- A murderer who PLANS and kills another human is a good example. He thinks that if he can plan it well, he can avoid "getting caught" by the justice system and then will not have to pay for his actions. There are MUCH WORSE consequences waiting for him, regardless of whether the police catch him or not. He does not know that he is likely to get killed a thousand times in return in future births.

4. Thus immoral actions like killing, stealing, etc are responsible for the worst outcomes, the worst kinds of future suffering; these are the worst forms of sañkhārā.

- On the other side of the spectrum for sañkhāra are the unfruitful actions that lead to lower levels of sañkhāra dukkha in this very life. For example, when we get attached to things/people via strong attachments or dislikes, that can lead to mental suffering in this life.
- However, such unfruitful actions can also form bad habits that can grow into more significant problems with time. Someone acting with greed or dislikes habitually can tend to make those stronger and eventually grow into stronger forms of excess greed and hate, leading to immoral acts. We will discuss how this happens via the paticca samuppāda steps.
- Of course the severity of the consequences will be according to the severity and nature of the act: "pati+ichcha" leading to "sama" + "uppada", as we will discuss in detail later. See, "Paticca Samuppāda - "Pati + ichcha" + "Sama + uppāda'"' for the meaning of pațicca samuppāda. When one is even willing to do immoral acts to get what one wants, the consequences will also be stronger and "inkind." Then there are "unfruitful acts" that can lead to comparatively minor forms of suffering in the near term but can also add up to more significant effects in the long run.
- Thus one has to think beyond the five precepts to understand the origin of sañkhāra dukkha. I know I am repeating some statements, but I want to make sure to get these essential ideas across.

I hope it is clear now why "immoral/unfruitful actions, speech and thoughts" is a better translation for sañkhāra than "mental formations." Sañkhārā are all mental; kāya and vacī sañkhārā are those thoughts that LEAD TO actions and speech.
5. Now let us discuss the other erroneous aspect of the translation of "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" as "ignorance leads to mental formations." For further details, see, "What Does "Paccaya" Mean in Paticca Samuppāda?."

- Ignorance (avijjā) is not there all the time. Even the worst criminal does not do immoral acts or even unfruitful acts ALL THE TIME. But when he does, such actions are done with ignorance as a root cause.
- It applies to all of us: The more we learn Dhamma, the more we get rid of ignorance. Then will we not think or do either immoral or unfruitful things, i.e., any type of (abhi)sañkhāra.

6. A closely related issue to think about is what kind of control we have over sañkhāra. There are three types of sañkhāra: kāya sañkhāra (those that lead to physical acts), vacī sañkhāra (those that lead to speech), and mano sañkhāra (those that automatically arise due to our gati).

- If we know right from wrong, we can control MOST of our physical actions and speech. We may even start saying something terrible and stop ourselves in the middle of the sentence.
- Depending on the emotional state of the mind, it may be not possible to control our actions under extreme stressful situations. Even a normally calm person may get into a rage if he catches his wife engaging in sex with another man. He may even kill that man in the heat of the moment.
- We also know "good people" who were tempted to do immoral things. That is especially true if the "payout or the perceived pleasure" was big enough. That is the danger of "not being free of the four lower realms."
- More information at: "Sañkhāra - What It Really Means."

7. The third category, mano sañkhāra, are also hard to control by will power instantly. I think we all can think about situations where it was hard to control greedy/hateful thoughts. We may start thinking about something, and the mind takes us all over the place. Such thoughts normally involve "what we could have," and also fantasize about all kinds of sense pleasures. One needs to stop such thoughts and think about their consequences willfully.

- These can only be lessened and ultimately stopped by changing one's habits ("gathi") and cravings ("āsavas"). That applies to kāya and vacī sañkhāra done on "impulse" or "temptations" discussed above.
- And that comes about by realizing the unfruitfuiness of any sañkhāra. That is strongly related to comprehending the Three Characteristics. We will be analyzing this in the upcoming steps of paticca saтирра̄da.

8. Thus the key is to change one's bad habits over time. Then, gradually, even such mano sañkhāra will STOP FROM ARISING.

- It may be hard to believe, but a significant part of this change of habits and cravings comes from comprehending the Three Characteristics of this world. One would realize that it does not MAKE

SENSE to hurt others (including animals) to get sense pleasure for oneself. That makes a BIG DIFFERENCE in one's outlook about what a "good life is."

- Contrary to what most people believe, a life filled with sense pleasures is not a "good, peaceful, life." An extravagant life can eventually become a "burdened life" because our body's ability to accommodate sense pleasures goes down as we age. This realization itself leads to "cooling down" of the mind. Anyway, as we discuss further, and if one contemplates more along with these ideas, these concepts will slowly become apparent.

9. In summary, all three kinds of suffering arise due to $\operatorname{sa\dot {n}khāra~that~range~from~highly~immoral~}$ acts to seemingly innocent unfruitful actions. All sañkhāra arise due to avijjā.

- That is why "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra"" is the first step in the paticca samuppāda cycle, which ends with "jara, marana, soka, parideva, dukkha, ....." all kinds of suffering.
- At the Arahant stage, one has removed avijjā (i.e., optimized paññā), and thus abhisañkhāra that lead to rebirth cannot arise; that is Saupadisesa Nibbāna. At the death of the physical body, the Arahant is not reborn and thus, at that time, all sañkhāra cease to arise (Anupadisesa Nibbāna or Parinibbāna or "complete Nibbāna").
- That is how "avijjā nirodha" leads to "saǹkhāra nirodha."

Thus we can see in a simple way how suffering arises with immoral/unfruitful actions as causes. One engages in such activities due to ignorance of the true nature of the world: anicca, dukkha, anatta. Here we discussed how ignorance gives rise to sañkhāra. In the next post, we will discuss how sañkhārā leads to viñ̃̄āṇa (or defiled consciousness). That is the next step leading to dukkha (suffering).

Next, "Sañkhāra paccayā Viññāna - 1",

### 9.11.4 Sañkhāra Paccayā Viññ̄āṇa - 1

1. "Sañkhāra paccayā Viññāna" is normally translated something like, "with mental formations as condition, consciousness arises." But I will show that a more accurate translation is, "Immora/unfruitful actions and thoughts as root condition for defiled consciousness."

- I will just keep the word viññāna without translating as "defiled/unfruitful consciousness" (which could become cumbersome to repeat also), because the word "consciousness" cannot fully embody the meaning of viññāna. Furthermore, vipāka viññāṇa (those that arise outside of "sañkhāra paccayā viññāna") are "just consciousness"; see \#4 below.
- Viññāna is a step in the pațicca samuppāda that describes how suffering arises; thus viññāna is NOT neutral or innocuous as the word "consciousness" or "awareness" implies; it is DEFILED consciousness, contaminated with immoral mental factors such as greed and hate.
- In contrast, an Arahant has undefiled, pure consciousness; thus an Arahant experiences the world without any defilements. He/she can see, hear, etc without making any type of judgement, attachment, or repulsion to what is seen, heard, etc.

Thus we need to realize that viññāna is DIFFERENT from "knowing" or "being aware", which is what "consciousness" implies. This is very important.
2. For example, two people with opposing political views (A and B) may encounter a politician C on the street who has views compatible with those of A. Person A will be happy to meet C and may go up to C , shake his hand and talk to him enthusiastically. On the other hand, Person B will automatically have irritable thoughts about C and is likely to avoid C. In this case, A and B generated two very different kinds of viññāna upon seeing the same person.

- On the other hand, suppose there is a fourth person, D, who also knows the politician C AND suppose D is an Arahant. Now, person D will recognize C as that politician but will not generate any likes or
dislikes about C. That is what "consciousness" is, just recognizing who or what it is without generating any biases.

3. The other main point is that viññaña is multi-faceted. It has embedded in it one's memories as well as one's future hopes and plans, and those lie under the surface. This is what Sigmund Freud called the subconscious. But there is no separate "subconscious"; there is only one citta at a time.

- The mind does this with the help of several mental factors (cetasika) like memory (manasikara) and perception (saññ $\bar{a}$ ). We will discuss that in the future.

4. For example, when I am looking at a picture I have what is called cakkhu viññāna, i.e., "visual consciousness." This is a vipäka viññāna and is "just consciousness."

However, if I have been planning a trip overseas that is still in the "back of my mind"; if I have been thinking about calling an old friend about whom I just thought of recently, that is also in the "back of my mind." Thus at a given time there may be several or even many viñ̃ñạna waiting to come to the surface.

- And some of those "subconscious" viññanna may disappear, if the reason for it to be there goes away for some reason. For example, if civil war breaks out in the country that I was planning to visit, I will abandon that trip and my "viññāna" for that will go away. If I stop thinking about my old friend, that viññāna for calling him up may also go away with time. Thus if a given viññāṇa stops getting "its food" it will die off gradually.
- The difference between kamma viññāṇa (those that arise due to "sañkhāra paccayā viññāna") and vipāka viññạ̄a is discussed in "Viññāna - Consciousness Together With Future Expectations."

5. Now we can see how "sañkhāra paccayā viñäāna" works. The more I think about my old friend, the more sañkhāra I am generating; thus I keep "feeding that viññāna" and that viññāna for calling him gets stronger.

- The breaking out of the civil war in that country basically deprived the "viññāna for making a trip to that country" of any food (i.e., now it is not possible to visit that country), and thus the news effectively killed that viññāna.
- As always, it is best to think about your own situations and see how "sañkhāra paccayā viññāna" works, and also how one can have many types of viññāna at the same time, even though only one is at the forefront at any given time.

6. There is another way that viñ $\tilde{n} \bar{a} n a$ can be divided into two main categories. One is the "base level" of viññāna for an existence or bhava. For example, if a deer is reborn as a human, then that lifestream will now have a "higher base level of viññāna" suitable for a human. Whereas a deer cannot sort out right from wrong, a human can. Thus at the end of a given "bhava" (say as a deer), that lifestream gets new, higher "base level" of viññāna.

- The other main category of viñ $\tilde{n} a n a$ is the numerous types of viññāna that arise in a given existence that we discussed above. What we perceive through the six senses (eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind) gives rise to six types of consciousness: vision, hearing, smell, taste, touch, and concepts. Based on those, we can have infinite types of viññāna as we discussed above. These types of viññāna are now in accordance with the type of existence or "bhava." For example, a deer does not perceive what is seen at the same level of consciousness as a human, even if both are looking at the same thing. Sometimes there may be differences in sense faculties too: a bat cannot see but uses sonar to find its way around. Furthermore, as we discussed above, there are many types of "subconscious" viññanna as well.
- There are many new concepts introduced in these introductory posts that are critical. One may need to go back to previous posts and re-read in order to grasps these important concepts.

7. Based on those two categories, there are two main paticca samuppāda cycles that describe life "in this world of 31 realms":

- One describes how the "base level" of viññanna changes at the end of a "bhava", say when a deer is reborn as a human. Here a given lifestream can make a transition from a lower base level of viññaña to a higher (e.g., deer reborn as a human) or vice versa (e.g., human reborn as a deer). This is the "paṭisandhi paṭicca samuppāda" cycle.
- The other patticca samuppāda cycle describes how a given lifestream accumulates conditions for suffering during a given "bhava." This is where we experience viñ̃̃āna through our daily activities. This is the "idappaccayatā paṭicca samuppāda" cycle; see, "Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda."

Let us discuss the viñ̃ān̄a associated with this latter one first.

## 1. Sañkhāra paccaȳ̄̄ Idappaccayatā Viññāṇa

Let us first look at how our consciousness changes basically every moment in an active day. We are being bombarded with pictures, sounds, smells, tastes, body touches, and we think about all sorts of things throughout the day. In each single case, we experience a different viññāna. This is why viññāna is very complex and multi-faceted.

1. If we take a simple example of looking at a person, there are multiple events that happens in the mind: the physical eye captures an image of the mind which is processed by the brain and sent to the mind (details of this will be discussed in the Abhidhamma section later). The mind instantly compares that image with previous experiences and recognizes that it is a close friend. Happy feelings may arise instantly too. If we had not seen him for a while, some old memories associated with him may also instantly pop into our mind. The sum total of all mental factors (feelings, perception, joy, etc) associated with that "seeing event" is the "eye consciousness" or "cakkhu viñãāna" at that moment.

- And this is an example of a "vipāka viññāṇa." We did not plan to see him, but just bumped into him.

2. But now based on this vipāka viññāna, we may decide to take some actions. We may run to meet him, give him a hug, and follow-up with even more actions. Most of these could be harmless sañkhāra and our experience, consciousness, or viññāna is mostly harmless.

- However, if we instead ran into a person with whom we recently had a serious argument, that vipāka viññāna may lead to a series of "bad sañkhāra" in our minds and thus lead to a totally different viññāna BASED ON those bad sañkhāra. we may decide to say something bad to that person. Now we are doing vacī sañkhāra that may have adverse consequences. Now our viññāna is different and we feel differently from the above case. We have an agitated state of mind, and with the slightest provocation from him, we may say or do even more harmful things.

3. When a thought arises in the mind, it has associated with it many mental factors (cetasika) which characterize how we feel: joy, sadness, greed, generosity, hate, kindness, etc. Viññāna encompasses all such relevant mental factors.

- In the previous example of persons A and B meeting the politician C, person A's thoughts embody happiness while person B's thoughts embody dislike.
- For a viññāna to arise, there must be some interest in the sense object. For example, we are bombarded with millions of sense inputs in a day, but we "pay attention to" only a fraction of those. Each mind has a set of "preferred items" in the background or "in the subconscious" based on the person's habits and cravings.

4. Then, the more we "feed a given viññana" by thinking, speaking, doing things related to that, the more strong it gets. Thus we can see how "habit building" is tightly associated with sañkhāra. In the same way, we can "remove a habit" by depriving that associated viñ̃āṇa of its food, i.e., by stopping thinking or doing things related to it.

- And that can be done only realizing the benefits of a good habit or adverse consequences of a bad habit, which was the first step in the paṭicca samuppāda, "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra." A bit of thought should
make this clear. Comprehending Buddha Dhamma takes time to think deeply about how all these things fit together. Just being able to recite the patticca samuppāda cycle does not bring any benefits.

5. A simple example is "building a viññanna for getting drunk": A teenager may not like the taste of his first drink, but if he keeps doing it due to "peer pressure", he is likely to build a new viññāna for it. As he builds this viññāna, he will keep accumulating sañkhāra to "feed that viññāna." He will be thinking about it, talking about it, and of course whenever has the chance he will be drinking. The more he does any of those sañkhāra, that viñ̃āạna will grow. AND even when he is doing something else, that viñ̃nāna will be at close to top of the subconscious waiting for an opportunity to come up and induce him to get drunk.

- And it works the same way for any type of activity. A teenager studying for an exam, will have a viññāna for it. If he is serious about it, he will be thinking about it more, talking about it, and studying hard; all those are sañkhāra too, in this case for his benefit.

The idea is to first not to do any abhisañkhāra (strong immoral sañkhāra) that could lead to birth in the four lower realms. These kinds of sañkhāra are the immoral acts, speech, and thoughts. We will discuss this in the next post.

### 9.11.5 Sañkhāra Paccayā Viññāạa - 2

If you are reading this without reading the earlier posts, you may be wondering whether I was being untruthful when I said this series will be in "plain English." I did describe any of the terms used here in plain English in the previous posts. There is no easy way to get the same meaning across without using such key Pāli words.

- So, once I clarify them, I have to use these Pāli terms in order to keep a post to a reasonable length, AND readable. One can always go back and read previous posts to refresh memory.

In the previous post, we discussed how sañkhāra can feed and build different types of viñ̃āṇa during our lifetime. The paṭicca samuppāda cycle which describes that process is the Idappaccayatā Patticca Samuppāda and we discussed the step "sañkhāra paccayā idappaccayatā viññāna" for that paticca samuppāda.

- Now we will discuss how such idappaccayatā viñ̃āạna can become strong and be "carried over" to the future lives; not only that, one of such strong viññāṇa can even determine the next birth. That is why such strong viñ̃̃āna can become "paṭisandhi viññāna" by providing the "link" to the next next life (that is what "patisandhi" means: "sandhi" is connection and "pati" is bond or making the connection).


## 2. Sañkhāra paccayā Patisandhi Viññāna

1. When we build idappaccayatā viññāna during our lifetime as described in the previous post, such viññāna can get very strong and even get carry over to the next lives.

- In fact, some of the viññāna that we easily get "attached to" very well could be coming from previous lives.

2. For example, different people have "natural tendencies" for certain tasks (music, art, science, business, basically any type of activity). Similarly, some people are attracted to gambling, drinking, sports, etc more than others. All these are sansāric habits, that have been cultivated by "feeding that viññāna" over many lives.

- Unless one reduces and eventually gets rid of one's bad habits, they can lead to bad births in the lower four realms where one can get trapped for long times. Similarly, developing good habits can lead to good births, in case one is unable to attain at least the Sotāpanna stage in this life.
- This is why it is very important to get rid of "bad habits" and to cultivate "good habits." There are many posts at the site on this important topic. I cannot emphasize enough the importance of this need to change habits.

3. Following the Noble Eightfold Path is all about changing to a "good person" first; doing "ānāpānasati $b h \bar{a} v a n a \vec{a}$ does the same thing. When one does this, one develops wisdom to see through the Three Characteristics: anicca, dukkha, anatta. And that also leads to the Sotäpanna stage, where one is guaranteed to be free of rebirths in the lower four realms.

- By the way, many people are introduced to the wrong concept of "there is no self" (incorrect translation of the term anatta). Thus they get stuck, saying the term, "good person", does not make sense (because there is no "self"); that could become a huge obstacle to any progress. While the Buddha rejected the concept of "self", he also rejected the concept of "no-self", because there is definitely some key personal characteristics that "flow" from one life to the next; see, "What Reincarnates? - Concept of a Lifestream."

4. Once one is free of the four lower realms (i.e., attains the Sotāpanna stage of Nibbāna), only then one will truly realize that it is unfruitful even to wish for or work to seek rebirths in higher realms.

- But, until one attains the Sotāpanna stage, one MUST avoid immoral abhisañkhāra (strong immoral actions) to avoid immoral viññāna and also engage in moral abhisañkhāra in order to cultivate moral viññanna; this will keep one firmly on the Path and to avoid rebirth in the lower four realms until the Sotāpanna stage is attained.

5. If we think deeply about the suffering that we encounter in this life, dukkha dukkha has arisen due to whatever immoral sañkhāra done in a previous life. An animal suffers more than a human, because the cause for an animal birth was a stronger immoral action done previously.

- Dukkha dukkha associated with higher realms (deva, brahma) is less than the dukkha dukkha for a human life, because the sañkhāra that led to the deva/brahma births were merely unfruitful, they were not immoral.

6. Any birth anywhere in the 31 realms is due to a abhisañkhāra. If it is due to a worst form of abhisañkhāra (immoral actions) then that leads to a birth in the lowest four realms via a strong and bad patisandhi viññāṇa. Lesser abhisañkhāra (unfruitful actions) lead to births in higher realms via "moral" abhisañkhāra viñ̃̃āṇa.

- Thus cultivating "immoral" abhisañkhāra viñãāṇa must be avoided by not engaging in immoral activities. Otherwise, "sañkhāra paccayā paṭisandhi viñ̃ān̄a" could lead to "bad births", where dukkha dukkha is very intense.

7. Viparinama dukkha associated with the current life is also mainly determined by previous action (abhisañkhāra) that led to this life, and can be analyzed the same way as for dukkha dukkha.

- But the sañkhāra dukkha associated with this life is due to actions (sañkhāra) that we do in this life. Also, the same sañkhāra that could cause future dukkha dukkha or viparinama dukkha can also give rise to sañkhāra dukkha in this life as well. This is an important point to be realized; if not clear, you may want to go back and review the previous posts.
- Therefore, we CAN get rid of part of the dukkha (the sañkhāra dukkha) in THIS LIFE by understanding Dhamma and acting and thinking accordingly. We can also stop or reduce ALL types of dukkha in FUTURE LIVES by this process.

If you have forgotten what these terms mean, it is a good idea to go back and refresh memory, because otherwise it will be difficult to comprehend the upcoming posts in this series as well. And these terms are critically important for grasping the message of the Buddha. Avijjā, sañkhāra, and viññāna are key terms that must be comprehended; they do not have corresponding English words.

More on viññāna can be found at, "3. Viññ̄āna, Thoughts, and the Subconscious."
Next, Viññāna paccayā Nāmarūpa,

### 9.11.6 <br> Viññāṇa Paccayā Nāmarūpa

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## Introduction

1. Nāmarūpa can have different but related meanings in different contexts. Nāmarūpa in the standard upapatti Paṭicca Samuppāda is different from the "nāmarūpa" involved in idappaccayā Patticca Samuppāda which takes place moment-to-moment.

- Idappaccayā means "what happens at this moment depending on the conditions at this moment." Thus, it describes "events in real-time" that bring vipāka in real-time, in addition to vipāka in the future. See, "Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda."
- The upapatti Paticca Samuppāda process describes how viñ̃āạa energies created up to and within this life lead to future births (i.e., vipāka in future lives via future births). Here "uppatti" means "birth." See, "Akusala-Mūla Upapatti Paticca Samuppāda."


## Nāmarūpa in Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda

2. Let us first discuss nāmarūpa involved in Idappaccayatā Pațicca Samuppāda, i.e., how a $\bar{j} \bar{a} t i$ can arise in the current life based on one's avijj $\bar{a}$ (ignorance) and sañkhāra (thoughts, speech, and actions).

- Jāti is not restricted to "births as a human, a deva, an animal." Many different $j \bar{a} t i$ (births) arise during the current life itself, see "WebLink: suttacentral: Jātidhammādi Sutta Dasaka (SN 35.33)."
- We will discuss two examples below which explain how a "thief" and a "drunkard" are "born" during the current life itself.


## "Viññ̄ṇa Paccayā Nāmarūpa" During a Lifetime

3. "Nāmarūpa" involved in Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda mainly refer to those "visual images" created by the person when making an "expectation" (viññāna) to achieve/maintain a certain goal.

- Here, "nāma" refers to whatever the "name" given to the subject involved in the Paticca Samuppāda process, and " $\bar{u} \bar{p} \bar{a}$ " are the associated objects themselves. Thus, the corresponding "nāmaru $\bar{u} p a$ " are the mental images of the subjects in question.

4. Let us take an example. When a thief plans to steal something (say a watch from a store), the process starts with the step "salāyatana paccayā phasso;" see, "Generating Kammic Energy in the 'Upādāna Paccayā Bhava' Step." That corresponds to him seeing the watch on display and realizing that he could take it without anyone seeing it.

- That is when he starts acting with avijjā initiating a PS cycle at "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra"; he starts thinking about the plan because of his ignorance of the consequences.
- Here "nāma" or the name is "watch," and "rūpa" is the watch itself. But "nāmarūpa" is the mental image of that watch: That is formed in HIS MIND. In addition, various other types of nāmarūpa related to the plan will go through his mind.
- For example, he may also make visuals of how he will be doing the stealing: "nāmarūpa" are the visuals he has in his mind to get the job done.
- He starts doing vacī sañkhāra first: thinking to himself about how to go about stealing the watch. This is "sañkhāra paccayā viññāna" and that gives rise to viññāna for stealing the watch.

5. The more he thinks and makes plans (i.e., makes more and more nāmarūpa in his mind, that future expectation for stealing that object (i.e., the viññāna for it) will get stronger.

- Here the Pațicca Samuppāda process runs backward, "nāmarūpa paccayā viññāna." This is called an "aññamañña paṭicca samuppāda." [aññamañña : (adj.), mutual.]
- These forward and backward steps may run back and forth while he is planning the robbery, and the Buddha said that both viññ̄ạna and nāmarūpa get stronger due to this feedback. They depend on each other and feed on each other.
- The more he thinks about it, the stronger those viññāna and nāmarūpa.
- Ven. Sariputta provided a simile for this inter-dependence between viññāna and nāmarūpa saying it is like two bundles of hay leaning against each other and supporting each other without any other support.


## A Second Example

6. Let us take another case of a teenager whose peers influence him to drink alcohol. Because of his ignorance about the consequences, he engages in such activities and also in planning activities: "avijj $\bar{a}$ paccayā sañkhāra."

- Here sañkhārā includes not only drinking activities but also planning. Therefore, all three types of sañkhāra are involved: mano, vacī, and kāya sañkhāra.
- While he is participating in drinking he is doing kāya sañkhāra; he will constantly talking about having such parties and those are vacī sañkhāra; it is also in the subconscious and many times a day they come back to his mind as mano sañkhāra. All these are included in "sañkhāra paccayā viññāna."

7. Most people do not realize it, but that process of "thinking and talking to oneself" (vacī sañkhāra) can make a big impact on the formation of nāmarūpa and the cultivation of viññāna. Many people spend hours and hours doing that assuming it does not contribute to "viññanna (or kamma) formation"; see, "Correct Meaning of Vacī Sañkhāra."

- In the above example, even when he is not drinking, such mano sañkhāra comes to the mind automatically, and he starts consciously thinking about drinking activities: he visualizes pictures of "party scenes," including friends, bottles of his favorite drink, any food that goes with it, etc.
- That conscious thinking is also vacī sañkhāra, and those also strengthen the viññāna via "sañkhāra paccayā viññāna."
- Now those mental pictures that arise during that process are nāmarūpa that arise due to "viñ̃ñaña paccayā nāmarūpa." Therefore, Paṭicca Samuppāda steps do not just flow in one way. They can run forward and backward.

8. If the teenager keeps his bad habit of drinking, he gets trapped in that bhava (state of mind of a drunkard), the more "drunken jāti" will result, i.e., more frequently he will be drunk. When one gets excessively drunk, one tends to behave like an animal without any sense of decency. The long-term consequences could be rebirth as an animal.

- Suppose that "viññāna of a drunkard" stays strong to the time of death (the cuti-patisandhi moment at the end of his human bhava). In that case, it could lead to a new uppatti bhava via the uppatti Paticca Samuppāda process mentioned in \#1 above. We will discuss this second type of Pațicca Samuppāda
- The important point is that such a patisandhi viñ̃ãnana is likely to give rise to rebirth in the animal realm, as mentioned above.

9. In both these examples, it is clear that those reverse steps also occur: "nāmarūpa paccay $\bar{a}$ viñ̃ān̄na" can happen, and does happen, together with "viñ̃n̄ạa paccayā nāmarūpa." The more one visualizes related nāmarūpa, the stronger that viññāna gets.

- As we saw above, this happens in other steps too (for example, "sañkhāra paccayā viñãāṇa" and "Viññāna paccayā sañkhāra") and such is referred to as an "añ̃̃amañña Paṭicca Samuppāda step." Here "aññamañ̃̃a" means "inter-dependent."
- This is especially true also for the "sañkhāra paccayā viñ̃̄āna." The stronger the viññāna gets, one is more likely to engage in the same kind of acts, i.e., sañkhāra, i.e., "viññāṇa paccayā sañkhāra." They feed on each other. This often happens in habit formation; see, " 9 . Key to Ānāpānasati - How to Change Habits and Character (Gati)."


## Viññāṇa Paccayā Nāmarūpa at Paṭisandhi (in Upapatti PS)

10. At the end of existence (bhava), a given lifestream jumps from one kind of existence to another. The easiest to visualize is the case of a Brahma to a Deva transition. The "nāma" part changes from a Brahma to a Deva, and the "rūpa" part changes from 2 pasāda rūpa for the Brahma to 5 for the Deva.

- That transition happens in the latter part of the last citta vithi of the life of Brahma. At that cutipatisandhi moment, the "Brahma nāmarūpa" dies and a "Deva nāmarūpa" is created by kammic energy. This is discussed in a bit more detail in the post "Cuti-Patisandhi - An Abhidhamma Description."

11. For humans (and animals,) the situation is a bit more complex because the first type of "human nāmarūpa" created is a human/animal gandhabba.

- In the cases of a human or an animal, the second type of nāmarūpa forms when that gandhabba merges with a zygote in a womb. That nāmarūpa is the basis for the physical human body. So, it depends on the particular case at hand.
- Let us consider the case of a human dying and born into a deer. A gandhabba is involved in both lives.


## Example of a Human to Deer Transition

12. In general, as soon as the viññana for the next existence was determined at the last citta vithi by the step "sañkhāra paccayā viññ̄ạna," the next step of "viñ̃n̄ṇa paccayā nāmarūpa" gives rise to the nāmarūpa for the next life.

- When human life ends, that "human gandhabba" will die, and at that cuti-patisandhi moment a "deer gandhabba" will arise.
- Thus here, "nāma" includes the basic level of viññāna for the new deer's existence, which is much different from the "nāma" of a human. The "rūpa" is that of a deer and not of a human. Thus "nāmarūpa" makes a huge transition at the end of the "bhava" from human to a deer.
- Of course, now that "deer gandhabba" needs to be pulled into the womb of a female deer (i.e., doe) to be born a deer.

13. I have discussed previously how a "deer gandhabba" could be reborn many times as a deer until the kammic energy of the "deer bhava" is exhausted; see, "Bhava and Jāti - States of Existence and Births Therein."

- In such instances, at the death of the deer, a "deer gandhabba" emerges from the dead body and waits for a suitable womb for the "deer mother" to become available. Here the new "nāmarūpa" may be somewhat different, but still, that of a deer so any change would be minor.
- Therefore, the "viñ̃ñana paccayā nāmarūpa" gives rise to a new set of "nāmarūpa" only at the patisandhi to a new existence.

Viññanna is a key concept in Buddha Dhamma. We can analyze it at various levels, and a deeper analysis is at "Viññāna Aggregate."

Next, "Nāmarūpa Paccayā Salāyatana",

### 9.11.7 Nāmarūpa Paccayā Saḷāyatana

Revised May 25, 2019; August 31, 2019; major revision May 20, 2021; September 9, 2022
"Nāmarūpa Paccayā Salāyatana" step involves different types of nāmarūpa and saḷāyatana depending on whether it is an Idappaccayatā or a upapatti Paṭicca Samuppāda.

## Ayatana and Indriya

1. First, let us discuss the difference between a $\bar{a} y a t a n a$ and an indriya.

- We have six sense faculties: eyes (cakkhu), ears (sota), nose (ghāna), tongue (jivhā), body (kāya), and the mind (mano). These are the indriya.
- Our initial sensory inputs (what we see, hear, etc.) are due to kamma vipāka based on this life with a solid, physical body. Unlike Brahma's "energy body," our "solid body" can be exposed to various ailments. At the moment of experience, these sensory faculties act as indriya. For example, when we see an attractive person on the road, that is just "seeing the event" with the cakkhu indriya.
- However, based on those initial sensory experiences, we may INTENTIONALLY use those indriya to "enjoy that ārammaña." Then those indriya become āyatana. In the above example, if we get attached to that attractive person and keep looking at that person, then we use our eyes as cakkhāyatana. In the same way, sota indriya becomes sotāyatana, and so on for all six.
- They are called salāyatana since there are six of them.

2. There is no equivalent English word for āyatana, so we will keep using indriya and āyatana from now on.

- By the way, pañca indriya (saddhā, sati, viriya, samādhi, pañña) are an entirely different set compared to this set of 6 indriya.
- In general, "indriya" means a "dominant faculty." Those that are dominant in the interactions with the external world are the six indriya in \#1; those dominant in spiritual advancement are the five indriya in pañca indriya.


## Examples of Indriya Becoming Ayatana

3. For example, I am walking on the road and see a nice house. I just happened to see it, and my eyes (cakkhu indriya) were working as indriya; they just presented a picture of that house to my mind. It is a neutral event.

- However, if I form an attachment to the house, I start looking at it for a while (with cakkhāyatana). I am thinking about how nice that house is and even about building one like that. At that point, I am also using my mind as a āyatana (mana indriya now becomes manāyatana).
- I have formed greedy thoughts about the house and now I am accumulating new kamma by generating vacī sañkhāra (talking to myself with vitakka/vicāra). I use my eyes and mind as āyatana (cakkhāyatana and manāyatana): I keep seeing the house and thinking greedy thoughts.


## Indriya Become Āyatana With Abhisañkhāra

4. In many cases, when we experience a sensory event through one indriya, we may start using some or all of the indriya as ayatana. In another example, someone offers us a piece of a tasty cake (a kamma $v i p \bar{a} k a$ ). We get the cake's taste with the tongue (jivhā) and like it so much we may use all six ayatanas to accumulate more kamma (smell and touch it and then ask for the recipe and think about how to make it or where to buy it).

- Those "extra activities" that we do with āyatana COULD BE abhisañkhāra (depending on whether greed was involved.) But just eating a cake is not abhisañkhāra; see, "Kāma Guna, Kāma, Kāma Rāga, Kāmacchanda."
- Most of the time, we use our sense faculties as indriya: we see, hear, etc., many things in a day but ignore most of them. But when we experience something that we have a craving for, we start using our sense faculties as āyatana.
- Both types of akusala-mūla Pațicca Samuppāda cycles operate only when we use our sense faculties as āyatana.
- An Arahant ALWAYS uses his/her sensory faculties as an indriya. He/she will see, hear, etc just like us, but will not get "attached to" anything.

5. However, we DO NOT use our indriya as ayatana in most situations. For example, I may become thirsty. Then I need to think about getting a glass of water or asking someone for a glass of water. Both involve vacī sañkhāra. Then I drink water that involves kāya sañkhāra (moving body parts.) Those are kammically neutral and NOT abhisañkhāra.

- In another example, suppose a robber attacks you with a knife in an isolated place. If possible, you would want to disarm him without killing or hurting him too much in the process. If that is not possible, you may want to try to run away. All those activities involve kāya sañkhāra. But they are NOT abhisañkhāra that involve greed, anger, or ignorance (lobha, dosa, moha.) The INTENTION (cetanā) there is to avoid injury to both.


## Salāyatana Means Different Things in The Two Types of PS

6. Salāyatana has somewhat different meanings in the idappaccayatā and paṭisandhi paticca samuppāda cycles. That is very much like for nāmarūpa that we described in the previous post.

- At birth (especially in a new bhava or existence), we get a "new set of sense faculties" or indriya. For example, if a human is reborn as a Brahma. A Brahma will have only eyes, ears, and mind. There will be only three indriya (or āyatana) instead of six for human. But we keep the term "salāyatana" in the Paticca Samuppāda as a generic term.
- Thus in Upapatti Paṭicca Samuppāda, we are concerned with forming a brand new set of āyatana for a new existence (bhava).
- However, when we consider the Idappaccayatā Pațicca Samuppāda series, we are concerned with how the six ayyatanas for a human change from even moment to moment. In particular, the issue is whether they are being used as àatana or indriya.


## "Nāmarūpa paccayā Saḷāyatana" at Paṭisandhi (Upapatti PS)

7. At the end of existence (bhava), a given lifestream makes a "big jump" from one kind of existence to another. At that time, the base level of viññāna for the lifestream makes a jump, and this is the "nāma" of the nāmarūpa. The nāmarūpa for the new existence also has a different blueprint for the new physical body, the "rūpa" part.

- As we did in the previous post, let us consider the case of a lifestream transitioning from a human to a deer. The basic level of viññanna changes from a human to a much lower level of a deer. This new level of viññana together with the blueprint for the deer is in the new nāmarūpa of the "deer gandhabba" that comes out of the body of the dead human, as we saw before.
- Now when this gandhabba descends to the womb of a female deer, that baby deer starts to grow. Six sense faculties (indriya) suitable for a deer grow in that womb, which may become salāyatana at times in the future after the birth.

8. In another example, consider a human who exhausted his kammic energy for the human bhava at death, and became a Deva in one of the Deva realms. At the cuti-pattisandhi transition in the last citta vithi of that human, the human gandhabba dies. In the next moment, a Deva gandhabba is born.

- All devas are born fully formed. There is no need for a mother's womb. That is an opapātika birth.
- When that human dies, his body becomes inert like a log. At that very instant, a fully-formed Deva appears in the appropriate Deva world.
- That Deva will have sense faculties appropriate for a Deva. Those are the indriya for the new existence. Those indriya can sometimes become āyatana depending on Deva's activities.


## "Nāmarūpa paccayā Salāyatana" During a Lifetime (Idappaccayatā PS)

9. During a given lifetime of a deer, human, or a Brahma, that lifestream will have a basic set of indriya (that become āyatana at times) appropriate for that existence: the sense faculties for a human are different from that of a deer or a Brahma.

- But during that lifetime, those ayatana will have minor changes (compared to the drastic changes at paṭisandhi) depending on the activity. Idappaccayatā Paṭicca Samuppāda cycle describes such changes.


## An Example in Idappaccayatā PS

10. In the previous post, we discussed the case of a thief who is planning a theff; see \#4 of "Viññāna Paccayā Nāmarūpa." His viññanna about the theft led him to generate appropriate nāmarūpa (the visuals in his mind of how the theft is to be carried out).

- When he plans the theft, he will use his sense faculties as ayyatana to do the "preparatory work." He will read about the place to be robbed, ask for relevant information, etc. Each time he does a specific act (whether thinking, seeing, hearing, etc.), the Idappaccayatā Pațicca Samuppāda cycles operate.
- Now when he is about to steal, his indriya becomes āyatana. All his sense faculties will be on high alert. He watches and listens carefully for anything unexpected, and his whole body becomes tense, pumped with adrenaline.
- All his àyatana will be employed to carry out the task. He will be using his body, eyes, and ears as $\bar{a} y a t a n a$. The act of stealing the watch is done with kāyayatana (kāya āyatana) and involves kāya abhisañkhāra. It is an abhisañkhāra because it involves greed.
- In comparison, getting the same watch by paying for it is a kāya sañkhāra where the body is used as an indriya. Both times he used his hand to hold the watch. It is the INTENTION (cetanā$)$ that determines whether the body was used as an āyatana (with kāya abhisañkhāra) or an indriya (kāya sañkhāra.)

Next, "Difference between Phassa and Samphassa",

## Difference between Phassa and Samphassa

## Revised November 6, 2018; June 2, 2019; re-written April 14, 2021

## Phassa and Samphassa - Incorrect Translations

1. No differentiation is made between "phassa" and "samphassa" in most English translations of Patticca samuppāda. Both words translated as "contact" in English translations without making the distinction. See, for example, "WebLink: suttacentral: Chachakka Sutta (MN 148)" and the English translations there.

- However, as we will see below, "samphassa" has a very different meaning than "phassa" and makes the connection of how our instinctive reactions to external sense experiences arise based on our "samisāric habits" or "gati."
- With the distinction made between "phassa" and "samphassa," the true meanings become clear in many suttā like "Chachakka Sutta (MN 148)".


## Phassa Is in All Citta

2. When we see, hear, etc. a citta arises that recognizes the sensory input. There are 7 cetasika (mental factors) that arise with ANY citta and phassa and vedana are two of them. We will have no sensory experience without the phassa (contact) cetasika.

- When the mind makes that contact with that image of the external object, a citta arises a citta arises, and that is what we experience.
- Some of the seven universal mental factors that arise with the citta instantaneously identify the object. These include vedana and sañña $\bar{a}$. Both those are universal cetasika.
- If samphassa takes place, there will be an additional vedana $\bar{a}$, which is called "samphassa-j $\bar{a}-$ vedanā."


## Samphassa - How Does It Arise?

3. An average human will form a like or a dislike for some of the sense inputs (but not for all).

- If a like or dislike is formed, then that sense contact is "san phassa"("san" + "phassa," where "san" are defilements (greed, anger, ignorance); see, "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Samisāra)"). It rhymes as "samphassa."
- This "combination effect" or "Pāli sandhi" leads to the pronunciation of many "san" words with an "m" sound: "san" + "mā" to "sammā." In the same way, "san" "yutta" to "samyutta," "san" "bhava" to "sambhava," and "san" "sāra" to "saimsāra"; see, "List of "San" Words and Other Pāli Roots."
- Thus, when one sees, hears, smells, tastes, touches something, whether there will be any likes or dislikes towards that sensory experience depends on that person, or more specifically, the "gati" (habits/character) of that person.


## Examples of Samphassa

4. Let us discuss some examples to illustrate how "samphassa" arises. First, let us look at the connection with those people/things in the world that we have special relationships with or what we "upādāna," i.e., like to either keep close to like to stay away from.

- Think about the worst "enemy" you have. When you even think about that person X, you generate distasteful feelings. But that person's family will have loving thoughts about that person. Here, you and X's child (for example) would have generated very different "samphassa" when thinking, seeing, hearing about X.
- When you travel by car or bus and looking out of the window, you may see zillion things, but those are just "seeing"; you don't pay much attention to them. They are "phassa." But now, if you happen to see a beautiful house, it piques your interest, and you may even turn back and take another good look at it and may be even thinking about how nice it would be to live in a house like that. That is "samphassa."

5. Now, let us see how one's perception of what is "valuable" can lead to "samphassa." Suppose someone inherits a valuable gem from his father. Every time he sees it or even thinks about it, he becomes happy. But his mind is also burdened by it since he is worried that he may lose it; he is keeping it in a safe and has put burglar alarms in the house to protect that gem.

- Now, suppose one day he asks a professional to evaluate the gem and finds out that it is not a gem. He may not even believe that initially, but once it sinks in that it is indeed worthless, he will become "detached" from it. He will no longer keep it in the safe and may even throw it away in disgust.
- Now he may be generating either neutral or hateful thoughts about the SAME OBJECT that he once loved so much. Nothing changed about the "gem"; it is still the same object as before. What has changed is his PERCEPTION of the value of that object. Whereas he generated "samphassa" on thinking or seeing that object before, now he may generate just "phassa" (neutral feelings) or "samphassa" with quite the opposite feelings of disgust.


## Phassa Can Turn to Samphassa in an Instant

6. Let us take another example that Waharaka Thero gave. This one clearly shows how the transition from "phassa" to "samphassa" can happen very quickly.

The following happened many years ago in Sri Lanka. A mother had to go overseas when her son was less than a year old. She had been overseas for many years and came back to see her son. Apparently, she had not even seen any pictures of the boy, who was now a teenager. When she gets home, she is told that the boy is visiting a neighbor and starts walking there. On the way, she bumps into a teenager; the teenager apologizes, and she resumes walking. But then another person on the street says, 'Don't you recognize your son? Well. How can you? You have been away all this time". Hearing that, she says, "Oh, is that my son?" and immediately runs back and hugs him.

- She clearly saw the boy when he bumped into her and apologized. But at that time, he was just a teenager to her. That "seeing" event involved "phassa."
- But when someone pointed out that it was her son, her perception of the boy took a big leap in an instant. Now she looks at the same boy with the whole new set of "mental baggage." Now it is not just a teenager, but her son; there is attachment involved. Now when she looks at him, it is "samphassa" that is involved.

7. Now, we can also see how "samphassa" leads to an intensified vedan $\bar{a}$ or feelings. This is called "samphassa jā vedan $\overrightarrow{\boldsymbol{a}}$ " or "vedana arising due to samphassa." This "mind-made defiled vedan $\bar{a}$ " is different from the universal vedana $\bar{a}$ mentioned in \#2 above.

- She had neutral thoughts (may be even some annoyance) when the boy bumped into her apologized. But when she learned that it was her son, her feelings turned instantly to joy.
- To take a bit more further, if that teenager then got hit by a car after several minutes, that joy would turn instantly to sorrow.
- These different types of "vedana" arise based on the type and level of "attachment" to a given object, in this case, the boy.


## Samphassa - Connection to Gati

8. "Samphassa" is intimately connected to one's "gati" or habits, most of which come from our past lives, even though some may be strengthened or weakened by what we do in this life. We may even start forming new "gati" in this life. Note that "gati" is pronounced "gathi" like in "Thailand."

- For example, a young lady looking at a dress may form a liking for it. Another person seeing his enemy will form a dislike. A teenager, upon hearing a song, may form a liking for it, etc.
- This "contact with san" (or samphassa) happens instantaneously. That initial samphassa arises automatically purely based on our "gati." But since our actions based on that initial reaction take some time, we still have time to control our speech or bodily actions. Even if bad thoughts come to our minds, we can stop any speech or bodily actions. That is Kāyānupassanā in Satipatt
- There are many posts at this site that discuss "gati," and at the fundamental level, both A$n \bar{a} p \bar{a} n a$ and Satipatṭhāna meditations are all about removing bad "gati" and cultivating good "gati"; see, "9. Key to Ānāpānasati - How to Change Habits and Character (Gati)".


## An Arahant Has Phassa but Not Samphassa

9. Now, let us consider what happens when an Arahant sees or hears similar things (phassa or "contact" takes place.) $\mathrm{He} /$ she will see or hear the same thing as any other person.

- But an Arahant will not be attracted to it or repelled by it. There will be no samphassa. Thus, there will be no "samphassa jā vedana $\vec{a}$ " either.
- To put it in another way, an Arahant sees, hears, etc. without any bias or samphassa. He/she will also generate vedanā, but not "vedanā due to samphassa."
- An Arahant has removed all such defiled "gati," which are closely related to cravings or "āsava." An Arahant has removed all "āsava"; this is what is meant by "āsavakkhaya" at the Arahanthood. This is a technical detail that may not be clear to some, but don't worry about it if it does not.

10. We can now see the difference between "phassa" and "samphassa."

- In an Arahant's case, there is only "phassa" or mere contact with the external sensory input. An Arahant will thus "see" or "hear" or "smell" or "taste" or "feel" the same things as any other person. But an Arahant will not be attached or repulsed by that sensory experience.
- For example, the Buddha identified different people. But he did not give special treatment to Ven. Ānanda (his personal assistant.) He did not treat Ven. Ānanda any different from Devadatta, who tried to kill him. He treated the poorest person the same way as he treated a king.
- The Buddha ate the most delicious food offered by the kings and also ate meager meals offered by poor people.
- In all those sense contacts, it was just "phassa" and not "samphassa."


## Samphassa Leads to Samphassa-jā-Vedanā

11. Therefore, now we can see that the step, "phassa paccayā vedan $\bar{a} "$ in Akusala-M $\bar{u} l a$ Paṭicca Samuppāda really is "samphassa paccayā samphassa-jā-vedanā." Such Akusala-Mūla Patticca Samuppāda processes do not operate for Arahants.

- More details on how "samphassa" leads to samphassa-jā-vedanā at: "Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways" and "Vipāka Vedanā and "Samphassa jā Vedanā" in a Sensory Event."

Next, "Phassa paccayā Vedanā....to Bhava",

### 9.11 .9 <br> Phassa Paccayā Vedanā....to Bhava

## Re-written May 24, 2021; revised May 25, 2021

It is critical to understand that "phassa paccay $\bar{a} v e d a n \bar{a} "$ in akusala-mūla Pațicca Samuppāda processes is really "samphassa paccayā samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedana $\bar{a} . "$

## Difference Between Phassa and Samphassa

1. In a previous post, we discussed the difference between "phassa" and "samphassa." See, "Difference between Phassa and Samphassa." To summarize:

- "Phassa" is pure mental contact. It is just seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, or just an arbitrary thought that comes to the mind without one's own likes/dislikes. Phassa is a universal cetasika and is present in ALL cittā.
- An ordinary person will also have "phassa" when sense inputs come in as kamma vipāka. For example, one may walk down the street and see an expensive ring on the road. That initial "seeing" is due to a kamma vipāka; that involves only "phassa." But now, greedy thoughts arise, and he picks it up and quickly puts it in his pocket. He did that action with "samphassa" (with greedy thoughts.)
- Thus the akusala-mūla Pațicca samuppāda involves "salāyatana paccayā samphassa," even though it is normally written as "salāyatana paccayā phassa" in the "uddesa" or "brief" statement; see \#3 below.
- Only an Arahant will always have just "phassa" and at no time "samphassa."


## Difference Between Indriya and Āyatana

2. We also discussed the difference between "indriya" and "āyatana," i.e., how we can use our sense faculties either way. See, "Nāmarūpa Paccayā Salāyatana." As discussed there, these six indriya are different from the five indriya in pañca indriya, which are sati, samādhi, saddh $\bar{a}$, viriya, and pañña $\bar{a}$.

- Our basic sense faculties are the six "indriya." When used with craving/anger/ignorance, they become "ayatana." Since there are six of them, there are six "āyatana" or "salāyatana."


## Brief and Detailed Explanations (Uddesa, Niddesa, Paṭiniddesa)

3. Akusala-mūla Paticca samuppāda processes start with ignorance (avijjā), and we start accumulating kamma by using our six indriya as "salāyatana." At such times, our sensory faculties make "defiled contacts" or "samphassa" as discussed in the above-mentioned posts.

- Therefore, it is clear that the step "salāyatana paccayā phassa" should really be "salāyatana paccayā samphassa." But for brevity, "salāyatana paccayā phassa" is used.
- In the same way, the next step of "phassa paccay $\bar{a}$ vedan $\bar{a}$ " is really "samphassa paccay $\bar{a}$ samphassa-jā-vedanā."
- It is common practice to write verses in brief in the Tipitaka. Such verses need to be explained in detail as I try to do in these posts. See, "Sutta Interpretation - Uddesa, Niddesa, Patiniddesa."


## Detailed Explanation With an Example

4. Let us take an example to go over the steps of the Paticca samuppāda up to now as a review. Suppose there is a teenager who comes to associate with friends that belong to a street gang. They tell him that one needs to enjoy life and has to do "whatever it takes" to make money to enjoy life. If the parents do not have close contact with the teenager, there is no one to explain the perils of such a way of life, and he embraces this wrong vision or "micchā dittthi."

- Thus due to ignorance (avijjā), the teenager starts doing things, speaking, and thinking like those gang members: "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra."
- Then what occupies his mind most of the time are thoughts (sañkhāra) related to gang activities and seeking pleasures by using drugs and alcohol: "sañkhāra paccayā viñ̃̃̄ạna." Thus, a corresponding "defiled mindset" occupies his mind at those times. During gang activities, his thoughts are focused on them, and what is in his subconscious during other times is also related to such activities.
- That, in turn, leads to "Viññāṇa paccayā nāmarūpa". He thinks about and visualizes various gang activities: How to sell drugs to make money and how he will enjoy the rest of the time hanging out with the gang.
- Thus all his six sense faculties become "āyatana": they all are used to find ways to optimize the gang activities and to think about ways to "have to fun": "nāmarūpa paccayā salāyatana."
- Thus inevitably, the sense contacts he makes are attuned for such activities: "salāyatana paccayā phassa" or more explicitly, "salāyatana paccayā samphassa." Those sensory contacts are defiled with greed, hate, and ignorance.
- Accordingly, most of his feelings are associated with such defiled sense contacts: He gets angry dealing with rival gangs, takes pleasure in beating them up, gets pleasure from drinking and using drugs, etc. Thus "(sam)phassa paccayā samphassa-jā-vedan $\bar{a} "$ ensues.


## Getting Attached (Tanhhā)

5. Now, we can see how he gets more and more absorbed in gang activities; he gets pleasure from them. Gang activities become regular habits. He gets "stuck" or "gets attached to gang activities" via both greed
 and Ignorance."

- The more he continues such activities, it will become harder to dissociate from them. He thinks about those activities even when not actively doing them. Those start working in his "subconscious"; he dreams about them, etc.
- We need to remember that consciously thinking (or talking to oneself) is also vacī sañkhāra and are kamma that will bring vipāka.


## Upādāna Makes One "Fully Engaged"

6. Such strong attachments to gang activities lead to "upādāna": Upādāna ("upa" +"ādāna," where "upa" means "close" and "ādāna" means "pull" or "attract"; thus gang activities becomes very close him. Those are what he thinks, speaks, lives, all day long: "taṇhā paccayā upādāna."

- He may especially get attached to certain specific activities. Alcohol, drugs, or even beating up other people or killing them. And such a specific thing would be his favorite, and that is what he will follow enthusiastically, and others will also encourage.
- He will spend most of his time with those gang members. They will enjoy doing their favorite things together.
- Thus, now he (his mind) will go through all the steps of PS starting with "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" repeatedly. This is where one really accumulates kammic energies for new existences (bhava.)

7. This leads to the preparation of future "existence" or "bhava." For example, suppose his gang becomes notorious for hurting rival gang members. They take pleasure in beating up someone or, in some cases, even killing someone. He will acquire the mindset of a violent animal. He will become easily agitated and angry.

This is "upādāna paccayā bhava."

- His "bhava" has drastically changed from that of an innocent teenager to that of a violent animal at times.


## Paṭicca Samuppāda Is Not a Linear Process

8. Thus, we can see that this progression from "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" to "upādāna paccayā bhava" does not happen in a linear sequence.

Some steps go back and forth. For example, "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" is inevitably also followed by the reverse "sañkhāra paccayā avijjā," i.e., the more wrong things he does, that also solidifies his ignorance. When he starts enjoying those immoral acts, he will tend to think that it will provide him happiness in the future. kāmacchanda (strong greed) and vyāpāda (strong hate), the two main components of the five hindrances.

- The five hindrances will suppress his ability to think clearly, and avijjā (ignorance) will grow; thus, "sañkhāra paccayā avijj $\bar{a} "$ " will also take place.
- There can be many such "inter-loops" that tend to strengthen the downward progression of that teenager.


## The Concept of Bhava

9. Let us discuss the concept of a "bhava" in a bit more detail.

- Every time we do a sañkhāra (a bodily act, speech, or a thought), a corresponding kamma (basically an action) is done. In Buddha Dhamma, too, action will trigger a reaction (or a response or a result) just like in physics. But when dealing with mental phenomena, the reaction (kamma vipāka) can come later, sometimes many lives later.
- This is why science has not yet realized the way to handle mental phenomena. Since most "reactions" (kamma vipāka) come later in this life, or even in future lives, it is not easy to see these "action/ reaction" or "kamma/kamma vipāka" relationships.


## Not All Sañkhāra Are Bad

10. Not all kamma are the same. Some kamma (and corresponding sañkhāra) are harmless, i.e., they are not potent. Anyone who lives in this world (even an Arahant until death) has to do sañkhāra to live: An Arahant has to walk, speak, think about things, and all these can be considered to be kamma (sañkhāra). In some cases, they are put in the category of kriya to separate them specifically.

- In akusala-mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda, we are concerned with kamma involving greed, hate, and ignorance. Anytime that happens, such kamma (sañkhāra) are potent. They can bring about significant results or kamma vipāka.
- The clearly strong kamma (via sañkhāra) are called abhisañkhāra (or kamma patha.) Killing one's parents is an abhisañkhāra. Since it is immoral, it is called an apuñ̃ā̄bhisañkhāra (apuñña+abhisañkhāra). It will lead to horrible consequences (STRONG kamma vipāka).
- Saving the life of a human is also an abhisañkhāra. Since it is a moral one, it is called a puññābhisañkhāra (puñña + abhisañkhāra). It will lead to good consequences.
- As we discussed above, those good or bad consequences may not be apparent even in this life. But they can bear fruit in future lives.


## "Paṭi Icca" Leading to "Sama Uppāda"

11. How the consequences or "reactions" or kamma vipāka due to good or bad kamma are brought about involves the concept of a "bhava," which can also be called a "kamma bïja" or a "kamma seed."

- Every time one does a good or bad kamma, the potential to bring about its results remains with him/her. And the more one does the same, the kammic energy grows. It is said that such acts prepare a "bhava" or existence corresponding to that kamma. In fact, this is the meaning of Paticca Samuppāda ("paṭi icca" leading to "sama uppāda"); see, "Paticca Samuppāda - "Pati+ichcha" + "Sama+uppāda."
- For example, as the above-discussed teenager keeps doing his violent acts, he makes a "bhava" or a "kamma seed" appropriate for bringing about their consequences.
- During a lifetime, these "bhava" mostly bring about environments suitable for conducting similar acts. It becomes his "state of existence" or "bhava." He keeps acting violently and may even act like an animal at times. His "animal-like gati" or "animal-like habits" will grow.
- This "bhava" is called a "kamma bhava," and he may "born" in that existence many times during the lifetime. The Idappaccayatā Paṭicca Samuppāda describes that.
- Of course, when this bhava gets stronger with maintaining that lifestyle, it may grow to be strong enough to bring birth in an actual "animal bhava." That is described in the upapatti Paticca samuppāda.


## Idappaccayatā Paṭicca Samuppāda

12. Going back to our example, it becomes easier for that teenager to get that state of existence (bhava.). He is provoked easily, and he can hurt someone without much remorse. Thus whole "Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda" cycle can run many times during a day.

- This is why stopping such actions early is important. If one has learned correct "ānāpāna" or "satipatṭhāna," then one would know not to keep doing such acts.
- This is also why the environment (parents, family, friends, teachers, etc.) plays such a huge role in one's life at a young age. We all have both good and bad tendencies ("gati") coming from previous lives. Which of those get to grow depends on how one's life is directed by the environment, especially at a young age. When one is old enough, one could, of course, make even drastic changes with effort.


## Upapatti Paticca Samuppāda

13. As a given "kamma bhava" gets stronger with repeated actions, it can become a "upapatti bhava," i.e., the kamma seed has now become strong enough to provide a patisandhi (rebirth) to a new bhava or existence at the end of the current existence (bhava) as a human; this is the cuti-patisandhi transition that happens in the last citta vith $h$ of the human existence.

- Details of this have been discussed in other posts and will be discussed in the next post as well, but the important thing here is the concept of a strong kamma seed that can give rise to a new existence (rebirth) or a "upapatti bhava."
- Such strong kamma seeds suitable for upapatti bhava can grow over many lifetimes as well.
- We all likely have many such good and bad strong kamma seeds that we have acquired in our previous lives. From all those good and bad kamma seeds potent enough to provide patisandhi, the most strong one comes to the forefront of the mind at death (if the kammic energy for the present bhava as a human is exhausted). We will discuss this in detail in the next post, but the difference between "bhava" and " $j a \bar{a} t i "$ has been discussed in "Bhava and Jāti- States of Existence and Births Therein."

We will discuss more details in the next post that will wrap up this series: "Bhava paccayā Jāti....Jarā, Marana,...".

### 9.11.10 Bhava Paccayā Jāti....Jarā, Maraṇa,...

## Revised June 16, 2019; re-written May 24, 2021; May 29, 2021

An existence (bhava) can result in this life (kamma bhava) or in future lives (upapatti bhava). Both types lead to more suffering in the end. Repetition of kamma bhava (i.e., engaging in similar activities) adds to kammic energies (kamma bija) that can fuel future upapatti bhava.

## Kamma Bhava and Upapatti Bhava

1. In a previous post ("Nāmarūpa Paccayā Salāyatana"), we discussed how repeated immoral actions of a teenager could bring about a specific type of existence (bhava) during the current life. That is a "temporary existence" (in that example as a drunkard,). Still, it creates kammic energy that will remain as kamma bhava.

- We also discussed how such kamma bhava could get stronger with time and become strong enough to lead to a whole new existence at death. This is called a upapatti bhava.
- Therefore, there are two types of "bhava": those that can bring about "experiences" during the current life (kamma bhava) and those that become strong enough to power a whole new existence (upapatti bhava).
- This is explained in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Paticcasamuppāda Vibhañga": "Tattha katamo upādāna paccayā bhavo? Bhavo duvidhena-atthi kamma bhavo, atthi upapatti bhavo," i.e., "What is upādāna paccayā bhavo? Two types of bhava - kamma bhava and upapatti bhava."
- This is why the Buddha emphasized the importance of the Idappaccayatā Paṭicca Samuppāda. Avijjā is NOT there all the time. Any unwise action done at a given time is due to avijj $\bar{a}$ present AT THAT TIME. See, "WebLink: suttacentral: Avijijā Sutta (AN 10.61)": "Purimā, bhikkhave, koṭi na paññāyati avijjāya: 'ito pubbe avijjāā nāhosi, atha pacchā samabhavī’ti. Evañcetamं, bhikkhave, vuccati, atha ca pana paññāyati: 'idappaccayā avijjā’ti." Thus, avijjā may arise based on the conditions at a given time, especially depending on the ārammaṇa (sensory input.)
- One's actions (kamma) DURING a lifetime accumulate and eventually lead to rebirths. Of course, in some cases, a single immoral action (like killing a human) can lead to a bad rebirth.


## Bhava as a "Seed"

2. Another way to look at the concept of a "bhava" is to treat it as a seed. As we discussed in the previous post, when we do any act with ignorance (and greed or hate), that helps the growth of a kamma seed (kamma bhava.) With more related kamma done, that seed can grow and bring a new birth (jäti) in the future (with upapatti bhava.) This concept of a kamma seed is easier to comprehend.

- Just like a normal seed has the potential to give rise to a plant, a kamma seed (or a "bhava") has the potential to bring about a "jāti" or a "birth," either during this life or in preparing a new life.
- Of course, once the Arahanthood is attained, that Arahant will not grasp a new bhava (since there is no upādāna.) Thus even if there could be many kamma seeds, they don't get to "germinate." Ven. Angulimala's account is a good example. See, "Account of Angulimala - Many Insights to Buddha Dhamma."
- I write it as $j \bar{a} t i$ (which is the conventional English term used), but it really is pronounced " $j \bar{a} t h i$." See, "Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars - Part 1"


## An Example from the Previous Post - Bhava and Jāti During a Life

3. Let us take the example of the teenager that we discussed in the previous post, "Phassa paccayā Vedanā....to Bhava." Because of the influence of his friends, the teenager starts dealing and using drugs and gradually gets drawn into the gang to become a gang member, and eventually starts doing violent acts of beating and killing people.

- When he did the first beating, his friends probably encouraged or even forced him to do it. Now let us suppose that he did not have a samsāric habit of doing that kind of violent act. So, when he did the first act, that energized a small kamma seed (or a "bhava.")

4. The next time he did something similar, this initial kamma seed made it easier for him to do the second act. Once he did that, the seed got bigger, and the next time he may not need much encouragement, and so on. The more he does it, the more easily he can get into that "bhava," i.e., the stronger kamma seed becomes.

This is none other than many Idappaccayatā PS cycles running that start with "avijjā paccay $\bar{a}$ sañkhāra" (doing immoral deeds due to avijjā), and leading to "upādāna paccayā bhava," making that bhava (or kamma seed) strong.

- This is another way of expressing "habit (gati; pronounced "gati") formation" that I have discussed in many other posts. The more one does acts suitable for a certain "bhava," the viññāna for similar behavior grows, and it is easier for one to be "born" in a corresponding state; this is "pati+ichcha"
leading to "sama+uppāda" as pointed out in the introductory post, "Paticca Samuppāda "Pati+ichcha"+" Sama+uppāda."
- Thus, the more the teenager does violent acts, the easier it becomes for him to be "born in that state," i.e., easier for him to do similar acts.
- In other words, repeated sañkhāra leads to strengthening the corresponding mindset or viññaṇa, and it propagates down the Paticca samuppāda series to make "kamma bhava."

5. Now let us consider when that kamma seed or "kamma bhava" gives rise to a " $j \bar{a} t i$ " in Idappaccayat $\bar{a}$ Paticca samuppāda. One day, his drug deal is sabotaged by a rival gang member, and he gets angry. Now he is easily "born" in that "animal-like violent state." He starts beating up that guy. This is a " $j \bar{a} t i$ " or "birth" in a violent existence.

- When the beating is almost done, that " $j \bar{a} t i$ " is almost over with; it is at the "jarā" (decay) stage, and when it is done, that is the end or death ("marana") of that " $j \bar{a} t i$."
- Thus when that episode is over, that temporary " $j \bar{a} t i \overline{ }$ " of "a violent existence" is over.
- The rest of it, "soka, parideva, dukkha, domanassa" or many forms of suffering, comes later in that life or even in future births. The kamma seed that helped him do that act itself got even stronger.

6. That violent action now gives rise to another kamma seed.

- Now, if during that confrontation with the other rival gang member, he himself gets beaten up, then that is due to a kamma vipāka of that new kamma.
- In either case, that "birth" or " $j \bar{a} t i$ " (the confrontation with the rival gang member) would give him only misery at the end: "soka, parideva, dukkha, domanassa."
- Many such Idappaccayatā samuppāda cycles can operate during even a day, and he may be "born" repeatedly in that confrontational state. Some may be minor, like getting mad at his friends, but some could be violent. He has prepared the "bhava," and he can get into "jati" or be "born in that bhava" easily.
- Just like when a seed is made, it is easy to get that seed to germinate. Once we prepare a "bhava," it is easy to be born in that type of existence.

7. Now, we can see that a "bhava" or a "kamma seed" is the potentiality for a particular kind of existence or a "state of mind" during the current life itself.

- He can now easily transition to that "state of mind" (or bhava). For example, he may be having a good time with his family and be in a "normal state of mind." Then he gets a phone call from a fellow gang member asking for his help with gang-related activity.
- He will instantly be transitioned to the "gang mentality" and be born a gang member. Then he will engage in whatever gang activity.
- But any birth (or $j \bar{a} t i)$ will come to an end. When that activity is over, he may come home and be part of the family life.
- However, that "bad jāti" will ALWAYS lead to "jarā, maraṇa, soka, parideva, dukkha domanassa." Even if that particular was successful and he leaves there happily, that ACTIVITY will lead to suffering in the future. He had accumulated more kammic energy for that "bad bhava."

8. But the important thing to remember is that "bhava paccayā $j \bar{a} t i$ " does not mean he is guaranteed to be born in that state. He will likely be born in that state under suitable conditions, for example, upon urged by friends.

- But if he comes to his senses and realizes the perils of such actions, he can make an effort and slowly degrade the potency of that kamma seed. The first thing is to stop doing those more violent acts. If the teenager has enough determination and has moral support from his family, he may get into the moral path.
- If he determines to change, it will be hard in the beginning. It is like trying to stop a moving car. If the car has a lot of speed, it takes a bigger effort to stop. It is easier to stop a slowly moving car before it gains speed. In the same way, it is easier to revert if one realizes that one is on the wrong path early.


## Same Example - Future Bhava and Jāti (via Upapatti PS)

9. If the teenager does not change his ways but only gets involved more and more with the violent activities, then that kamma seed (or kamma bhava) will grow bigger and can become strong enough to energize a whole new existence (rebirth) or "upapatti bhava." Or he can even make a single huge kamma seed by killing someone.

- We all are likely to have acquired several or even many such large bad kamma seeds (i.e., many bad "upapatti bhava") suitable to yield rebirths in the lowest four realms; we have no way of finding out.
- Of course, we are also likely to have many good kamma seeds (i.e., many good "upapatti bhava") suitable to yield rebirths in the higher realms.


## No Control Over the Next Bhava (in Upapatti PS)

10. And we do not have any control over which "upapatti bhava" is selected at the end of the current bhava. The strongest with the most "upādāna" associated with it gets to the front automatically. The Buddha gave a simile to explain how this selection of a "upapatti bhava" or a strong kamma seed happens at the cuti-patisandhi transition at death.

- Imagine a barn that keeps the cows in for the night. In the morning, all the cows are anxious to get out and roam around. But when the gate opens, it is the strongest cow that has come to the front and is out of the gate when it is opened. The weaker ones don't even make an effort to be at the front.
- Just like that, it is the strongest "kamma seed" or a "patisandhi bhava" that wins at the cuti-patisandhi transition.
- Let us get back to the teenager that we discussed above. If the kamma seed that he nourished during this life as a violent person with "animal-like" behavior is the strongest one of all his accumulated kamma seeds, then it will bring about an animal existence at the cuti-patisandhi transition.

11. A Buddha could analyze such a pattisandhi Patticca samuppāda cycle in finer details to pinpoint even what type of animal it would be. This is because a Buddha can see not only a person's whole history in the present life but going back to many eons; thus, he could see which kamma seed will bring the next existence and exactly which kind of "gati" are embedded in that kamma seed. We can only discuss the general trends, and here we have discussed only the main ideas of how these Paticca samuppāda cycles operate.

- Going back to the teenager, In this case, it is the pattisandhi Pațicca samuppāda cycle that operates, and "bhava paccay $\bar{a} j \bar{a} t i$ " here leads to the birth in a new existence as an animal using that upapatti bhava.


## Many Births Within a Upapatti Bhava - For Humans and Animals

12. Once born in such an animal existence, that animal will grow and then start old age ("jara") and eventually die ("maraṇa").

- The kammic energy of that kamma seed may not deplete in just one birth (this applies only to humans and animals.)
- Since most animals have shorter lifetimes, only a fraction of that kammic energy is likely to have been spent. That animal will keep going through many similar births (" $j \bar{a} t i$ ") until the energy of that kamma seed is spent. It is said that many animals keep coming back to the same life many hundreds of times.

13. This is the difference between "bhava" and "jāti." Once one gets a new existence or "bhava," one could have many births (" $\mathrm{j} \bar{a} t i^{\prime}$ ") in that existence until the energy of the kamma seed is totally spent. See, "Bhava and Jāti - States of Existence and Births Therein."

- Thus we can see that the last step of "jāti paccayā jarā, maraṇa, soka, parideva, dukkha, domanassa" will be with "him" for a long time to come. It is not just one birth but many that will correspond to that existence as that animal.
- In general, when one is in the human "bhava," one could be reborn many times before the energy of that "good kamma seed" is depleted. This is why some children can recall previous recent lives. However, it is tough to get another "human bhava"; see, "Rebirth - Connection to Suffering in the First Noble Truth."
- However, especially in Deva and Brahma realms, there is only one birth during that existence as a Deva or a Brahma.


## Kamma Seeds Removed for Those With Magga Phala? - No

14. Before closing this section, let us discuss another important point. We mentioned earlier that everyone had accumulated numerous good and bad kamma seeds strong enough to give rise to good and bad rebirths. Then the question arises: Does a person attain the Sotāpanna stage (i.e., make bad rebirths in the lowest four realms void) by eliminating all those corresponding bad kamma seeds?

- While it is possible to reduce the potency of kamma seeds and maybe even eliminate some, it may not be possible to remove all. The Ariya metta Bhāvanā may remove many kamma seeds, as discussed in the "Bhāvanā (Meditation)" section, but there could be leftovers. It is said that the Buddha had 11 instances of bad kamma vipāka, including a back problem. We will discuss this point in a separate post.
- Therefore, it is very likely that we all have many good and bad kamma seeds strong enough to energize many good and bad rebirths.
- What happens at the cuti-patisandhi moment involves the "upādāna paccayā bhava" step in the paṭisandhi Paticca samuppāda cycle. As we recall, this is the step that is responsible for energizing "upapatti bhava" as well as "kamma bhava."
- But this same step is involved in grasping the strongest "upapatti bhava" at the end of the current "bhava." If a person dies and if that was the last possible human birth for him/her, then at the dying moment, that comes closest, and he/she will willingly grasp it because that will match the dominant "gati" of him/her.

15. Let us consider the case of the violent teenager again. Suppose he continued with his violent acts and built up a "upapatti bhava" suitable for a violent animal. Then at the dying moment, he could see in his mind (like in a dream) a rival gang member trying to "steal a drug deal"; he will also see a gun close by. By his instincts, he will get angry, grab the gun, and shoot that person. This is an example of a "gati nimitta."

- That is the "upādāna paccayā bhava" step for the new existence. He has willingly grasped the mindset of an animal, and he will be born as an animal. His next thought-moment is in that animal that comes out of that dead body of the teenager as a "gandhabba" with an invisible fine body.
- This is described in detail in other posts; it needs more background material in "manomaya kāya" for understanding the technical details, but that is not critical here. However, now we can understand how a new existence is grasped at the end of a "bhava" in the patisandhi Paticca samuppāda cycle.

16. Let us now go back to how a Sotāpanna avoids such bad rebirths even if he/she has many bad kamma seeds. Suppose that Sotāpanna has the same kind of kamma seed as that teenager (could be from a previous life) and that it is strong enough to come to the forefront of his/her mind at the dying moment.

- What happens is that a Sotāpanna will not grab the gun and shoot that person even if it is his/her worst enemy doing something that could make him/her mad. His/her mindset or "gati" has been permanently changed. Thus "upādāna paccayā bhava" step will not be executed for that kamma seed.
- In that case, now the next potent upapatti bhava will come to the forefront. If that is also a bad one suitable for rebirth in the lowest four realms, that will be rejected. Eventually, he/she will grasp a rebirth compatible with his/her "gati" at that dying moment, which for a Sotāpanna will never be the "gati" of a being in one of the four lowest realms. This happens automatically and very quickly. We do not have conscious control over it.
- Thus one's rebirth will be determined by how one lives (and had lived previous lives). If one lived like an animal, one would be born an animal no matter how much one wishes to have a "good birth." As we discussed above, the real danger is that we do not know how we had lived our previous lives.
- This is why Paṭicca samuppāda means "pati + ichcha" leading to "sama" + "uppāda" or what one grasps willingly and habitually is what one that will operate automatically at the dying moment; see, "Paticca Samuppāda - "Pati+ichcha"+" Sama+uppāda."


### 9.12 Imasmim Sati Idam Hoti - What Does It Really Mean?

August 5, 2018; revised January 26, 2019; May 2, 2019; July 4, 2022

## A Zen Riddle?

1. "Imasmimं sati idamं hoti, imassa uppādā idamं uppajjati; imasmim asati idamं na hoti, imassa nirodh $\bar{a}$ idam nirujjhat $\bar{\imath}$ ti." This is a famous phrase that appears in most sutt $\bar{a}$ that describe Paṭicca Samuppāda (Dependent Origination).

- It is usually translated as, "When there is this that is, with arising of this that arises; when there is not this that is not, with the cessation of this that ceases." That sounds like a Zen riddle!
- But the Buddha never made his Dhamma into riddles. He always presented it in the simplest possible way. Some verses have become riddles because people have incorrectly translated them; they did not understand the true meanings or the significance of key Pāli words.
- Another example is, "Anidassana Viñ̃̃āna - What It Really Means."


## Sati - Mundane Meaning in the Verse

2. The keyword in the verse that we are interested is "sati." All English translations that I have seen have left out this keyword!

- There are two meanings to the word "sati." One is mundane, meaning "attention."
- It is actually that mundane meaning that should be used in this verse.
- If one set the mind on an immoral task (planning a robbery, assembling a bomb to kill people, etc.) one will start doing immoral deeds with "apuñña abhisañkhāra (or apuññ̄bhisañkhāra)" and initiate akusala-mūla Paticca Samuppāda. That will lead to rebirth in the apāyā.
- At the opposite end, a Noble Person above the Sotāpanna Anugāmi stage will try to set the mind on cultivating "kusala-mūla sañkhāra" and initiate kusala-mūlla Paticca Samuppāda. Here, they will have Samma $\operatorname{arati}$ (mindset focusing on Nibbāna). That "sati" is the one with deeper meaning.


## Sammā Sati - Deeper Meaning of Sati

3. The deeper meaning of "sati" should be used in the context of Satipatthāna bhāvanā, for example.

- That "sati" is a sobhana cetasika, i.e., a good mental factor. The sati cetasika is cultivated by learning dhamma and eventually comprehending Tilakkhaṇa.
- However, that cetasika sati does not have a counterpart in asobhana cetasika, i.e., there is no "asati" cetasika.
- In verse, both "sati" and "asati" are mentioned. Therefore, "sati" in the context of the verse in question does not refer to the sati cetasika.


## Mundane Sati - Examples

4. The word "sati" in "Imasmim sati idam hoti,.." is, however, still closely related to the mind. It just refers to keeping the mind focused on the task at hand, whether it is a "good" or "bad" task.

- Suppose a suicide bomber is assembling a bomb that he intends to use to kill many people. He must be paying careful attention (or "being mindful") to what he is doing,otherwise, he will blow himself up. That is the mundane meaning of sati there.
- Thus, the term "mindful" can apply to the mindset of the suicide bomber while assembling the bomb. He must be mindful of his task. If he makes even a slight mistake, he may trigger the bomb right there.
- Obviously, he is not engaged in Satipatṭhāna. In fact, someone being mindful of morality/Nibbāna would not engage in such an act.


## Attention Needed to Do Good or Bad

5. That mundane meaning of "attention" is the meaning that should be used in analyzing the verse in question here: "Imasmimं sati idaì hoti,.."

- What it means in this context is "to focus the mind on something (X)." Then that "something" leads to the creation of "another thing (Y)." Even though X is ALWAYS mental, Y could be mental ( $n \bar{a} m a$ ) or material ( $r \bar{u} p a$ ) or a combination of the two (nāmarūpa).
- When the mind is set on getting something done, one makes vacī and kāya sañkhāra accordingly, i.e., one thinks about getting it done and acts accordingly; that is the "sati" that is referred to in that verse.
- When the mind does not focus on something (and does not make plans in mind via vacī sañkhāra, and carries out such plans), that is called "asati." In that case, there is no reason that Y would arise.


## Good or Bad Deeds Done With Different Types of Sañkhāra

6. As we will see below, making sañkhāra is just the first step in a series of steps.

- We can make the mindset to do good or bad things. Keeping the attention on "good things" will lead to good outcomes (via good dhamma). Keeping the attention on "bad things" will lead to bad outcomes (via bad dhamma).
- Therefore, both cases (good or bad attention) will lead to a corresponding (good or bad) outcome. That is what is meant by "Imasmim sati idam hoti" or "keeping the attention on this will lead to that."
- What Pațicca Samuppāda describes the eventual outcome ("that" is a "jāti," the outcome or the result): "sañkhāra paccayā viññāṇa,"....ending up in "bhava paccayā jāti."

7. Of course, if one does not keep the attention on something, one will not be generating (good or bad) sañkhāra about it. Thus, one will not initiate Paṭicca Samuppāda cycles: "sañkhāra paccayā viññāṇa,"... .ending up in "bhava paccayā jāti."

- Therefore, if there is "asati" or "no attention on some task," then there will be no reason for there to be an outcome:"Imasmim asati idam na hoti."
- In other words, the mind will have no reason to generate new sañkhāra to initiate Paṭicca Samuppāda processes.

8. Now we can understand half of the verse: "Imasmim sati idaí hoti, "Imasmiminasati idam na hoti." That means "when the mind is focused on X that will give rise to Y when the mind is not focused on X that will not give rise to Y."

- We have already figured out what is meant by "imassa uppādā idaì uppajjati" and "imassa nirodhā idam் nirujjhatī ."
- This part states that what has ultimately come to being (uppajjati) or the jāti is due to what first arose in mind (uppād $\bar{a}$ ) which are sañkhāra.
- Similarly, for something not to come to being (nirujijhatī), the corresponding cause should not arise in mind (nirodha $\bar{a}$ ). If there is "asati" or "no attention," then nothing will be realized: "no $j \bar{a} t i "$ (because no sañkhāra is generated to trigger Paṭicca Samuppāda processes.)


## Correct Interpretation of the Verse

9. So, now we can translate the whole verse: "when the mind is focused on this it will give rise to that, when the mind is not focused on this it will not give rise to that; this arising in mind (uppād $\bar{a}$ ) will give rise to that (uppajjati), this not arising in mind (nirodh $\bar{a}$ ) will stop that from coming to being (nirujjhatī).

- In straightforward terms, this describes the Buddha's key message: if one does not generate any defilements in mind, then one will not be reborn into this suffering-filled world.
- Furthermore, one MUST understand the anicca/dukkha/anatta nature of this world and set the mind on attaining Nibbāna to stop the rebirth process. That understanding will stop apuñ̃a abhisañkhāra from arising via "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" in akusala-mūla Pațicca Samuppāda.

10. How anything and everything in this world arises with the mind as the "creator" is explained in the doctrine of the cause or effect of Paticca Samuppāda.

- Even though the process starts with generating sañkhāra ("avijjā paccayā sañkhāra"), it involves many other steps ("sañkhāra paccayā viñ̃̄̄̄ṇa," etc.) before the final thing manifests.
- That is why this verse comes in many suttā just before introducing the Paticca Samuppāda cycle starting with "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra."


## Ariyasāvaka Sutta (SN 12.49)

11. What we discussed above becomes clear in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Arivasāvaka Sutta (SN 12.49)." It starts with the statement: "Na, bhikkhave, sutavato ariyasāvakassa evaì hoti: 'kim nu khokismim sati kim hoti, kissuppādā kimं uppajjati? Kismim sati sañkhārā honti, kismim sati viññannà் hoti, kismimं sati nāmarūpaì hoti, kismim sati salāyatanamं hoti, kismim sati phasso hoti, kismim sati vedanā hoti, kismimं sati tanhā hoti, kismimं sati upādānai் hoti, kismim sati bhavo hoti, kismimं sati jāti hoti, kismim sati jarāmaraṇà̀ hotī’ti?."

Translated: "Bhikkhus, a noble disciple, is not confused by the question: ‘[What gives you indeed- (kim nu kho-)] What in mind becomes a cause? With the existence of what in mind does what come to being? What in mind becomes a cause for sañkhāra? What in mind becomes a cause for viññaṇa? What in mind becomes a cause for nāmarūpa?... What in mind becomes a cause for jarāmaraṇa?'."
12. The next verse: "Atha kho, bhikkhave, sutavato ariyasāvakassa aparappaccayā ñānamevettha hoti: 'imasmim sati idamं hoti, imassuppādā idamं uppajjati. Avijjāya sati sañkhārā honti; sañkhāresu sati viññānamं hoti; viñn̄āne sati nāmarūpaì hoti; nāmarūpe sati salāyatanam hoti; salāyatane sati phasso hoti; phasse sati vedanā hoti; vedanāya sati taṇhā hoti; taṇhāya sati upādānamं hoti; upādāne sati bhavo hoti; bhave sati jāti hoti; jātiyā sati jarāmaraṇaì hotī’ti. So evamं pajānāti: 'evamayaì loko samudayatī'ti."

Translated: "Bhikkhus, the noble disciple knows that what arises is dependent on what is cultivated in mind: 'When this exists in mind, that comes to be; with the arising of this in mind, that arises. When the mind is ignorant (avijjāya sati), sañkhāra arise/come to be (sañkhārā honti). When there are saṅkhāra in mind (sañkhāresu sati), viññāna comes to be (viññāṇaí hoti). When there is viñ̃āṇa in mind (viññāne sati), nāmarūpa arise/come to be (nāmarūpaì honti), ....When the mindset takes that of a certain existence (bhave sati), $j \bar{a} t i$ comes to be ( $j \bar{a} t i$ hoti). When there is $j \bar{a} t i$ in mind ( $j \bar{a} t i y \bar{a}$ sati), jarāmarana comes to be (jarāmaraṇaì hotī). He understands thus: 'In such a way the world arises (samudaya).' "
13. Next verse is: "Na, bhikkhave, sutavato ariyasāvakassa evaï hoti: 'kim nu kho-kismim asati kim na hoti, kissa nirodhā kim nirujjhati? Kismimं asati sañkhārā na honti, kismim asati viññānamं na hoti, kismim asati nāmarūpaì na hoti, kismim asati salāyatanamं na hoti, kismim asati phasso na hoti, kismim asati vedanā na hoti, kismimं asati taṇhā na hoti, kismimi asati upādānamं na hoti, kismim asati bhavo na hoti, kismimं asati jāti na hoti, kismimं asati jarāmaraṇà̀ na hotī̀ti?."

Translated: "Bhikkhus, a noble disciple is not confused by the question: ‘[What gives you indeed- (kim nu kho-)]Absence of what in mind would not be a cause? With the cessation of what in mind what would
be stopped from arising? Absence of what in mind (kismim asati) sañkhāra would not result (na honti)? Absence of what in the mind viñ̃̄̄ana (an expectation of a worldly thing) would not result? ..Absence of what in the mind nāmarūpa would not result?... Absence of what in the mind jarāmaraṇa would not result?' ."
14. And then: "Atha kho, bhikkhave, sutavato ariyasāvakassa aparappaccayā ñānamevettha hoti: 'imasmim asati idamं na hoti, imassa nirodhā idaì nirujjhati. Avijjāya asati sañkhārā na honti; sañkhāresu asati viññānamं na hoti; viññạne asati nāmarūpaì na hoti; nāmarūpe asati salāyatanam na hoti ... pe ... bhavo na hoti ... jāti na hoti ... jātiyā asati jarāmaraṇà் na hotī’ti. So evaì pajānāti: 'evamayaì loko nirujjhatī'ti.

Translated: "Bhikkhus, the noble disciple knows that what arises is dependent on what is cultivated in mind: 'When this does not exist in mind, that will not come to be; with the cessation of this in mind, that is stopped from arising. When there is no ignorance in mind (avijjāya asati), sañkhāra do not come to be (sañkhārā na honti). When sañkhāra cease to exist in mind (sañkhāresu asati), viññāna do not come to be (viññānam na hoti). With the cessation of viññāna in mind (viññāne asati), nāmarūpa do not come to be (nāmarūpaí na honti), ...When there is bhava absent in mind (bhave asati), $j \bar{a} t i$ will not come to be
 na hot $\bar{\imath}$ ). He understands thus: 'In such a way the world ceases to exist (nirujjhatī), and thus the samisāric suffering ends.' "
15. Finally, "Yato kho, bhikkhave, ariyasāvako evai் lokassa samudayañca atthañgamañca yathābhūtaì pajānāti, ayaì vuccati, bhikkhave, ariyasāvako diṭthisampanno itipi ... pe ... amatadvāramं āhacca tiṭthati itipı’’ti.

Translated: "Bhikkhus, a noble disciple thus understands the origin and the ending of the world. He is knowledgeable about the true nature of this world, has the correct vision, and comes to attain Nibbāna."
16. That is the complete sutta. It provides the basic reasoning behind Paticca Samuppāda.

- It is important to realize that all the steps in Paticca Samuppāda involve the mind up to the $j \bar{a} t i$ stage. When the $j \bar{a} t i$ stage arrives, the process is complete. That $j \bar{a} t i$ that came into being has to evolve naturally to its end.


### 9.13 Paṭiloma Paṭicca Samuppāda - Key to Nibbāna

March 15, 2019; revised January 10, 2021

January 10, 2021: Renamed from "Anuloma Paṭiloma Paṭicca Samuppāda - Key to Sotāpanna Stage" to "Paṭiloma Paṭicca Samuppāda - Key to Nibbāna"

Paṭiloma Patticca Samuppāda is the "reverse of the standard Akusala-Mula Paṭicca Samuppāda process. That means it is the way to Nibbāna.

## Introduction

1. Just before his Enlightenment, the Buddha figured how beings are born endlessly due to their own way of thinking. That knowledge is embedded in Paticca Samuppāda, translated as, "Dependent Origination."

- It describes the origins of different types of living beings, according to their own thought processes (sañkhāra) based on the level of $a v i j j \bar{a}$ (ignorance of the real nature).
- Anuloma Pațicca Samuppāda describes the forward progression of events leading to eventual suffering. Pațiloma Paṭicca Samuppāda describes the backward progression to see that indeed avijjā must be removed (by cultivating wisdom or pañña) in order to stop future suffering from arising.


## Anuloma Paṭicca Samuppāda and Paṭiloma Paṭicca Samuppāda

2. "WebLink: suttacentral: Pathama Bodhi Sutta (Udāna 1.1)" and "WebLink: suttacentral: Dutiva Bodhi Sutta (Udāna 1.2)" state how the Buddha comprehended anuloma and patiloma Paṭicca Samuppāda during the night of the Enlightenment.

- Most people are quite familiar with how suffering originates with sañkhāra generation due to the ignorance of the Four Noble Truths (avijjā), and then goes through the familiar steps: "avijjāpaccayā sañkhārā, sañkhārapaccayā viññannam, ..and ends with ".. Evametassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa samudayo hotī" $t i$ OR "the whole mass of suffering."


## Paṭiloma Paṭicca Samuppāda

3. It is also important to trace the steps backwards and see how future suffering can be stopped by cultivating pañ̃̄̄: "avijjānirodhā sañkhāranirodho, sañkhāranirodhā viñ̃̄āṇanirodho, viñnāạanirodhā nāmarūpanirodho, nāmarūpanirodhā salāyatananirodho, salāyatananirodhā phassanirodho, phassanirodhā vedanānirodho, vedanānirodhā taṇhānirodho, taṇhānirodhā upādānanirodho, upādānanirodhā bhavanirodho, bhavanirodhā jātinirodho, jātinirodhā jarāmaranain sokaparidevadukkhadomanassupāyāsā nirujjhanti. Evametassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa nirodho hot $\boldsymbol{\imath}$ ti."

- By stopping $j \bar{a} t i$, it is possible to stop suffering from arising (at the end). Now we just go backwards: Jati (births) stopped by stopping bhava, which is stopped by stopping upādāna, tanhā, vedanā, phassa, saḷāyatana, nāmarūpa, viññāna, and sañkhāra. When one gets to the first step: sañkhāra cannot be stopped from arising without eliminating avijjä (and thus getting rid of ALL gati).
- In fact, if one really contemplates on this process, one can get some deep insights.


## Nirodha Means "Stop From Arising" - Not Destruction of an Existing Entity

4. It is quite clear that in order to stop "the whole mass of suffering", one MUST stop each of those 10 factors (jāti, bhava, upādāna, taṇhā, vedanā, phassa, saḷāyatana, nāmarūpa, viññāna, and sañkhāra) from arising.

- Thus one can clearly see that nirodha means "stop from arising."
- One can also see that can be done ONLY by removing avijjā, which is the same as cultivating paññā.
- The removal of avijj $\bar{a}$ (and cultivation of pañ $\tilde{n} \bar{a}$ ) is done by following the Eightfold path, which has two components; see, for example, "What is Unique in Buddha Dhamma?." There are no shortcuts!

5. We concluded in \#4 above that in order to stop future suffering from arising we must stop those 10 terms from arising. This appears not to make sense with some of those terms when we try to reconcile that with the fact that an Arahant has stopped those from arising.

- In particular, one could object in particular that vedanā, phassa, viññāna, and sañkhāra still arise in a LIVING Arahant.
- As I have explained in many posts scattered throughout the website (especially in the "Paticca Samuppāda" section), those terms are in the "uddesa" version. This is explained in detail in the post, "Sutta Interpretation - Uddesa, Niddesa, Patiniddesa."
- Let us discuss briefly a few of those terms.


## Need for Detailed Explanations

6. Basically all current English translations just provide word-by-word translations of that "uddesa version" without any explanation. For example, the English translation of the first sutta in \#1 above states, "..because of consciousness: mind and body, because of mind and body: the six sense spheres, because of the six sense spheres: contact, because of contact: feeling, because of feeling... because of continuation: birth, because of birth: old age, death, grief, lamentation, pain, sorrow, and despair all arise, and so there is an origination of this whole mass of suffering.."; see, "WebLink: suttacentral: The First Discourse about the Awakening Tree (UD 1.1)."

- According to the second sutta, all those terms (consciousness, six senses, contact, feeling) should not arise in an Arahant!
- Furthermore, it is not clear what is meant by "continuation" (for bhava), which leads to $j \bar{a} t i$ (births), and thus "this whole mass of suffering."


## Detailed Explanations of Terms in Paticca Samuppāda

7. For example, the step, "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" really should be "avijjā paccayā abhisañkhāra."

- As is explained in the post, "Sañkhāra - What It Really Means," an Arahant generates sañkhāra, but NOT abhisañkhāra.
- It is those abhisañkhāra that lead to future births and thus future suffering!

8. The next step is written in suttā as "sañkhāra paccayā viññāna" and that is the uddesa version.

- It needs to be explained as "abhisañkhāra paccayā viññạna," where viññāna means "defiled consciousness."
- An Arahant would have "purified viññanna" and NOT "defiled viññāna." This is explained at, "Viññāna Aggregate."

9. Another confusing step could be "nāmarūpa paccayā salāyatana," where "saḷāyatana" or "six $\bar{a} y a t a n a$ " are normally translated as "six sense faculties." Of course, a living Arahant has perfectly good sense faculties (indriya).

- Those six indriya (or sense faculties) become salāyatana when one acts with avijjā and use them to accumulate "san"; see, "Nāmarūpa paccayā Salāyatana."

10. In the next step of "salāyatana paccayā phassa," it is really "salāyatana paccayā samphassa." When those indriya are used as a yatana, one "makes contact with a defiled mind" and that defiled contact is "samphassa" ("san"+ "phassa").

- This is discussed in, "Difference between Phassa and Samphassa."
- Therefore, an Arahant would have only "phassa" and NOT "samphassa."

11. Now when those sense inputs are evaluated with a defiled mind, one generates "mind-made vedan $\vec{a}$ " or "samphassa ja vedanā." These are greedy, angry, jealous, types of vedan $\bar{a}$ generated due to the defilements in the mind.

- Such "defiled and mind-made vedanā" are absent in an Arahant. An Arahant will, however, generate vedana due to the contacts with the six indriya.
- For example, if someone hits an Arahant, he/she will feel the pain. Spoiled milk would taste bitter and a piece of cake would taste sweet, etc. But an Arahant would not generate angry thoughts about someone offering spoiled milk and would not generate cravings for the cake.
- This explained in detail in the post, "Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways."

12. The next confusion is at the step, "bhava paccayā jāti," which is translated in \#5 as, "because of continuation: birth." I am not sure what is meant by "continuation" there.

- The correct interpretation is given at, "Bhava and Jāti- States of Existence and Births Therein."


## Stopping Abhisañkhāra Is the Key to Nibbāna

13. If one can spend some time reading those posts and the links given in them, one should be able to get a good idea of how different types $j \bar{a} t i$ originate via abhisañkhāra (one's own thoughts).

- The Sotāpanna stage of Nibbāna is attained by getting rid of the wrong way of looking at one's body (and actions) are due to an unchanging "soul."
- However, one's bhava and jāti arise due to one's own abhisañkhāra. We are humans in this life because of good abhisañkhāra cultivated in a previous life.
- If we do bad (or apuñña) abhisañkhāra in this life, we may be born as animal or worse. If we do good (or puñña) abhisañkhāra in this life, we may be born as devas, Brahmā, or humans again.


## No Birth Among the 31 Realms Will Stop Suffering

14. However, there in no birth in the 31 realms that can bring a permanent state of happiness. Any Deva or Brahma existence will come to an end, and then one could be born in the apa $\bar{a} \bar{a}$.

- A permanent state of happiness (which means the absence of ANY suffering) is attained by stopping this never-ending rebirth process. That is the key message of the Buddha.
- When one truly understands that, one has the "vision" of a Sotāpanna, i.e., one would have gotten rid of sakkāya diṭthi (and vicikiccā and silabbata parāmāsa all at the same time).


## Further Information

15. More details can be found in the "Paticca Samuppāda" section. In the "Living Dhamma" section there is an attempt to provide a systematic approach to learn and practice Buddha Dhamma (of course, with more details in other sections).

- A systematic approach to Buddha Dhamma at "Buddha Dhamma - A Scientific Approach," which continues at "Understanding the Terms in Paticca Samuppāda."


### 9.14 Paṭ̣̣hāna Dhammā

October 22, 2016

## Patthāna Dhamma - Connection to Cause and Effect (Hetu Phala)

What Does "Paccaya" Mean in Paticca Samuppāda? Moved out of Patṭhāna Dhammā to one level up after How Are Paṭicca Samuppāda Cycle Initiated?

Anantara and Samanantara Paccaya
Asevana and Annamanna Paccaya

### 9.14.1 Paṭṭhāna Dhammā - Connection to Cause and Effect (Hetu Phala)

October 22, 2016; revised October 25, 2016; June 15, 2018; April 11, 2021; June 28, 2022

1. Patṭhāna dhammā is also cited as pattāna dhammā in English.

- The word "Pațthāna" comes from "Paṭtha" + "āna." I have previously mentioned that "āna" means "bringing in" as in "ānāpāna" in Ānāpānasati Bhāvanā. "Patt tha" in Pāli or Sinhala means the layer of a tree trunk underneath the outermost layer of bark - consisting of phloem cells - which carry food between roots and leaves.
- So, the word "patthāna" here conveys the idea that while the roots (mūlika hetu) are critical for the tree's survival, "paṭtha" also plays an important role in the tree's growth. In the case of Paṭthāna Dhamma, they play an important role in describing the conditions under which hetu or causes can bring in effects, as we will see below.
- By the way, "pattha" are essential for the tree's survival, just as the roots of the tree are. One could kill a tree simply by a process called "girdling" where those phloem cells are removed; see the Wikipedia article: "WebLink: WIKI: Girdling."
- The Buddha frequently used analogies with the workings of a tree. We also need to remember that "mūla" is a root in Pāli or Sinhala, so "mūlika hetu" means "root causes." So, the tree's survival depends on its roots and its "Pattha" containing those critical phloem cells.
- This is the same as saying Paṭthāna Dhamma describes CONDITIONS are as important as ROOT CAUSES, which are lobha, dosa, and, moha (for akusala kamma), and alobha, adosa, and amoha (for kusala kamma).

2. It is also to be noted that "patṭhāna" in "Satipatṭhāna" can be interpreted to mean "providing food" or "pattha" +" $\bar{n} n a$ " to cultivate sati or mindfulness.

- The word "Patṭhāna Dhamma" has not been discussed that much in English. Therefore, it is good to get started the right way. Buddhaghosa did not discuss it because he did not comprehend Paticca Samuppāda, and as a result even many people who follow even Theravāda Buddhism are not familiar with Patṭhāna dhamma. Ven. Ledi Sayadaw in Burma and Ven. Rerukane Chandawimala in Sri Lanka are clear exceptions. They have discussed Paṭthāna Dhammā; see the references below.
- However, their interpretations of Tilakkhana (anicca, dukkha, anatta) are not correct.

3. In the workings of living things (including plants) - and in mental processes in particular - the mechanism of how causes lead to effects is much more complex compared to material phenomena involving inert objects.

- In these cases, many conditions need to be satisfied, in addition to having sufficient causes.
- In many cases, such critical conditions are not satisfied even if the causes are there, so there is normally a TIME DELAY between causes and effects, i.e., between kamma and kamma vipāka.
- This is why it is hard for people to see the validity of cause and effect (hetu phala) involving living things, especially the mind.
- This is what is explained in Pațicca Samuppāda, with the help of Patthāna Dhammā. There are 24 conditions or paccayā discussed in the "Patṭhānapakaraṇa" in the Abhidhamma Piṭaka: "WebLink: suttacentral: 1.1. Nikkhepavāra." Of course, the English translation is likely to have many errors, but one can get the basic idea.
- Let us discuss some examples to understand the role of a few of such conditions or paccayā.

4. All necessary causes to bring about a tree are embedded in a seed. A seed is a CAUSE for the subsequent appearance of a tree. Yet, a seed cannot germinate unless suitable conditions are present. If one keeps a seed in a cool, dry place, it will just sit there for even thousands of years without giving rise to a tree.

- However, if one plants the seed in the ground where sunlight is available and provides water and nutrients, it will germinate and grow to be a tree.
- The root condition to bring into existence a tree is embedded in a seed. That is in the anantara paccaya. But suitable conditions for that seed to germinate are in fertile soil with adequate sunlight and water; this is called samanantara paccaya. Therefore, both anantara AND samanantara paccaya MUST be satisfied to bring a tree into existence; see "Anantara and Samanantara Paccaya" for details.
- So, AT WHAT TIME the seed will germinate will depend on when the samanantara condition (fertile soil) will be satisfied. Anantara condition (presence of a seed) is not enough.

5. Another important condition of paccayā comes into play for the germinated seed to grow into a tree: The $\bar{a} h \bar{a} r a$ paccayā (food condition) must be satisfied. If water, sunlight, and nutrients are not available after the seed is germinated, it cannot grow to be a tree.

- An essential type of āhāra is the "food for viññāna." When one has bad thoughts about another person, that viññāna grows as long as one keeps thinking about that person and how bad he/she is. Viññāna $\bar{a} h a ̄ r a$ are mano sañcetanā.

6. Another example of such a condition or paccayā is "āsevana paccayā." Āsevana means to "associate with."

- An important example is an association with bad friends. Whether it is a child or an adult, one's behavior will be influenced by who one associates with; see, "The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Āsavas)."
- I have discussed several such important conditions or paccayā in the post, "Micchā Ditthi - Connection to Hethu Phala (Cause and Effect)." Here is that discourse:


## WebLink: Audio Desana: Episode 6 - Micchā Ditthi Connection to Hetu Phala Cause and Effect

There are 24 such conditions in Pațthāna Dhamma. I will discuss them in detail in this subsection on "Patthāna Dhamma" in a series of posts.

- This is why mental phenomena are so complex. In many cases, several such conditions need to be satisfied for a cause (hetu) to lead to a corresponding effect (phala).

7. In the same way, the kammic energies created by our actions do not disappear. A given action creates a kamma seed with energy to bring in its fruits. It is just like a seed waiting for the right conditions to germinate and bring a tree into existence.

- Those kamma seeds or kamma bīja are out there waiting for suitable conditions to bring in their effect.
- Whether they will bring vipāka, AND at what strength, AND when, will depend on the conditions or paccay $\bar{a}$. This is what is described by Pațicca Samuppāda with the help of Paṭthāna Dhamm $\bar{a}$.
- See, "What Does "Paccaya" Mean in Paticca Samuppāda?", "Sañkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka" and "Nāmagotta, Bhava, Kamma Bīja, and Mano Loka (Mind Plane)" for more details.

8. But there are some strong kamma that WILL bring in vipāka without exceptions. Those include ānantariya pāpa kamma. They are so strong that they do not require conditions to be just right. They bring vipāka mostly at the dying moment, i.e., death of the physical body, and will not be delayed until the cuti-patisandhi moment. Hence, the delay is only until death.

- Some people inherit wealth unexpectedly and some people die of accidents. These are also strong kamma vipāka, though as not strong as ānantariya pāpa kamma.
- But in most cases, conditions or paccayā play major roles, sometimes many conditions need to be satisfied for vipāka to bear fruit.

9. This knowledge - or rather this understanding of - how kamma and kamma vipāka work - is called kammassakata sammā ditthi, and is a REQUIREMENT to attain mundane sammā samādhi. When one fully understands this, it will be easier to see that the rebirth process has a logical foundation.

- This is because one can now clearly see that most of kamma or one's actions are going to have corresponding vipāka or results when suitable CONDITIONS appear.
- So, if one does actions suitable to be born in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$, one COULD BE born in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$, until one REMOVES the ability to for such CONDITIONS to appear.
- When one attains the Sotāpanna stage, one will never realize the conditions suitable for a birth in the ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$. This requires another step BEYOND kammassakata samm $\bar{a}$ ditthi, which is the comprehension of Tilakkhaṇa.
- Therefore, getting to the Sotāpanna stage is a two-step process: first to get to kammassakata samm $\bar{a}$ ditt thi and then the comprehension of Tilakkhaṇa.
- This is discussed in detail in the desana $\overline{\text { in }} \# 6$ above.

10. We see people doing immoral things without them being subjected to corresponding punishments, but that does not mean they are getting away with it. Those actions can bring their fruits in future lives if they are not realized in this life.

- There are two ways to overcome kamma vipāka. The first is: those kamma seeds will lose their energy with time; they can last at most 91 eons. They are like regular seeds, which lose their power over time.
- The other way is to attain all four stages of Nibbāna. That will remove the possibility of making conditions for ANY kamma seed to germinate.

11. These conditions or paccayā play a critical role in Pațicca Samuppāda. When we say "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra," it means, "we do sañkhāra with ignorance when necessary CONDITIONS are present."

- For example, we do not do immoral acts or apuññābhi sañkhāra all the time. When we are attracted to, or repulsed by something that we see (this is an example of àrammana paccaya), we may generate craving or dislike, and then it can lead to an immoral action or apuññābhi sañkhāra; see, "What Does "Paccaya" Mean in Paticca Samuppāda?."
- This is the reason why kamma itself is not deterministic. Just because one has avijja does not mean one will necessarily do an immoral thing, generating (apuññābhi) sañkhāra. If we cultivate Satipatṭhāna, even if we get the urge to do something immoral, we can contemplate the bad consequences and stop that action, speech, or thoughts.
- When one keeps doing Satipaṭthāna - and keeps avoiding immoral acts - one's gati will change for the better, and then even the automatic urge to do something immoral will gradually fade. In other words, one's avijja will reduce. This is why Satipatṭhāna is so important.


## References

1. The Manuals of Dhamma by Ven. Ledi Sayadaw (1999), pp. 31-57.
2. Abhidharma Margaya (in Sinhala) by Ven. Rerukane Chandawimala (2010), pp. 247-278.

Next in the series, "What Does "Paccaya" Mean in Paticca Samuppāda?", ..

### 9.14.2 Anantara and Samanantara Paccayā

## Revised February 12, 2020; August 7, 2022

## Critical Roles of Causes (Hetu) and Conditions (Paccayā)

1. An action or a deed is a kamma. That kamma was done with an intention and led to creating kammic energy that COULD bring vipāka in the future. Such kammic energies act as causes to bring vipāka. But such vipāka is not guaranteed.

- There must be suitable conditions (paccayā) that must be there for such vipāka to materialize.

2. The easiest way is to consider the following example: A seed contains the necessary ingredients (causes) for bringing up a new tree. But just because a seed is there, a tree will not come into existence. If the seed is in a cool, dry place, one could keep it that way for a long time. Or one could burn or crush it, and it will never bring up a tree.

- SUITABLE CONDITIONS must be present for causes to bring about corresponding effects. That is what paccayā means.
- If a seed is planted in fertile soil and water and sunlight are provided, it will germinate and give rise to a tree.
- When such suitable conditions are present, causes WILL bring about corresponding effects. Thus when an event takes place under the right conditions, it is called "paccuppanna," i.e., born ("ирраnna") via suitable conditions ("paccayā.") Of course, root causes must be there, to begin with.


## All Kamma Do Not Lead to Vipāka

3. That is the reason why kamma vipāka is not deterministic. In the post, "What is Kamma? - Is Everything Determined by Kamma?" I mentioned it, and here we will discuss it in detail.

- When we commit a good or an evil deed, the kammic potential or energy associated with that deed remains as a kamma bīja or a kamma seed. We will eventually get to the question of "where it is stored," but we just need to remember that a kamma seed is not a physical seed but energy or potential. This concept is described in the post, "Sañkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka."
- The germination of a kamma seed, though, has some similarities to the germination of a physical seed, for example, an apple seed. The apple seed has the potential to bring about an apple tree. Still, the seed will not germinate until suitable conditions for germination are present. The seed needs to be in the soil, and water and sunlight must be provided for germination.
- In the same way, kamma vipāka (the result of a past kamma) can come to fruition only with the conditions for the corresponding kamma seed to germinate.


## Anantara and Samanantara Relations

4. Let us look at the anantara and samanantara relations as discussed in the Patṭhāna Dhamma (book on "Conditional Relations" in Abhidhamma): [anantara : [adj.] next; adjoining; immediately following. samanantara: [adj.] immediate; nearest.]

- "An" means food or in this case the kamma seed; "antara" means storage, waiting to bear fruit. Thus, anantara ("an" + "antara") means basically a kamma seed waiting to germinate. [antara : [nt.] difference. [adj.] inner; inter. anto : [ind.] inside; within; inner.]
- "Sama" means equal or similar. Thus samanantara ("sama" + "anantara") means "matching conditions" with the antara.
- Therefore, for a kamma vipāka to materialize, both anantara and samanantara must be there.
 see, "Ānantariya Kamma - Connection to Gandhabba."


## Some Analogies/Examples

5. Here is one analogy the Buddha gave. If one prepares a plot by preparing the soil, providing water, and if sunlight is also available, the samanantara for a seed to germinate is there. However, unless one starts with an apple seed (i.e., if anantara is not there), an apple tree cannot grow.

- On the other hand, if one keeps the apple seed in a cool, dry place, it will not germinate since the samanantara condition is not met.
- Results appear when both anantara and samanantara conditions are met. Thus, when one plants an apple seed in a suitable plot, it will germinate and become an apple tree.
- Furthermore, a mango tree will not result from an apple seed. Thus samanantara will give rise to a result matching the "seed" in the anantara.

6. More examples can be given these days that are related to modern technology. If a radio station is broadcasting a radio program, that is the anantara. The seed energy is available anywhere within a specific range. But one cannot listen to the program without a radio. Even if someone has a radio, one cannot listen to the broadcast unless the receiver is tuned to the correct frequency. When those conditions are met, one could hear the program.

- Kamma vipāka can bring results via "instant communication" when the conditions become right. All kammic potentials are in "instant contact" with us via a concept similar to that described in quantum entanglement: see, "Quantum Entanglement - We Are All Connected." Thus all potential kamma seeds are waiting in anantara and can bring about instant results when the right conditions (samanantara) appear.


## Many Bad Vipāka Can be Avoided by Being Mindful

7. By being mindful, we can avoid many past bad kamma seeds from coming to fruition. We make sure that samanantara conditions are not present. If one goes out at night in a bad neighborhood that provides fertile ground for a past bad kamma seed to germinate and the kamma vipāka to take place.

- In the same way, we can force "good" kamma seeds to germinate by providing the right conditions. For example, even if we have enough merits (i.e., a good kamma seed) that could make us pass a test or get a job, unless we make the right conditions (i.e., prepare in advance), we may not get the results.
- But sometimes, one gets an unexpected promotion or better results than anticipated in a test if the kamma seeds are potent.

8. From our past innumerable lives, we have accumulated countless kamma seeds, both good and bad. Some of the stronger ones bear fruit no matter what we do, especially the ānantariya kamma vipāka.

- But in general, by being mindful (i.e., by NOT providing appropriate conditions), we can avoid many bad kamma vipäka. By making the right preparations (i.e., by optimizing samanantara conditions), we can exploit those good kamma seeds.
- A particularly important case is bringing up a child. The parents and teachers have considerable responsibility for providing the right conditions for that young mind to develop. In particular, association with bad friends can direct a young life in the wrong direction; in the same way, association with good friends and a nurturing environment can bring about a productive, responsible adult.


## Importance of Cultivating Good Gati (Habits/Character)

9. One important cross-connection is matching "gati" with similar "gati" that we have discussed before; see "Habits and Goals" and "Sansāric Habits and Āsavas."

- For example, when a gandhabba is waiting for a suitable womb, the anantara-samanantara paccay $\bar{a}$ comes into play. A gandhabba, who in previous lives had developed a particular habit, say heavy drinking, is attracted to a womb of a woman with similar habits, possibly an alcoholic or a drug user. The concept of a gandhabba is in, "Manomaya Kāya (Gandhabba) and the Physical Body," and "Manomaya Kāya and Out-of-Body Experience (OBE)."
- Similarly, a gandhabba, who in previous lives led moral lives, is bound to be attracted to a mother's womb in a "good" family. Like in the above case, the samanantara for the gandhabba (where it can establish itself) is an environment that matches its own "gati."
- However, no matter how one is born, one can still change one's destiny by making conditions for other good kamma vipāka to come to fruition and by making sure not to create conditions for bad kamma vipāka to come to fruition.

In other posts, we will discuss further applications of anantara-samanantara relations. One important discussed in "Transfer of Merits (Pattidana)- How does it Happen?."

Next in the series, "Āsevana and Aññamañña Paccayā."

### 9.14.3 Āsevana and Aññamañña Paccayā

November 20, 2016; revised July 1, 2019 (comment added at the end); March 4, 2021; September 9, 2022

1. As mentioned in the "Patthāna Dhamma - Connection to Cause and Effect (Hetu Phala)," there are 24 paccay $\bar{a}$ or conditions that contribute to various steps in the Paticca Samuppāda (PS) cycles.

- As discussed in the post "What Does "Paccayā" Mean in Paticca Samuppāda?," and in the post mentioned, a given step in a PS cycle cannot proceed until one or more conditions are satisfied. And we have control over most of these conditions. Therein lies Patṭhāna Dhamma's value; we can see how to stop akusala-mūla PS cycles from proceeding and maintain kusala-mūla PS cycles.
- This post will discuss two of those 24 paccay $\bar{a}$ or conditions. They are somewhat related to each other and thus are suitable to discusse together.

2. $\bar{A} s e v a n a ~ p a c c a y \bar{a}$ - which can be loosely translated as the "condition of association" - is an important condition that fuels various PS steps at different times.

- In most cases, āsevana paccayā has been translated as a "condition of repetition." Even though repetition is relevant, repetition comes via close associations, so the association is primary.
- The word "āsevana" comes from " $\bar{a}$ " and "sevana" or "came to the shade"; when one is staying close to a tree in the hot sun, one is "hanging around" the tree and is benefited from its cool shade.
- Of course, one can be influenced in the wrong direction when one is associating with bad friends, too, as we will see below. Therefore, āsevana paccayā comes into play in both kusala-mūla and akusalamūla PS.
- When one likes the experience, one tends to keep that association. Sometimes, that eventually leads to bad consequences, but one still tends to keep bad associations because of the ignorance of such bad outcomes.

3. An important role of āsevana paccayā is played in the "viñ̃nāna paccayā nāmarūpa" step in PS, whether it is kusala-mūla PS or akusala-mūla PS.

- For example, a teenager who is (unknowingly) cultivating a viñ̃̃āna for drinking is heavily influenced by the association with bad friends. He likes to "hang out" with such bad friends and tends to generate a lot of sañkappa or vacī sañkhāra (conscious thinking about how he/she will be having a good time with those friends at parties with a lot of alcohol). The nāmarūpa generated in his mind are such "party scenes," visualizing those friends and various favorite drinks.
- On the other hand, when one is on the right path, one constantly thinks about Dhamma Concepts, has Dhamma discussions with good friends, and visualizes such gatherings. Or one could be visualizing some meritorious deeds, like giving or helping out at an orphanage; these are good nāmarūpa generated with such a good viññāna.
- These nāmarūpa are different from the nāmarūpa that descends to a womb at the okkanti moment, i.e., when a gandhabba enters a womb. We will discuss that later. So, nāmarūpa comes in two main categories.

4. $\bar{A}$ sevana paccay $\bar{a}$ can play a role in different types of situations. Let us consider two such examples.

- One such situation is the teenager mentioned above, who cultivates bad nāmarūpa by associating with bad friends. The more he/she associates with such bad friends, the more he/she will generate bad nāmarūpa of party scenes with a lot of alcohol and/or drugs. Not only that, there will be other associated nāmarūpa: $\mathrm{He} /$ she will constantly be visualizing favorite friends, gathering places, appropriate music, etc.
- In such an environment, it is also easy to cultivate other types of "bad nāmarūpa" such as gambling, illicit sex, stealing (to sustain those activities), violence, and even killings.
- The teenager could cultivate such nāmarūpa and more over time.

5. On the other hand, when one is on either mundane or lokuttara Eightfold Path, one will be cultivating "good viññāna," and one tends to visualize exactly opposite types of nāmarūpa.

- One could be planning a Dhamma discussion and thinking and visualizing who will be there and what topics will be discussed. One could be organizing a charity event and making arrangements.
- One could be planning to attend a meditation retreat and visualizing what kind of activities one could be engaging in. One could even be thinking about and trying to visualize the suffering endured by poor children in a situation one is familiar with and generating compassion-filled thoughts and nāmarūpa.

6. In either case, the "nāmarūpa paccayā salāyatana" step will then point one's all six āyatana or salāyatana (five physical senses and the mind) towards such thoughts, visuals, and actions.

- Then those associations will become even stronger. When one gets absorbed in relevant activities, when one's mind is occupied with such thoughts and constantly visualizes related activities, people, and objects, those nāmarūpa will "grow" in one's mind. Those nāmarūpa will be closely associated with one's gati.
- This is also discussed in the post: "The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Āsavas)."
 sañkappa (or sankalapanā), we are generating an enormous number of citta vīthi in a short time. Each citta vith $h$ will make the next citta vithi stronger (actually make the javana citta in the subsequent citta $v i t h i$ stronger) by association.
- The best example is one we have talked about several times in the "Living Dhamma" section. When we start thinking about an enemy, we start visualizing more and more bad situations that we encountered with that person; we tend to pull out all "past associations" from memory and conjure up "many possible future scenarios" in our minds.
- All these "bad sañkappa" or "conscious bad thoughts" will strengthen the PS steps.
- Our minds can run wild if not controlled with Satipatṭhāna or $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p a \overline{n a}$; see, "Satipatthāna Sutta Relevance to Suffering in This Life."

8. Even in a given citta vīthi, each javana citta is strengthened by the previous javana citta via āsevana paccay $\bar{a}$. This happens in the time scale of a billionth of a second and is driven by our gati.

- The first javana citta is weak. But the second javana citta gets fuel from the first one and is inevitably generating strength via association. One meaning of the name javana is "to run with." The series of 7 javanas "run with the object in mind," initially getting stronger until the fifth javana. Then the fuel runs out, and the sixth and seventh javana become weaker and weaker.
- Kamma generated by the first javana citta can only bring vipāka this life. But kamma done by the second through the sixth javana citta (which get stronger by association), are potent enough to bring kamma vipāka in many future lives. The seventh javana is weak. Thus, it can bring vipāka only in the next life and become null if it does not bring vipāka in the next life.
- It is unnecessary to learn the complexities of citta vithi, but it is good to have some idea.

9. The association then moves to the next citta vithi. Thus the subsequent citta vithi (and thus the javana citta in that citta vīthi) will be stronger. And thus, it propagates, which is why one can get "really worked up" even thinking about a hated person.

- This is why Satipatthāna (and being mindful of bad thoughts) is so important. The start of such a hateful mindset is AUTOMATIC (due to our gati,) as discussed in the "Living Dhamma" section. But we can stop those initial thoughts BEFORE they get strong and become out of control if we are mindful.
- This can be compared to a seed giving rise to a mighty tree unless one destroys it when it is just a little bud. When a seed germinates and becomes visible as a little plant, that little bud can be easily broken. But if one waits and allows it to grow, it COULD grow into a strong tree that is hard to take down.

10. As we see, patṭhāna dhamma can go to finer details. This is why Paṭicca Samuppāda has been compared to an ocean. It is vast and can explain the arising of ANY SANKATA (whether live or inert) in this world.

- However, if we start digging deeper, that could become a waste of time since there is no ending regarding how much finer detail one wants to examine.
- Still, it is good to see the depth of Buddha Dhamma. It gives one confidence in following the Path. Unshakable faith comes from realizing that Buddha Dhamma describes our world as it is.

11. Now let us briefly discuss the aññamañña paccayā, usually translated as "mutuality condition." This is not a bad translation but could also be translated as "forward and backward condition."

- Many of the PS cycle's steps go backward and forward. For example, the step we have discussed, "viññāna paccayā nāmarūpa," runs backwards (in the same PS cycle) too.
- Therefore, while nāmarūpa are generated AND get stronger by a given viñ̃āạa, the viññāna itself gets stronger by the cultivation of nāmarūpa, i.e., "nāmarūpa paccayā viññāna" step runs simultaneously too. This is the "mutual strengthening."
- In the example of the teenager, the cultivation of bad nāmarūpa (visuals of party scenes, bad friends, etc.) leads to the strengthening of that bad viñ̃̄āna (desire to drink or take drugs), even though the bad viññāna first led to the corresponding nāmarūpa.

12. The añ̃̃amañ̃̃a paccay $\bar{a}$ - just like the $\bar{a} s e v a n a ~ p a c c a y ~ \bar{a}-$ is highly effective in the first several steps in PS. While the "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" step initiates bad actions (or sañkhāra), the continued actions in the same direction then lead to strengthening avijja (or ignorance of the consequences of such actions), i.e., "sañkhāra paccayā avijjā."

- This is why it is essential to stop such conscious sañkhāra (especially sañkappa or the first part of vacī sainkhāra) when one realizes that one is getting on the wrong track. Otherwise, one's avijiā will grow, and one's bad gati will only grow.
- Such immoral sañkhāra - in the form of vacī sañkhāra - appear to provide us with a sense of satisfaction at that time. For example, when one gets "really worked up" thinking about a bad deed done by an enemy, it gives one pleasure to say bad things about that person to others, or even retaliate directly to that person.

13. However, such actions lead to a "heat" or "tāpa" in us in the longer term. Long after that "initial satisfaction" of putting down that person, one will be "burning inside" for long times, even if one does not realize that. One will be prone to frequent outbursts even with other people.

- Removal of this tāpa or "fire" in us is what is meant by the phrase "ātāpi sampajano" in the Satipatṭhāna Sutta. That will help reduce our tendency to get "worked up" at the slightest provocation, i.e., to change our gati in the right direction; see "Satipatthāna Sutta - Structure."
- This is the first type of suffering that many of us don't even realize; see, "Suffering in This Life - Role of Mental Impurities" and other posts in "Living Dhamma."

14. Finally, the aññamañña paccayā is not operative starting at the "saḷāyatana paccayā phassa" step in the Paticca Samuppāda.

- We can see that "phassa cannot lead to saḷāyatana," "vedanā cannot lead to phassa," etc.

July 1, 2019: Regarding \#2 above, it is important to note that āsevana differs from asevana.

- Sevana is association. $\overline{\text { Asevana }}(\bar{A}+$ sevana $)$ is "came to associate with"(as discussed in \#5 above).
- Asevana ( $A$ with a short A + sevana) is "not to associate with," the negation; see \#5 of "Associations (Sevana) - A Root Cause of Wrong Views.."

It is imperative to see the difference, which illustrates how Pāli words combine (sandhi) to produce other words with very different meanings. Thanks to Tobias Große for bringing this distinction to our attention at today's discussion forum.

## $x \quad$ Is There a 'Self'?

September 22, 2019

- Citta - Basis of Our Experience and Actions
- Vipāka Vedanā and "Samphassa jā Vedanā" in a Sensory Event
- Kāma Guna - Origin of Attachment (Tanhā)
- Vision Is a Series of "Snapshots" - Movie Analogy
- Do I Have "A Mind" That Is Fixed and "Mine"?
- Chachakka Sutta - Six Types of Vipāka Viññāna
- Sakkāya Ditthi in Terms of Attā or "Selp" or "Ātma"
- An Apparent "Self" Is Involved in Kamma Generation

Subsection: "Paticca Samuppāda - Not 'Self' or 'No-Self"
Conclusion: "Origin of Life - One Creates One's Own Future Lives"

- That only leads to more suffering. Creating new lives stops with attaining Nibbāna/Arahanthood.


### 10.1 Citta - Basis of Our Experience and Actions

September 22, 2019; revised November 14, 2019

## Introduction

1. We have been discussing the first few verses of the "WebLink: suttacentral: Chachakka Sutta (MN 148)" in the series on, "Is There a "Sell"?" It is a good idea to take a break and look at what we have learned from a different point-of-view.

- The Buddha called himself a "vibhajjavādi." That means he explained things in great detail by diving and subdividing a given entity or concept to examine it at more fundamental levels.
- That is very much like what the scientists are doing today. They first explained the matter in terms of molecules, and then with atoms. Later, they found that an atom consists of a nucleus and electrons in orbitals around it. Then they probed the nucleus and discovered that more fundamental particles (with names like gluons, and quarks) make up the nucleus.
- By probing deeper, physicists also came up with Quantum Mechanics. Matter and energy are "quantized" on a small scale. That just means they come in "packets" or "quanta"" (the singular is "quantum.")
- More than 2500 years ago, the Buddha taught that matter and energy are quantized. The smallest "quantum" in Buddha Dhamma is a suddhatthaka. But that is not relevant to the present discussion.


## Sensory Experience is Quantized - It comes in "Packets"

2. I am not going to have a discussion on Quantum mechanics here. But I want to look at the "Chachakka Sutta (MN 148)" from a little bit different point-of-view. That will break the tradition of providing boring translations of suttā, and I hope will also provide better insights into the material in the sutta. This discussion would be beneficial before we move to the next section of the sutta.

- As you will see below, scientists are just beginning to take the mental phenomena seriously. They have made a bit of progress. But they are not even close to having a detailed analysis of mental phenomena that the Buddha did over 2500 years ago.
- Mental energy is also quantized, even though we may feel like thoughts are continuous. The smallest unit in Buddha Dhamma is a "citta." A citta lasts less than a billionth of a second. We cannot experience a single citta. Even though it is conventionally translated as "a thought", that is not correct.
- What we usually think of as a "thought" consists of billions of cittā (The plural of citta is citta, but sometimes I tend to write that as citt $\bar{a}$ just because that is easier for most people.) By the way, citta is pronounced "chiththa."


## What is a Thought?

3. Let us first see the progress that science has made over the past 50 years or so. Science is still at a very early stage regarding the mind. But they have made some progress recently and we will show them to be fully consistent with Buddha Dhamma. In fact, those findings help explain deeper concepts in Buddha Dhamma.

- Only fifty years ago, scientists thought that computers can "become conscious" just by increasing the processing speeds. Now there are computers that are much faster, but they, of course, do not have consciousness. We will discuss later why computers will never become conscious.
- The following is a presentation entitled, "What is a Thought?" by Henning Beck, a scientist studying brain phenomena.

WebLink: youtube: What is a Thought? How the Brain Creates New Ideas |Henning Beck | TEDxHHL

## A Computer Does Not Have Perception (Sañ̃ $\bar{a}$ )

4. At 4:00 minutes, we see a "face" made up of fruits and vegetables. Even though it is not a real human face, it takes us just a split second to realize that it represents a face.

- But as Mr. Beck points out, a computer will never be able to recognize the representation of the human face depicted there.
- At 9:20 minutes he starts a discussion on the identification of a chair. Again, a computer runs into a problem identifying "less obvious" structures that can serve as chairs.
- In both these instances, what the computer is missing is sañ̃̃ā (loosely translated to English as "perception"). Even animals can recognize objects relevant to their survival. A dog, for example, can instantly recognize its owners and any other pets living in the house. It can recognize foods that it likes, etc. See "Saññā - What It Really Means."


## Vedanā, Sañ̃n̄̄, Joy, Sadness, etc. Cannot Arise in a Brain

5. Around 6:00 minutes, Mr. Beck starts talking about human thought. All he (and other scientists) know right now is that our thoughts rise very fast. But they do not have any explanation of how thoughts with feelings (vedanā), perception (sañ̃̄̄a), joy, etc. can arise out of a brain made of inert atoms and molecules.

- A brain is not that different from a computer, in the sense that atoms and molecules are the building blocks of both. Both can process information. But a brain processes information in a very different way compared to a computer. It involves billions of neurons working as a team. Scientists are not even close to figuring out how the brain processes information.
- In the future, scientists may be able able to figure out how those neurons are able to process information much faster than a computer with a thousand-times higher processing speeds.
- However, they will still NOT be able to able to figure out how a human or animal can recognize their surroundings AND generates emotions (happy, sad, etc.)
- Around 11:00 minutes he discusses the difference between learning and understanding. That is an excellent point.


## Vedanā, Sañ̃̃̄̄, Joy, Sadness, etc. Arise in the "Mental Body"

In a previous post, "Contact Between Āyatana Leads to Vipāka Viññāna," I mentioned that plants and trees have a basic form of vedanā and sañ̃̄̄̄ (see \#3,\#4 there.) However, plants and trees CANNOT generate emotions like joy and sadness. A tree does not have a mind or a "mental body" created by kammic energy.
6. In the same way, a brain cannot generate a thought. How can feelings and emotions come out of an entity made of inert atoms and molecules? The "mental body" of a living being is created by kammic energy.

- There has to be a LIVING BEING to generate a citta, the basic unit of consciousness. For a human being, the essence of that LIVING ENTITY is not the physical body, but the mental body.
- That "mental body" is alternatively called a manomaya kāya or gandhabba. It consists of a hadaya vatthu (seat of mind) and five pasāda rūpa located around it (for seeing, listening, smelling, tasting, and touching.) The mental body is not like the "physical body." It is more like an "energy body" that gives life to the inert and dense physical body.
- A manomaya kāya may be visualized as an "energy field" within the physical body with the hadaya vatthu and five pasāda rūpa overlapping the region of the physical heart.

7. Our brains do not have the capability to identify objects. It cannot generate emotions like joy and sadness. As we discussed in \#4 above, even animals can identify things and generate feelings and emotions.

- It is the mental body (manomaya kāya or gandhabba) that generates emotions like joy and sadness as well as vedanā, saññ̄a .
- More precisely, those mental phenomena arise in the hadaya vatthu (seat of mind) of the gandhabba.

8. The details are not critical, but that basic mechanism is important to understand. A brain does not see, hear, smell, taste, or touch. It is the seat of the mind (hadaya vatthu) that experiences all those.

- That is why a human body is just a shell that supports the mental body (manomaya kāya or the gandhabba). At the death of the physical body, that manomaya kāya leaves the body instantly. When we touch a dead body, it is obvious to us that there is no "life" there.
- A living body is like a "live wire" with an electric current flowing through. One will get an "electrical shock" by touching it. But if there is no electric current, it is just a metal wire.
- In the same way, it is the manomaya kāya that gives "life' to an inert physical body.


## The Manomaya Kāya Changes from Existence to Existence

9. What happens to the manomaya kāya at the end of existence? To make this clear, let us take the case of a Brahma dying and getting a human existence. That transition from a Brahma to a human happens at the moment of death of that Brahma. It is called the "cuti-patisandhi" moment ("cuti" means dying and "patisandhi" means getting a new existence.)

- That Brahma had a seat of the mind (hadaya vatthu) and two pasāda rūpa (for seeing and hearing). On the other hand, in the new existence, the human would have five pasäda rūpa (for seeing, listening, smelling, tasting, and touching). Furthermore, the hadaya vatthu of the human would be different from that of a Brahma.
- Therefore, the manomaya $k \bar{a} y a$ of in the new human existence is very different from that of the Brahma.
- Suppose that at the end of that human existence, that human gets an animal existence. Then at that "cutipațisandhi" moment, that new animal existence would have its own set of hadaya vatthu and five pasāda rūpa.

10. Those three existences are very different, even though it is the same "lifestream." So, what is there to be taken as a "soul" or a "self"?

- That is why the Buddha said there is no "soul" or a "self" or a "ātma" going from one birth to another. In the above example, the same "lifestream" that started as a Brahma became a human, and then an animal. What is the ESSENCE that defines a "soul" or a "self" or a "ātma"?
- The details on that are in the post "Chachakka Sutta - Six Types of Vipāka Viññāna." First, let us look into the mechanism of citta generation.


## A Citta Has Vedanā, Sañ̃̄̄̄, and Many Other "Built-In" Mental Factors

11. A citta is the fundamental unit of cognition, which we do not feel by itself. It comes in bunches of 12 or more cittā. Those "bunches" or series of cittā are citta vīthi. What we "feel" or "experience" is a vast number of such citta vīthi.

- Any citta vīthi that arises due to sensory input from one of the five physical senses has 17 citt $\bar{a}$. It is a pañcadvāra citta vīthi.
- On the other hand, a citta vīthi arising directly in the mind (due to dhammā) may have varying numbers of citta, with a minimum of 12 cittā. That is a manodvāra citta vīthi.

12. What we usually call a "thought" is the cumulative effect of billions of such citta vithi that arise PER SECOND.

- Each of those cittā has at least seven mental factors (cetasik $\bar{a}$ ). Those universal cetasik $\bar{a}$ include vedanā and saññā. Vedana cetasika makes one FEEL a sensory input. The sañña cetasika is the one which recognizes that sensory input.
- Only a living being can generate that fundamental unit of cognition (citta) within a billionth of a second, with built-in seven or more cetasik $\bar{a}$.
- That is why a computer or a robot will NEVER become conscious. Only Kammic energy can create a manomaya kāya with the seat of the mind (hadaya vatthu).


## Important Role of the Brain

13. Even though the brain itself cannot generate citta, it plays a critical role in getting the information about the sense object to the hadaya vatthu. More details at "Brain - Interface between Mind and Body." Let us briefly discuss the series of events following the capture of an image by our eyes.

- The retinas at the back of the eyes send the captured image to the visual cortex in the brain through the optical nerve. That part of the brain then analyzes the signal to a form that can be understood by the mind. That information is sent to the cakkhu pasāda rūpa in the manomaya kāya. Then the cakkhu pasāda rūpa makes a contact with hadaya vatthu, which vibrates 17 times due to that "impact."
- Those 17 vibrations of the hadaya vatthu correspond to the generation of a citta vithi with 17 citt $\bar{a}$. That is the origin of a cakkhudvāra citta vithi. It is not necessary to learn those details. But those interested can find details at "Does any Object (Rūpa) Last only 17 Thought Moments?."
- Sensory inputs coming through the other four physical senses (ears, nose, tongue, and the body) work the same way.

14. Just remember that the sensory input comes to a pasāda rūpa in the mental body AFTER the sensory signal is processed by the brain. For example, when we see a tree, the image of the tree received by the eyes is processed by the brain first.

- Then the brain transmits that processed signal to the cakkhu pasāda rūpa, which in turn transfers it to the hadaya vatthu.
- It is the hadaya vatthu that "feels" or "experiences" that image and "sees" the tree.
- But even a sensory experience that we "feel" arises due to a series of "sensory packets." For example, when we see a tree, that image does not come in continuously. It comes in "packets" or "snapshots."
- In fact, that is similar to how a video camera or a movie film works. We will discuss that in the post "Vision Is a Series of "Snapshots" - Movie Analogy."


### 10.2 Vipāka Vedanā and "Samphassa jā Vedanā" in a Sensory Event

September 29, 2019; revised November 15, 2019; August 28, 2022
We are discussing the "Worldview of the Buddha." It may be a good idea to print out the posts for referral while reading subsequent posts. It is CRITICAL to understand the material discussed so far to follow future posts.

## All Our Activities Start With a Sensory Trigger

1. We know that we are alive because we are aware of the external world. We can see an object, hear a sound, smell an odor, taste food, and feel the touch of something or someone. Furthermore, we can recall past events (part of dhammā).

- All our sensory experiences start with a "trigger event" that comes through one of our six sense faculties. If we see, hear, smell, taste, or touch something that grabs our attention, we start thinking, speaking, and taking action on that particular sight, sound, odor, taste, and touch.
- Also, a thought about a past event or a planned event (dhammā) may come to our mind, and we could get started that way too.

2. We usually go through our daily chores based on what we do routinely. We get up in the morning and get ready for work (school) on a working day. Those " to do tasks" come to our minds automatically as dhammā.

- Such a "planned or routine day of work" could be disrupted by an unexpected event. One may get a phone call from the boss asking to go to a meeting at a different location. A child may come down with a fever, and a hospital visit may be required. Again, a sensory trigger is there.
- We may also set up an alarm to get up at a particular time. When the alarm goes off in the morning, we wake and recall having to get ready for a specific task.
- It is a good idea to think about what one goes through during the day. We can see that all activities start with "sensory triggers."


## A Sensory Trigger is an "Arammaṇa"

3. Each activity starts with a "trigger," a sensory event. That is a "ārammana" in Päli. We consciously and deliberately start looking at an object when we become interested in that object. Then it becomes a new "ārammaṇa." That may prompt us to take further action.

- For example, short interaction with a person may trigger an interest in that person. Then that may lead to further contacts.
- We get exposed to many sensory inputs as we go through the day. But only specific sensory inputs catch our attention and make us think about them. A strong sensory input that gets our attention is a ārammaṇa.
- If X listens to the television in the background while eating, X focuses is on the meal. However, if X hears on the TV that a terrorist attack just took place in a major city, X's attention would focus on that news story. X may stop eating and go and watch the television to get more information. That is a new ārammaṇa.

4. There is always an "ārammaṇa" to initiate an action, and there are only six types of a rammana per "Chachakka Sutta (MN 148)."Cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññānain, sotañca paṭicca sadde ca uppajjati sotaviññānam், ghānañca paticca gandhe ca uppajjati ghānaviññānam், jivhāñca paṭicca rase ca uppajjati jivhāviññānamं, kāyañca paticca phoṭthabbe ca uppajjati kāyaviññānam், manañca paticca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviññānaì."

- For example, the second on the list says that "ear-consciousness (sota viññana) happens when ears (more precisely sota pasāda) come to contact with a sound (sadda)." In the above example, X heard about a terrorist attack.
- That sensory event could then start a whole series of new actions. In the example of \#3 above, X stopped eating and went to the television to watch it.
- You should think about this basic idea of how a sensory event (seeing, hearing, etc. leads to a whole set of actions during a given day. This idea was first introduced in the post, "Contact Between Āyatana Leads to Vipāka Viññ̄āna."


## Two Different Meanings of Paṭicca

5. We translated the verse, "cakkhuñca paticca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññaṇ̄ain" as "..cakkhu viññāna arises when a rūpa makes contact (paticca) with cakkhu pasāda rūpā." See, \#7 of "Contact Between Āyatana Leads to Vipāka Viññāna." That was further elaborated in the next post, "Indriya Make Phassa and Āyatana Make Samphassa."

- Some English translations state that as "dependent on the eye and forms, eye-consciousness arises." They translate paticca as "dependent on," presumably because Paticca Samuppāda is translated as "Dependent Origination."
- But paticca is a Pāli word with somewhat different meanings depending on the context. Let us clarify that first.

6. It is fine to translate Paticca Samuppāda as "Dependent Origination." That is because the steps in Paticca Samuppāda are CONDITIONAL statements. For example, "with avijjā (ignorance) as condition, sañkhāra arise." One could also state that the "arising of sañkhāra is dependent on the presence of avijja." However, conditionality comes from the word "paccayā," not from "paticca." See, "What Does "Paccayā" Mean in Paticca Samuppāda?."

- Therefore, "cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññānaì" should not be translated as "dependent on the eye and forms, eye-consciousness arises." It is more than just dependence. It is "coming together" or "coming to contact" of cakkhu and rūpa that gives rise to cakkhu viññanna. "Paṭicca" happens with only those events that grab our attention.
- There is also a deeper meaning of paticca in Paticca Samuppāda, where it combine the two words "pati" + "icca." When one attaches willingly to moral (or immoral) deeds, one ends up with corresponding "births" ("sama" + "uppada.") See, "Paticca Samuppāda - "Pati+ichcha" + "Sama+uppāda"." That is why I do not translate Paticca Samuppāda as "Dependent Origination." There is more than "just dependence" in Paṭicca Samuppāda.
- However, in verse "cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññānaim," paṭicca means "coming together" or "contact." Here there is no "intention." It is cakkhu and ruppa making contact. That is very clear in SN 12.53 and SN 12.54 , in verse, "telañca paṭicca vaṭtiñca paṭicca telappadīpo jhāyeyya." OR, "an oil lamp (telappadīpo) burns while the wick (vattiñca) is together with oil (telañca)." If one does not add oil to the lamp, the wick will burn out quickly. There is no involvement of the mind there. Thus, the "pati" + "icca" etymology does not apply here.


## Where Does Paṭicca Happen?

7. It is essential to remember that "cakkhu" (or cakkhāyatana) is not physical eyes (the Pāli word for the physical eye is "nayana"). "Cakkhu" is the cakkhu pasāda rūpa that lies close to the hadaya vatthu (seat of the mind), and hadaya vatthu overlaps the physical heart. That is far away from the brain.

- This cakkhu pasāda rūpa is the "internal āyatana." It is commonly referred to as "cakkhu."
- The brain processes an image the eyes receive and then sends it to the "cakkhu." We discussed in the post, "Contact Between Āyatana Leads to Vipāka Viññān̄,"
- Furthermore, the "r $\overline{u p a}$ " is the image of the external object (external $\bar{a} y a t a n a$ ). To be precise, it is a "vanna rūpa" (or "rūpa rūpa") in this case.
- When that rūpa makes contact with the cakkhu, the cakkhu in turn "hits" the hadaya vatthu (seat of the mind) and transfers that rūpa to the mind, that is the event, "Cakkhuña paticca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññānam."
- That contact gives rise to the cakkhuviññāna in mind. Therefore, that sensory experience arises in the mind close to the physical heart. It does not occur in the brain (or at the eyes)! You may want to refresh memory by reading \#12 of the post, "Buddhist Worldview - Introduction."

8. The example discussed in \#3 involves an ārammaṇa coming through as a sound (sadda rūpa). Here the "sound rūpa" received by the sota pasāda rūpa (shortened to just "sota") is the "sadda" in "sotañca paticca sadde ca uppajjati sotaviññānam.".

- Any external sensory input is a form of energy. That is why they are all rupa. There is some confusion because most times, a "rūpa rūpa" or a "vanna rūpa" is just written as a "rūpa."
- A sound is a sadda rūpa. You can figure out the other three: rasa rūpa, gandha rūpa, and phott!habba rūpa.
- A thought coming directly to the mind is a "dhamma"" or a "dhamma rūpa." There is no separate "pasāda rūpa" for dhammā, which directly contacts the hadaya vatthu.


## Vipāka Vedanā Arise With That Initial Vipāka Viññāṇa

9. Let us consider "hearing a sound." That is "sotañca paṭicca sadde ca uppajjati sotaviññānam.". This sotaviññāna is a vipāka viññāna, as we discussed in "Contact Between Āyatana Leads to Vipāka Viññāna."

- As we have discussed, vedan $\bar{a}$ and saññ $\bar{a}$ arise with each citta. Therefore, there are a vedan $\bar{a}$ and sañ̃ña associated with that sota viñ̃̄̄ana (which is a citta.) In other words, we know that we heard the sound (vedan $\bar{a}$ ), and we recognize what the sound is (saññ $\bar{a}$ ). The vedan $\bar{a}$ that arises with that vipāka viñnāṇa is a vipāka vedanā.
- At this stage, the mind receives the sensory event. All vedanā associated with that initial sensory event is a neutral (upekkhā) vedanā. However, some somanassa or domanassa vedanā arise due to $k \bar{m} m a$ guṇa (even in an Arahant.). The next post, "Kāma Guna - Origin of Attachment (Tanhā)," will discuss this issue. However, no dukkha/sukha vedanā arise in this step of, "sotañca paṭicca sadde ca uppajjati sotaviññannam." That also holds for other sensory faculties, except for the physical touch (kāya.)
- Therefore, the only exception is "kāyañca paticca photṭhabbe ca uppajjati kāyaviñnān̄aín." The sensory contact through the physical body can generate a dukkha vedana due to an injury. It can lead to a sukha vedanā due to a body massage.
- We will discuss sukha, dukkha, somanassa, domanassa, and upekkhā vedanā below.


## The Second Type of Vedanā is "Samphassa $\mathbf{j} \bar{a} \operatorname{Vedan} \bar{a} "$

10. In the post, "Indriya Make Phassa and Āyatana Make Samphassa," we looked further into the "Chachakka Sutta (MN 148): "Cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhu viññạnaì, tị̣nam sañgati phasso, phassa paccayā vedanā." Those we discussed the second type of vedana due to "phassa paccay $\overline{\text { a }}$ vedanā." There we discussed how the second type of vedana $a$ arises due to "samphassa." It is a good idea to review that post.

- That second type of vedanā is due to "contact with defilements in mind" or "san" or "anusaya." And that depends on each person, i.e., how strong a tanh $\bar{a}$ is generated via greed, anger, or ignorance. Therefore, this "samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedan $\vec{a}$ " is mind-made.
- An Arahant would experience the first type of vedanā, the vipāka vedanā. The second type of vedana would NOT arise in an Arahant because he/she does not have a defiled mind.
- Now we can categorize vedana $u$ using a different scheme. That will show that dukkha/sukha vedana arises ONLY due to the physical body. Other types of sensory contacts lead to unpleasant/pleasant vedana (domanassa/somanassa) in the MIND.


## Two Types of Vedanāa (Kāyika and Cetasika)

11. As we saw above, ALL vedanā belong to those two types discussed above: vipāka vedana and samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedan $\bar{a}$. However, there are other ways to categorize vedan $\bar{a}$. The Buddha has taught us how to examine a given entity or a concept in many different ways. Once one understands them, it is easy to see which analysis is appropriate for a given situation.

- The Buddha categorized vedanā up to 108 types. However, we do not need to discuss all of them. We will consider only those that are relevant to common situations.
- First, ALL vedanā belong to two categories of kāyika vedanā (those felt on the body) and cetasika vedana $\bar{a}$ (those arising in the mind.) Of course, all of the vipāka vedana $\bar{a}$ and samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedan $\bar{a}$ are in these two new categories. It is just a different way to look at them.
- Those vedanā felt in the physical body (kāya) are kāyika vedanā. All other vedana are cetasika vedan $\bar{a}$; they arise in mind.


## Three Types of Kāyika Vedanā

12. Then the kāyika vedana $\bar{a}$ can be three types: dukkha vedan $\bar{a}$, sukha vedanā, adukkhamasukha vedanā.

- We can see that dukkha vedanā due to injuries, body aches, etc. are kāyika vedanā. Those vedanā are felt AT A LOCATION in the body. We feel a finger cut at the finger. Similarly, a back massage gives a sukha vedana $\bar{a}$ on the back.
- We remember that vedan $\bar{a}$ means "becoming aware of." So, those vedan $\bar{a}$ due to bodily contacts that do not generate dukkha or sukha (i.e., neutral) are "adukkhama asukha" (neither painful nor pleasant), and that rhymes with "adukkhamasukha."


## Three Types of Cetasika Vedanā

13. Those cetasika vedanā similarly belong to three major types: domanassa vedanā, somanassa vedana $\bar{a}$, and upekkhā vedanā.

- The word "domanassa" comes from "do + manasa" or "a depressed mind." Similarly, "somanassa" comes from "so + manasa" or "a pleasant mind." Of course, upekkhā vedanā is neither domanassa nor somanassa. It is neutral, and we feel that sensory input.
- Note that while the adukkhamasukha vedanā is associated with body touches, upekkh $\bar{a}$ vedan $\bar{a}$ is associated with all other sensory inputs.


## Relationship to Vipāka Vedanā and "Samphassa-jā-Vedanā"

14. Now, these cetasika vedanā can be either vipāka vedanā or "samphassa-j $\bar{a}-v e d a n \bar{a} . "$

- As we have discussed, samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedana $\bar{a}$ depends on the person's mindset (more precisely, on one's anusaya or gati.) Three people looking at the same person X may generate different types of
samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedan $\bar{a}$. A friend of X will generate a samphassa-j $\bar{a}-v e d a n \bar{a}$ that is of somanassa type. An enemy of X will generate a samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedana $\bar{a}$ that is of domanassa type. A third person who does not know X may only feel a samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedan $\bar{a}$ of upekkhā type.
- Since there are six types of samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedan $\bar{a}$, we can see that there could be 18 types of vedan $\bar{a}$ associated with them. Each one could be domanassa, somanassa, or upekkhā.
- In the "WebLink: suttacentral: Atthasata Sutta (SN 36.22)," the Buddha has discussed 108 types of vedanā. But for many situations, the above types of vedanā are sufficient for our discussions.


### 10.3 Kāma Guṇa - Origin of Attachment (Taṇhā)

October 6, 2019; revised October 9, 2022
Kāma guṇa are associated with pleasurable things in this world. It is because of kāma guṇa that we tend to attach (tanh $\bar{a})$ to worldly things via either greed or anger (based on ignorance.) Based on kāma guṇa we AUTOMATICALLY generate sāmisa vedanā. Sāmisa vedanā, in turn, COULD lead to taṇh $\bar{a}$ (attachment to worldly things.)

## Summary of the Previous Post

1. In the previous post, we first categorized vedana into two types: vipāka vedana and samphassa-j $\bar{a}-$ vedanā.

- Then, later in the post, we categorized vedana differently. Those vedana $\bar{a}$ felt in the physical body (kāya) are $\boldsymbol{k} \bar{a} y i k a ~ v e d a n \bar{a}$. All other vedana types arise in mind, and they are cetasika vedana $\bar{a}$. Of course, vipāka vedanā can be kāyika vedana or cetasika vedanā. However, samphassa-jā-vedanā are all cetasika vedanā.
- Then kāyika vedanā can be three types: dukkha vedanā, sukha vedanā, adukkhamasukha (adukkhama asukha or neither dukkha nor sukha) vedană.
- One may need to review that post: "Vipāka Vedanā and "Samphassa jā Vedanā" in a Sensory Event."


## A Few Observations Based on the Previous Post

2. Now I need to add a few more comments. First, those k $\overline{\boldsymbol{a}} \boldsymbol{y} i k a \operatorname{vedan} \overline{\boldsymbol{a}}$ are all $v i p \bar{a} k a$ vedan $\bar{a}$. Those are the ones that contribute to physical suffering (injuries, sicknesses, etc.) and bodily comforts (like in a body massage.) Therefore, dukkha vedanā, sukha vedan $\bar{a}$, and adukkhamasukha vedanā are all vipāka $v e d a n \bar{a}$, and they arise only with "bodily contacts" (kāyañca paṭicca photṭhabbe ca uppajjati kāyaviñāānaam.)

- All other types of vipāka vedanā come through the eyes ears, nose, tongue, and mind. Unlike vipāka vedanā that come through the physical body, they are NOT kāyika vedana $\bar{a}$.
- Those are, at that moment, all upekkh $\bar{a} v e d a n \bar{a}$. We see, hear, smell, taste, or dhamm $\bar{a}$ come to mind. They are, "Cakkhuñca paticca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññānaìn, sotañca paticca sadde ca uppajjati sotaviññānaì, ghānañca pațicca gandhe ca uppajjati ghānaviññannaì, jivhāñca paticca rase ca uppajjati jivhāviñ̃āṇam, and manañca pațicca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviñ̃n̄ạaín." Note that "kāyañca paṭicca phoṭthabbe ca uppajjati kāyaviñ̃āṇamं" does NOT appear here.
- Then, samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedanā arise following those initial vipāka vedanā. For example, following hearing a sound (sotañca paṭicca sadde ca uppajjati sotaviññānaim), two more steps take place before samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedana $\bar{a}$ arise. They are in the "Chachakka Sutta (MN 148): "sotañca paticca sadde ca uppajjati sotaviññanami, tinnamं sañgati phasso, phassa paccayā vedanā." As we discussed In the previous post, phassa paccayā vedanā is samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedan $\bar{a}$. Those are vedana that arise due to greed, anger, and ignorance.
- In this post, we will discuss that last step in detail. Why do humans get attached to some sensory inputs via greed and to others via aversion (dislike)?


## What Are Kāma Guna?

3. The Buddha said that this world is filled with eye-pleasing sights, ear-pleasing sounds, etc. for all five physical senses. Each existence in the kāma loka has its own set of "attractive and enticing sensory objects." The Buddha called them kāmaguna or "sensual qualities." As we know, kāma means sensual.
"Guna" means "qualities" or "characteristics." Even though kāmaguna is one word in the Tipiṭaka, I like to write it as two words, "kāma guna" since that helps remember the meaning.

- For example, humans like certain types of food. Each animal species has its own "favorite foods." Lions and tigers like to eat meat. Cows don't eat meat, and they eat grass. Pigs like to eat all sorts of rotten food.
- Humans enjoy certain sights, sounds, tastes, smells, and bodily contacts. As long as one has a human body, it is impossible to avoid generating a sukha vedanā due to such sensory contacts. Even Arahants feel those.


## Kāma Guṇa Are Enticing Objects, Sounds, Tastes, Odors, and Bodily Contacts

4. Such sukha vedanā arise immediately AFTER the initial vipāka vedanā. As we discussed in the previous post, all vipāka vedana $\bar{a}$ due to sensory contacts other than bodily contacts are upekkh $\bar{a} v e d a n \bar{a}$. They are neutral.

- However, immediately following that initial contact, kāma guña comes into play. Many suttā discuss kāma guṇa, and they all have the following clarification of what it is. The "WebLink: suttacentral: Nibbānasukha Sutta (AN 9.34)," states, "Pañcime, bhikkhave, kāmagun̄ā. Katame pañca? Cakkhuviññeyyā rūp $\bar{a}$ ittth $\bar{a}$ kantā manāpā piyarūp $\bar{a}$ kāmūpasaimhita rajanīy $\bar{a}$, sotaviññeyy $\bar{a}$ saddā, ghānaviññeyyā gandhā, jivhāviññeyyā rasā, kāyaviññeyyā phoṭthabbā, itṭhā kantā manāpā piyarūpà kāmūpasaìhitā rajanīyā. Ime kho, bhikkhave, pañca kāmaguṇā."
- Translated: "There are these five sensual qualities (kāmaguna). Which five? There are forms ( $r \bar{u} p \bar{a}$ ) experienced with eyes that are agreeable, pleasing, charming, endearing, enticing, and leading to desire. There are sounds (sadda) that are agreeable, pleasing, charming, endearing, enticing, and leading to desire (and similarly for the other three senses.)


## Vedanā Due to Kāma Guṇa Are Not "samphassa-jā-vedanā"

5. However, this somanassa vedanā that arises due to kāma guṇa are NOT the "samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedanā." Somanassa vedanā due to kāma guṇa arises in an Arahant, as well as in an average human.

- Let us clarify with some examples. Sugar or honey has a "kāma guṇa" of sweetness. That holds for everyone, from an average person to an Arahant. A beautiful woman will be seen as such by anyone from an ordinary person to an Arahant.
- However, "tinnnam sañgati phasso, phassa paccay $\bar{a}$ vedan $\bar{a} "$ in \#2 above does not occur in an Arahant. Even though an Arahant will experience somanassa vedana due to kāma guṇa, an Arahant would NOT get attached to that "pleasant/sensual feeling."
- Therefore, even though an Arahant would feel the tastiness of honey, he/she would not generate any craving for more. An Arahant has comprehended that desire for ANY worldly pleasures (sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and body touches) will only lead to future suffering. But it is essential to realize that one CANNOT and SHOULD NOT suppress such desires with sheer willpower. That understanding comes after the Sotäpanna stage.


## Vedanā Due to Kāma Guṇa Are Sāmisa Vedanā

6. There is a unique name for those "automatically-arising" vedana due to kāma guṇa. They are sāmisa vedanā.

- The word sāmisa has origins in the keyword "āmisa," which means "associated with the sensual world" or "kāma loka." Thus, sāmisa sukha vedanā mean a "pleasant feeling" that arises due to the nature of the kāma loka. [āmisa :[nt.] food; flesh; bait; gain. (adj.) material.]
- An Arahant, as well as an average human, will experience similar "sāmisa vedanā." Any sensory event of $k \bar{a} m a ~ l o k a ~ i s ~ a ~ s a ̄ m i s a ~ v e d a n a \bar{a}$. We will briefly discuss the types of sāmisa vedana $\bar{a}$ below.
- We remember that the original viñ̃̄̄ạna (cakkhu, sota, ghāna, jivhā, kāya) resulted due to a vipāka. Vipāka vedanā associated with those are upekkhā vedanā. (The only exception was kāya viññāna, which could give rise to dukkha, sukha, or adukkhamasukha vedanā.)
- Immediately following those vipāka vedanā, kāma guṇa comes into play, and sāmisa vedanā arises automatically.
- It is only after the generation of sāmisa vedanā that "tiṇ̣aím sañgati phasso, phassa paccayā vedana $\bar{"}$ comes into play.


## Kāma Rāga Is Getting Attached to Sāmisa Vedanā

7. The human world is full of enticing sights, sounds, tastes, odors, and bodily comforts. Those are not $k \bar{a} m a$. They are kāma guṇa. Getting attached to them and cultivating kāma sañkappa (or vacī sañkhāra or vitakka/vicāra) is kāma (and kāma rāga).

- The "WebLink: suttacentral: Nibbedhika Sutta (AN 6.63)" states, "Sañkappa rāgo purisassa kāmo, Nete kāma y yāni citrāni loke..."

Translated: "A person's kāma is getting attached and thinking about (sañkappa rāga) those pleasing things in this world (citrāni loke). Those beautiful things in the world are not kāma."

- I highly recommend the post "Kāma Guna, Kāma, Kāma Rāga, Kāmacchanda." It has more information that will help understand the concepts better.


## Difference Between Samphassa-jā̄-Vedanā and Sāmisa Vedanā

8. Now we can see the difference between samphassa-j $\bar{a}-v e d a n \bar{a}$ and sāmisa vedanā.

- First, sāmisa vedanā are common to ALL HUMANS, including Arahants. They are the sweetness of sugar or pleasing odors like perfumes.
- On the other hand, samphassa-jā-vedanā are highly PERSONAL. They do not arise in Arahants. For others, how strongly they arise depends on one's gati AND the specific ārammana.
- We also need to understand that samphassa-jā-vedanā arises BECAUSE OF sāmisa vedanā. One gets attached to sensory inputs because they are enticing. As long as one does not see the "hidden suffering" in those enticing sights, sounds, etc., one is bound to generate a craving for them.
 discuss that briefly since it is crucial.


## Tanh $\bar{a}$ - Getting Attached via Greed, Anger, or Ignorance

9. Just like "pleasing and enticing things" in the kāma loka, there are also "unpleasant things." For example, rotten food tastes terrible, and we do not like loud or high-pitched noises. Humans generate sāmisa dukkha vedan $\bar{a}$ when exposed to such sensory inputs or $\bar{a} r a m m a n a$.

- Nonetheless, we get "attached" to them also. We complain about lousy-tasting foods or harsh noises and may take action to avoid them.
- That is why "taṇhä" means "getting attached to ārammana via either greed or anger." We also get attached to ārammaṇa due to ignorance, not knowing their true nature. See "Tanhā - How We Attach Via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance."
- We get attached via greed and ignorance DUE TO sāmisa sukha vedanā and sāmisa upekkhā vedana $\overline{\text {. }}$. It is essential to realize that while everyone feels sāmisa vedana $\overline{\text { a }}$, not everyone attaches via sāmisa vedanā the same way.


## Samphassa-jā-Vedanā Depend on One's Gati And The Specific Ārammaṇa

10. We have already discussed how samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedan $\bar{a}$ arise due to one's character/habits (gati) and specific ārammaṇa. See, "Vipāka Vedanā and "Samphassa jā Vedanā" in a Sensory Event."

- An Arahant does not have any gati left (other than those without kammic consequences), and thus would not generate taṇhā and, therefore, would not generate samphassa-jā-vedanā.
- All others attach to àrammaṇa in different ways and at different levels. Whether one attaches to ārammaṇa depends on that particular ārammaṇa AND one's gati. For example, teenagers are likely to gati to attach to loud music, whereas older adults may dislike such music. In each category of food, odors, sex, etc., some people attach more than others.
- It is essential to avoid "bad ārammana." If one associates with those who drink excessively or are engaged in drug use, it is hard to avoid getting involved with such activities.
- In the same way, it is easier to cultivate good habits (gati) by associating with those who already have good gati. Then one will mostly be exposed to "good ārammaṇa."


## Summary

11. So far, we have discussed the progression of events when a sensory input comes in per "WebLink: suttacentral: Chachakka Sutta (MN 148)." For example, when an external object is the ärammaṇa, the series of events start with, "Cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññānam." At that initial stage, it is just a vipāka viññāna. See, "Contact Between Āyatana Leads to Vipāka Viññāna." Then in the subsequent posts, we have been discussing the progression, "Cakkhuñca pațicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhu viññānamं, tinṇam sañgati phasso, phassa paccayā vedanā." Now we can summarize those steps as follows.

- First, a ārammaṇa (in this case, a visual object) catches one's attention with a vipāka viññāna. In this case, it is a cakkhuviññāna.
- Immediately, the kāma guna comes into play, and one experiences a sāmisa sukha vedana $\bar{a}$ if it is a mind-pleasing object. That happens whether one is an average human or an Arahant.
- Then the next part of the above verse, "tiṇnam sañgati phasso, phassa paccayā vedanā" happens in mind (within a fraction of a second.) One's "san gati" come into play. If one has the gati to be attracted to such type of objects, then one would automatically attach. If it was an object that one truly dislikes, one would generate sāmisa dukkha vedanā and would still attach with dislike or anger.
- Now, another average human MAY NOT get attached either way. That is because that particular $\bar{a} r a m m a n ̣ a$ may not be his/her "type," i.e., he/she may not have an interest in it. On the other hand, an Arahant WILL NOT get attached (via like, dislike, or ignorance) to ANY ārammana.


## Next Post

12. It took us a few posts to cover that, but I think it is essential to get these basic ideas clarified. It may not take long to go through the rest of the sutta.

- Another essential point from the discussion is that sensory events are discrete. They do not come in continuously. The mind handles ONE ārammaṇa at a time. However, since the mind is very fast, it APPEARS that we are seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and feeling the body touches simultaneously.
- The following post discusses this critical point: "Vision Is a Series of "Snapshots" - Movie Analogy."


### 10.4 Vision Is a Series of "Snapshots" - Movie Analogy

October 13, 2019; revised November 15, 2019; April 4, 2022

## Vision - How Do We See an Object?

1. Vision or "seeing" appears to us as continuous. We see people moving around, vehicles moving, animals running around, etc. However, in reality, "seeing" happens due to a series of "snapshots" that our physical eyes take. Please bear with me as I set the stage with the following Pāli terms. It is unnecessary to know these Pāli terms in detail, but try to get the basic idea.

- A key idea behind Buddha Dhamma is that we experience only one citta (loosely translated as a thought) at a time and that citta focuses on ONE a rammana. In other words, while the mind is registering a visual event, it cannot hear, smell, taste, or feel a touch. The keyword a rammaṇa was introduced in the post, "Vipāka Vedanā and "Samphassa jā Vedanā" in a Sensory Event."
- "Seeing" does not happen continuously since the mind can process only one cakkhudvāra citta vīthi (with 17 citta) at a time.. The mind processes that cakkhudvāra citta vīthi with three more manodvāra citta vīthi. At the end of those citta vīthi, the mind has captured a 'snapshot" of the object and recognized it. Those four citta vithi define one "snapshot" of a moving object.
- Our "seeing of a moving external object" involves many "snapshots" within seconds. Our perception of a moving object results from many such "snapshots." We do not see the individual "snapshots."


## Movie Analogy - Series of Snapshots

2. We can simplify and understand the above process using an analogy. What I stated above is - in principle - what happens when we watch a movie.

- A video camera captures many static pictures (snapshots) of a scene to make a move. Then those snapshots are projected to a screen at a specific rate. If the playback speed is too slow, we can see individual pictures, but above a certain "projection rate," it looks like natural motion. Here is a video that illustrates this well:


## WebLink: youtube: Animation basics: The optical illusion of motion - TED-Ed

- A movie projector projects static pictures to the screen at a rate of about 30 frames a second, and we see the movie as a continuous progression of events. If the projection rate is low, we can see it frame by frame or as individual "snapshots." When projected at 30 frames a second, we do not perceive those static pictures. Then we perceive a continuous progression without any gaps.
- More details in the post, "Citta and Cetasika - How Viññāña (Consciousness) Arises."
- That is why the Buddha said that the mind (or viñnäna) is a magician. We perceive a streamlined world, even though the reality is that our sensory faculties detect only a series of "snapshots," It is the mind that conceals the reality and gives us a perception of a continuous progression of events.
- It is critical to understand this point. It helps get rid of sakkāya ditṭhi; see "Chachakka Sutta - Six Types of Vipāka Viññāna."


## Mind and the Brain - Two Different Entities

3. In an early post on this series, I pointed out that cakkhāyatana is cakkhu pasāda rūpa, not the physical eyes. See \#12 of "Buddhist Worldview - Introduction."

- That cakkhu pasāda rūpa (or simply cakkhu) is part of the gandhabba, our "mental body." The gandhabba has the seat of the mind (hadaya vatthu) surrounded by the five pasāda rūpa corresponding to vision, hearing, taste, smell, and touch.
- When our physical eyes capture an image of an external object, that image goes to the visual cortex in the brain. The signal is processed there and then transmitted to the cakkhu pasāda rūpa, making contact with the hadaya vatthu. That contact (phassa) leads to the arising of cakkhu viññāna at the hadaya vatthu. More details in "Brain - Interface between Mind and Body."
- By the way, that is the step, "cakkhuñca pațicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññānám" discussed in \#7 in the post, "Contact Between Āyatana Leads to Vipāka Viññāna."

4. Therefore, the brain works like a computer. It converts the image from the eyes to a form "processable" by the hadaya vatthu (seat of the mind.) Therefore, vision involves a somewhat complex process.

- Similar processes take place for the other four physical sensory events. For example, when the physical ears capture a sound, that signal goes to the auditory cortex in the brain for processing. That signal then goes to the sota pasāda rūpa, which makes contact with hadaya vatthu to transfer. That gives rise to sota viññāna via, "sotañca paṭicca sadde ca uppajjati sotaviññānami."


## Reviewing the Whole Series Could Be Helpful

5. It may need some effort to understand this sequence of events. But it is necessary to comprehend the overall process before we get to the next post.

- It is good to print all the posts in the "Worldview of the Buddha" subsection and go over them carefully. There are about eight posts up to now.
- It is not necessary to understand the DETAILS of \#6 and \#7 below. But it is good to get the general ideas involved. I am providing this information illustrate the following. New findings in science are not only compatible with Buddha Dhamma but also help explain critical concepts in Buddha Dhamma.


## The Brain Processes Visual Signals at About 30 Frames per Second

6. A recent study has reported that the minimum time to recognize of a static picture is about 13 milliseconds (Ref. 1). That means we should be able to see such snapshots projected at 77 frames per second at the highest rate. However, that is probably "pushing it" and not comfortable for the brain to handle. That is why movies use a projection rate of about 30 frames per second, as mentioned in \#2 above.

- Interestingly, the time for neural information to reach the brain takes about 15 to 30 milliseconds (References 49, 50 in Ref. 2). Therefore, a projection rate of 30 to 50 frames is compatible with that measurement too.
- A millisecond is a thousandth of a second.


## Same Analysis Holds For Other Four Physical Senses

7. A similar set of rules are valid for hearing as well. Another recent study (Ref. 2) found that sounds could be recognized at rates up to 30 sounds per second. That corresponds to a "sound packet" of a duration of about 33 milliseconds that can be detected and recognized.

- However, people speak at a much slower rate of 150 words per minute. That is about two words per second, much less than 30 possible words per second that would be possible according to the above study. So, there is no problem with hearing what other people speak, even if someone talks faster than the average rate.
- Currently, no studies are available from science for the other three sensory events (taste, smell, and body touches). But the same process holds for those as well.


## Aside - Cognition (Sañ̃̄̄̄) Requires More Than Detection

The following points (\#8, \#9) are "asides." It is not necessary information but could help those familiar with Abhidhamma.
8. We must remember that "experiencing a sensory input" is much more complex than just receiving that sensory input. For example, the mind needs to see an object or hear a sound, recognize what it is, and generate a vedanā.

- For example, upon hearing the sound "apple," the mind needs to know what an "apple" is. Someone who does not speak English would not know what is meant by the word "apple." But those who speak English AND have had an experience eating apples would have MEMORIES of those. Therefore, the mind needs to compare the received sensory with memories to recognize it!
- The mind does that very fast with the help of the manasikāra cetasika. As you may know, manasikāra is one of the seven universal cetasika that arises with each citta. Thus, the mind can recognize a sensory input instantaneously, as soon as it receives a "data packet."
- More details in "Citta and Cetasika - How Viññāna (Consciousness) Arises."


## Aside - Process In Abhidhamma Language

9. Actual "seeing" or vision takes place at hadaya vatthu. Same for the other four types of sensory events. For example, consider a "packet of data" sent from the physical eye to the b-rain. The brain processes that information and transmits to the cakkhu pasāda. As you may remember, the five pasāda rūp $\bar{a}$ (cakkhu, sota, ghāna, jivhā, kāya) surround the hadaya vatthu. Now the cakkhu pasāda makes contact with the hadaya vatthu by hitting it. That causes the hadaya vatthu to vibrate 17 times, like a gong struck by an iron rod vibrating for a certain fixed number of times.

- The 17 vibrations of the hadaya vatthu correspond to the 17 citt $\bar{a}$ in a citta vīthi. Such a citta vīthi is a pañcadvāra citta vīthi because one of the five physical senses or pañcadvāra ("pañca" or five + "dvāra" or "door") initiates it.
- Imagine a blade clamped at one edge and hit on the un-clamped side. The blade will vibrate. It vibrates for a certain FIXED number of times. For a given material, that is fixed number.
- The same thing happens when a pasāda rūpa makes contact with the hadaya vatthu. The hadaya vatthu vibrates 17 times, with each vibration leading to the arising of a citta. That is the origin of a citta vīthi with 17 cittā. Those 17 vibrations are a form of energy called a hadaya rūpa.

10. The misconception that any $r \bar{u} p a$ has a lifetime of 17 thought moments arose because of not understanding the difference between a rūpa (the image of an external object) and a hadaya rūpa (which is just the 17 vibrations of the hadaya vatthu).

- In other words, this information packet is received and processed by the hadaya vatthu within those 17 citt $\bar{a}$. The information is complete by the fourth citta (fourth vibration of the hadaya vatthu), and then the rest of the citta in that citta vīthi deal with this information. Three more citta vīthi run by the hadaya vatthu itself completes the process. The additional citta vīthi, initiated by the mind, are manodvāra citta vīthi. Here, manodvāra means the "mind-door."
- Details of \#9 and \#10 at "Does any Object (Rūpa) Last only 17 Thought Moments?."


## The mind is Fast, and the Brain is Slow

11. Thus, we can see a vast difference in time between the two processes involved. The physical body acquiring data takes time of the order of 10 milliseconds. The mind processes that information within a billionth of a second (using one pañcadvāra citta vīthi and three manodvāra citta vīthi.)

- Even if the five senses keep sending data continuously, the mind is "just sitting there" most of the time. Let us examine this in more detail: Suppose the brain keeps sending data from the eye non-stop. Since each "packet" takes, say ten milliseconds, then in a second, there will be 100 "data packets" of vision coming
in. If the brain is going at full speed, it can send at most $500(=100 \times 5)$ "data packets" from all five physical senses in a second. Then the mind will be spending less than a millionth of a second in processing all that data. During a movie that lasts two hours, the mind will be active, probably less than a second.

12. During those "gaps," the hadaya vatthu also interacts (both ways) with the mana indriya in the brain. In particular, it gives instructions to the brain (via mana indriya) on how to control the physical body in response to sensory inputs.

- Thus, for the most part, the mind (or, more precisely, the hadaya vatthu) is sitting there idly. That "idle state" of the mind is the "bhavañga" state.
- A key point here is that the mind spends only a VERY SHORT TIME experiencing the SENSORY INPUTS. There is no "self" watching a movie. The mind gives the illusion that a "self" is watching the movie. Details are in the next post, "Chachakka Sutta - Six Types of Vipāka Viññāna."
- The above is a very brief discussion. Of course, there are more details, but one can hopefully get the basic idea. Please ask questions if something is not clear. It is critical to understand this post.


## Summary

13. The critical point embedded in the WebLink: suttacentral: Chachakka Sutta (MN 148) is that there is no "self" experiencing the external world. We discussed the initial steps in sensory events addressed by that sutta.

- The key message in the sutta is that the mind DOES NOT experience the external world CONTINUOUSLY. Instead, the mind is active only for very brief periods when receiving inputs from the five pasäda rüpa. As mentioned above, the brain is "on" much longer than the mind. Once the brain processes information packets, the mind absorbs that information within a "blink of an eye."
- On the other hand, the brain has a heavy workload while watching a movie. It has to process audio and video inputs at a rapid rate for the movie's duration. One could get a headache if one watches two movies at a stretch. But even during that time, the mind is mainly in the bhavanga state. There is no "self" watching the movie. It is just a series of events taking place. The mind is "putting all those "events" together and giving the appearance of a continuous progression of events. Thus one has the perception that "I am watching a movie."
- Details are in the next post, "Chachakka Sutta - Six Types of Vipāka Viññāna."
- Later on, we will discuss why it is also incorrect to say that there is "no-self."


## REFERENCES

1. M. C. Potter et al., "WebLink: dspace.mit.edu: Detecting Meaning in RSVP at 13 ms per Picture", Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience, vol. 13, pp. 90-101 (2014).
2. V. Isnard et al., "WebLink: researchgate.net: The time course of auditory recognition measured with rapid sequences of short natural sounds," Scientific Reports, vol. 9, pp. 1-10 (2019).

Click on the links to download the publications.

## Do I Have "A Mind" That Is Fixed and "Mine"?

August 30, 2018; revised October 3, 2022
You may first read the post, "Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)" to have the proper background.

1. Let us systematically see what happens when we "see" a tree for example. Please don't just read through, but stop and think about each point. This post condenses much information (true for most posts, but especially this one).

- Light reflected off the tree falls on our eyes and forms an image of that tree on the retina in the back of the eye. As you can imagine, that image is tiny. But we "see" its numerous leaves, individual flowers, and fruits in great detail. How is that possible?
- Anyway, that image is transmitted to the brain through a chemical signal. How does the brain "see" the tree?
- Jeff Hawkins, who has thought a lot about this issue, is actively engaged in artificial intelligence. His book, "On Intelligence" discusses current scientific knowledge on vision and other sensory inputs.

2. Starting on p. 55 of his book, Hawkins discusses how the image that falls on the back of the eye is transmitted to the brain: "Visual information from the outside world is sent to your brain via a million fibers in your optic nerve...",

- "You can visualize these inputs as a bundle of electrical wires or a bundle of optical fibers..." and "The inputs to the brain are like those fibers, but they are called axons, and they carry neural signals called 'action potentials' or 'spikes,' which are partly chemical and partly electrical...."
- As discussed, not only visual signals but all sense inputs (sounds, taste, smell, and body touch) to the brain are the same type. You hear a sound, see the light, and feel pressure, but inside your brain, there isn't any fundamental difference between these different neural signals. An action potential is an action potential.
- Scientists have not figured out how the brain distinguishes those different types of signals. Moreover, they have no idea how the mind "sees the light" or an image of that tree.

3. To quote more from that book: "There is no light inside your head. It is dark in there. There is no sound entering your brain either; it is quiet inside. The brain is the only part of your body that has no senses itself. A surgeon could stick a finger into your brain and you would not feel it. All the information that enters your mind comes in as spatial and temporal patterns on the axons."

- So, it is a mystery how the mind senses those chemical and electrical signals coming to the brain as vision, sound, taste, smell, and body touch.
- Scientists are trying to solve this puzzle by looking for answers in the brain. They have come to the end of the line here.
- Now let us see how the Buddha described these processes.

4. Actual "seeing" (and hearing, smelling, etc) goes on at the hadaya vatthu located in the gandhabbā or the mental body. The gandhabbā is like a fine mesh overlapping the physical body, with the hadaya vatthu located close to the physical heart. That is what gives life to the physical body.

- At the death of the physical body, that fine gandhabbā is pulled off the physical body like a ghost. It is so fine that we cannot see it. But we all know that a body can be alive one second and become inert (like a piece of wood) at death.
- Of course, when the gandhabbā comes out temporarily (as in the case of those who can do astral travel or in the case of out-of-body experiences), it is still "attached" to the physical body and keeps
the physical body alive. In "astral travel" terminology, the mental body is attached to the physical body via an invisible "silver cord."
- Such cases are discussed in "Manomaya Kāya and Out-of-Body Experience (OBE)."

5. Another key point is that in the fine body of the gandhabbā, there are five "pasāda rūpa" located around the hadaya vatthu: cakkhu, sota, ghāna, jivhā, and kāya, that correspond to seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touch. Here is the "missing part" of the puzzle that scientists will never be able to solve just by dealing with the brain:

- The brain is like a very sophisticated computer that analyzes those chemical and electrical signals discussed above in \#2 and \#3.
- Those chemical and electrical signals (which come in packets of about 10 millisecond duration per scientist) are converted to electromagnetic (EM) waves and are transmitted through the air to the pasāda rūpa located around the hadaya vatthu.
- This is what the Buddha taught 2000 years ago, and until scientists make this connection, they will not be able to proceed too far from where they are now.

6. The Buddha did not explain it in terms of EM waves. These waves are called "kiraṇa" in Pāli or Sinhala.

- This is explained in the post "Citta and Cetasika - How Viññāna (Consciousness) Arises" and other posts in the following subsection: "Citta and Cetasika."
- It takes a real effort to understand the details. But it will be worthwhile for those who are serious about learning Abhidhamma. Otherwise, just try to get the basic idea.

7. As an example, let us take the case of seeing a tree. A continuous series of "data packets" (chemical and electrical signals per \#3, \#4 above) that come to the brain from the eyes are processed by the brain and converted to EM waves (kiraṇa).

- Those waves then travel to the cakkhu pasāda situated close to the hadaya vatthu. These waves from the brain to the heart area of the body travel in the air much faster than those chemica/electrical signals traveling from the eyes to the brain via axons.

8. When an EM wave (kiraṇa) packet arrives at the cakkhu pasāda, it hits the hadaya vatthu and "transfers" that visual information about the tree to the mind. The mind is born momentarily during this transition for the duration of that signal.

- This is what is meant by "cakkhuñca paticca rūpeca uppajjati cakkhu viññānam்." Here cakkhu is the cakkhu pasāda rūpa (not the physical eye), and rūpa (in "rūpeca") is the signal from the brain that carries the visual signal about the tree (not the actual tree!). [uppajjati : [u + pad + ya] to be born; arises.]
- See "Chachakka Sutta - Six Types of Vipāka Viññāna."

9. This is CRITICALLY important to realize. What is meant by a "rūpa" is NOT the same as what our visual object is. We DO NOT see a man, a woman, or a tree. What comes to the mind is a "rūpa signal" that is generated by the brain. That signal has all the INFORMATION about that visual object.

- The reception of the visual signal (rūpa) by the cakkhu pasāda (cakkhu) happens at the very moment that the cakkhu pasāda transfers that signal to the hadaya vatthu by "hitting it." And at that very moment, cakkhu viññāna arises: "cakkhuñca paticca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññānaim."

10. These are critical points to understand, even if all the details are not understood by modern science yet. Visual consciousness arises briefly when that information about the visual object is transferred to the mind.

- However, within that split second, not only the object (the tree in this case) is recognized, but also vedanā, sañña $\bar{a}$ (recognition), and other mental factors also arise.
- For example, if we have seen that tree in the past, the mansikāra cetasika can feed that information too, so we will know the name of the tree instantly; see "Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)."

11. In another example, let us consider what happens when we tap a glass with a spoon. Of course, we will hear the tapping sound.

- Where did that sound come from" Was it in the glass? No. Was the sound in the spoon? No.
- The sound was emitted as a result of the spoon hitting the glass. If the spoon did not hit a glass, there would not be a tapping sound.
- In the same way, unless a " $r \bar{u} p a$ " or an image taken in by the eyes came to cakkhu pasāda and made it hit the hadaya vatthu, there would not be a "seeing event" or a cakkhu viññāna.

12. So, there is no "entity" called the mind. The mind arises when we receive sense inputs via the five physical senses, as described above.

- What we loosely call the "mind" is the viññānakkhandha that arises in a billionth of a second after going through a fast process of citta, mano, mānasaì, ..: See "Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)."
- We can not only hear the tapping sound, but we can also see the glass and the spoon simultaneously. But those two events do not happen "at exactly the same time." They just appear to be simultaneous.
- What comes to the mind is a series of sense inputs (via all five physical senses) in rapid succession. We just perceive it all to happen at the same time.

13. How this is possible is explained in the post, "Citta and Cetasika - How Viñ̃̃āna (Consciousness) Arises" and other posts in the following sub section: "Citta and Cetasika."

- As explained there, the process is similar to how a motion picture works. When making a movie, the producers take many many static pictures (with a video camera) and then play them back at a fast enough speed. If the playback speed is too slow, we can see individual pictures, but above a certain "projection rate," it looks like real motion. Here is a video that illustrates this well:
WebLink: youtube: Animation basics: The optical illusion of motion - TED-Ed

14. When we see the outside world, what happens is very similar to the above. At the end of the video it is stated that the "movie" we see is an illusion. As the Buddha explained, that holds for real life as well. In real life, when we see someone coming toward us, we see a series of "static pictures" or citta projected at a very fast rate in our minds, giving us the illusion of a "movie like experience."

- The mind is very fast. The Buddha said that nothing in this world is faster than the mind. That is why we feel that all types of sense inputs come to "one's mind" simultaneously. In reality, they are discrete snapshots, just like movie frames!
- But just like we see a continuous movie (that is really a large number of individual picture frames), we feel like we have a continuous mind.

15. Now to the second issue on the mind. Why do we experience the outside world our way, and have our feelings and perceptions about a given sense input (love or anger when seeing the same person, for example)? That is why we feel like "I have my own mind."

- The key is to realize that our response to the external sense inputs is unique because we have our "own way" of perceiving and evaluating those sensory inputs based on the set of gati we have.

16. As we discussed in the previous post, "Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)," our feelings, as well as our initial responses, reflect our personality or our gati.

- There we also discussed why the types of sensory input also play an important role. So, our INITIAL response to an external sense input depends on BOTH one's gati AND the types of sensory input.
- That was an important post, so it may be beneficial to review it again. In this series of posts, I will try to highlight some key features of Buddha Dhamma that will truly help get rid of sakkāya ditṭhi. That is the key to the sotāpanna stage.

17. In other words, our "state of mind" depends on our gati and the sensory inputs we receive. Furthermore, we don't have "a fixed mind"; it can change rapidly.

- If you think back, I am sure you can remember times when you felt like your mind was filled with greed; other times with love, yet another time with anger, etc.
- As one progresses on the Path, these extreme swings of "one's mind" will become less, which is the key to nirāmisa sukha, eventually leading to Nibbāna.
- Each of us does not have a fixed mind. That means we don't generate "our own" saññā, vedana $\bar{a}$, sañkhāra, viññāna. In other words, we do not have our saññākkhandha, vedanākkhandha, sañkhārakkhandha, and viññānakkhandha.
- Moreover, it is not fruitful to take any of them as "mine." That perception is part of Sakkāya dițthi.

18. Sakkāya dittthi can be stated as the following wrong assumptions. "I am my body", "I am my vedanā," "I am my sañ̃n̄a," "I am my sañkhāra," and "I am my viññ̄ạna." The last four can be lumped together as "I am my mind." But a better way to remove Sakkāya ditṭhi is to realize that: "All those entities are not worthwhile to be taken as mine."

- We tend to think automatically that "I have my own body," "I have my own mind," and "it is fruitful to be taken them as mine."
- Let us first analyze the mind and see whether that statement is true. In the next post, we will address "I have my own body" and "it is fruitful to be taken as mine."
- The Buddha analyzed how the mind arises step-by-step, by breaking down the process. That is why he called himself a "Vibhajjavādi"; see, "WebLink: suttacentral: Subha Sutta (MN 99)": "Vibhajjavādo kho ahamettha, mānava; nāhamettha ekamisavādo.." or "Young man, I am a Vibhajjavādi (one who analyzes from many aspects by dividing a given process to parts), I do not hold a fixed view based on just one aspect."

In the next post, we will discuss why it is not fruitful to take one's body as "one's own." But it is important to know that the perception of "me" goes away only at the Arahant stage; see, "Sakkāya Ditthi is Personality (Me) View?."

### 10.6 Chachakka Sutta - Six Types of Vipāka Viññāṇa

October 19, 2019; revised \#12 on September 28, 2020; April 3, 2021; Title revised December 30, 2021; August 29, 2022

## [Old Title : Chachakka Sutta - No "Self" in Initial Sensory Experience]

## Cha chakka - Six Sets of Sixes

1. We have finished discussing the six steps in the Chachakka Sutta. See "Worldview of the Buddha." Let us briefly summarize the "six sets of sixes" (Cha chakka.)

- The sutta first lists the "six sets" or "six collections." "Cha ajjhattikāni āyatanāni veditabbāni, cha bāhirāni āyatanāni veditabbāni, cha viññānakāyā veditabbā, cha phassakāyā veditabbā, cha vedanākāyā veditabbā, cha taṇhāk $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$ veditabbā."

That means: "One needs to understand the following "six sets of sixes": Six internal āyatana, six external $\bar{a} y a t a n a$, six classes of (vipāka) viñ̃̄̄ $\bar{a} n a$, six classes of phassa, six classes of vedanā, six classes of tanh $\bar{a}$. Let us briefly state what they are. I have explained them in detail in the preceding posts.

- Six internal āyatana are: "Cakkhāyatanaín, sotāyatanaín, ghānāyatanaì, jivhāyatanamं, kāyāyatanaí, manāyatanam."‘
- Six external āyatana are: "Rūpāyatanaì, saddāyatanaín, gandhāyatanaim, rasāyatanamं, phoṭthabbāyatanaì, dhammāyatanam்."
- Six classes of (vipāka) viññāna are: "cakkhuviññāna, sotaviññạna, ghānaviññāna, jïvhāviññāṇa, kāyaviññāna, manoviññāna."
- The six classes of phassa: "Cakkhuñca pațicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññānain, tiṇnamं sañgati phasso" and similarly for the other five (i.e., they are six types of "san phassa"),
- Six classes of vedanā: "phassa paccayā vedana"" arising from each of the preceding six types of "san phassa."
- Six classes of taṇhā: "vedanā paccayā tanhhā" due to the preceding six types of vedanā.
- It could be a good idea to print out the Pāli version of the sutta so that you can track which section of the sutta a verse under discussion is.


## Chachakka Sutta Describes Initial Sensory Experiences Based on a New Ārammaṇa

2. About the first fourth of the "WebLink: suttacentral: Chachakka Sutta (MN 148)" discusses the following steps: "Cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññānà், tiṇnam̀ sañgati phasso, phassa paccayā vedanā, vedanā paccayā taṇhā." (repeated for all six sense faculties.)

The sutta describes the automatic and instantaneous response to a new ärammana. In several posts, we discussed in detail all those steps. Very briefly, those steps are (just focusing on the cakkhu viññāna):

- With the coming together (contact) between cakkhu (or cakkhu pasāda rūpa) and a rūpa (which is a "snapshot" of that external rūpa), cakkhu viñ̃̃āṇa arises. Cakkhu is NOT the physical eyes; "seeing" happens only when a rūpa makes contact with cakkhu pasāda. Please review previous posts as needed.
- If that $r \bar{u} p a$ has a kāma guña, one may get interested in it (if one has the corresponding "san gati"). The next step takes place ONLY IF one has such matching gati for that $r \bar{u} p a$ or that $\bar{a} r a m m a n ̃ a$.
- If one has matching "san gati"" then a corresponding "samphassa-j $\bar{a}-\mathrm{vedan} \vec{a} "$ arises AUTOMATICALLY. See, "Vipāka Vedanā and "Samphassa jā Vedanā" in a Sensory Event."
- The next step, "vedanā paccay $\bar{a}$ tanh $\bar{a}$," happens if that "samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedan $\bar{a} "$ is strong enough to take further action. We discussed that last step in, "Kāma Guna - Origin of Attachment (Tanhā)."


## A Ārammana triggers sensory Experiences

3. Therefore, the sutta describes the events that occur when a new ārammana comes to mind via one of the six internal sense bases (internal āyatana).

- It is essential to see that ALL these activities happen AUTOMATICALLY and INSTANTANEOUSLY. They do not require CONSCIOUS thinking. There is no INTENTION involved.
- That is a critical point to understand. You might say, "I can use any sensory faculties (internal äyatana) anytime I want to." That is true. But think about any event, and you can ALWAYS trace it back to a arammaṇa that comes to mind on its own.
- For example, you may see and hear many things when walking down a crowded street. But one sight or sound could stop you and start doing something else. You may see an eye-catching item in a store window, stop to look at it, and then go inside to buy it. That was triggered via, "cakkhuñca paticca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññānam.". The sutta describes what happens ONLY at the MOMENT that you saw the item. Once you get "attached to it," you start generating vacī sañkhāra (consciously thinking about the item) and kāya sañkhāra (go inside the store). That is the "kamma generation" stage. We will discuss that in later posts.
- Even in the middle of a discussion, one may get a new idea, and then everyone may start talking about that new idea he/she presented. The conversation changes to a new topic with the new ārammana. That happened with a dhamm $\bar{a}$ (an idea) that came to the mind via "manañca paṭicca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviññānam்."


## Chachakka Sutta Describes Only Kamma Vipāka

4. All the steps in \#2 above happen within a fraction of a second. There is no conscious thinking involved. They are all kamma vipāka.

- Of course, that process describes only those events immediately following the INITIAL sensory contact. One can deliberately experience that sensory contact again and again after the initial experience. For example, one may keep looking at an interesting sight or keep listening to a pleasing sound. That is when one accumulates a new kamma (if done with greed, anger, or ignorance). We will discuss those steps in future posts involving Paticca Samuppāda.
- Results of past kamma automatically lead to kamma vipāka. Based on them, we create a new kamma. That is how the rebirth process continues.


## Sensory Inputs - One "Packet" At a Time

5. As I discussed in detail in the previous post, all our sensory inputs are first processed by the brain in "packets." The brain can process those six types of data in parallel (at the same time). Each "packet" is about one-hundredth of a second ( 10 milliseconds) in duration. Those processed signals arrive at the seat of the mind (hadaya vatthu) located on the mental body (manomaya kāya or gandhabba). The mind, in turn, analyzes only ONE packet of information at a time. See the previous post, "Vision Is a Series of "Snapshots" - Movie Analogy."

- For example, while the mind is processing a "sight" or rūpa rūpa, it CAN NOT process a "sound" or a "sadda rūpa." After analyzing that "snapshot" of sight the mind switches to another sensory input. Of course, our eyes and ears do not "die" moment-to-moment. It is just that "cakkhu," for example, is ALIVE (or ACTIVE) only while the mind is processing input from the physical eyes.
- Therefore, ONLY ONE internal āyatana is "ALIVE" at a given moment. Our "cakkhu" comes alive while the mind receives a "snapshot" of an external rūpa. The "sota" is alive (or active) only during a brief moment of receiving a "bit of sound" like just a word. They come to the mind in "packets," not as a continuous stream. But it SEEMS that we experience them all simultaneously since the mind processes all inputs very quickly.
- The following example may help to get the basic idea. We have seen those signposts where a message runs one letter at a time, but at a fast rate. Only one letter is on display at a given moment. But within a fraction of a second, that letter turns off, the next letter turns on, and so on. Since it happens fast, we can read the message.
- The mind is swift. It can — not only put together such a stream of incoming signals — but also separate the six sensory inputs. In the previous post (see \#8 there), I briefly mentioned that the mind does this with the help of the manasikāra cetasika.
- More details in "Citta and Cetasika - How Viññāna (Consciousness) Arises."


## If Cakkhu Is "Attā," It Must Be Alive (or Operational) All The Time

Now let us discuss the next verse in the sutta. It helps understand what is meant by the critical Pāli words attā and sakkāya diṭthi.
6. We have the perception that there is a "self" that sees, hears, tastes, smells, touches, and recalls dhamm $\bar{a}$ all simultaneously.

- However, we do not experience all six sensory inputs simultaneously. Even with just one sensory input, the mind receives only a brief"snapshot" of it at a time. See, "Vision Is a Series of "Snapshots" - Movie Analogy."
- In other words, our six internal āyatana of cakkhu, sota, ghāna, jivhā, kāya, and mano arise ONLY if a corresponding ārammaṇa appears. As I have emphasized, our physical eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body are not our internal āyatana. See, "Buddhist Worldview - Introduction."
- Therefore, "one's self' is not in ANY of those 36 entities. All those come to existence momentarily and pass away. That happens from time-to-time only when a a arammana is registered.
- That is a critical conclusion that is related to "anattã." It will also become clear that anatt $\bar{a}$ differs from anatta (without the long " $\vec{a}$ "). Let us discuss anatta $\bar{a}$ in detail now.


## A "Self" Is Not Involved in The Preceding Processes

7. After going through the steps in \#2 above, the next part of the sutta starts with the verse, "Cakkhu attā'ti yo vadeyya taì na upapajjati. Cakkhussa uppādopi vayopi paññāyati. Yassa kho pana uppādopi vayopi paññāyati, 'attā me uppajjati ca veti cā'ti iccassa evamāgatam hoti. Tasmā tarin na upapajjati: 'cakkhu attā'ti yo vadeyya. Iti cakkhu anattā."

Loosely translated: "If anyone says, 'The cakkhu is self,' (or "seeing" is mine or "it is I who sees") that is not tenable. An arising and disappearing of cakkhu (not the physical eye) is evident. If cakkhu is 'self,' that would imply: 'my self arises and disappears' OR 'I come into being momentarily and disappear.' That is why it cannot be argued that 'The eye is self.' Thus cakkhu is 'not-self' or 'anattā." ("na att $\vec{a}$ " for "not $a t t \bar{a} "$ r rymes as "anatt $\bar{a}$, " just as "na a $a \bar{a} m i "$ " rhymes as "Anāgāmi.")

- That verse is then repeated for the other five entities related to $c a k k h u$, i.e., rūpa, cakkhu viññāna, cakkhu samphassa, cakkhu samphassa-jā-vedanā, taṇhā (due to cakkhu samphassa-jā-vedanā.) The last verse in that series is, "Iti cakkhu anattā, rūpa anattā, cakkhuviññannaím anattā, cakkhusamphasso anatt $\bar{a}$, vedana $a n a t t \bar{a}$, tanhhā anattā."
- Then that is repeated for the six entities associated with sota, ghāna, jivhā, k $\bar{a} y a$, and mano ( $6 \times 6$ ). The last verse is, "Iti mano anattā, dhammā anattā, manoviñ̃n̄̄n̄aì anattā, manosamphasso anatt $\bar{a}$, vedan $\bar{a}$ anatt $\bar{a}$, taṇhā anatt $\bar{a}$." At this point, we are about halfway through the text in the sutta.
- Therefore, "self" can be found in any of those.
- Now let us discuss two other suttā briefly to make those points clear.


## Bāhiya Sutta - "Diṭthe Diṭthamattaim Bhavissati"

8. In the "WebLink: suttacentral: Bāhiya Sutta (Udāna 1.10)," the Buddha tells Bāhiya, "Tasmātiha te, bāhiya, evaì sikkhitabbaì: 'dițthe dițthamattaì bhavissati, sute sutamattaì bhavissati, mute mutamattaì bhavissati, viññāte viññ̄atamattaì bhavissatī'ti.

Translated: "Bāhiya, you should train yourself the following way. At any moment, what you see (diț̣he) is just a snapshot (ditṭhamattaim is literally, "trace of a sight.") What you hear (sute) is a brief sound (sutamattain.) What you experience with taste, smell, and touch (mute) is a trace of that (mutamattain.) Your viñ̃̄̄ạna (viññāte) is a trace of viñnāṇa (viññātamattaì.)

Then the Buddha further explains, "Yato kho te, bāhiya, ditthe ditṭhamattain bhavissati, sute sutamattaì bhavissati, mute mutamattaì bhavissati, viññāte viññātamattaì bhavissati, tato tvain, bāhiya, na tena; yato tvaim, bāhiya, na tena tato tvaì, bāhiya, na tattha; yato tvaim, bāhiya, na tattha, tato tvamं, bāhiya, nevidha na hurain na ubhayamantarena. Esevanto dukkhassā" $t i$.

Translated: "Since what you see (dittthe) is just a snapshot (and similarly for others), Bāhiya, there is no "you" (involved) the re; because of that, Bāhiya, you should not get attached (na tattha); if you do that, Bāhiya, "you" are not in this existence (nevidha) or another existence (na hurain) or in between those two (na ubhayam antarena.") That (understanding) is the end of suffering (Esevanto dukkhassā" $t i$.

My comments:

- That means it is incorrect to say there is a "self" experiencing those traces of sensory events. Those are just results (vipāka) of past kamma, i.e., causes bring corresponding results. We will explain this further with the Mālukyaputta Sutta below.
- However, the above description may give the impression that everything is deterministic. That is not so, and that will become clear when we address what happens following the initial "vipāka stage."
- Many people incorrectly translate "mattam" to English as "only." For example, most current translators translate "ditt the dittthamattam" as "seeing is only seeing."
- Ditṭhamatta means "a snapshot" (literally a "trace of seeing."). For example, appamatta means "insignificant." "appa" means "little" and "matta" means "a trace." Matta is "mātra" in Sanskrit and "O sso in Sinhala. As we discussed in the previous post, the mind (or the viññāna) gives us the illusion of a continuous sensory experience implying an "experiencer." That is why the Buddha said that viññanna is a magician. See \#2 of, "Vision Is a Series of "Snapshots" - Movie Analogy."


## Mälukyaputta Sutta - Same Verse In More Details

9. Those above verses in \#8 are also in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Mälukyaputta Sutta (SN 35.95)," where the Buddha tells bhikkhu Mālukyaputta, "Ettha ca te, mālukyaputta, diṭthasutamutaviññātabbesu dhammesu ditṭhe diṭthamattain bhavissati, sute sutamattaiं bhavissati, mute mutamattam bhavissati, viññ̄te viñnātamattam bhavissati. Yato kho te, mālukyaputta, diṭthasutamutaviñnātabbesu dhammesu ditṭhe diṭthamattaì bhavissati, sute sutamattaì bhavissati, mute mutamattaì bhavissati, viñ̃n̄̄̄e viñ̃n̄̄̄tamattaì bhavissati; tato tvaì, mālukyaputta, na tena. Yato tvaín, mālukyaputta, na tena; tato tvaí, mālukyaputta, na tattha. Yato tvaí, mālukyaputta,
na tattha; tato tvaì, mālukyaputta, nevidha, na huraí, na ubhayamantarena. Esevanto dukkhass $\vec{a}$ "ti.

- That is very similar to Bāhiya Sutta above. However, now bhikkhu Mālukyaputta recounts what he understood. That is very informative.


## Mālukyaputta Sutta - What Happens If One Gets Attached

10. Bhikkhu Mālukyaputta then says that he understood what the Buddha meant by the above verse. He explains his understanding:
'Rūpaì disvā sati muṭthā,
Piyam nimittam manasi karoto;
Sārattacitto vedeti,
Tañca ajjhosa tiṭthati.
Tassa vaḍ̣hanti vedanā, anek $\bar{a} r u \bar{p} a s a m b h a v a \bar{a}$; Abhijjhā ca vihesā ca, cittamassūpahaññati;
Evaì ācinato dukkhain, $\bar{a} r a ̄ n i b b a ̄ n a ~ v u c c a t i . ' ~$

## Translation:

"When one sees a form (rūpa) without mindfulness (i.e., without knowing that it is just a trace of "seeing"), one gets attached to that (nimitta or ārammana),
One experiences it with an infatuated mind (with greed)
And remains bound to it.
"Many feelings flourish within,
Originating from the mind thinking about many related $r \bar{u} p a$ (anek $\bar{a} r \bar{u} p a s a m b h a v \bar{a}$ );
Greed and anger as well
By which one's mind becomes disturbed;
For one who accumulates suffering thus
Nibbāna is far away.

## Mālukyaputta Sutta - What Happens If One Does Not Get Attached

11. Bhikkhu Mālukyaputta then says the following about how one needs to train oneself to attain Nibbāna:
'Na so rajjati rūpesu, rūpaì disvā patissato; Virattacitto vedeti, tañca nājjhosa titṭhati.

Yathāssa passato rūpaì, sevato cāpi vedanā̀̈;
Khīyati nopacīyati,
evaì so caratī sato; Evaí apacinato dukkhaí, santike nibbāna vuccati.'

## Translation:

"When one sees a form with mindfulness (with proper understanding)
One is not inflamed by lust for forms;
One experiences it with a dispassionate mind

And does not hold on to it tightly.
"For one acting mindfully in such a way
Without attaching to the form,
Even while one experiencing those feelings;
Suffering is exhausted, not built up
For one not piling up suffering thus,
Nibbāna is near.

## Next Post

12. From what bhikkhu Mālukyaputta stated above, we can see that it is not correct to say that it is "noself," either. After the "vipāka stage" that comes with a new ārammaṇa is over, it is possible to "take control' of the sensory experience. That is possible ONLY IF one comprehends that anattā nature is involved in the vipāka stage. Without that understanding, one would have sakkāya diṭthi as the sutta points out next.

- Aside from those who are anxious to see why it is not correct to say that it is "no-self," either: At the end of the vipāka stage (at the step, "vedanā paccay $\bar{a} \tanh \bar{a}$ "), a new phase of the sensory experience starts. That is the "kamma accumulation" stage. That new phase could last a long time if the mind is firmly attached to that ārammana. One may think about more ways of enjoying that ārammana, speak about it, and do things to pursue that ārammana. All those are sankhhāra, and they lead to kamma viññāna via, "sañkhāra paccayā viññāna."
- However, Chachakka sutta starts at the vipāka stage (with a sensory experience) and shows how one starts accumulating kamma ONLY IF one has sañgati (if one has the corresponding "san gati"). See \#2 above. That decision to "get attached" is made at the votthapana stage of a citta vithi. See, \#15 of "Avyākata Paticca Samuppāda for Vipāka Viñ̃̃āna."
- That is what bhikkhu Mālukyaputta explained in \#10 and \#11 above. We will discuss that in detail after finishing the discussion on the Chachakka Sutta.
- Details of that "kamma accumulation" process will depend on whether one would still have sakkāya dittthi. That means one does not realize that there is no "self" or "att $\vec{a}$ " involved in that initial sensory experience due to kamma vipāka.
- That is the next verse in the Chachakka Sutta, which we will discuss in the next post.


### 10.7 Sakkāya Ditṭhi in Terms of Attā or "Self" or "Ātma"

October 26, 2019; revised November 1, 2019; October 9, 2022

## Summary of Chachakka Sutta Up to This Point

1. The Chachakka Sutta (MN 148) describes in detail what happens when a new ārammaṇa (thought object) comes to the mind. The mind may "attach" (taṇhā) to that ārammana via greed, anger, or ignorance. Let us briefly summarize those steps. All relevant posts are at, "Origin of Life."

- First, depending on the specific internal ayyatana involved, one of six vipāka viññanna arises. Those are cakkhu, sota, ghāna, jivhā, kāya, or mano viññāna. Such a viññāna does not create kammic energy. It is just "seeing," "hearing," "smelling," "tasting," "touching," or "recalling a memory or an idea."
- Then the mind "makes contact" with "san gati." If one has gati to attach to that ārammaṇa via greed, anger, or ignorance, then the mind GENERATES corresponding somanassa, domanassa, or upekkha $v e d a n \bar{a}$. They are samphassa-j $\bar{a}-v e d a n \bar{a}$ or mind-made vedan $\bar{a}$.
- The mind "attaches" to that $\bar{a} r a m m a n a ~ i f ~ s u c h ~ a ~ " m i n d-m a d e " ~ v e d a n a ̄ ~ a r i s e s . ~ O n e ~ c a n ~ a t t a c h ~(t a n ̣ h ~ \bar{a}) ~$ via greed, hate, or ignorance.
- The keyword ārammaṇa was introduced in the post, "Vipāka Vedanā and "Samphassa jā Vedanā" in a Sensory Event."


## The Unique Situation For an Arahant

2. Only the first step happens in an Arahant. There is no attachment to any ārammana. Only the experience of kāma guna (such as the sweetness of sugar or the bitterness of lemon) is there. See, "Kāma Guna Origin of Attachment (Tanhhā)."

- However, an Arahant would also feel $k \bar{a} y i k a$ (bodily) vedanā due to injuries, sicknesses, etc. Those are $d u k k h a$, sukha, or adukkhamasukha vedanā. Note that an Arahant does not experience somanassa/domanassa vedana $($ Samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedan $\bar{a})$ ) based on those k $\bar{a} y i k a$ (bodily) vedana $\overline{\text {. }}$
- Anyone other than an Arahant MIGHT attach to a particular ārammana. Whether or not that attachment happens depends on the "san gati." It is not that everyone attaches to every ārammana.


## Deeper Aspects of the Chachakka Sutta

3. We also discussed the "deeper aspects" involved in those steps.

- Only one of the six types of viñ̃āạa arises in mind at any moment due to a specific ārammaṇa. When we see, do not hear, smell, taste, touch, or think AT THAT BRIEF MOMENT. That is because only one citta vith focused on one sensory input can be present at any moment. Put another way, only one pasāda rūpa can contact the hadaya vatthu (seat of the mind) at a given time. The mind analyzes that sensory contact with four citta vīthi JUST FOCUSED ON that particular sensory input.
- For example, when the mind analyzes a "packet of sound," it focuses on that sound. The mind DOES NOT and CANNOT see, taste, smell, etc. during that brief time. Thus sensory inputs are analyzed in "packets." Each "packet" is only one of six possible types (sight, sound, taste, smell, touch, or recall of dhammā.)
- We analyzed that in terms of recent findings from modern science. The mind takes "snapshots" of each sensory input separated by about a hundredth of a second (10 milliseconds.) Since that happens very fast, we "feel like" we are "seeing continuously." That is an illusion created by the mind, just like we perceive a set of snapshots as a continuous movie. See, "Vision Is a Series of "Snapshots" - Movie Analogy."
- Not only that, but we feel that we are seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, touching, and thinking simultaneously. But the reality is that the mind receives only one "snapshot" at a time. The mind has the astounding capability to combine "data packets" from the "six doors" without mixing them up!


## What is Ghāna Sañ $\tilde{n} \bar{a}$ ?

4. The fast mind gives the illusion that there is a "person" or a "self" or an "atta" experiencing those sensory events. That incorrect perception is "ghāna sañ̃̄ $\bar{a} "$ " or a "perception of solidity."

- I had not used the term "ghāna sañ̃̃"̄" previously. It is a word that describes the illusion that the mind creates by taking a series of "snapshots" and linking them together to provide a "continuous sensory experience."
- As we discussed, that happens when we watch a movie too. The illusion of continuous motion results in the projection of a series of "static pictures." See, "Vision Is a Series of "Snapshots" - Movie Analogy."

5. Any sensory event is just a brief "snapshot." It lasts a brief moment and goes to the past. That is the critical point to understand. Bāhiya understood that point instantly and attained Arahanthood. But he had cultivated the path almost to the end and needed a "little push" to get there. We discussed that in the previous post, "Chachakka Sutta - Six Types of Vipāka Viññāna."

- The mind has the astounding capability to recall preceding "snapshots," and to put it all together to present a "continuous sensory experience." That is why the Buddha called viññāna a magician.

6. We also have a "ghāna sañ̃ $\bar{a} "$ " about our physical body. We perceive our bodies as solid, but as I have explained in a previous post, our bodies are "mostly empty." That is because those atoms and molecules which make up our bodies are mostly empty. see, \#7-\#10 of the post, "Mystical Phenomena in Buddhism? ."

- I keep summarizing the discussion since there is a lot of material embedded in those verses. Now, let us discuss the next verse in the sutta.


## Next Verse in the Chachakka Sutta - Sakkāya Samudaya

We have discussed up to the verse which ends with, "Iti mano anatt $\bar{a}$, dhamm $\bar{a}$ anattā, manoviññannam anattā, manosamphasso anattā, vedana anattā, tanhh $\bar{a}$ anatt $\bar{a}$." Now we are getting to the critical conclusion reached from those earlier verses.
7. The next verse in the sutta starts with, "Ayaim kho pana, bhikkhave, sakkāyasamudayagāmin̄̄ pațipadā-cakkhum 'etain mama, esohamasmi, eso me attā'ti samanupassati, rūpe 'etaì mama, esohamasmi, eso me attà'ti samanupassati; ..."

- Sakkāya here refers to sakkāya diṭthi. Samudaya ("san" + "udaya") means "arising (due to) san." Gāmini means "path." Patipada means an "action plan" or simply one's behavior. Thus, sakkāyasamudayagāmin̄ patipadā means, "the behavior that leads to the arising of sakkāya dittehi."
- Then it says, sakkāya ditṭhi arises because one believes that "cakkhu is mine, cakkhu is what I am, cakkhu is my "self."
- The sutta then repeats that for all other five entities associated with "seeing." They are rūpa, cakkhu viññāna, cakkhu samphassa, cakkhu samphassa-j̄ā-vedanā, and tanhhā (that results from cakkhu samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedanā.)
- Then it is repeated for the other five internal āyatana: sota, ghāna, jivhā, kāya, mano.


## Re-cap on the Initial Sensory Experience Due to Kamma Vipāka

8. All our discussions on the first half of the sutta led to the CRITICAL conclusion in the above verse. In simple terms, "there is no EXPERIENCER" experiencing those initial sensory inputs. As we remember, those INITIAL sensory inputs come in as kamma vipāka.

- Let me emphasize this point. Any sensory experience starts without direct initiation by the "experiencer." For example, one FIRST sees an object via "cakkhuñca paticca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññannaì." But that does not happen by chance. It is ALWAYS a kamma vipāka.
- A kamma vipāka experienced through the physical body (kāya) can be comforting (sukha), painful (dukkha), or neutral (adukkhamasukha). For example, one gets to lie on a comfortable bed due to a good kamma done in the past. A bad kamma done in the past leads to an injury. Both happen via "kāyañca paticca phoṭ̣habbe ca uppajjati kāyaviññāṇam." "

9. All other INITIAL sensory EXPERIENCES START with adukkhamasukha vedan $\bar{a}$. We see, hear, smell, taste, or a thought comes to the mind. The last one is, "manañca pațicca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviññānaì." All those generate adukkhamasukha vedanā (neutral feeling).

- However, based on all six initial sensory contacts, we may instantly generate somanassa or domanassa vedanā due to kāma guna. For example, it is natural for a human (including Arahants) to experience an appealing taste when tasting sugar or seeing an attractive person.
- Based on those are "mind-made" feelings or "samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedanā." They are different from dukkha/sukha vedanā associated with sensory contacts with the body (kāya.)
- Now, based on such somanassa or domanassa vedanā due to kāma guṇa, an average human MAY generate samphassa-jā-vedana $\bar{a}$. That will happen IF the mind "get stuck" (tanh $\bar{a})$ on that sensory input. Of course, an Arahant WILL NOT generate those samphassa-jā-vedana $\overline{\text {. }}$
- That was discussed in, "Kāma Guna - Origin of Attachment (Tanhā)."


## Taṇhā Leads to Upādāna via Paṭicca Samuppāda

10. That is a critical step in Paticca Samuppāda, not discussed in the Chachakka Sutta. That sutta explains only the KAMMA VIP $\bar{A} K A$ stage. That step of "tanhhā paccaya upādāna" starts the "new kamma GENERATION" process.

- I hope you can see that ALL of our kamma generation activities start when a new ārammaña comes to mind. That starts with the "salāyatana paccayā phasso" step in the Paticca Samuppāda cycle. It is the "tanh $\bar{a}$ paccayā upādāna" step that starts a new Paticca Samuppāda cycle with "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra."
- That is a CRITICAL point. I will take the time to explain this "tanhhā paccayā upādāna" step. That way, one can get insights into how Paticca Samuppāda operates. Then one can begin to get an idea of the importance of understanding key concepts of Buddha Dhamma.


## A New Paṭicca Samuppāda Process Starts Only if One Starts Acting with Avijjā

11. Next, The Chachakka Sutta states the REASONS why a given person may START to going through the kamma generation stage starting with avijjā. See, "Chachakka Sutta - Six Types of Vipāka Viññ̄āna."

- One would pursue a given ārammana (the sight, sound, etc.) ONLY IF one perceives that it is worthwhile or beneficial to him or her. That perception comes from the wrong view that those sensory experiences are one's own. As we discussed, that wrong view is sakkāya diṭthi.
- One with sakkāya ditṭhi does not realize that those experiences are just results of causes from the past. That they are kamma vipāka. Then one tries to get control of the situation by either trying to maintain a
"good experience" or avoid a "bad experience." Therefore, it is POSSIBLE for ANYONE with sakkāya diṭṭhi to go through the "taṇhā paccayā upādāna" step.
- However, a Sotāpanna (who has removed sakkāya diṭthi) may still do immoral deeds. A Sotāpanna would NOT do apāyagāmī deeds. But he/she may still do less-strong immoral deeds. That is because a Sotāpanna still has wrong perceptions (viparita sañ̃̄̄̄.) At the Arahant stage, one would have removed both wrong views and perceptions. I will explain this in a future post after concluding the discussion on the Chachakka Sutta.

12. However, not everyone with sakkāya ditṭhi will go through the "taṇhā paccayā upādāna" step. Different people "attach" to different types of ārammaṇa.

- For example, if a beautiful woman starts working at a workplace, everyone will see her as beautiful. But only a few will get "attached" and start thinking about asking her for a date. There could even be a person who may "fall in love head over heels" at first sight of her.
- That is why we cannot say there is "no-self" either. Until one attains Arahanthood, there will be a "dynamic self" who gets attached to some things in this world. I say a "dynamic self" because there is no "fixed self" in the sense of a soul or a "ātma." See "What Reincarnates? - Concept of a Lifestream."


## Attachment (Taṇhā) Can Happen Due to Greed, Anger, or Ignorance

13. In the above example, we discussed getting attached to the sight of a beautiful woman. But as we have discussed, one can "attach" to a ārammaṇa via anger or ignorance.

- Seeing an enemy, one will instantly generate anger in mind via the steps in the Chachakka Sutta. Here, the samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedan $\bar{a}$ generated is a domanassa vedan $\bar{a}$. It is a stressful vedan $\bar{a}$. But still one "attaches" to that ārammaṇa, and will start making bad vacī sañkhāra (i.e., conscious thoughts of anger) in mind.
- On the other hand, the samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedanā generated in the example discussed in \#12 above (upon seeing a beautiful woman) is a somanassa vedana $\overline{\text {. That person is "attached" via greed. }}$
- In some situations, there could be confusion on how to respond to a ārammaṇa and still get "stuck." That is due to $a v i j j \bar{a}$.


## Taṇhā Leads to Upādāna Depending on One's Level of Avijjā

14. Having one or more of the following views leads to sakkāya ditṭhi.

- The physical body ( $k \bar{a} y a$ ) is mine, it is what I am, and it is my "self." Furthermore, all associated bodily functions are mine; they are what I am and my "self." Those are: seeing or cakkhu, hearing or sota, tasting or jivhā, smelling or ghāna, touching or kāya, and thinking or mana. See \#6 above.
- Then one also tends to associate some external rūpa the same way. Those are rūpa rūpa (or vaṇna rūpa or simply rūpa), sadda rūpa, gandha rūpa, rasa rūpa, phott habba rūpa, and dhamma rūpa or dhamm $\bar{a}$. For example, 'this is my house; my song; this is my cake; my favorite scent; my comfy bed; these are my thoughts."
- One may also perceive that all of one's mental aspects (cakkhu viñ̃̃āṇa, cakkhu samphassa, cakkhu samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedana $\bar{a}$, and $\operatorname{tanhha} \bar{a}$ ) are all one's "self." Of course, the same with other mental aspects associated with other sense faculties. There are 36 ( 6 X 6) such entities that the sutta lists. See, "Chachakka Sutta - Six Types of Vipāka Viññāna."


## Pañcupādānakkhandhā as Sakkāya Diț̣hi

15. Those 36 entities are also known as "pañcupādānakkhandhā." Here, Pañcupādānakkhandhā comes from "pañca" + "upādāna" + "khandha" or the five aggregates, to which one gets attached. See "Chachakka Sutta - Six Types of Vipāka Viññān̄a."

- If you carefully look at those 36 entities, they include rūpakkhandha, vedanākkhandha, sañ̃̄̄̄kkhandha, sañkhārakkhandha, and the viññāṇakkhandha. However, one does not consider all of those to be "mine." For example, out of all the houses in this world, one may claim to own one or a few homes. Out of all humans, one may have a set of people that one considers "mine." For example, my parents, wife, children, friends, etc.
- Therefore, only a tiny fraction of the pañcakkhandha one has "attachments to." Those attachments can vary from very strong (my body is the strongest) to decreasing levels for friends, neighbors, etc.
- Thus, pañcupādānakkhandhā is a small fraction of the pañcakkhandha.
- The "WebLink: suttacentral: Sakkāvapañhā Sutta (SN 38.15)" DEFINES sakkāya as pañcupādānakkhandhā: "'Sakkāyo, sakkāyo'ti, āvuso sāriputta, vuccati. Katamo nu kho, āvuso, sakkāyo"ti? "Pañcime, $\bar{a} v u s o, ~ u p a \bar{a} d \bar{a} n a k k h a n d h \bar{a}$ sakkāyo vutto bhagavatā, seyyathidaìrūpupādānakkhandho, vedanupādānakkhandho, saññupādānakkhandho, sañkhārupādānakkhandho, viññāṇupādānakkhandho. Ime kho, āvuso, pañcupādānakkhandhā sakkāyo vutto bhagavatā"ti.


## Other Ways of Describing Sakkāya Diṭthi

16. It is possible to describe sakkāya ditṭhi in somewhat different ways. However, all of those are interconsistent. The following posts discuss some of those. Please let me know if you find any inconsistencies (lal@puredhamma.net) or we can discuss it at the discussion forum.

- Sakkāya Ditthi is Personality (Me) View?
- Sakkāya Ditthi and Tilakkhana
- Sakkāya Ditthi - Getting Rid of Deeper Wrong Views


## Wrong Views of Nicca and Sukha Lead to the Wrong View of Attā

17. One gets attached to things one perceives to be nicca and sukha. Nicca (pronounced "nichcha") means we believe we can keep them in the way we want or like. Sukha means we think we will be happy by getting "ownership" of them.

- Then one takes "ownership" of them. One considers those to be "one's own" or "attā." That attachment can vary from very strong to less intense. One's own body and mental qualities (vedanā, sañña $\bar{a}$, sañkhāra, viñ̃̄āṇa regarding one's own body) give the strongest sense of att $\bar{a}$.
- Then comes one's spouse, children, house, cars, etc., relatives and friends, etc.
- Therefore, the hardest thing to remove is the sense of att $\bar{a}$ about one's body.
- IT CANNOT be removed by willpower. It comes only from understanding this world's anicca, dukkha, and anatta nature. What we discussed up to now plays a significant role in that understanding. There is no "experiencer." A sensory input comes in as a result (kāma vipāka) of a previous cause (kamma.)


# An Apparent "Self" Is Involved in Kamma Generation 

November 2, 2019; revised November 6, 2019; September 10, 2022; October 14,2022 (\#18)

## Introduction

1. Here, we will discuss why someone with sakkāya ditṭhi believes in a "self" (knowingly or unknowingly) and accumulates kamma with that wrong view.

- In previous posts in this series, we discussed why there is no "Experiencer." Thus, there is no need for the existence of a "self" to describe an INITIAL sensory experience.
- However, anyone with sakkāya ditṭhi has the wrong view of a "self" experiencing sensory inputs. Based on that mistaken view, steps are taken to maintain a "good experience" or to stop a "bad experience." Therefore, we could say there is a wrong view of a "Doer" as long as there is sakkāya dittthi. That is why it is incorrect to say that there is "no-self" either.
- That does not mean we do not need to take action to prevent bad outcomes. The key idea is to realize the unfruitfulness of doing immoral deeds (including conscious thoughts and speech) in response to sensory inputs.
- The Chachakka Sutta (MN 148) describes in detail what happens when a new ārammaṇa (thought object) comes to the mind. The mind may "attach" ( $\boldsymbol{t a n h} \overline{\boldsymbol{a}})$ automatically to that arrammaña via greed, anger, or ignorance. Let us briefly summarize those steps. It is critical to follow these steps. All relevant posts are at "Worldview of the Buddha." The main subsection is "Origin of Life."


## Posts on the Background Material

2. In earlier posts, we discussed that INITIAL sensory experiences DO NOT require a "self." However, they do not happen arbitrarily or randomly either. Those sensory experiences have causes (or reasons); they are kamma vipāka.

- Some kamma vipāka bring in suffering, such as injuries, sickness, etc., while other vipāka results in pleasurable experiences, such as good food, comfortable living, etc. Those are ALL experienced via the physical body ( $k \bar{a} y a$.) They are NOT illusions. There is real suffering (and some pleasures too.)
- All other INITIAL sensory experiences do not DIRECTLY lead to pain or pleasure. Seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and recalling memories are "neutral" sensory experiences at that moment.

3. However, based on those sensory inputs, somanassa or domanassa vedana arise automatically in the mind. Those are "mind-generated" vedanā based on "kāma guṇa." All humans (including Arahants) experience the sweetness of sugar or bitterness of some medicines. These are not "samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedan $\bar{a}$." However, for others, "samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedan $\vec{a}$ " arise due to such somanassa or domanassa vedan $\bar{a}$. See "Kāma Guna - Origin of Attachment (Tanhā)."

- Thus, based on somanassa or domanassa vedanā due to "kāma guṇa," a given person may attach (taṇh $\bar{a})$ to that particular sensory event (ārammaṇa) and generate samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedana $\bar{a}$. Only an Arahant is guaranteed not to attach.
- That is the summary of about a fourth of the Pāli text in the Chachakka Sutta (MN 148). That completes the six sets of six.


## No "Self" Involved in the Initial Sensory Experiences

4. As we have discussed, the next verse in the sutta is, "'Cakkhu attā'ti yo vadeyya tam na upapajjati. Cakkhussa uppādopi vayopi paññāyati. Yassa kho pana uppādopi vayopi paññāyati, 'attā me uppajjati ca veti cā'ti iccassa evamāgataì hoti. Tasmā tam na upapajjati: ‘cakkhu attā’ti yo vadeyya. Iti cakkhu anattā."

Loosely translated: "If anyone says, 'cakkhu is self,' (or "seeing" is mine or "it is I who sees") that is not tenable. An arising and ceasing of cakkhu (not the physical eye) is evident. If cakkhu is 'self,' that would imply the following: 'my self arises and ceases' OR 'I come into being momentarily and cease to exist.' That is why one cannot argue that 'cakkhu is self.' Thus cakkhu is 'not-self' or 'anatta.". ("na att $\bar{a}$ " for "not $a t t \bar{a} "$ r rymes as "anatta,", just as "na āgāmi" rhymes as "Anāgāmi.")

- Then the next fourth of the Pālitext in the Chachakka Sutta (MN 148) states that the above conclusion holds for all 36 entities ("six sets of sixes") involved in the initial sensory experience. Six internal $\bar{a} y a t a n a$, six external āyatana, six classes of (vipāka) viññāna, six classes of phassa, six classes of $\boldsymbol{v e d a n a}$, six classes of tanh $\overline{\boldsymbol{a}}$.
- See, "Chachakka Sutta - Six Types of Vipāka Viññāna"" for details on that.
- Then we discussed the next verse in the sutta starting with, "Ayam kho pana, bhikkhave, sakkāyasamudayagāmin̄̄ patipad̄̄.."


## Attā Translated as "Self" Is Not Correct

5. The Pāli word "att $\vec{a} "$ does not mean "self," even though I used that translation above. That translation is quite common these days. We will go with that until we finish discussing Paṭicca Samuppäda because it does help to get the idea of sakkāya ditthi across below. If I try to discuss the real meaning of atta right now, that could lead to confusion.

That is why the Buddha refused to answer Vaccagotta's question about whether or not there is an "att $\bar{a}$." See "WebLink: suttacentral: Ānanda Sutta (SN 44.10)."

- Vacchagotta comes to the Buddha asked "kim nu kho, bho gotama, atthattā" ti?" OR "Master Gotama, is it correct to say that there is an "att $\bar{a} "$ ?".
- Note that "atthatt $\bar{a} "$ is "atthi att $\bar{a} "$ where "atthi" means "exists." Vacchagotta meant in this case "attā" to be "self." Thus, Vacchagotta meant: "Is it correct to say that a "self" exists?"
- The Buddha remained silent, and Vacchagotta asked the question in the negative form. The second time, he asked: "Kim pana, bho gotama, natthatt $\overrightarrow{\boldsymbol{a}}$ " $t i$ ?" or, "Master Gotama, is it not correct to say that there is a "self"?". Seeing that the Buddha refused to answer his question, Vacchagotta got up and left.
- Note that "natthatt $\bar{a}$ " is made up of three words: "na atthi att $\bar{a}$, " which negates "atthatt $\bar{a}$. ." Just as these days, many people are confused about the Pāli word "atta" and the Sanskrit word "ātma." The latter meaning is closer to a "soul"
- I will discuss this sutta when I will discuss "attā" in detail, after discussing Pațicca Samuppāda. By the way, Vacchagotta understood the concept later on and became an Arahant too.


## The Origin of the Wrong View of Sakkāya Diṭṭhi - Sakkāya Samudaya

6. The sutta then states that the wrong view of sakkāya ditṭhi arises BECAUSE one does not realize the above facts. Without knowing those facts, one tends to BELIEVE that a "self" is experiencing those first sensory events.

- Then, if it were a "good experience," one would try to maintain that pleasant experience and also plan to experience it again in the future. In the case of a "bad experience," one would do the opposite to avoid such "bad experiences."
- The more one engages in either kind of such activity, the wrong VIEW of a "self" (sakkāya ditthi) grows.

7. That explanation is in a short verse starting with, "Ayam kho pana, bhikkhave, sakkāyasamudayagāmin̄ patipad $\bar{a}-c a k k h u \dot{m}$ 'etaì mama, esohamasmi, eso me attà’ti samanupassati; rūpe 'etaì mama, esohamasmi, eso me attā’ti samanupassati; ..."

- We discussed this verse in detail in the last post, "Sakkāya Ditthi in Terms of Attā or "Self" or "Ātma."
- So far I have summarized the discussion up to now. Now, we can discuss the next verse of the sutta.


## Next Verse in the Chachakka Sutta - Sakkāya Nirodhaya

The verse in \#7 above explains how sakkāya ditṭhi ARISES. The new verse below explains HOW sakkāya diṭthi WILL STOP FROM ARISING.
8. The next verse in the Chachakka Sutta (MN 148) starts with, "Ayaim kho pana, bhikkhave, sakkāyanirodhagāmin̄̄ patipad̄̄-cakkhumं 'netaì mama, nesohamasmi, na meso attā’ti samanupassati. Rūpe ‘netaì mama, nesohamasmi, na meso attā'ti samanupassati..."

The word Nirodha comes from "nir"+"udaya," where "nir" means to stop and "udaya" means "arise." Thus nirodha means to prevent something from arising.

- Gāmini means "path." Paṭipadà means an "action plan" or one's behavior. Thus, sakkāyanirodhagāmin̄̄ patipadā means, "the behavior that leads to STOPPING the arising of sakkāya diț̣hi."
- Then it says, that will happen when one "SEES" that "cakkhu is NOT mine, cakkhu is NOT what I am, cakkhu is NOT my "self." Here, "netaim" means "na" + "etam" or "it is not."
- That is because, in reality, there is no "self" or a "soul" or a "ātma" that is associated with a living being. The sensory experiences arise due to past causes. Yet, we cannot explain the response of an average human to those sensory experiences without the assumption of a "self." The response of an average human to such sensory inputs can only be explained by taking into account his/her mindset of believing in a "self."
- (Once we discuss Paticca Samuppāda, it will become clear why future suffering arises BECAUSE of that wrong view of sakkāya dițthi. That is how sakkāya ditṭthi can be removed. Only then can we also understand the real meaning of attalatt $\bar{a}$ (and anattalanatt $\bar{a}$.) I do not want to get into that issue right now because that will confuse many people.)

9. The sutta repeats that for all other five entities associated with "seeing." They are rūpa, cakkhu viññāna, cakkhu samphassa, cakkhu samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedanā, and taṇh $\bar{a}$ (that results from cakkhu samphassa-j $\bar{a}-$ vedanā.)

- Then it is repeated for the other five internal àyatana: sota, ghāna, jivhā, kāya, and mano. Please go through those verses.
- However, it may NOT be easy to "see" that no "self" is involved in sensory experiences. We have had the wrong view of sakkāya ditṭhi virtually forever! That is why we are in this never-ending rebirth process.
- To remove that strong ditṭhi, we need to see the "true nature," i.e., we need to cultivate "yathäbhūta $\tilde{n} \bar{a} n a . "$ A big part is realizing that there is no "experiencer," as we have discussed in detail using the movie analogy. There are only causes and results; the results are according to the causes AND conditions at the time of bringing the results. That is Paticca Samuppāda. See, "Vision Is a Series of "Snapshots" - Movie Analogy."
- We will focus on that in detail in upcoming posts. However, this sutta briefly states the primary process.


## Sakkāya Nirodhaya Starts With Vedanā

10. The key to arriving at that UNDERSTANDING is stated in the next verse of the sutta, starting with, "Cakkhuñca, bhikkhave, paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññannaì, tiṇnam sañgati phasso, phassapaccayā uppajjati vedayitaim sukhaì vā dukkhaì vā adukkhamasukhaiं vā."

Translated: "Bhikkhus, dependent on the eye and forms, eye-consciousness arises; then the mind makes contact with "san gati"; that contact with "san gati" leads to the arising of "mind-made" feelings felt as pleasant or painful or neither-painful-nor-pleasant."

- Regardless of the sense faculty, those "mind-made" vedanā or "samphassa-jā-vedanä" CAN ARISE based on kāma guṇa AND one's gati.
- We discussed this part of the verse already in the posts, "Indriya Make Phassa and Āyatana Make Samphassa," "Vipāka Vedanā and "Samphassa jā Vedanā" in a Sensory Event," and "Kāma Guna Origin of Attachment (Tanhā)."


## Getting Attached to Vedanā Leads to the Growth of Anusaya

11. Then the subsequent verses introduce a critical word, anusaya. Based on sukha vedanā, dukkha vedan $\bar{a}$, and adukkhamasukha vedan $\bar{a}$, three corresponding types of anusaya result: rāgānusaya, patighānusaya, and avijjānusaya.

- Let us start with the verse that explains the origins of rāgānusaya: "So sukhāya vedanāya phuṭtho samāno abhinandati abhivadati ajjhosāya tittthati. Tassa rāgānusayo anuseti."
- Translated: "When one experiences a sukha vedanā, if one delights in it, welcomes it, and thinks and speaks highly of it, gets absorbed in it, then the underlying tendency for $r \bar{a} g a$ (rāgānusaya) gets stronger (i.e., rāgānusaya will grow)."
- Here, rāgānusaya comes from "rāga" + "anusaya." Now we need to get an idea about the meaning of anusaya first.


## What is Anusaya?

12. Anusaya is usually translated as "latent tendencies." That does give the basic idea. Such "latent tendencies are in our gati. Anusaya and "gati" are closely related. See, "The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Asavas)" and "Āsava, Anusaya, and Gati (Gathi)."

- Everyone has a set of gati (habits/character qualities). Each person has his/her own set of things/activities that she likes and dislikes. Some of these are not moral or immoral.
- But we also have moral (ethical) gati and corrupt (bad) gati. Here moral/immoral have a wide range, and we will discuss that later. But those deeds have kammic consequences. Those are the gati that are relevant.

13. By the way, notice that now we are talking about a "person" or a "self" who has sakkāya ditthi (and gati and anusaya)! That is why it is incorrect to say that there is "no-self" either.

- When we keep doing what we are used to, that habit will only GROW. That also means anusaya will grow and that growth due to the activity is "anuseti."
- Arahants do not have moral/immoral gati but kammically neutral gati (habits). Such practices include doing things in specific ways.


## Rāga Anusaya Grows by Getting Attached to Mind-Made Sukha Vedanā or Somanassa Vedanā

14. What the sutta states in verse \#10 are the following. When a "pleasing a rammana" comes to the mind, it may delight in that $\bar{a} r a m m a n ̣ a$. If so, it will welcome that $\bar{a} r a m m a n a$ and "get absorbed in it." That means the person would think highly about it, speak highly about it, and act on it to sustain that ārammaña.

- For example, if X sees an object that X likes, X will keep looking at it and start thinking about how good it is. X may tell another how good it is. Even later on, X may plan to experience that sight again. Those activities involve vacī and kāya sañkhāra.
- That is how the Paṭicca Samuppāda starts with "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" and "sañkhāra paccayā viññāna."
- Here, $a v i j j \bar{a}$ is the ignorance of believing that there is a "self" experiencing that sensory input.


## Those Viñ̃̃āṇa Are Kamma Viññạ̣̄a

15. We remember that there could be six types of viññanna in the INITIAL sensory event that takes place due to kamma vipāka. Those are cakkhu, sota, ghāna, jivhā, kāya, or mano viññāna. They are ALL vipāka viññāna, which makes one aware of the sensory input.

- However, viññāna in "san̉khāra paccayā viññāṇa" generates kamma viñnāṇa. Such kamma viññāṇa can ONLY be mano viññāna. They have embedded energy because that person has decided to take further steps to enjoy that sensory experience again and again.
- In the Abhidhamma language, those sañkhāra have javana power. They create kammic energy for that kamma viñ̃āạa.
- In other words, that "person" has to spend time and effort to enjoy that sensory experience again. He has now created a "kamma bija" or expects a specific outcome.

16. For example, if a person $X$ saw and "attached" to an expensive item in a store, $X$ would talk about it with the spouse and make plans to come up with the money to pay for it. Until X buys that item, that "viññāna" will be there. The critical point here is that X already HAD a rāga anusaya for it, and by engaging in those follow-up activities, X "added" more energy to that. That addition is "anuseti."

- Different people have different types of anusaya. That is why not everyone attaches to a given $\bar{a} r a m m a n ̣ a$. Furthermore, each person's levels of anusaya CAN change with time. That anusaya can be REMOVED too, which is the way to Nibbāna.
- As you can imagine, the other two types of anusaya will "build up" the same way. With a "bad" $\bar{a} r a m m a n a, ~ d o s a ~ o r ~ a n g e r ~ a r i s e s, ~ a n d ~ p a t i g h a ̄ n u s a y a ~(p a t i g h a ~ a n u s a y a) ~ s t r e n g t h e n s . ~$
- Finally, the avijjānusaya (avijjā anusaya) builds up when acting with avijjā. We will discuss more of that in the next post.


## Difference Between Diṭthi Vipallāsa and Saññā Vipallāsa

I do not want to leave this post without clarifying the following point.
17. In the discussion forum at puredhamma.net, a legitimate question was asked: "Since a Sotāpanna has removed sakkāya ditṭhi, why is that a Sotāpanna would still value sensory pleasures, and may even commit some immoral deeds?"

- As we know, a Sotāpanna is incapable of doing ONLY "apāyagāmi" deeds that could lead to rebirths in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$ (plural of apāya.)
- There is a difference between "SEEING" (ditthi) the real nature of this world and having corresponding PERCEPTIONS (sañña $\bar{a}$ ) about that real nature. It is important to understand what is meant by sañ $\tilde{n} \bar{a}$; see "Saññā - What It Really Means."
- The Pāli word "vipallāsa" means "confusions" or "distortions." Wrong views lead to diṭthi vipallāsa and wrong perceptions lead to sañ̃̃̄̄ vipallāsa. More details at "Vipallāsa (Ditthi, Saññā, Citta) Affect Sañkhāra."
- With that terminology, a Sotāpanna has removed diṭthi vipallāsa but still has sañña vipallāsa.

18. In other words, the wrong views about a "self" (sakkāya ditthi) go away at the Sotāpanna stage. But the perception of a "self" (asmi māna) goes away in stages and disappears only at the Arahant stage.

- Sañ̃n̄ $\operatorname{vipallāsa~goes~away~at~the~Anāgāmi~stage,~and~citta~vipallāsa~(together~with~asmi~māna)~is~}$ removed at the Arahant stage. See "Vipallāsa (Ditthi, Saññā, Citta) Affect Sañkhāra."
- That is also why we CAN NOT say that "there is no-self." Until the attainment of Arahanthood, there is a perception of a "self."
- The critical point is that $I t$ is wrong to approach the analysis of sensory experiences based on a "self" or "no-self." Instead, we can explain everything regarding causes and effects or Paticca Samuppāda.
- Then it will also become clear that the Pāli word "atta"" does not really mean a "self" or a "soul" or a "ātma."


### 10.9 Paṭicca Samuppāda - Not 'Self' or 'No-Self'

Tanhā - The Origin of Suffering

Paticca Samuppāda - A 'Self' Exists Due to Avijiā
Kamma, Sañkhāra, and Abhisañkhāra
Vacī Sañkhāra - Sañkappa (Conscious Thoughts) and Vācā (Speech)
Tanhā Paccayā Upādāna - Critical Step in Paticca Samuppāda
Moha/Avijjā and Vipāka Viññāna/Kamma Viññān̄a
Icchā (Cravings) Lead to Upādāna and to Eventual Suffering
Dhammā, Kamma, Sañkhāra, Mind - Critical Connections
Paticca Samuppāda - From Mind to Matter

### 10.9.1 Taṇhā - The Origin of Suffering

November 9, 2019

## Taṇhā Is Attachment, Not Craving

1. Taṇh $\bar{a}$ is a badly misunderstood Pāli word. The common translation is "craving," and that is wrong. The craving usually is associated with a pleasurable ārammaṇa.

- Taṇhā means attachment to ANY ārammaṇa. It could be something that one likes OR dislikes OR even neutral (it may be just curiosity.)
- We may attach to a beautiful object or a person to varying degrees. It could just mean pausing to take a "second look" at something. It could be a much stronger attachment like "falling in love at first sight" with a person.
- But we also stop and take a second look at a person who just got run over by a car and died. That is not a pleasant sight, but we still got "attached" to that sight. We may think about it for a little while and then forget about it. But seeing one's worse enemy on the street will lead to a stronger "attachment." One may generate repulsive thoughts and may even say something harsh to that person.
- The point is that taṇhā leads to further "mind action" or "conscious thoughts" about a ārammaṇa. We discussed that in, "Kāma Guna - Origin of Attachment (Tanhā)."


## Tanh $\bar{a}$ - The Origin of Suffering

2. Tanhhā is also the origin of future suffering. The Buddha defined the "origin of suffering" or "dukkha samudaya" as follows in his first discourse, "WebLink: suttacentral: Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta (SN 56.11"': "Idamं kho pana, bhikkhave, dukkhasamudayain ariyasaccain-yāyaì tanhā ponobbhavikā nandirāgasahagatā tatratatrābhinandin̄̄, seyyathidami-kāma tanhā, bhava taṇhā, vibhava tanh $\bar{a}$."

- Translated: "Bhikkhus, what is the Noble Truth of the origin of suffering-It is attachments (tanh $\overline{\boldsymbol{a}}$ ) based on seeking delight (nandiräga) in various things here and there, which leads to rebirth -that is, attachments to sensual pleasures ( $\boldsymbol{k} \overline{\boldsymbol{a} m a} \tanh \overline{\boldsymbol{a}}$ ), to the existence (bhava tanh $\overline{\boldsymbol{a}}$ ), and the view of a single life (vibhava tanh $\bar{a}$.)
- The three types of taṇhā discussed at "Kāma Tanhā, Bhava Tanhā, Vibhava Tanhā."

3. Interestingly, in the "Cūlavedalla Sutta (MN 44), the same verse describes the origin of sakkāya diṭthi:
"'sakkāyasamudayo sakkāyasamudayo'ti, ayye, vuccati. Katamo nu kho, ayye, sakkāyasamudayo
vutto bhagavatā" ti? "Yāyaì, $\bar{a} v u s o ~ v i s a ̄ k h a, ~ t a n h h \bar{a} ~ p o n o b b h a v i k \bar{a} ~ n a n d i ̄ r a ̄ g a s a h a g a t a \bar{a}$ tatratatrābhinandin̄̄, seyyathidaim-kāma tanhā bhava taṇhā vibhava taṇhā; ayaì kho, $\bar{a} v u s o$ visākha, sakkāyasamudayo vutto bhagavatā" $t i$.

- That is not surprising since all immoral actions originate with the wrong view that worldly pleasures need to be pursued at any cost.
- If one does strong immoral deeds (pāpa kamma), one will be eligible for suffering in the apāyā. Even the desire to enjoy sensory pleasures will bind one to the kāma loka. The desire for jhānic pleasures leads to getting trapped in rūpa and arūpa loka. But there is no long-term happiness anywhere in any realm.
- That is because regardless of where the next birth is, one is not free from the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$ in the long run. The possibility of rebirth in the apāya will be there until one attains the Sotāpanna stage by removing sakkāya ditṭhi. All possible suffering ends when one fully comprehends dukkha samudaya at the Arahant stage. We will discuss that in detail in the future.


## The Meaning of Tanhh $\bar{a}$ (Pada Nirutti)

4. Many Pāli words have their meanings in the word itself. Uncovering the meaning of a word that way is "pada nirutti." For example, "sakkāya" comes from "sath" + "kāya" or taking an aggregate of things or a collection (kāya) to be beneficial (sath.) That is why sakkāya ditṭhi originates when one considers that the five aggregates to be one's own and thus beneficial. [nirutti : (f.) [Sk. nirukti, nis+vac] one of the Vedāngas (see chalanga), explanation of words, grammatical analysis, etymological interpretation; pronunciation, dialect, way of speaking, expression.]

- Tanhha means getting "fused" or firmly attached. The word tanhhā comes from two words. "Thána" (pronounced like "thatch") means "place" (ъ) in Sinhala) and "h $\vec{a} "$ meaning getting fused/welded or attached ( (ఒぃว゚ٌอ in Sinhala). Note that "tan" in tanh $\bar{a}$ pronounced like in "thunder" and "h $\bar{a}$ " is pronounced like in "harm."
- That is consistent with the meaning derived from the Chachakka Sutta. See "Kāma Guna - Origin of Attachment (Tanhā)."


## Three Types of Tanh $\bar{a}$

5. The verses in \#2 and \#3 refer to three types of taṇh $\bar{a}$. They are kāma taṇhā, bhava taṇh $\bar{a}$, vibhava tanh $\bar{a}$.

- Each category represents the origin of a particular way attachment can happen. As we can imagine, kāma $\tanh \bar{a}$ originates due to our inherent kāma guṇa. There are sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and dhamma $\bar{a}$ that we like to experience. If access to such things is blocked, we again get attached, but this time with anger.
- Bhava tanhā arises in those who believe in rebirth. They would like to be born as a human, deva, or a Brahma based on their gati.
- Those who do not believe in rebirth have vibhava tanhh $\bar{a}$.
- Let us discuss them briefly.


## Kāma Taṇhā

6. In kāma loka, all five physical sense faculties are present. Getting attached to anything via the five sense faculties is $\boldsymbol{k} \bar{a} m a \tanh \bar{a}$.

- Furthermore, attachment arising from the desire to enjoy taste, smell, and body touch can happen only in kāma loka. Those three require a "solid body" as we can imagine.
- In the rūpa lokas, living beings do not have "solid bodies." Yet, they can see and hear without having physical eyes or ears.
- Therefore, in rūpa lokas, taṇhā arise only due to sights and sounds. Thus an Anāgāmi, who will be born in a rūpa loka has some rūpa tannhā and sadda taṇhā because he/she may like to see a Buddha statue or listen to a discourse.
- In arūpa lokas, there is only the mind. Therefore, an attachment can be only to dhamm $\bar{a}$.


## Bhava Taṇhā

7. Bhava taṇhā arises from attachment to "any existence." Thus bhava tanhhā is present in kāma loka, rūpa loka, and arūpa loka, i.e., all 31 realms.

- Even in the kāma loka, there may be people who do not enjoy the "kāma" or sense pleasures; but they still want to live a quiet, peaceful life. They mostly have bhava taṇhā. They may like to be in a secluded place, cultivating jhāna; that is their desired "bhava." If they develop jhānā, they will be born in rūpa loka or arūpa loka due to their new "gati."
- There are other subtle forms of "bhava" too. Some like to become famous, earn a title, to get a highprofile job or a responsibility, etc. These attachments are not associated with sensual pleasures. They are also due to bhava taṇhā.


## Vibhava Taṇhā

8. Vibhava tanh $\overline{\boldsymbol{a}}$ arises from the wrong view of materialism (uccheda ditthi in the time of the Buddha; uccheda pronounced "uchcheda"). One believes that life ends at death. Here the mind is assumed to a byproduct of the body (brain). And thus, when the body dies, that is the end of the story.

- Therefore one believes that one needs to enjoy all possible pleasures of this life before dying. Such a person would typically have kāma taṇhā as well as vibhava taṇhā.
- It is easy to have vibhava tanhhā in modern society. That is especially true if one has not heard about the Buddha's message about a more complex world with 31 realms and a rebirth process. Our human sensory faculties cannot access such "hidden" aspects of this world. One believes only what one can see.


## Taṇhā Does Not Directly Lead to Rebirth

As we have seen in previous posts, for an average human, SOME ārammaṇa WILL automatically generate $\tanh \bar{a}$ within a split second. Only in an Arahant, taṇh $\bar{a}$ would NOT arise for ANY ārammaṇa. That is a crucial message of the Chachakka Sutta (MN 148.)
9. However, Tanhhā does not directly lead to rebirth (new existence). Paṭicca Samuppāda does not say, "Taṇhā paccayā bhavo." Instead, it is, "Taṇhā paccayā upādāna," followed by "upādāna paccayā bhavo."

- To make a new existence (bhava), the mind needs to "pull that ārammaña close" and start generating conscious thoughts about it. That happens because one either likes it or dislikes it. That is the "Taṇhā paccayā upādāna" step.
- That "Taṇhā paccayā upādāna" step is a bit involved. When the mind attaches to a ārammaṇa, it starts "examining" that ārammaṇa. That "examination" involves vitakka/vicāra or vacī sañkhāra.
- That is when one STARTS acting with avijja and generate sanikhāra (and therelby kamma viññāṇa via "sañkhāra paccayā viñ̃̄āna.") That is the start of a new Paṭicca Samuppāda cycle.
- More details in follow-up posts at, "Paticca Samuppāda - Not 'Self' or 'No-Self'." A simpler explanation of Paticca Samuppāda in the section, "Paticca Samuppāda."
All relevant posts are at, "Origin of Life."


### 10.9.2 Pațicca Samuppāda - A'Self' Exists Due to Avijjjā

## November 16, 2019; November 17, 2019

## Introduction

1. The "WebLink: suttacentral: Chachakka Sutta (MN 148)" discusses six parameters associated with each of six entities. The six parameters are internal āyatana, external āyatana, viññāna, phassa, vedanā, taṇhā. They are associated with each of the six types of internal ayatana we have: cakkhu, sota, ghāna, jivhā, $k \bar{a} y a$, and mano. Thus, there are thirty-six entities discussed.

- The focus of attention is àrammaṇa. For example, a woman walking in a shopping mall stops and looks at a dress in a shop window. A dress in the window has caught her attention. That dress is ārammaṇa.
- We MAY get attached (tanhhā) to a ārammaṇa coming through any of the six senses. That "getting
 following process. "Cakkhuñca pațicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññānain, tị̣nàm sañgati phasso, phassa paccayā vedanā, vedanā paccayā tanhā̄."
- We discussed that process in detail in the earlier posts of the sub-section "Worldview of the Buddha."


## Taṇhā (Getting Stuck to a $\overline{\text { Arammana) Happens Instantaneously }}$

2. An "eye-catching object" is a rūpa ārammaṇa or rūpārammaṇa (a new word). With a rūpārammaṇa, a cakkhu viññāna (sensation of seeing) arises via "cakkhuñca paticca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññānaìn." (In the same way, saddārammaṇa, ghānārammaṇa, jivhārammaṇa, kāyārammaṇa, dhammārammaṇa give rise to sotaviññāna, ghanaviññāṇa, jivhāviññāṇa, kāyaviññāṇa, and manoviññāna.)

- Within a split-second of that, the mind COULD be stuck (taṇhā) in that $\bar{a} r a m m a n ̣ a$.
- If that ārammana is mind-pleasing, the mind MAY attach ("getting stuck" could be a better way to say it) via greed. If it is repulsive, "getting stuck" MAY occur via anger. Even if it is a neutral ārammaṇa, "getting stuck" can happen with ignorance.
- I know I keep repeating same things. But repetition is KEY to retention.
- Even though we focused on the Chachakka Sutta, the above sequence of events is in many suttā. Some of the prominent suttā are MN 18, SN 12.43 through SN 12.45, and several suttā in SN 35. It is critical to understand that this process happens automatically within a split-second.


## Taṇhā Arises Due to Sakkāya Diṭ̣hi (Diṭ̣hi Vipallāsa) AND Asmi Māna (Saññā Vipallāsa)

3. The sequence of events in \#1, \#2 does not require a "self." That sequence happens in an instant without any CONSCIOUS thinking.

- IF an attachment or "getting stuck" (tanhha) results, that is because one has "gati" to attach to such a $\bar{a} r a m m a n ̣ a$. That is there because one has wrong views of a "self" (sakkāya ditṭhi or diṭthi vipallāsa) AND also the wrong perception (saññā vipallāsa) of a "self."
- The wrong view of a "self" goes away at the Sotāpanna stage, and the incorrect perception of a "self" (saññā vipallāsa) goes away entirely only at the Arahant stage.
- With the removal of sakkāya ditṭhi, the tendency to do "apāyagāmi deeds" will stop. However, until the Arahant stage, one will still have saññā vipallāsa, and thus asmi māna, and will be capable of doing less severe immoral deeds (akusala kamma).
- That was discussed together with the terms ditṭhi vipallāsa and sañ̃̄̄̄ vipallāsa in the post, "An Apparent "Self' Is Involved in Kamma Generation." It may be a good idea to re-read that post and also
the post, "Vision Is a Series of "Snapshots" - Movie Analogy." There is no self" in ultimate reality, but one will have a sense or perception of a "self" until attaining the Arahant stage.


## Taṇhā - The Origin of Suffering

4. The previous post ("Tanhā - The Origin of Suffering,") I pointed out TWO critical facts:

- FIRST, tanhh $\bar{a}$ (attachment or "getting stuck" to various ārammana) is the ORIGIN of suffering. That is the First Noble Truth on suffering. That tanhhā could be due to a pleasing OR unpleasant ārammaṇa.
- However, taṇhā by itself, CANNOT AUTOMATICALLY lead to suffering. If that were the case, no one would be able to attain Nibbāna. That is because, as we have discussed, taṇh $\bar{a}$ happens within a fraction of a second of capturing the ārammaṇa.
- Therefore, the SECOND critical fact is the following. Unless one pulls that arrammana in and starts thinking about it (vitakka/vicāra), one WILL NOT accumulate abhisañkhāra (and thus kamma viññāna.) That would be done with $a v i j i j a \bar{a}$ (with the wrong perception of a 'self.') [vitakka/vicāra is of akusala type while savitakka/savicāra is of kusala type]
- That second process takes place starting with the "taṇhā paccayā upādāna" step in Paṭicca Samuppāda. We will discuss this below.


## There is a "Self" Doing Kamma With Wrong Views and Wrong Perceptions

5. That is why it is not correct to say that there is "no-self." For anyone who has not yet attained the Arahant stage, the perception of a "self" is there. See, "An Apparent "Self" Is Involved in Kamma Generation."
 Arahant based on ANY ārammaṇa. That is automatic. It is not that he/she consciously avoids taṇh $\bar{a}$ at that moment. The key is that an Arahant has removed ALL "gati" leading to any attachment (tanhhā.)

- The key to understanding Paṭicca Samuppāda is to comprehend how gati can be removed (and thereby $\tanh \overline{\boldsymbol{a}}$ stopped). We will be discussing this in the next few posts.


## Dukkha Nirodha (Stopping of Future Suffering) is Cessation of Taṇhā

6. The Buddha defined the "stopping or the cessation of suffering" or "dukkha nirodhaya" (Third Noble Truth) as follows in his first discourse, "WebLink: suttacentral: Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta (SN 56.11)": "Idaì kho pana, bhikkhave, dukkhanirodhaì ariyasaccam-yo tassāyeva taṇhāya asesavirāganirodho cāgo paținissaggo mutti anālayo." [asesa :[adj.] entire; all. cāgo : abandoning, forsaking; resigning, sacrificing, giving away; self-sacrifice, liberality. patinissaggo : forsaking, getting rid of. mutti :[f.] release; freedom.]

Translated: "Bhikkhus, what is the Noble Truth of the cessation of suffering-it is the complete cessation of tanh $\bar{a}$, the giving up and relinquishing of it, freedom from it by losing all desires (also called "āsava") for things in this world (anālayo).

- The word anālaya comes from na + alaya or "not desiring." As we have discussed, one attaches
 one is blocked from getting that then one may "attach" with anger. Therefore, craving or desire is at the root of tanhhā. Dosa (or patigha) is the "second manifestation of lobha or greed. See, "Kāma Guna Origin of Attachment (Tanhā)." [ālaya :[m.] 1. abode; roosting place; 2. desire; attachment; 3. pretence.]
- That is why Nibbāna is also "āsavakkhaya" or "āsava" + "khaya" or "removal of"āsava."
- I try to introduce these key Pāli words gradually and as needed.


## Paṭicca Samuppāda - Both "Self" and "No-Self" Are Incorrect Approaches

7. It is not beneficial to start with the concept of either a "self" or "no-self." But we HAVE TO use terms like "our thoughts," "he spoke," and "she did that," etc. That is because those things ARE DONE by an average human with the perception of a "self." Besides, we CANNOT communicate with each other without using such terminology. Even the Buddha said things like, "I will go there" or "I was born in such an existence in the past."

- But we need to "see" and understand the following. Causes (old kamma) and conditions (paccay $\bar{a}$ ) lead to results (kamma vipāka). Then, based on such vipāka, we take actions that create new kamma, which, in turn, will bring more vipāka. That is how the rebirth process continues!
- The wrong view (sakkāya dittthi) and wrong perception (asmi māna) of a "self" leads to such activities. Paticca Samuppāda explains that process.
- As long as one has those wrong views and perceptions of a "self," one will have certain gati (character.) Based on those gati, causes (kamma) for future results (vipāka) accumulated. When those vipāka bring results, more kamma generated. So, there is no end to this cyclic process. That is why there is no end to that cycle of kamma and vipäka!
- Those gati will diminish as one starts comprehending the true nature of this world. With that comprehension, wrong views and perceptions will lessen and eventually go away. That is the way to Nibbāna. It starts with Sammā Ditṭhi (removal of sakkāya ditṭhi), seeing the true nature of this world. Of course, one must first get rid of the ten types of micchā ditṭhi to get to mundane Sammā Ditṭhi. See, "Buddha Dhamma - In a Chart."


## The sequence of Events In \#1 Above Are in Paticca Samuppāda

8. The Pāli verse in \#1 above from the Chachakka Sutta is "cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviñnānami, tiụnaì sañgati phasso, phassa paccay $\bar{a}$ vedana $\bar{a}$, vedana $\bar{a}$ paccay $\bar{a}$ tanhhā." The steps stated in that verse are the same as "salāyatana paccayā phasso, phassa paccay $\bar{a}$ vedanā, vedan $\bar{a}$ paccayā taṇhä" in Paticca Samuppāda.

- The steps "cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññānaì, tiụnaím sañgati phasso" in the Chachakka Sutta merely describe in more detail what happens with the "salāyatana paccayā phasso" step in Paticca Samuppāda. Of course, "salāyatana" refers to all six sensory inputs, and cakkhu in "cakkhuñca paticca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññānaì, tiṇ̣à் sañgati phasso" refers to one of those six.
- Paticca Samuppāda cycle usually does not start with "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra." There must be a REASON to begin acting with $a v i j j \bar{a}$. The reason is "getting attached to sensory input," i.e., taṇh $\bar{a}$. And that happens because we have certain "gati" that have been built-up over past lives due to the ignorance of the Four Noble Truths, i.e., due to avijjā!
- Initial "attachment" (tanhhā) ALWAYS happens with the steps discussed in the Chachakka Sutta and embedded in the above verse. Any of the six sensory inputs can trigger it, and the sixth one is mano: "mānañca paṭicca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviññānaì, tiṇnamं sañgati phasso, phassa paccayā vedanā, vedanā paccayā taṇhā."
- Therefore, it is essential to realize that in real life, Paṭicca Samuppāda does NOT start with "avijjā paccayā sañkhārā." It begins with"salāyatana paccayā phasso" and proceeds to "phassa paccayā vedanā, vedanā paccayā taṇhā."
- It is only at that stage that a given "person" may start acting with avijj $\bar{a}$ and thus start the complicated step, "taṇhā paccayā upādāna."


## Based on Attachment (Taṇhā), One Starts Acting With Avijjāa

9. Let us discuss that critical step, "taṇhā paccayā upādāna."

- Tanhhā means attaching or "getting stuck" with a particular ārammaṇa. It is not correct to say that taṇh $\bar{a}$ is "craving." When one sees an enemy, one does not generate tanhhā via craving. Instead, the mind gets "stuck" in that ārammanna of an enemy with anger or dislike.
- If it is a "good a rammana," the mind will try to enjoy it more. If it is distasteful, then it will try to stop that. Either way, mind MAY generate (abhi) sañkhāra with kammic consequences.
- For example, a person with a tendency (gati) to engage in stealing may try to steal an "eye-catching item" from a store. Stealing is a bad kamma, and thus he/she will accumulate "bad kamma" that could bring "bad vipāka" in the future.


## What Does Upādāna Mean?

10. Upādāna means "pulling the ārammaṇa closer (in one's mind)" ("upa" + "ādāna," where "upa" means "close" and "ādāna" means "pull").

- Once getting attached (tanhhā) to a ārammaṇa, we do not let it go. The mind "pulls that ārammaña in." First, we start consciously thinking about it and may talk about it. Both those involve vacī sañkhāra (vitakka/vicāra).
- If we get "worked up," we may take bodily actions. We may hug a person we like or hit a person we don't like. Kāya sañkhāra in mind LEAD TO such physical actions. The brain helps carry out actions according to those intentions that arise in mind. See, "Brain - Interface between Mind and Body."
- By the way, mano (or citta) sañkhāra automatically comes to our minds. They involve vedanā/sañ̃̄̄̄. They do not involve conscious thinking (vitakka/vicāra.)
- It is with the "taṇhā paccayā upādāna" step that we start doing "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" and start a new Paṭicca Samuppāda cycle.
- We will discuss sañkhāra in detail in the next post.


### 10.9.3 Kamma, Sañkhāra, and Abhisañkhāra - What Is "Intention"?

November 23, 2019; revised July 8, 2022; August 27, 2022

## Sañkhāra Create Causes for Future Suffering

1. Pațicca Samuppāda (PS) describes how future suffering arises due to sañkhāra done with avijjā. Intention plays a big role, and it depends on one level of avijj $\bar{a}$.

- The PS cycle starts with "avijjā paccayā sañkhārā" and ends with "jāti paccayā jarā, marana, soka-parideva-dukkha-domanassupāyasā sambhavan'ti." And then it says, "Evametassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa samudayo hoti." or "that is how this whole mass of suffering arises."
- Therefore, the PS cycle generally addresses ALL TYPES of future suffering. That includes bad kamma vipāka DURING a given life and stronger kamma vipāka that lead to future REBIRTHS. In particular, rebirths in the four lowest realms (apayyā) lead to the worst kinds of suffering.
- All these FACTS appear in a long list of short suttā (plural of sutta) in the Anguttara Nikāya (10), starting with the "WebLink: suttacentral: Sādhu Sutta (AN 10.134)" and ending at AN 236 (over one hundred suttā!)
- I have translated several of them to English at, "Anġguttara Nikāya - Suttā on Key Concepts."


## Suffering (and Pleasures) Arise Due to Kamma Vipāka

2. According to those suttā, suffering (dukkha) arises due to the vipāka (results) of akusala kamma or apuñña kamma (simply translated as immoral deeds.)

- In the same way, pleasures (sukha) result from kusala kamma/puñña kamma (simply translated as moral deeds.)
- There is a big difference between kusala kamma and puñ̃̃a kamma. See, "Kilesa - Relationship to Akusala, Kusala, and Puñña Kamma."
- Until then, we may use kusala/puñña and also akusala/apuñña without much distinction. So, at this point, we are just assuming that kusala/puñña kamma are "good" and akusala/apuñña kamma are "bad."
- Even though we loosely translate kusala/akusala kamma as moral/immoral deeds, kammā are done via bodily actions, speech, or thoughts.


## Dasa Akusala - Seeds for Future Suffering

3. At a fundamental level, the Buddha identified three categories of akusala kamma. Those done with bodily actions (kāya kamma) are killing, stealing, sexual misconduct. There are four types of kamma done with speech (vaci kamma.) They are lying, slandering, harsh speech, and gossiping. Finally, three types done with thoughts (mano or citta kamma) are excess greed, excess anger, and wrong views.

- Those ten types of akusala kamma (dasa akusala) in Pāli are: Pānātipāto, adinnādānam், kāmesumicchācāro, musāvādo, pisuṇà vācā, pharusā vācā, samphappalāpo, abhijjhā, byāpādo, micchā diṭthi.
- Those are the ten types of akusala kamma separated into three categories.


## All Types of Kamma Originate In the Mind

4. When we look at the ten types of akusala kamma, we can see why kamma DOES NOT mean JUST bodily actions. The way of THINKING and SPEAKING, contribute to the accumulation of kamma which can bring vipāka in the future.

- It is critically important to understand this point. Some people speak very nice words and even appear to be engaged in "good deeds" but have very bad intentions/mindsets. For example, someone may pretend to speak nicely but could be thinking bad thoughts to him/herself about the person they are talking to. See. "Correct Meaning of Vacī Sañkhāra."
- Going through the motions of good actions/speech DOES NOT count for GENERATING good kammic energy.

The Buddha clarified this point very clearly. In the WebLink: suttacentral: Nibbedhika Sutta (AN 6.63): "Cetanāhain (cetanā aham), bhikkhave, kammaì vadāmi. Cetayitvā kammaí karoti-kāyena vācāya manasā."

That means: "Intention, II tell you, is kamma. One does kamma with intention (in mind)-via body, speech, and thoughts.

- Therefore, kammic ENERGY for ALL ten types of kamma are GENERATED in mind. Stated another way: MIND creates kammic energy associated with all ten types of kamma.
- I cannot emphasize enough the importance of understanding this CRITICAL point.


## Intentions are in Sainkhāra

5. It is cetanā in javana citta that PREPARES kamma viññāna or kamma bija using various types of cetasika. Such kamma viññāna or kamma bīja are PART OF dhammā.

- Some dhammā are just memories. see "Dhammā, Kamma, Sañkhāra, Mind - Critical Connections."

6. What we discussed in \#4 above can be stated in Buddha's terminology. The mind generates three types of sañkhāra: mano, vacī, and kāya sañkhāra. All three types of sañkhāra arise in mind.

- How do those intentions end up as speech and bodily actions?
- It is the brain that "carries out" bodily movements and speech INTENDED in kāya sankkhāra and vacī sañkhāra. The brain gets the body parts to move with the help of the muscles and the nervous system. Speech, similarly, is generated via the movement of the tongue and the muscles in the mouth area.
- Therefore, kāya sañkhāra LEAD to kāya kamma (killing, stealing, sexual misconduct.) Vacī sañkhāra LEAD to vacī kamma (lying, slandering, harsh speech, and gossiping.) Mano (or citta) sañkhāra LEAD to mano (or citta) kamma (excess greed, excess anger, and wrong views.)


## Mind/Physical Body to Pilot/Airplane Analogy

7. The seat of the mind (hadaya vatthu) is where thoughts arise. The hadaya vatthu is part of the manomaya kāya, mental body, or the gandhabba. The hadaya vatthu is in constant contact with the brain.

- In other words, the MIND decides what to do, and the brain carries out those commands. An analogy is how an airplane flies. The pilot decides on where to go, and the onboard computer carries out those commands.
- More details are in "Brain - Interface between Mind and Body."
- Modern scientific evidence on the importance of the hadaya vatthu is only at an early stage. The following quote is from "WebLink: heartmathorg: Exploring the Role of the Heart in Human Performance." "The heart is the most powerful source of electromagnetic energy in the human body, producing the largest rhythmic electromagnetic field of any of the body's organs. The heart's electrical field is about 60 times greater in amplitude than the electrical activity generated by the brain."
- However, hadaya vatthu is NOT the heart. It is in the mental body (gandhabba) but close to the physical heart.


## Not All Sañkhāra Will Have Kammic Consequences

8. Even though Paticca Samuppāda just states, "avijjā paccayā sañkhārā," not all sañkhāra will have kammic consequences. Stated differently: We do not act with avijjā all the time.

- For example, ANY bodily movement involves kāya sañkhāra. If one's mind decides to stand up, the brain gets that done by moving leg muscles. That does not have any kammic energy to bring future $v i p a ̄ k a$. Therefore, not all bodily actions have kammic consequences.
- Sañkhāra with kammic consequences are "strong sañkhāra" or "abhisañkhāra." Let us discuss that in detail first.


## Good or Bad Cetasika Responsible for "Intention" - Cetanā Is in Every Citta

9. If you swing your arm, that is a kaya kammā because that action involves moving a body part. That action was initiated by kāya sañkhāra generated in mind. But that does not have kammic consequences (except for the movement of the arm.)

- Now, if you swung your arm to get hold of a cup, that is also a kammically neutral action (kammā) or just a sañkhāra. You did not do either a moral or immoral act. The intention was to grab a cup, which
did not involve any sobhana or asobhana cetasika. That action is a kiriya (kriyā in Sanskrit or zoss in Sinhala).
- On the other hand, if you swung your arm to hit someone, it was done with anger. So, the dosa cetasika (an asobhana cetasika) was in your thoughts. Thus, it was an apuñ̃ǟ̄hisañkhāra (apuñña abhisañkhāra). That apuññābhisañkhāra in the mind led to an akusala/apuñ̃̃a kammā or an immoral deed.
- If you put your arms together to pay respects to the Buddha, it is a puññābhisañkhāra (puñña abhisañkhāra.) The saddhā cetasika (a sobhana cetasika) is in the mind. We can also call it a kusala/puñña kammā or a moral deed.
- Therefore, "good or bad" cetasika (mental factors) are the ones that bring intention to thoughts. The cetan $\bar{a}$ cetasika is in ALL thoughts. The cetana cetasika just incorporates the other relevant "good or bad" cetasika to a given thought to convey the "intention."


## Assāsa Passāsa (Breathing) Is Kāya Sañkhāra

10. The very basic $k \bar{a} y a$ sankkhāra are involved in breathing. It is also the most IMPORTANT $k \bar{a} y a$ sañkhāra since we cannot live without breathing.

- Any type of sañkhāra involves cetanā and thus sañkhāra involves citta vīthi. It does not seem like we breathe intentionally. That is because no javana citta are present in such citta vithi associated with breathing. They are parittārammaṇa citta vīthi. That means they are "weak."
- Of course, breathing has no kammic consequences. It is a "bodily action," but a critically important one.


## Apuñ̃̄ābhi saǹkhāra, Puñ̃̄ābhi sañkhāra, and Āneñjābhisañkhāra

11. We introduced two new words above that are relevant in generating kammic energy: apuñ̃̄ābhisañkhāra and puññābhisaṅkhāra. Here, apuññābhi sañkhāra lead to akusala (or apuñña or immoral) kamma. Good, moral deeds, speech, or thoughts with kammic energy involve puñ̃̄ābhisañkhāra.

- There is a third type of abhisañkhāra: āneñjābhisañkhāra (āneñja abhisañkhāra). These types of sañkhāra are in the minds of those who cultivate arūpāvacara jhāna, the highest four jhāna.
- Apuñ̃ābhisañkhāra lead to rebirth in the apāyā. These, of course, lead to akusala kamma.
- Puññābhisañkhāra leads to rebirth in the human, deva, and rūpāvacara Brahma realms. Puñña kamma is done with such puññābhisañkhāra. Note that cultivating rūpāvacara jhāna is a puñña kamma.
- Āneñjābhisañkhāra leads to rebirths in the arūpāvacara Brahma realms.


## Saǹkhāra in Paṭicca Samuppāda Are Abhisañkhāra

12. Even though the first step in Pațicca Samuppāda is simply, "avijjā paccayā sañkhārā̈," it refers to abhisañkhārā.

WebLink: suttacentral: Paticcasamuppāda Vibhanga, explains the term "avijjā paccayā sañkhārā" in akusala-mūla Paticca Samuppāda (that leads to suffering) as follows: "Tattha katame avijjā paccayā sañkhārā? Puñn̄ābhisañkhāro, apuñn̄ābhisañkhāro, āneñjābhisañkhāro, kāyasañkhāro, vacīsañkhāro, cittasañkhāro."

Translated: "What is avijjā paccayā sañkhārā? Puññābhisañkhāra, apuñ̃ābhisañkhāra, āneñjābhisañkhāra, kāyasañkhāra, vacīsañkhāra, cittasañkhāra." (here, citta sañkhāra is the same as mano sañkhāra).

- Those are all abhisaṅkhāra, even though the verse is simplified as "avijjā paccayā sañkhārāa."
- Two categories of sañkhāra are mentioned there. One category refers to types of kamma accrued (Puñ̃ābhisañkhāra, apuññābhisañkhāra, āneñjābhisañkhāra.)
- The other category points out the three modes: body, speech, or mind (kāya sañkhāra, vacī sañkhāra, citta sañkhāra, or mano sañkhāra).
- This is clarified in several suttā as well. for example, WebLink: suttacentral: Sañgīti Sutta (DN 33): "Tayo sañkhārā-puñnābhisañkhāro, apuññābhisaṅkhāro, āneñjābhisaǹkhāro."

13. Therefore, the word sañkhāra can have different meanings in different contexts. That is why sañkhāra SHOULD NOT be translated as just "mental formations."

- I hope you can see that translating sañkhāra as just "mental formations" does not provide much insight. Once one understands the basic concepts discussed above, it will be easier to see the real meaning of different types of sañkhāra.
- We will discuss kāya, vacī, and mano sañkhāra in detail in the next post. Then the critical connection of vitakka/vicāra with vacī sañkhāra will become clear.
- Also, see "Complexity of the Mind - Viññāna and Sanikhāra" and "Kamma are Done with Sañkhāra Types of Sañkhāra."

All posts at "Origin of Life."

### 10.9.4 Vacī Sañkhāra - Sañkappa (Conscious Thoughts) and Vācā (Speech)

November 30, 2019; December 1, 2019 (new \#14 also added); July 17, 2021; September 10, 2022 (esp. \#11)

## Introduction

1. Vacī Sañkhāra is looking into a ārammaṇa deeper (vitakka), and, in detail (vicāra). We introduced that in a previous post but will discuss it in more detail here.

- Vācā is, of course, speech. Sañkappa has been translated as "thoughts or intention." Here, we will see that sañkappa means "thoughts with intention." We will also discuss how vacī sañkhāra relates to both $v \bar{c} c \bar{a}$ and sañkappa.
- The first four steps in the Noble Eightfold Path are Sammā Ditṭhi, Sammā Sañkappa, Sammā Vācā, and Sammā Kammanta. One's thoughts depend on one's views, and one's speech and actions depend on how one thinks. This is why Sammā Ditt thi comes first and why "having correct views" about the nature of this world is at the forefront.

2. There are various types of sañkhāra. In the previous post, we discussed categorizing sañkhāra in two different ways.

- Three types depending on whether they lead to bodily actions, speech, or thoughts: kāyasañkhāra, vacīsañkhāra, and cittasañkhāra.
- There are three more types according to future vipāka: Puñ̃̃ābhisañkhāra, apuññābhisañkhāra, āneñjābhisañkhāra. These are discussed at \#14 below.
- Let us first review the first category briefly and then focus on vacī sañkhāra. I explained kāya and citta (or mano) sañkhāra in recent posts.


## Three Types of Sañkhāra Responsible for Actions, Speech, and Thoughts

3. There are succinct statements in the WebLink: suttacentral: Cūlavedalla Sutta (MN 44) on the types of sañkhāra generated in mind:
"Tayome, āvuso visäkha, sañkhārā-kāyasañkhāro, vacīsañkhāro, cittasañkhāro"ti.

- There are three types of saǹkhāra - kāya sañkhāra, vacī sañkhāra, citta sañkhāra.
"Katamo panāyye, kāyasañkhāro, katamo vacīsañkhāro, katamo cittasañkhāro"ti?
- What are kāya sañkhāra, What are vacī sañkhāra, What are citta sañkhāra (or mano sañkhāra)?
"Assāsapassāsā kho, āvuso visākha, kāyasan̉khāro, vitakkavicārā vacīsañkhāro, sañn̄a ca vedanā ca cittasañkhāro"ti.
- Assāsa passāsā are kāya sañkhāra, vitakka vicāra are vacī sañkhāra, saññā and vedanā constitute citta sañkhāra.
"Kasmā panāyye, assāsapassāsā kāyasañkhāro, kasmā vitakkavicārā vacīsañkhāro, kasmā sañn̄a ca vedanā ca cittasañkhāro" "ti?
- Why are the three types of sañkhāra categorized in that way?
"Assāsapassāsā kho, $\bar{a} v u s o ~ v i s a ̄ k h a, ~ k a ̄ y i k \bar{a} ~ e t e ~ d h a m m a ̄ ~ k \bar{a} y a p p a t ̣ i b a d d h a ̄, ~ t a s m a ̄ ~ a s s a ̄ s a p a s s a ̄ s a ̄ ~$ kāyasañkhāro. Pubbe kho, āvuso visākha, vitakketvā vicāretvā pacchā vācaì bhindati, tasmā vitakkavicārā vacīsañkhāro. Saññ̄ ca vedanā ca cetasikā ete dhammā cittappaṭibaddhā, tasmā saññā ca vedanā ca cittasañkhāro"ti.
- Assāsa passāsā (breathing in and out) is associated with the body (movements). Thus, assāsa passāsa is kāya sañkhāra.
- Vitakkalvicāra arise before speech "breaks out." Therefore, vitakka/vicāra are vacī sañkhāra.
- Sañ̃̄̄̄ and vedanā are associated with any citta. Thus, saññā/vedanā are citta sañkhāra.


## No Kammic Consequences for Citta (Mano) Sañkhāra

4. Citta (mano) sañkhāra does not have strong kammic consequences that can result in rebirth. As mentioned above in \#3, they encompass vedan $\bar{a}$ and sañña $\bar{a}$, which are in ALL citta. Therefore, even vipāka cittā have citta (mano) sañkhāra.

- As we discussed in the post, "Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)," any thought goes through nine stages within a billionth of a second. The early stages are citta and mano. Those two stages already have vedanā and sañña.
- Bad (asobhana) or good (sobhana) mental factors (cetasika) are incorporated into thought only in the latter stages of that nine-step process. Furthermore, such cetasika involve in those latter stages ONLY IF there is an attachment ( $\tanh \bar{a}$ ) and one is consciously thinking about a ārammana.
- The six steps described in the Chachakka Sutta happen within a split second. There is no time to "think" and thus there cannot be any vacī or kāya sañkhāra. See \#6 below.


## Vacī or kāya sañkhāra Can Lead to Abhisañkhāra

5. Vacī or kāya sañkhāra MAY ALSO lead to actions that do not have kammic consequences. Such "harmless" vacī or kāya sañkhāra cannot become abhisañkhāra that can bring future vipāka, including rebirths.

- Breathing or walking to the kitchen to get a glass of water involves such "harmless" kāya sañkhāra. Thinking about what needs to be done at work tomorrow or talking to the spouse about dinner plans involves such vacī sañkhāra.
- Other $k \bar{a} y a$ and vacī sañkhāra lead to actions and speech that have kammic consequences. Those lead to abhisañkhāra. Such abhisañkhāra "prepare or give rise to" sañkhata. Thus, sañkhata are entities
that are "prepared" via sañkhāra or "arise" due to sañkhāra. Paṭicca Samuppāda describes that process and we will get to it.


## No Vacī or Kāya Sañkhāra Involved in Initial Sensory Experience

6. Some thoughts that have gone through the nine stages do not involve conscious thinking. Thus, no vacī or kāya sañkhāra are possible in such thoughts. Those are the vipāka citta described in the Chachakka Sutta (MN 148.)

- As discussed in the recent posts, the six steps in the Chachakka Sutta take place due to kamma $v i p a \bar{k} a$. During that vipāka stage, first, one of the six types of viññāna experienced. They all are vipāka viññanna. They are cakkhu, sota, ghāna, jivhā, kāya, and mano viññāna. The last step is "vedanā paccayā tanh $\bar{a}$."
- In all those six steps, one does not get to think. They happen automatically. It is important to realize that one consciously generates vacī or kāya sañkhāra with sobhana or asobhana cetasika. Only mano sañkhāra (without kammic consequences) is generated in those six steps.


## Paṭicca Samuppāda Starts With "Salāyatana Paccayā Phassa"

7. As we discussed in previous posts, the Paticca Samuppāda cycle starts not with "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra," but with "salāyatana paccayā phassa." This is why we spent a lot of time discussing the Chachakka Sutta (MN 148.) It may be a good idea to review those posts.

- There has to be a ārammaṇa strong enough to generate interest. For example, seeing an attractive/repulsive figure, tasting something tasty/bitter, hearing a soothing/loud noise, etc.

8. Such vipāka viññāna come about via, "cakkhuñca paticca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññaṇàm" through "mānañca paṭicca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviñ̃ñanaì" per Chachakka Sutta. We discussed in a previous post that those steps are equivalent to "salāyatana paccayā phasso, phassa paccay $\bar{a}$ vedanā, vedanā paccayā taṇhā" steps in Paṭicca Samuppāda. See, "Paticca Samuppāda - A "Self" Exists Due to Avijjā."

- In other words, during the vipāka stage, "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" followed by "sañkhāra paccayā viññāna" DOES NOT take place, as we can see.
- After getting to "vedanā paccayā tanh $\bar{a}$ " with the initial sensory event on a new $\bar{a} r a m m a n a$, the next step in the Paticca Samuppāda cycle starts. The next step is "tanhhā paccayā upādāna." That is when kamma viññāna arises because we start acting with avijjā.
- Let us see how vacī and kāya sañkhāra arise once one gets attached and gets "stuck" in a ārammaṇa (tanhā.) That is the beginning of a complex process involved in the "taṇhā paccayā upādāna" step.


## Vitakka/Vicāra Initiate Abhisañkhāra

9. When one is "stuck" with a particular ārammaṇa, one starts CONSCIOUSLY thinking about it. That involves vitakka and vicāra mental factors (cetasika.) That means one starts "looking into that ārammaña deeper (vitakka), and, in detail (vicāra).

- We can get an idea with the following example. Suppose we go to a showroom to buy a car. If we get interested in a certain car, we scrutinize it. We ask questions from the salesman and get more information about that car. In the same way, when we get interested in any ārammana, we start thinking about different aspects of it.
- In particular, when we like a given ārammana (that car could be one), we start imagining how nice it would be to have it parked on the driveway and how the neighbors may be impressed by it. We often start "daydreaming" about how we will enjoy it. Those are all vacī sañkhāra with vitakka and vicāra.
- Of course, we may also start talking about how good it is. Speaking out also involves vitakka/vicāra.
- If any of those thoughts involve "bad" (asobhana) cetasika (like greed), then such conscious thoughts become vacī abhisañkhāra.

10. If we get interested in a ārammaṇa, we may take action too. We may go to other showrooms to look at similar models and compare prices. We may search the internet for other car dealers in the area, etc.

- Such actions involve moving body parts. As we will see below, kāya sañkhāra lead to those actions.
- If those thoughts involve "bad" (asobhana) cetasika, then such kāya sañkhāra becomes kāya abhisañkhāra.
- More information at, "Vitakka, Vicāra, Savitakka, Savicāra, and Avitakka, Avicāra." I recommend reading that post to get further details and Tipitaka references.


## Sañkappa Means Thinking and Thus Vac̄̄ Sañkhāra

11. Mahācattārīsaka Sutta (MN 117): "Katamo ca, bhikkhave, sammāsañkappo ariyo anāsavo lokuttaro maggañgo? Yo kho, bhikkhave, ariyacittassa anāsavacittassa ariyamaggasamañgino ariyamaggaim bhāvayato takko vitakko sañkappo appana $\bar{a}$ (fixing of thought on an object) byappan $\bar{a}$ cetaso abhiniropanā (application) vacīsañkhāro-ayaì, bhikkhave, sammāsañkappo ariyo anāsavo lokuttaro maggañgo. "

Translated: "What, bhikkhus, is sammā sañkappa that is noble, blameless, supramundane, a factor of the noble path? The thinking, re-thinking, Noble thoughts devoid of āsava - in one whose mind is noble, whose mind is devoid of $\bar{a} s a v a$ (anāsavo), who is on the noble path. That is samma sankappa that is noble and a factor of the path.

- Thus, it is obvious that Sammā Sañkappa means generating thoughts focused on making progress on the Path.
- They are "Noble vacī sañkhāra" with the comprehension of anicca, dukkha, anatta and thus focused on Nibbāna.
- By the way, such sañkhāra arise in the "Kusala-Mūla Paticca Samuppāda" starting with "kusala-mūla paccayā sañkhāra." Note the difference from the Akusala-Mūla Paticca Samuppāda that starts with "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra." We will discuss the Kusala-Mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda in the future in this series. It is discussed in the Paṭicca Samuppāda section, "Kusala-Mūla Paticca Samuppāda."


## Not All Sañkhārā̄ Are Due to Avijjā (and Taṇhā)

12. Now we can see how one starts doing sankh $\bar{a} r \boldsymbol{a}$ due to avijja only IF one is attached via taṇh $\bar{a}$. That is the beginning of a Paṭicca Samuppāda cycle: "avijjā paccayā sañkhārā."

- However, not all sañkhāra create kamma viñ̃āṇa that can bring good or bad kamma vipāka. For example, one may get thirsty (due to a a rammana, too) and decide to go to the kitchen to get a glass of water. Walking to the kitchen involves kāya sañkhāra (to get the body to move.) But that intention is neither good nor bad. It is kammically neutral. It was not due to avijj $\bar{a}$.
- All bodily activities, including breathing, are done with kāya sañkhāra. But "avijjā paccayā sañkhārā" comes into play ONLY IF bad or defiled intentions are in mind. There is no avijj $\bar{a}$ or taṇha involved in breathing or the activities mentioned above (thus they DO NOT lead to abhisañkhāra).


## Apuñ̃a Abhisañkhārā Done with Avijjā (and Taṇhā)

13. Now, let us consider the actions of a thief. A person is waiting to see a doctor and sees someone has dropped a wallet. The moment he sees the wallet, his mind attaches to it (tanhh $\bar{a}$ ). Then he thinks there could
be some money in the wallet and an easy way to get some "free money." Those conscious thoughts are vaci sañkhāra. Then he picks it up and puts it in his pocket. That last step involves kāya sañkhāra.

- Here he did bodily actions with kāya sañkhāra. He did that because he did not realize the future bad consequences of stealing. Thus "avijjā paccayā sañkhārā" generated bad thoughts of picking up the wallet AND putting it in his pocket.
- While he was doing that he had "bad sañkhāra" (with bad cetanā) in his mind. The cetanā (intention) was to steal. Such bad sañkhāra are apuñña abhisañkhāra. Both vacī and kāya sañkhāra, in this example, were apuñ̃̃a abhisañkhāra.


## Puñña Abhisañkhārā Also Done with Avijjā (and Taṇhā)

14. In the previous post, "Kamma, Sañkhāra, and Abhisañkhāra" (under \#12) I pointed out briefly that puññābhisañkhāra and āneñjābhisañkhāra are also done with avijjā.
 akusala-mula Paticca Samuppāda (that leads to suffering) as follows: "Tattha katame avijj $\bar{a}$ paccayā sañkhārā? Puññābhisañkhāro, apuñnābhisañkhāro, āneñjābhisañkhāro, kāyasañkhāro, vacīsañkhāro, cittasañkhāro."

Translated: "What is avijjā paccaȳ̄ sañkhārā? Puñ̃̃ābhisañkhāra, apuññābhisañkhāra, āneñjābhisaǹkhāra, kāyasañkhāra, vacīsañkhāra, cittasañkhāra." (here, citta sañkhāra is the same as mano sañkhāra). It is quite clear that apuñ̃āāhisañkhāra are due to avijjā. But why are the other two are said to be done due to $a v i j j a \bar{a}$ ?

- Puñ̃̃ābhisañkhāra are, of course, Moral and good deeds AND also the cultivation of rūpāvacara jhāna.
- Āneñjäbhisaǹkhāra involve cultivating arūpāvacara samāpatti.
- When a person who has not comprehended anicca, dukkha, or anatta engages in those two types of "good sañkhāra," they are still done with avijjā! That is because one has not yet grasped the dangers in remaining in the rebirth process.
- To get the basic idea, let us briefly consider the following example.

15. Now let us consider the same scenario of \#13 above with another average human. But this person has good, moral gati. He is always trying to do moral things and tries to abstain from doing immoral things.

- This person will pick up the wallet and take it to the receptionist. The person who dropped the wallet may come back looking for it. It is possible that the wallet had not only his driver's license but possibly credit cards and money. So, our good samaritan saved a lot of stress and work for the wallet owner.
- That is an example of a puñña abhisañkhāra. But if it is an abhisañkhāra, done via "avijjā paccayā sañkhārā." Is that not a contradiction since he did a "good deed"?
- To answer that question we need to understand the difference between the mundane eightfold path and the Noble Eightfold Path.


## Two Eightfold Paths - Mundane Eightfold Path and the Noble Eightfold Path

16. The Buddha said that there are two eightfold paths (Mahācattārīsaka Sutta, MN 117). One is the mundane path, where one does good deeds without the comprehension of the "real nature of this world (yathābhūta ñāna)." One gets to the mundane path by first getting rid of the ten types of micch $\bar{a}$ ditthi. I have discussed the two paths in the post, "What is Unique in Buddha Dhamma?"

- Once one gets rid of the ten types of micchā ditthi, another critical step involves getting to the Noble Eightfold Path. One must learn the "real nature of this world" or the anicca, dukkha, and
anatta nature from a Noble person who learned that from a Noble person. That lineage goes back all the way to the Buddha. See, "Four Conditions for Attaining Sotāpanna Magga/Phala."
- Only a Buddha can discover the anicca, dukkha, and anatta nature by himself. All others need to learn that from a Noble person (Ariy $\bar{a}$.) That is why most people are only exposed to the mundane eightfold path.
- We will discuss the anicca, dukkha, and anatta nature in upcoming posts once we finish going through the steps in Paṭicca Samuppāda. Of course, it has been discussed in the sub-section, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta." The current "Origin of Life" series attempts to get there systematically.


### 10.9.5 Taṇhā Paccayā Upādāna - Critical Step in Paṭicca Samuppāda

## December 7, 2019;revised December 10, 2019; October 14, 2020; October 9, 2022

"Taṇhā paccayā upādāna" is a critical step in Paṭicca Samuppāda (PS). That is where we can take CONTROL of the PS process.

## We Do Have Control Over Our Destiny

1. We started this series by discussing the Chachakka Sutta. That sutta describes the initial events that trigger the PS process. As we saw, "salāyatana paccayā phassa" step is where a new PS cycle gets started. See "Buddhist Worldview - Introduction."

- A mind does not arbitrarily start generating sañkhāra (corrupt or immoral thoughts) due to avijjā. That is why I say that a PS cycle does not begin with "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra." See the previous post, "Vacī Sañkhāra - Sañkappa (Conscious Thoughts) and Vācā (Speech)."
- Our focus is on the types of abhisañkhāra that can bring "bad kamma vipāka" in the future. Therefore, we are discussing the "akusala-mūla PS."


## Paṭicca Samuppāda Initiated by "Saḷāyatana Paccayā Phassa"

2. First, there must be a reason for a mind to generate abhisañkhāra (evil or immoral thoughts.) The Buddha pointed out that there are three primary reasons: lobha (greed), dosa (hate or anger), and moha (not knowing about kamma/vipāka and rebirth at the base level and not realizing the anicca, dukkha, anatta nature at a deeper level.)

- One MUST be tempted by greed or anger to do such bad kamma. That happens ONLY IF there is a STRONG sensory input coming through one of the six senses. For example, one generates angry thoughts if one sees an enemy. One may think about stealing only if one sees a valuable item and generates greed.
- That is why "salāyatana paccaya phassa" is the step that INITIATES kamma generation via the PS cycle. Salāyatana means the six internal ayatana or the six sense faculties (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind.)

3. The "saḷāyatana paccayā phassa" combines two steps. For seeing, "Cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhu viññānaì, tiṇ̣à் sañgati phasso." Here, "sañgati phasso" is "say gati phasso" or "making contact with corresponding gati to accumulate "say."

Then the mind quickly goes through the "(sam)phassa paccayā vedan $\bar{a}$ " and "vedana $\bar{a}$ paccay $\bar{a}$ tanhh $\bar{a}$ " steps to end up with "tanh $\vec{a}$ " or "attachment to that $\bar{a} r a m m a n ̣ a " ~ i n ~ a ~ s p l i t-s e c o n d!~ W e ~ C A N N O T ~ s t o p ~$ those steps. They are automatic. They can take place as long as we have "gati to attach to that type of ārammana."

- We discussed that at length in several posts in discussing the Chachakka Sutta. See, "Is There a "Self"?"
- Removing tanh $\bar{a}$ involves controlling the next step in PS: "tanhhā paccayā upādāna." That is what we will focus on now.


## Difference Between Moha and Avijjā

4. Once one gets "attached" to a ārammaṇa, one is CAPABLE of doing akusala kamma (immoral deeds.) Some people are unaware that immoral acts (bad kamma) can lead to unpleasant vipāka in the future. Some bad kamma can lead to suffering-filled rebirths in $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$. That is the base level of moha, where one is morally blind. Someone with moha could do such immoral deeds without any remorse. See, "Lobha, Dosa, Moha versus Rāga, Patigha, Avijijā."

- Moha is reduced to the avijija level when one gets rid of the ten types of micchädiṭhi. Even at the lower level of avijjā, one is still CAPABLE of doing such "apāyagāmi actions" if the sensory input is strong enough. One could live a "moral life" most of the time but take a large bribe or engage in sexual misconduct if the ārammaña is strong enough. For example, one may not have taken a bribe for most of their life but be tempted "if the price is high enough."
- Even after one attains the Sotāpanna stage, one may still do some akusala kamma, but one's mind WILL NOT allow doing any "apāyagāmi deeds."
- We are now focusing on understanding how an average "moral person" accumulates bad kamma, starting at the "salāyatana paccayā phassa" step in Akusala-Mūla PS. A "moral person" has removed the ten types of micch $\bar{a}$ diṭthi but has not yet comprehended Tilakkhaṇa (anicca, dukkha, and anatta.)


## A "Moral Person" May Be Tempted to Do Apāyagāmī Deeds

5. Such a "moral person" has reduced moha to the avijjā level, but still is capable of doing "apāyagāmi" deeds. Even though they mainly act morally, they have "hidden defilements" (anusaya.) Those anusaya can come to the surface (as $\bar{a} s a v a$, ) if triggered by a tempting sensory input. That is what we discussed in \#3.

- Anusaya means "sleeping defilements." They can be "awakened" by a robust sensory input (ārammana) and brought up to the mind as "āsava." See, "Āsava, Anusaya, and Gati (Gathi)."
- Anusaya is like gunpowder in a matchstick. Striking that match on a rough surface will produce light. In the same way, when a defiled mind (with avijjā) comes into contact (phassa, or more accurately samphassa) with a strong ārammaña (say an attractive person), that could make greed or desire (āsava) come to the mind.
- Having such an anusaya is the same as having "bad gati." As one reduces anusaya (following the Eightfold Path), one's undesirable gati will also decrease. As we will see, gradually decreasing upādāna by being mindful is the key.


## Tanh $\bar{a}$ Is There As Long as One Has Bad Gati and $\bar{A} s a v a$

6. The critical point in the Chachakka Sutta is the following. One MAY get attached (tanhā) to a given $\bar{a} r a m m a n ̣ a ~ a s ~ l o n g ~ a s ~ o n e ~ h a s ~ " d e f i l e d ~ g a t i " ~ o r ~ t h e ~ s e v e n ~ t y p e s ~ o f ~ a n u s a y a: ~ d i t ̣ t h a ̄ n u s a y a ~(w r o n g ~ v i e w s), ~$ vicikicchānusaya (tendency to do the unwise), kāmarāga anusaya (temptation for sense pleasures), paṭigha anusaya (temptation for hatred), bhavarāga anusaya (craving for existence), māna anusaya (sense of "me"), and avijjā anusaya (ignorance); see, for example, "WebLink: suttacentral: Dutiva Anusaya Sutta (AN 7.12)."

- They all have greed, anger, and ignorance (of the Four Noble Truths) as their origins. See "Conditions for the Four Stages of Nibbāna."
 one acts unwisely (ayoniso manasikāra), one will go through the "tanhhā paccayā upādāna" step in PS and will start accumulate NEW kamma via "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra."
- Therefore, the key to Nibbāna is to stop the tendency to move automatically from taṇhā to upādāna. We will see that this is equivalent to removing gati, anusaya (and thereby āsava or cravings.)


## Connection to the Eightfold Path, Satipatṭhāna, Ānāpānasati

7. The key to getting to Nibbāna is to understand what happens in the "taṇhā paccayā upādāna" step. That is the first step after the last step, "vedanā paccay $\bar{a}$ taṇh $\bar{a}$ " discussed in the Cha Chakka Sutta.
" As we saw above, as long as one has "defiled gati" or $\bar{a} s a v a$, one WILL have tanh $\bar{a}$. The way to reduce and eventually remove $\tanh \bar{a} \bar{a}$ is to reduce and eliminate one's bad gati.

- We cannot remove taṇhā by sheer willpower. But we can control the "taṇhā paccayā upādāna" step by stopping vaci sañkhāra as they start arising. That is because we start "talking to ourselves" only when we get to the upādāna" stage. See "Difference Between Tanhā and Upādāna."
- Thus, as soon as we become aware that the mind has turned to a "defiled state," we need to change from that "wrong or immoral path" (micchā ditṭhi, micchā sañkappa, micchā vācā, micchā kammaṃta, micch $\bar{a}$ ajiva, micch $\bar{a}$ v $\bar{y} y \bar{a} m a$, micch $\bar{a}$ sati, and micch $\bar{a}$ samādhi) to the "moral path" and specifically to the Noble Path (sammā ditṭhi, sammā sañkappa, sammā vācā, sammā kammaṃta, sammā ajiva, sammā vāyāma, sammā sati, and sammā samādhi.)

8. Being mindful of such "bad ārammana" is Satipatṭhāna $=$ "sati" + "patṭhāna" (to establish) or "being mindful."

- Forcefully getting rid any of micchā ditṭhi, micchā sañkappa, micch $\bar{a} v \bar{a} c \bar{a}$, micch $\bar{a}$ kammaṃta, micchā ajiva, micchā vāyāma, micchā sati, and micchā samādhi is the "āpāna" (dispell) part of Ānāpānasati.
- Forcefully strengthening relevant factors of sammā ditthi, sammā sañkappa, sammā vācā, samm $\bar{a}$ kammaṃta, sammā ajiva, sammā vāyāma, sammā sati, and sammā samādhi is the "āna" (take in) part of Ānāpānasati.
- Now we can see that $\bar{A} n \bar{n} p \bar{a} n a s a t i$ is to focus the mind (sati) on "āna" and "āpāna" or "ānāpāna."


## VacīSañkhāra Responsible for Upādāna

9. When one gets "attached" or "gets stuck" in a $\bar{a} r a m m a n ̣ a ~ d u e ~ t o ~ t a n h h a ̄, ~ t h e ~ F I R S T ~ T H I N G ~ t h a t ~ h a p p e n s ~$ is that DEFILED thoughts arise in one's mind AUTOMATICALLY. Those are mano (or citta) sañkhāra.

- For example, if one sees a beautiful person, one may generate lustfil thoughts automatically. If one sees one's arch-enemy, one may create angry thoughts, etc. Such defiled arise due to "hidden defilements" (anusaya) or "bad gati."
- However, within moments, we become aware of such thoughts. Many of us continue to generate similar defiled thoughts CONSCIOUSLY at that stage. As soon as we become aware of such thoughts, they are now vacī sañkhāra.

10. We start analyzing that ārammana in various ways (vitakka/vicāra.) We may also start speaking about it. Both types are vaci sañkhāra. We have discussed that in detail in several posts. See "Vacī Sañkhāra Sañkappa (Conscious Thoughts) and Vācā (Speech)", "Difference Between Tanhā and Upādāna" and "Vitakka, Vicāra, Savitakka, Savicāra, and Avitakka, Avicāra."

- With vitakka/vicāra (vacī sañkhāra), our interest in that ārammana will get stronger. Then we may take physical actions involving kāya sañkhāra.
- By the way, vacī sañkhāra (talking to oneself without speaking) is the same as sañkappa. Vacī sañkhāra also leads to speech ( $v \bar{a} c \bar{a})$ as we discussed before.
- Of course, kāya sañkhāra leads to bodily actions.

11. The following is the time sequence:

- Mano (citta) sañkhāra arise first (and automatically) and do not involve conscious thinking. They DO NOT have strong kammic consequences.
- We start accumulating new kamma by generating vacī and kāya sañkhāra. Vacī sañkhāra lead to micchā sañkappa and micchā vācā. Kāya sañkhāra leads to micchā kammanta.


## Avijjā Is the Ignorance of Bad Consequences of Tanhhā/Upādāna

12. What we discussed above in \#7 through \#11 are all associated with the "taṇhā paccayā upādāna" step in PS. When the mind automatically "attaches to a ārammaṇa" (tanhhā), it starts generating sañkhāra via "avijjā paccayā (abhi)sañkhāra." That is how new PS processes start accumulating new kamma.

- If one does not realize the harmful consequences of getting attached via greed, anger, or ignorance, that means one is acting with avijja AT THAT TIME.
- It is critical to note that any "given person" does not always act with avijjā. Whether one will start thinking and acting with avijjä depends on the nature of the arammana (whether it matches his/her gati) and how strong the ärammaṇa is.
- If one does get "attached" or "get stuck" with a ārammaṇa, then one will start "pulling it closer." One wants to think and speak about the $\bar{a} r a m m a n a$ and take action.
- Upādāna means "pulling it closer (in one's mind)" ("upa" + "ādāna," where "upa" means "close" and "ādāna" means "pull").

13. That is how the "taṇhā paccayā upādāna" step starts a new PS cycle with "avijijā paccayā saǹkhāra."

- One will start generating vacī sañkhāra without speaking first. Those are micchā sañkappa. For example, upon seeing an enemy $(\mathrm{Y})$, person X may generate evil thoughts about Y .
- If emotions become stronger, X may speak out. In the above example, X may say something harsh to Y . Those are micchā vācā.
- If Y responds in kind and the situation escalates, X may hit that person. That is a micch $\bar{a}$ kammanta.That action was initiated by kāya sañkhāra.
- All such vacī and kāya sañkhāra arise via "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra."


## Paṭicca Samuppāda May Not Proceed Linearly

14. Now we can see how complicated the "taṇhā paccayā upādāna" step is. It went back to the "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" step to initiate a new PS cycle.

- Now, those vacī sañkhārā and kāya sañkhārā lead to kamma viñnāṇa, via "sañkhāra paccayā viññāna" (and the rest of the PS cycle ending in "the whole mass of suffering.") That whole process may repeatedly run as long as one remains engaged with that ārammana.
- Such kamma viññāna are focused on hurting that person in the example of \#13. That viññāna, in turn, leads to more vacī and kāya sañkhāra via "viññāna paccayā sañkhāra." Note that this is the reverse of "sañkhāra paccayā viññāṇa."
- Therefore, PS steps do not necessarily go just one way. They can go backward. They can jump to different places in the cycle. As we saw, it jumped from the "taṇhā paccayā upādāna" step to the "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" step.
- However, one can figure out such complexities when one understands the basic concepts.


## Connection to $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p \bar{a} n a s a t i ~ a n d ~ S a t i p a t t h \bar{a} n a$

15. That is also why it is CRITICAL to stop the vacī sañkhāra that arise immediately following the mano sañkhāra. In that initial stage, speech has not "broken out yet." We just become aware that we are generating lustful/hateful thoughts.

- We MUST stop vacī sañkhāra as they start arising. Then they will not lead to "bad speech" (via more vacī sañkhāra) or "bad actions" (via kāya sañkhāra.) This is discussed in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Vitakkasanthāna Sutta (MN 20)."
- That is the key to doing the correct Ānāpānasati bhāvanā and Satipațthāna bhāvanā! See " $\underline{\text { a }}$. Ānāpānasati Bhāvanā (Introduction)."
- We will discuss that and more steps in PS in the upcoming posts.


## Moha/Avijjā and Vipāka Viññāṇa/Kamma Viññ̄āna

## December 14, 2019; revised December 15, 2019

## Summary of Discussion Up To Now

1. In the subsection on "Worldview of the Buddha," we are discussing how the Buddha explained the sensory experience. More importantly, the Buddha taught how a "living being" generates kammic energies for future existences (bhava) based on "attachment" (tanhā) to a given sensory experience. As we have discussed, "attachment" can happen due to greed, hate, or an unwise mindset.

- First, we discussed how a sensory event starts when a ārammaña (sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, dhamm $\bar{a}$ ) comes to the mind when one of the six senses (internal $\bar{a} y$ atana) comes into contact with an external $\bar{a} y a t a n a$. Becoming aware of sensory input is one of the six types of vipāka viññāna: "cakkhu viññāna, sota viññāna, ghāna viññāna, jivhā viññanna, kāya viññāna, mano viññāṇa." [Indriya (sense faculty) and $\bar{a} y a t a n a$ (defiled sense faculty) have totally different meanings. For example, eyes are indriya when we just happen to see things, but they BECOME āyatana when they are used for pleasure, i.e., to deliberately look at sensual things to enjoy them.]
- Those six types of viññāna, including mano viññāna, are vipāka viññạ̄̄a. They DO NOT generate kammic energy. They are "experiences."

2. Then, one MAY "attach to" or "get stuck in" that sensory experience INSTANTLY. That means generating tanhha. Then the "taṇhā paccayā upādāna" step automatically follows. That is a step in the middle of the Paṭicca Samuppāda (PS) cycle.

- One will attach ( $\tanh \bar{a}$ ) only if one has "defiled gati." That means one likes or dislikes that sensory experience (could be connected with ignorance too.) If one attaches, then one will start thinking and speaking (with vacī sañkhāra) and even may take actions (with kāya sañkhāra) with a DEFILED MIND. That means those sañkhāra arise via, "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra." That is part of "upādāna" or "pulling that ārammaṇa close."
- Therefore, what we summarized here in \#2 is how the "taṇhā paccayā upādāna" step in PS initiates a new PS process that starts at "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra." That is how the PS cycle begins in real life, beginning with a ārammaṇa (as detailed in the Chachakka Sutta (MN 148).


## Summary in Charts

3. Since it is CRITICAL to understand what we discussed above, I have made the charts below to help us with the discussion.


Response to a ārammaṇa with Moha



Response to a ārammaṇa with Avijjā

## Response to a ārammana by an Arahant

One can download the charts for easy reading/printing: "WebLink: PDF file: Response to a ārammana with Moha," "WebLink: PDF file: Response to a arrammana with Avijia,", and "WebLink: PDF file: Response to a ārammana by an Arahant."

- Paṭicca Samuppāda referred to in ALL the above charts is the "Akusala-Mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda." That PS process leads to future suffering.
- Therefore, sañkhāra that do not arise in an Arahant are ONLY "bad or immoral sañkhāra." An Arahant will still generate mano, vacī, and kāya sañkhāra to think, speak, and take actions. He/she will be engaged in "puñña kriyä" or "moral deeds." Such "moral deeds" are NOT "puñña $\boldsymbol{a b h i s a n} k h \overline{a r a} \boldsymbol{a}$ " because one does them with full comprehension of the anicca nature. We will discuss this critical point later.


## Difference Between Moha and Avijja

4. Let us start with the chart on the left. That chart is for an extreme case of a "totally morally-blind" person. That mind is covered with defilements (moha.) Such a person would, just like an animal, go along with any temptation that comes to the mind. His/her "bad gati" will only get stronger.

- The chart in the middle applies to a wide range of humans with avijj $\bar{a}$. Avijj $\bar{a}$ is a lower form of moha. When one removes the ten types of micch $\bar{a}$ dittthi, moha reduces to the avijja level. Any human who knows right from wrong is an average human. It also includes those who are Ariyā (Sotāpanna Anugāmi and above) but not yet attained Arahanthood.
- Of course, any Ariya (Noble Person) is INCAPABLE of doing apāyagāmi deeds. An Anāgāmi is INCAPABLE of craving for sensual pleasures, etc. Therefore, as one move to higher stages of Nibbāna, one will "attach to" less and less ārammaṇa (sensory inputs.)
- But any average human - no matter how "moral" by conventional standards - is CAPABLE of doing even an apāyagāmi deed. The ārammaṇa must be strong enough to be tempted.
- An Arahant has a totally-purified mind and has no "bad gati" left. Therefore, he/she WILL NOT initiate an "Akusala-Mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda" cycle under ANY circumstance. That is indicated in the third chart.


## Difference Between Vipāka Viññāna and Kamma Viññāna

5. Above charts also help us clarify the difference between vipāka viññāna and kamma viññāna. Any sensory EXPERIENCE is a vipāka viññāṇa. Vipāka viññāṇa can come in through any of the six sense faculties, as shown at the top of the charts. Every living being, including an Arahant, experiences vipāka viñ̃̄̄ana. In other words, ANY living-being can see, hear, etc.

- If one attaches ( $\operatorname{tanhha} \bar{a}$ ) to a $\bar{a} r a m m a n ̣ a$, then that initiates the step "taṇh $\bar{a}$ paccayā upādāna" step in PS. That means one starts "pulling that ārammaṇa close (upādāna)." First, one starts thinking about it with vacī sañkhāra. One does that with the sense of a "me" involved in the sensory experience. As we have discussed, there is no need for a "me" or a "self" to experience a sensory input. See, "Chachakka Sutta - Six Types of Vipāka Viññāna."
- Therefore, at the beginning of that "taṇhā paccayā upādāna" step, one starts generating sañkhāra about that $\bar{a} r a m m a n ̣ a$ with the "avijja a paccayā sañkhāra" step in PS. That is when a PS cycle starts at the "beginning" and then runs through the end.
- The next step in PS after the "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" step is "sañkhāra paccayā viññāna." That viññāna is a kamma viñ̃̃̄āna. Since it arises ONLY in mind, that is a mano viñ $\tilde{n} a ̄ n a$. This kamma viññāna appears at the bottom of the FIRST TWO charts. An Arahant does not generate kamma viñ̃̄̄̄na. Therefore, kamma viññāna is absent in the third chart.


## Kamma Viññạ̣̄a Generated with the View (diṭthi) and Perception (saññ̄̄) of "Me" or a "Self"

6. From the last bullet of \#5, it is clear that one's mind will NOT go through the Akusala-Mūla PS at ANY TIME only if one is an Arahant.

- That is because it is ONLY an Arahant would have "seen" the futility of attaching to ANY sensory input (ārammaṇa.) There is no sense of a "me" or a "self" in an Arahant.
- That is a point that we will discuss in detail in upcoming posts. But it is good to know about that point ahead of the time. It is CRITICAL to understand the material presented so far to be able to "keep up" with the upcoming posts when we discuss sakkāya dittthi.
- As we can see, ANYONE below the Arahant stage WILL attach to at least a few sensory inputs. That is because anyone below the Arahant will have at least a trace of avijja anusaya left.
- It is impossible for an average human even to comprehend that. That is why the Buddha emphasized that it is not correct to say that a "self" does not exist. The point is that for ANYONE below the Arahant stage of Nibbāna, a "self" with "gati" exists!
- However, anyone above the Sotāpanna Anugāmi can "see" that it is unfruitful to take anything in this world to be "mine," and also can lead to future suffering. That "seeing" is "with wisdom" and is lokuttara (or lokottara in Sinhala) Sammā Ditthi. A fish biting the tasty bait on a hook does not "see" that it will be subjected to much suffering. Just like that, an average human cannot "see" the suffering hidden in sensual pleasures. We will discuss details in future posts.
- One becomes a Sotāpanna Anugāmi when one comprehends Tilakkhaṇa (anicca, dukkha, anatta) to some extent. Even after that, the saññā (perception) of a "me" will be there. That perception will reduce with higher stages of magga phala and will disappear at the Arahant stage.


## Starting with a "Self" or "No-Self" is not the correct approach

7. As we summarized in \#5 above (and discussed in the post mentioned there), attachment to a arrammaṇa happens instantly. That requires no conscious thinking and thus is NOT possible to stop. As long as one has 'bad gati," one MAY attache to some sensory inputs (ārammaṇa.)

- The way to eliminate taṇhā is to reduce and finally remove one's "bad gati." Luckily, humans have the ABILITY to do that by understanding the PS process.
- Indeed, there is a "self" is in the PS process. However, that is not an unchanging "self" like a "soul" or a "ātma." I call it a "dynamic self," see "What Reincarnates? - Concept of a Lifestream." That "self" disappears when one attains the Arahant stage!

8. Therefore, until one becomes an Arahant, the there is a "self" that CAN make decisions on how to respond to sensory input. As shown in the middle chart above, anyone can stop any "bad vac $\bar{l}$ sañkhāra" that arises when tempted by a given sensory input. If that fails, one can stop kāya sañkhāra that lead to physical actions. In simple words, that means one should stop any bad conscious thoughts, bad speech, or bad (immoral) deeds as soon as one becomes aware of them.

- When one becomes a Sotāpanna Anugāmi by comprehending Tilakkhaṇa to some extent, one's "apāyagāmi gati" will disappear.
- Until then, one can practice $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p a \overline{n a s a t i ~ o r ~ S a t i p a t t t h a ̄ n a ~ B h a ̄ v a n a ̄ ~ t o ~ s t o p ~ s o m e ~ t e m p t a t i o n s . ~ O n e ~}$ does not need to have formal meditation sessions. It is utterly useless to have formal meditation sessions and not to act with mindfulness when one goes through daily activities. That is when one generates most of the defiled thoughts and actions.
- Formal meditations become more relevant after getting to the Sotāpanna stage. That is why "bhāvanāya pahātabbä" comes last in the Sabbāsava Sutta (MN 2). There, "dassanena pahātabbä" of "removal via correct vision" is first on that list. That is the "correct vision" required to be a Sotāpanna. One must first understand what to meditate on!


## Kamma Viññāna Have Future Expectations

9. What is the real difference between a vipāka viññāna and a kamma viññāna?

- Vipāka viññāña provide the sensory experience. One sees with cakkhu viññanna, hears with sota viññāṇa, tastes with jivhā viññāna, smell with ghāna viññāna, feel touch with kāya viññāṇa, and thoughts coming to the mind with mano viñ̃ān̄a.
- Kamma viññāṇa arise via "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra." When one gets attached to a ārammaṇa via greed or hate, for example, one has an EXPECTATION. If one likes the ārammaṇa, one wants more of it. If one dislikes it, one wants it to go away.
- Thus when one consciously thinks (vacī sañkhāra) and takes actions ( $k \bar{a} y a$ sañkhāra), there are "expectations" embedded in such sañkhāra. Those sañkhārā lead to kamma viññāna via "sañkhāra paccayā viññāna."

10. Those "expectations" in kamma viñ̃̃āna are energies generated by the mind in javana citta.

They stay "out there in the world" as dhammā. Those are part of the dhammā in "manañca paṭicca dhamme ca uppajjati mano viññānam.".

- Therefore, just like the other five types of $r \bar{u} p a$ are "out there in the world," dhamm $\bar{a}$ are "out there," too. They can be detected by the mana indriya, just like a sound detected by the sota indriya, for example. That is how our future expectations periodically come back to our minds, i.e., how we remember our plans for the future. Sigmund Freud called that the "subconscious." Of course, he had no idea about the actual mechanism.
- Dhammā are rūpa too. But they are just energies that are below suddhatthaka. They are "anidassanaì appatighai் dhammāyatanapariyāpannam்." They "cannot be seen or touched." See, "What are Rūpa? - Dhammā are Rūpa too!"
- The other five types of rūpa sensed via the five physical sense faculties are above the suddhatthaka level. Modern science is only aware of those five types.
- We will discuss dhammā in detail in the next post.

All posts on the new series at, "Origin of Life."

### 10.9.7 Icchā (Cravings) Lead to Upādāna and to Eventual Suffering

## December 21, 2019; re-written October 14, 2022 (\#4 revised later)

## Upādāna Is a Key Concept That Has Been Hidden

1. The Buddha declared that his Dhamma or teachings on suffering "had not been known to the world" before him. In his first discourse, WebLink: suttacentral: Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta (SN 56.11), he "defined" dukkha or suffering.

Idam kho pana, bhikkhave, dukkhaim ariyasaccam:
$j a ̄ t i p i ~ d u k k h a ̄, j a r a ̄ p i ~ d u k k h a ̄, ~ b y a ̄ d h i p i ~ d u k k h o, ~ m a r a n ̣ a m p i ~ d u k k h a ̄ \dot{m}, ~ a p p i y e h i ~ s a m p a y o g o ~ d u k k h o, ~$ piyehi vippayogo dukkho, yampicchaỉ (yam pi icchaì) na labhati tampi dukkhā्̄m-samkhittena pañcupādānakkhandhā (pañca upādāna khandhā) dukkhā. [saǹkhittena means being overthrown by defilements]

## Translated: Bhikkhus, What is the Noble Truth of Suffering?

"Birth is suffering; getting old is suffering; getting sick is suffering; death is suffering. Having to associate with things one does not like is suffering and having to separate from those one likes is suffering. If one does not get what one wants/craves (icch $\bar{a}$ ), that is suffering - in brief, the origin of suffering is the "pulling close" (upādāna) of the five aggregates of rūpa, vedanā, sañn̄̄, sañkhāra, viññāṇa (pañcupādānakkhandha). [iccha :[adj.] (in cpds.), wishing; longing; desirous of.]

- Everyone knows that "Birth is suffering, getting old is suffering, getting sick is suffering, dying is suffering. Having to associate with things that one does not like is suffering. Having to separate from those things one likes is suffering." That part is known to the world.
- It may be a bit harder to understand birth as suffering, but ANY birth ends with decay and death at the end, so it is not that difficult to "see."


## The "Hard-To See" Suffering That Is Hidden

2. What is "previously unheard" is that craving (icch $\bar{a}$ ) for sensory attractions leads to suffering in the future. When one craves something, one will start thinking and speaking (vacī sañkhāra), and doing things (with kāya sañkhāra) to "get possession" of it. That "pulling close" of "mind-pleasing things" is "upādāna" ("ирa" + "ādāna" as we discussed before.) [Upādāna means "pulling it closer (in one's mind)" ("upa" + "ādāna," where "upa" means "close" and "ādāna" means "pull"). [ $\bar{a} d \bar{a} n a:(n t)$ ), taking up; grasping.]]

- Since we do not "see" that hidden suffering, we tend to do immoral deeds to possess such "mindpleasing things." That means generating (mano, vacī, and $k \bar{a} y a$ ) sañkhāra due to our avijj $\bar{a}$ (ignorance of the core teachings of the Buddha, including the Pațicca Samuppāda process.)
- The harsh consequences of such immoral deeds (kamma vipāka) may not be seen immediately, or even in this life. That is why it is hard to "see" this hidden suffering.
- That is contrary to our daily experiences. We do everything to live a luxurious life with a beautiful house, an attractive spouse, a nice car, etc. We do not see "any bad consequences" of our efforts to pursue those "mind-pleasing things."


## A Fish Does Not "See" the Hidden Suffering in a Delicious Bait

3. As we will discuss, we are no different than a fish biting into a tasty bait, say, a worm. That fish does not see the hook hidden in the "delicious worm." It will be subjected to much suffering once it bites the worm, and the hook attaches to its mouth.

- The difficulty in our case is that our deeds to get those sensory pleasures may not show their CONSEQUENCES in this life. It is useless to follow Buddha Dhamma if one does not believe in rebirth or kamma/vipāka.
- All we tend to crave (icch $\overline{\boldsymbol{a}}$ ) are PARTS OF the five aggregates (pañcakkhandha). That small part is pañcupādānakkhandha. We like certain types of rūpa (people and things), certain types of vedanā (feelings), etc.
- That is why it is critical to understand how "pulling close" (upādāna) of sensory inputs (ārammaṇa) leads to future suffering. The akusala-mūla Pațicca Samuppāda (PS) ends up in "jarā, maraṇa, soka, parideva, dukkha, domanassa,.." or the "whole mass of suffering."


## Craving (Icchā) Starts the Paticca Samuppāda Process That Leads to Suffering

4. In the previous two posts, we discussed how an external sensory input (àrammana) triggers the "taṇh $\bar{a}$ paccayā upādāna" step in the PS. See, "Tanhā Paccayā Upādāna - Critical Step in Paticca Samuppāda" and "Moha/Avijijā and Vipāka Viññāna/Kamma Viññāña."

- Continuing that discussion, let us look at how that future suffering arises. The following chart summarizes what we discussed. It shows all the steps in the PS process, starting with "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" to the end, "jarā, maraṇa, soka, parideva, dukkha, domanassa,.." or the "whole mass of suffering."
- However, the initiation of PS cycles is not at the "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" step but the "(sam)phassa paccay $\bar{a}$ vedana $\bar{"}$ step. Attaching to a sensory input ( $\bar{a} r a m m a n a)$ with liking (icch $\bar{a})$ happens first. See \#3 of "Chachakka Sutta - Six Types of Vipāka Viññāna."


Open pdf for viewing or printing: "WebLink: PDF-file: Icchā to Upādāna to Suffering."

## Idappaccayatā Paṭicca Samuppāda Example

5. Idappaccayatā Pațicca Samuppāda explains phenomena occurring in real-time as they happen. That is easier to interpret compared to upapatti Paṭicca Samuppāda, which describes events leading to future lives, especially in rebirths. [idaím :[(Nom. and Acc. sing. of ima) nt.] this thing. paccayatā: :f.] causation. idappaccayat $\bar{a}:($ ida $\dot{m}+$ paccayat $\bar{a})$ [f.] having its foundation on this, i.e., causally connected.]

- Let us revisit a simple example that we discussed in \#13 of the recent post, "Vacī Sañkhāra - Sañkappa (Conscious Thoughts) and Vācā (Speech)."

A person is in the waiting room to see a doctor and sees that someone has dropped a wallet. The moment he sees the wallet, his mind attaches to it (tanhā). Then he thinks there could be some money in the wallet and that it is an easy way to get some "free money." That happens within moments of him seeing the wallet.

- "Seeing the wallet" is a cakkhu viññāna that resulted via, "Cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhu viññānam.". Within a split-second, he attaches to it (tanha $\bar{a})$ as we discussed in the posts on Chachakka Sutta (MN 148.)
- Then he starts thinking about how much money can be in that wallet, and how to pick it up without being noticed. Those are vacī sañkhāra that arise due to his ignorance (avijj $\bar{a}$ ) about their harmful consequences. Thus, his mind has generated "upādāna" for the wallet because he has a craving (icchā) for money.
- Thus, his mind starts the step, "taṇhā paccayā upādāna" in Paṭicca Samuppāda (PS.)


## Initiation of a new Paṭicca Samuppāda Process

6. Therefore, the "tanhhā paccayā upādāna" step now leads to the start of a brand new PS process with "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" (see the chart above.) We discussed that in the previous post, "Moha/Avijijā and Vipāka Viññāna/Kamma Viññāna."

- Those conscious thoughts about the wallet are vacī sañkhāra. Now those sañkhāra lead to a NEW kamma viññāṇa. That viññāna has the expectation of picking up the wallet and keeping it for himself. That is a mano viññaña that arises in his mind and is different from the cakkhu viñ̃ $\bar{a} n a$ of "seeing the wallet."
- Now, that kamma viññāna leads to "nāmarūpa formation" in his mind. He runs various scenarios in his mind (vitakka/vicāra), both regarding picking up the wallet without being noticed and what he can do with the money in the wallet. That is "viññāna paccayā nāmarūpa."
- That immediately leads to the involvement of several internal ayatana. For example, he may look around to see whether anyone is watching. He may stand up and see whether the receptionist can see the area where he is sitting, etc. That is "nāmarūpa paccayā salāyatana."
- That, in turn, leads to "salāyatana paccayā (sam)phassa." His mind's defilements (or "san" or anusaya) affect all his thoughts and activities. That generates mind-made vedanā or "(sam)phassa paccay $\bar{a}$ (samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-)vedan $\vec{a} "$ followed by more PS cycles. Those are the steps described in the Chachakka Sutta.
- We need to remember that words like "phassa" and "vedana"" in the abbreviated PS must be interpreted as "samphassa" and "samphassa-j $\bar{a}$-vedan $\bar{a}$." See the previous posts in this series: "Worldview of the Buddha."


## Strengthened Upādāna Leads to a Temporary Bhava

7. His mind is now back to the "tanhhā paccayā upādāna" step in the PS process, and it reinforces that upādāna. The above steps may be repeated many times in his mind as he sits there and contemplates various aspects. Those, by the way, are vitakka/vicāra.

- With the strengthening of the upādāna, now his mindset changes to that of a thief's existence (bhava). That is "upādāna paccayā bhava." Then immediately, he is "born" (jāti) a thief. That is "bhava paccayā $\bar{a} t i$, " By the way, in upapatti Paṭicca Samuppāda, jāti can happen much later. The "bhava" remains energized as $d h a m m \bar{a}$; see below.
- Now that "thief' goes and picks up the wallet and puts it in his pocket. Now, "stealing of the wallet" is accomplished. That is the "marana" or "death" of that particular $j \bar{a} t i$ as a thief.
- However, there is more to it than just marana. "Jarā, maraṇa, soka, parideva, dukkha, domanassa,.." will also follow.
- Even though he got what he wanted, his mind is very agitated. Even though no one else was in the waiting room, he wondered whether the receptionist somehow saw his act. Also, now a new thought comes to his mind as to whether there is a video camera in the room. That "mental stress" is part of domanassa.


## The Process Is Over, but the Consequences Will Prevail

8. It is possible that there was a video camera in the room. If so, he could be charged with theft a few days later. Those are part of the "mass of suffering" due to the immoral act of stealing.

- But the critical point is the following. Even if he did not get caught, he would be paying for his immoral action in the future. The kammic energy of that immoral deed will follow him, waiting for an opportunity to bring a corresponding "bad vipāka" at some point.
- Kammic energy is in dhammā (with a long "a" at the end, not as in Buddha Dhamma.) Let us address that in brief.


## Dhammā Are Energies Created by Mind - With Kamma Viññāna

9. Dhammā are the underlying energies (or "kamma seeds" or "kamma bīja") created by the mind.

- A seed has the POTENTIAL to give rise to a tree under proper conditions like good soil, water, and sunlight. In the same way, dhammā (a kamma bīja) has the POTENTIAL to give rise to things (both living and inert) in this word.
- That is how such dhamma (or kamma seeds) can bring vipāka in the future.
- Just like an ordinary seed needs soil, water, and sunlight to germinate and bring about a tree, dhamm $\bar{a}$ needs proper conditions to bring about corresponding vipāka. That is also why kamma is not deterministic. For example, Angulimāla killed 999 people. That kammic energy was there even after Ven. Angulimāla attained Arahantship. However, with that Arahantship, his mind became pure, and any conditions to bring about the vipāka of such bad kamma could not materialize. See, "Account of Angulimāla - Many Insights to Buddha Dhamma."
- The role of dhammā is discussed in "Dhammā, Kamma, Sañkhāra, Mind - Critical Connections."


## Icchā (Cravings) Lead to Upādāna and to Eventual Suffering

10. What we discussed above is the key message embedded in the First Noble Truth of Dukkha Sacca (pronounced "sachcha.")

- It is craving (icchā) for "mind-pleasing sensory attractions in the world" that lead to taṇhā and upādāna and eventual suffering.
- Based on icch $\bar{a}$, we get "stuck in attractive sensory inputs" (tanh $\bar{a}$ ), and try to keep that $\bar{a} r a m m a n a$ as close as possible in mind (upādāna.) We do that in our minds by generating unwise thoughts (vacī sañkhāra), which leads to unwise speech (more vacī sañkhāra) and immoral actions (based on kāya sañkhāra). That is the start of an akusala-mūla PS process, "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra."
- That process, of course, inevitably leads to the last step in the PS process, "jarā, maraña, soka, parideva, dukkha, domanassa,.." or the "whole mass of suffering."

11. The "WebLink: suttacentral: Icch $\bar{a}$ Sutta (SN 1.69)" summarizes the importance of the icchā. One time, a deva came to the Buddha and asked:
"Kenassu bajjhatī loko, "By what is the world bound?
kissa vinayaya muccati; By the removal of what one is freed?
Kissassu vippahānena,
What is it that one must abandon sabbaì chindati bandhanan"ti. To cut off all bondage?"
[bajjhati :[pass. of bandhati] is bound or captivated; is caught.
vinaya: :m.] discipline; the code of monastic discipline; removal.
muccati : $[\mathrm{muc}+\mathrm{ya}]$ becomes free; to be saved or released.
vippahāna : (nt.) [vi+pahāna] leaving, abandoning, giving up.
chindati $:[$ chid $+\dot{\mathrm{m}}+\mathrm{a}]$ cuts; severs; destroys.
bandhana: $[\mathrm{nt}$.$] bound; fetter, attachment; imprisonment; binding; bondage; something to bind with.]$
The Buddha replied:
"Icchāya bajjhatī loko, icchāvinayāya muccati;
Icchāya vippahānena, sabbaì chindati bandhanan"ti.

## "By cravings, one is bound to the world;

By the removal of desire one is freed
Craving is what one must give up
To cut off all bondage."

- But, of course, the craving for "mind-pleasing things" cannot be removed by just willpower. One must understand the harmful consequences of such cravings. That understanding comes through moral living AND learning true and correct Buddha Dhamma.
- That is why Sammā Ditṭhi comes first in the Noble Eightfold Path. The other steps in the Path will follow once one comprehends the teachings. But a badly corrupt mind cannot grasp those teachings, which is why moral living is a prerequisite.

12. The following posts discuss more examples that may help solidify the understanding: "How Do Sense Faculties Become Internal Āyatana?" and "Key Steps of Kammic Energy Accumulation."

- The Idappaccayatā Pațicca Samuppāda is discussed in detail in "Paticca Samuppāda During a Lifetime."


## Dhammā, Kamma, Sañkhāra, Mind - Critical Connections

December 28, 2019; revised February 17, 2022

## Introduction

1. From the previous posts on Pațicca Samuppāda in this series, we can make the following conclusions:

- The MIND generates different types of sañkhārā. They are involved in all thoughts (mano and vaci sañkhārā), speech (vacī sañkhārā), and bodily actions (kāya sañkhārā.)
- Therefore, sañkhārā (generated with avijjā) are responsible for all ten types of akusala kamma. Of those ten, three with the mind, four with speech, and three with the body.
- Such kamma create energies (or kamma bīja) released to the world as "dhammāa." We will discuss some details here. This word dhammā is different from dhamma (teachings) in Buddha Dhamma.
- Please review those previous posts as needed: "Paticca Samuppāda - Not 'Self' or 'No-Self"


## Manopubbangamā Dhammā - Mind Is the Precursor of All

2. The first Dhammapada verse is "Manopubbangamā Dhammā.." There are, in fact, two verses that go together. Those two verses have the following meanings:

- All things and phenomena have the mind as their forerunner. They all are mind-made. If one speaks or acts with an evil mind (i.e., engages in dasa akusala), then suffering (dukha) will follow just as the wheels of a cart follow the footsteps of the ox that is pulling the wagon.
- All things and phenomena have the mind as their forerunner. They all are mind-made. If one speaks or acts with a purified mind (i.e., engages in dasa kusala and puñ̃̃a kamma), happiness (sukha) follows one like one's own shadow.


## Dhammā Are Energies Created by Mind - With Mano Viññāṇa (Kamma Viññạ̣̄a)

[^5]- The "seeds" here — dhammā (a kamma bïja) — are "created and fed" by "kamma viññ̄ạna."
- Only the mind can generate kamma viñ̃ãṇa. Such kamma viññaṇa arise via, "sañkhārā paccayā viññāna" in Paṭicca Samuppāda. Since that happens ONLY in mind, kamma viññāna are ALWAYS mano viññāna. A kamma viññāna has ENERGY. Such kamma viññāṇa encompass our future hopes and expectations.
- All the other five types of viññāna (cakkhu viññāṇa, sota viññạna, ghāna viññạna, jivhā viññāṇa, kāya viññāna) are ALWAYS vipāka viñ̃ñạna. Mano viññāna could be EITHER vipāka or kamma viññāṇa. To recall how vipāka viññāṇa arise, see, "Chachakka Sutta - Six Types of Vipāka Viññāna."
- Vipāka vedanā that we experience arise with vipāka viñ̃n̄āna. See, "Vipāka Vedanā and "Samphassa通 Vedanā" in a Sensory Event."


## An Example Of a "Mild" Kamma Viññāṇa

4. Let us consider an example of how a kamma viññāna arises and how it could grow with sañkhārā.

- Suppose X needs to buy a car. He saw a car in a showroom and "fell in love with it." Here the impactful ārammana was that moment of seeing his "dream car." A kamma bïja was born at that time with that expectation via "sañkhārā paccayā viññāna."
- He goes home and thinks about how to finance the purchase. He talks to his friends about how beautiful the car is, etc. All those are vacī sañkhārā based on that vehicle. Then he may go back to the showroom to look at it again and even to get a better price for the car. Those would involve $k \bar{a} y a$ sañkhārā.
- Every time he thinks, speaks and acts on issues relating to that car, he is "feeding that viññanna" for buying the vehicle. That happens with "sañkhārā paccayā viññāna," and makes that viññāna stronger. We could also say that the kamma bïja or dhamma associated with that viññanna would grow.
- The stronger that viññāṇa becomes, the more often will it "come back" to his mind (as a dhammā) via "manañca paṭicca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviññānami." That is what Sigmund Freud called "the subconscious." Of course, Freud had no idea of the working of the subconscious via kamma viññāna.
- Now, one day, X buys the car. At that time, the kamma viññāña (kamma bīja) for that expectation will go away. Even if he did not buy the vehicle, that kamma viññāna (kamma bīja) would have died if he lost his job unexpectedly and realized that he could not afford the car. In either case, it would no longer be in his "subconscious."


## An Example Of a "Strong" Kamma Viññāṇa Associated with a Pāpa Kamma

5. In the above example, we considered a relatively "mild" kamma. Even though some greed was involved, that kamma (buying a car) was not a pāpa kamma. A pāpa kamma is a strong akusala kamma that could make one eligible for rebirth in the apāy $\bar{a}$. Let us consider an example.

- Suppose X now wants to kill another human out of anger. The moment that he decides on that, his vacī sañkhāra creates a new kamma bïja (and a kamma viññāna) on deciding to kill. His mind is "stuck with the idea of killing that person." That is taṇhā. The conventional translation of tanhh $\bar{a}$ as "craving" is not quite right.
- From that moment, any time that X is thinking about how to carry out the killing, that kamma bïja (kamma viññanna) will grow. It happens via "sañkhāra paccayā viññāna," where sañkhāra are vacī sañkhāra involved in his planning. This is "upādāna" ("upa" + "ādāna" or "keeping it close in mind." He often thinks about how to kill that person. He dwells on it.
- Then, one day, X decides to shoot that person. Then he may go and buy a gun. That involves $k \bar{a} y a$ sañkhāra, and those will also contribute to the growth of that viññaña (kamma bïja.)
- Then X shoots and kills that person. That is the strongest kamma and it is a kaya kamma done with $k a ̄ y a ~ s a n ̃ k h a ̄ r a$. But all those vacī and kāya sañkhāra involved were abhisañkhāra.
- However, unlike in the previous case in \#4 above, that kamma viññāna (kamma bīja) does not go away. That is because it is an akusala kamma. Even though the expectation accomplished that kamma viñ̃ān̄a will instead be "established in the kamma bhava." It will "follow him" just as the wheels of a wagon follow the footsteps of the $\mathbf{o x}$ in $\# 2$ above. That kamma viññanna will be "with him" for billions of years waiting for an opportunity to bring its results (vipāka.)


## Abhidhamma Explanation

6. The following information is relevant but not essential. I include it for those who are familiar with Abhidhamma. It is a good idea to read it in any case, to get the basic idea. A mind creates ENERGY when it focuses on an ārammaña and attaches to that ārammaña. Then a particular strong citta vīthi (atimahantarammana or mahantarammana) runs in the mind.

- Towards the end of such a citta vīthi, seven especially powerful citta (javana citta) arise. Those javana cittā generate and release kammic ENERGY to the world. Those ENERGIES are dhammā or kamma bïja.
- Such ENERGIES generate in the steps, "avijjā paccayā sañkhārā, sañkhārā paccayā viññāna, viññāna paccayā nāmarupa" in Pațicca Samuppāda. That, of course, takes place during citta vīthi.
- These kammic energies generated in javana citta lie below the suddhatthaka level. A suddhaṭthaka is the smallest unit of matter in Buddha Dhamma. See, "The Origin of Matter - Suddhatthaka." [suddha : [pp. of sujjhati] become clean or pure. att haka :[nt.] a group of eight.]
- That is a very brief explanation. One could read about citta vīthi in Bhikkhu Bodhi's book, "Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma." As I said, it is not necessary to fully understand that process. But that could fill "some gaps in the picture."


## Dhammā Are Rūpa Too!

Dhamm $\bar{a}$ are also $r \bar{u} p \bar{a}$ in Buddha Dhamma. As we have discussed, dhamm $\bar{a}$ are pure energy that lies below "tangible matter" above the suddhattthaka stage.
7. Those energies released to the "nāma loka" or "immaterial world" stay there as dhammā. Therefore, $d h a m m \bar{a}$ are "out there" in the world, just like other types of $r \bar{u} p \bar{a}$. Our world consists of ru$p a$ loka and nāma loka. While rūpā are in the rūpa loka, dhammā belong to the nāma loka.

- Another name for kamma viñ̃ñ̄ṇa or dhammā is kamma bīja. In Buddha Dhamma, such energies also come under the category of " $r \bar{u} p a$." More on that below.
- While scientists can detect any of the other five kinds of $r \bar{u} p a$ with their instruments, they cannot detect dhamma $\bar{a}$. Only the mana indriya in the brain can detect dhamm $\bar{a}$ and pass them over to the hadaya vatthu (seat of the mind.)
- The world that we can "see" or "interact with" consists of the following. There are solid objects (people, animals, trees, houses, etc.) that we "see" with our eyes. They are "r $\bar{u} p a r \bar{u} p a$ " or simply " $r \bar{u} p a$." There are sounds that we hear (sadda rūpa.) Things that we smell are odors (gandha rūpa.) We taste the essence (rasa rūpa) in the food we eat. And we touch solid objects (photthabba rūpa.)
- On the other hand, "nāma loka" has records (namagotta) of all the "mental aspects" like vedana $\bar{a}$, sañ̃̄̄a, sañkhāra, viññāna. It also keeps records of kammic energies that we produce, which are dhamma $\overline{\text {. }}$
- Dhammā are in a different category compared to other types of "tangible rūpa." It may be a good idea to read the post "Our Two Worlds: Material and Immaterial."

8. Long before Einstein made the connection between matter and energy via his famous $\mathrm{E}=\mathrm{mc}^{\wedge} 2$ equation, the Buddha treated both matter and energy as " $r \bar{u} p a$."

- With advances in physics, now it is well-established that matter and energy are indistinguishable. For example, now scientists accept that light consists of particles (photons.)
- We can directly see some of those "rūpā," i.e., rūpa rūpa. We also know how other types of rūpa arise.. For example, "sadda rūpa" are sound energy. Still, scientists know that sound propagates through the air via "pressure waves." We are familiar with the five types of "rūpa" that we sense with our five physical senses (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body.)
- Scientists cannot detect dhammā because they have tiny energies. They think memories are "stored in the brain." That is not compatible with the ability of some children to recall past lives. Of course, the Buddha could recall past lives as far back as he wished (without seeing a "beginning.") See, "Origin of Life - There is No Traceable Origin."


## Dhammā Are Anidassana Rūpa

9. The following information is relevant but not essential. It is a good idea to read it in any case, to get the basic idea. The Buddha stated that "dhamm $\bar{a}$ cannot be seen or made contact with (other than by the mana indriya.) Dhammā are "Vedanākkhandho ... pe ... viññānakkhandho, yañca rūpaì anidassanamं appatighaì dhammāyatana pariyāpannami.."

- That verse is in "WebLink: suttacentral: 2.3.2. Dukanikkhepa" of the Dhammasañgaṇī under the subsection 2.3.2.2.3. Sanidassanaduka.
- The critical point to remember is that dhammā include our memories (which are just records without energy) AND viññāṇa (which include kamma viñ̃āạa with kammic power.)

10. There is a lot to grasp here, but the main points are the following.
11. Dhammā (used generally in plural) include kamma viññāna or kamma bīja.
12. Dhamm $\bar{a}$ also include memories from the past, including those from past lives. It is just that one may not be able to recall past lives until one attains jhāna and cultivates "pubbenivāsānussati ñāna."
13. Those dhamm $\bar{a}$ (including memories or " $n \bar{a} m a$ gotta") are "out there" too, just like the other five types of $r \bar{u} p \bar{a}$ are "out there." But an average human is unaware of dhammā. It takes a Buddha (with a perfectly purified mind) to uncover such details about the world.

- That is why I stated that dhammā are in the "unseen world" or "immaterial world." Details at "Our Two Worlds: Material and Immaterial."


## Dhammā Behave Differently Compared to "Normal Rūpa"

11. Rūpa or "matter" behaves very differently below the suddhatthaka level. Again, we do not need to get into details, but it is essential to make that connection. For those interested, details at "The Origin of Matter Suddhatthaka."

- As discussed, those "gross or dense $r \bar{u} p \vec{a}$ " that we detect with the five senses are the only $r \bar{u} p \bar{a}$ that modern science can detect.
- However, scientists ran into problems when they started studying "matter' at very low density (like electrons and photons). "Matter" at the sub-atomic level behaves very differently, and those investigations led to the discovery of quantum mechanics. For example, electrons and photons do not obey the same laws as large particles like stones or tennis balls.
- Even though scientists have made progress with quantum mechanics, they still cannot explain some phenomena at the sub-atomic level. One key issue is that such "quantum particles" like electrons and photons seem to be interacting instantaneously across long distances. This phenomenon is known as "quantum entanglement." See "Quantum Entanglement - We Are All Connected."

12. Those dhammā are kamma bīja lie below the suddhatthaka level. They interact with the mana indriya instantaneously.

- All other types of $r \bar{u} p \bar{a}$ detectable with the five physical senses are above the suddhatthaka level. However, some sub-atomic particles (closer to the suddhatthaka level) like electrons display the ability to interact instantaneously among themselves, just like dhamm $\bar{a}$. See, "Quantum Entanglement - We Are All Connected." This effect mystified quantum physicists to this date.
- However, the Buddha explained all that 2500 years ago. I have tried to explain to the physics community over the past few years. They do not see that connection yet. But at some point, they will have to. For those who have a physics background, "Quantum Mechanics and Dhamma."


## Those Dhammā Could Bring Vipāka via Vipāka Viññāṇa

13. Under proper conditions (paccayā in Pațicca Samuppāda, kamma viññāna (or dhammā) COULD bring corresponding results (vipāka) and the associated viñ̃āṇa are vipāka viññāṇa. That happens via all SIX sense faculties. As we discussed in previous posts, "cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhu viññānaì" through "mānañca paticca dhamme ca uppajjati mano viñnāạaì." All those are vipāka viññạna.

- In other words, vipāka viññạ̄na materialize via all six sense inputs (eyes, ears, tongue, nose, body, and mind.) We discussed that in several earlier posts on the Chachakka Sutta (MN 148.)
- As we discussed in \#2, \#3 above, ONLY mano viññāna can also be kamma viññāṇa. Such kamma viññāna arise via "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra, sañkhāra paccayā viññ̄āna."


## Summary

14. The MIND generates sañkhārā with INTENTIONS to do, speak, or think. Such $k \bar{a} y a, v a c \bar{c}$, and mano sañkhārā lead to kamma done with actions, speech, and thoughts.

- The strong sañkhārā or abhisañkhārā generates kammic energy. Such energies can be called dhammā, kamma bija, or kamma viññāṇa. They can bring vipāka during a lifetime or bring future rebirths.

15. We have covered a lot of material in this post. It is impossible to go into details (if we do, we will not get to finish the discussion on Paticca Samuppāda for a long time!)

- It is not necessary to try to learn Abhidhamma in a rush. However, it is a good idea to try to understand the basic concepts.


## Pațicca Samuppāda - From Mind to Matter

January 11, 2020

## Where is the "Mind-to-Matter" Step in Paṭicca Samuppāda?

1. Akusala-mūla Pațicca Samuppāda starts with "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" and ends with "bhava paccayā jāti, jāti paccayā jarā, marana,.."

- The first step involves generating defiled thoughts (mano, vacī, and kāya sañkhāra) due to avijijā (not being aware of the Four Noble Truths.) In the end, that leads to births of physical bodies ( $j a \bar{a} t i$ ) that will then undergo old age and death.


## Javana Citta Create Energy!

2. I laid the foundation for this post in a recent post, "Dhammā, Kamma, Sañkhāra, Mind - Critical Connections." Please review that as needed.

- The critical point is that our thoughts (specifically javana citta) CREATE energy! That may be hard to believe.
- Even a few hundred years ago, many people thought that the Buddha taught some other things that were "hard to believe." For example, Buddha taught that there are an uncountable number of planetary systems like our Solar system in the universe. However, before Galileo invented the telescope, people believed that Earth was at the center of the universe! See the "WebLink: en.wikipedia.org: Geocentric model."
- Even after reading the previous post mentioned above, many of you may not have caught on to the fact that the mind creates energy. And that is what leads to the "arising of physical bodies" in future existences (rebirths.) You may want to read that post after reading this one, and things will become more clear.


## Thoughts Create "Seeds" That Can Give Rise to Physical Bodies

3. In that previous post, we discussed that such minute amounts of energies created by our thoughts are PART OF dhamm $\bar{a}$ (with a long "a" at the end.)

- Of course, such minute amounts of energy cannot DIRECTLY create massive/dense bodies like ours.
- When a living being grasps a new existence (bhava), only a "mental body" or "manomaya kāya" for the new life appears. It is a "mental body" since it is mostly mental with only a trace of matter. Very little kammic energy is enough to create that "mental body."
- This "mental body" or "manomaya kāya" is the same as a gandhabba or a "patisandhi viññāṇa." One creates one's future via one's sañkhāra (i.e. that is the way one THINKS). Paticca Samuppāda describes that process.
- That is why it is CRITICAL to understand the previous three posts: "Dhammā, Kamma, Sañkhāra, Mind - Critical Connections," "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception," and "Cloning and Gandhabba."

4. The word "kāya" in Buddha Dhamma means a "collection." Thus, this "body" that is created by kammic energy consists mostly of the four "mental aggregates." It has only a trace of matter (much smaller than an atom in modern science.)

- However, it has all five aggregates of rūpa, vedanā, saññā, sañkhāra, and viññ̄n̄na. Of course, the "rūpa $k \bar{a} y a$ " is unbelievable small, but the "four mental aggregates are the same as those experienced by a living person with a physical body.
- That "mental body" or "manomaya kāya" is the same as gandhabba! However, after the initial formation, gandhabba can "solidify" somewhat by "taking in scents or aroma." Hence the name "gandhabba" ("gandha" + "abba" or "taking in scents.")
- For details on gandhabba, see, "Mental Body - Gandhabba."


## It is Kamma Viñ̃ạ̄̄a That Sets Up Energy for a New Existence (Bhava)

5. There are no "rūpa" in PS steps up to "viññ̄ạna." As we have discussed, a kamma viññāna that arises via "sañkhāra paccayā viññāna" is a type of "rūpa" because it has "energy." As Einstein showed with his famous equation, $\mathrm{E}=\mathrm{mc}^{\wedge} 2$, energy is also a manifestation of matter. Again, see "Dhammā, Kamma, Sañkhāra, Mind - Critical Connections."

- Then at the next step, there is "nāmarūpa." That is where a conventional "rrūpa" becomes "live." That is precisely what happens when a "patisandhi viññāna descends to a womb" and makes an inert zygote become alive! That occurs at the "viññāna paccayā nāmarūpa" step in Upapatti PS.
- The post "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception" explains how a "patisandhi viññāna" leads to the creation of a "new human body."
- Sexual intercourse only creates the "material basis" for a new life. An egg (from the mother) combines with sperm (from the father) to form a single cell, a zygote. That zygote is inert (a rūpa), just like the egg and the sperm. An existing "mental body" or a gandhabba (nāma with energy) needs to merge with that zygote to form the nāmarūpa or the fetus (with mind and body).
- Sexual intercourse is not necessary to form the zygote or the "material base" for a new "physical body." A zygote can be created in a laboratory, but still requires eggs from the mother; see, "Cloning and Gandhabba."


## "Nāmarūpa Paccayā Salāyatana" in Upapatti Paṭicca Samuppāda

6. That "live person" or the fetus will grow for nine months to complete the formation of all six sensory faculties. That is the "nāmarūpa paccayā salāyatana" step in upapatti PS. As we know, "salāyatana" represents the "six sensory faculties" of a living being with a "body and mind."

- Therefore, the transition starts with the step "sañkhāra paccayā viññāna," Then, it goes through the "viññāna paccayā nāmarūpa" step, before finalizing the formation of a "human with six sensory faculties" at the "nāmarūpa paccayā salāyatana" step.
- However, it is essential to understand that a "pațisandhi viññanna" leading to a rebirth must have been cultivated previously. Such a viññāna "builds up" over MANY "Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda" cycles that take place DURING a life or even over many lives.


## Example of an Alcoholic Making an "Animal Bhava"

7. Let us consider an example to illustrate how one cultivates a pațisandhi viññāna suitable for an animal over time. Let us consider an alcoholic/drug addict. I am not talking about a person who takes an occasional drink. Instead, this person has an addiction to alcohol or drugs.

- As we have discussed in recent posts on the Chachakka Sutta (MN 148), one starts thinking about a certain ārammaṇa (in this case, drinking) when thought about that ārammaña comes to mind as a vipāka viñ̃̃āna. In this particular case, it could be seeing an alcohol bottle, hearing about an upcoming party, or just habitually remembering that "it is time to have a drink."
- As explained in those posts, one's mind quickly gets to "taṇhä" (or "getting stuck" in that ārammana.) Thus, a PS process would start at the "taṇhā paccayā upādāna" step. See, "Icchā (Cravings) Lead to Upādāna and to Eventual Suffering."
- That is when one starts THINKING about that a $r$ rammana that came to the mind. That is the "avijja $\bar{a}$ paccayā sañkhāra" step of a new PS cycle.


## Nāmarūpa in "Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda" Are Just "Visuals"

8. Suppose the alcoholic/drug addict in our example is sitting at his desk at work. Due to his habit, an upcoming party may come to his mind via "manañca paticca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviññānam.."

- Of course, he will be instantly "stuck in that ārammaṇa," and the "taṇhā paccayā upādāna" step in PS gets him started on "avijja paccayā sañkhāra." Thus, he starts thinking about the experience that he is going to have in the upcoming party. Those are vacī sañkhāra.
- That leads to the arising of a viññāna (anticipation or the expectation of the possible enjoyments) via "sañkhāra paccayā viññāna." The javana citta in his thoughts start creating energy for that viññāna.
- That involves visualizing "party scenes" at the upcoming party and also his past experiences in similar situations. He will imagine the friends who will be there, what kind of alcohol, food, and other types of entertainment will be there. These are all "nāmarūpa" or visuals that arise in his mind. These nāmarūpa are very much like what we experience in a dream, just visuals.


## Some of those Viñ̃nāna and Nāmarūpa Cultivated Could be Compatible with Animal Mindsets

9. Some of those viñāāna and nāmarūpa cultivated by the alcoholic/drug addict in our example could be compatible with those of animals. That is a critical point.

- During some of these parties, alcohol or drug usage could get to extreme levels. Some people may pass out and could be unable to walk. They will be dragging themselves on the floor like animals.
- Some may be engaging in sexual misconduct. Such bodily actions are more potent than such cultivating vacī sañkhāra. However, in most cases, it is the cultivation of vacī sañkhāra (thinking about such activities with vitakka/vicāra) that lead to bodily actions.
- Both kinds of sañkhāra lead to the growth of patisandhi viñ̃ñaṇa suitable to bring about an animal birth in the future (in an Upapatti PS process.)


## Nāmarūpa In "Viññāṇa Paccayā Nāmarūpa" Are Two Kinds

10. It is critical to note that the "nāmarūpa" discussed in \#8 are different from those in \#5.

- The nāmarūpa in \#8 helps build that viññāna via the backward step, "nāmarūpa paccayā viññanna." When the alcoholic is making those "visualizations," he is cultivating that viññanna. Thus, each is helping grow the other. That often happens in "Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda" cycles.
- For example, Ven. Sariputta in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Nalakalāpī Sutta (SN 12.67)": "Seyyathāpi, $\bar{a} v u s o$, dve nalakalāpiyo añnamañnaì nissāya tiṭtheyyumi. Evameva kho, āvuso, nāmarūpa paccayā viññāṇaì; viññāṇa paccayā nāmarūpaì;..." OR "Just as two sheaves of reeds might stand leaning against each other, so too, with nāmarūpa as condition, viññāna comes to be. With viññāna as condition, nāmarūpa comes to be.."
- On the other hand, the "viññāna paccayā nāmarūpa" step happens only once in upapatti PS cycles. That involves a special "paṭisandhi viññāna" (gandhabba.) When that paṭisandhi viññāṇa (or gandhabba) descends to the womb, it merges with the zygote and creates a new "nāmarūpa" or a "live fetus." See, \#5 above and the posts referred to there, "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception" and "Cloning and Gandhabba."


## It Is Important to Review Related/Past Posts Often

11. Another thing to remember is that even a given PS cycle does not proceed in just one direction. All those steps, as with many others in PS, go backward too. For example, "viññāna paccayā nāmarūpa" and "nāmarūpa paccayā viññāna" steps may go back and forth strengthening each other in many cases (see \#8, \#9 above.)

- I have explained this in several previous posts in this series: "Paticca Samuppāda - Not 'Self' or 'NoSelf" A vital case discussed in "Tanhā Paccayā Upādāna - Critical Step in Paticca Samuppāda."
- There is a lot to grasp in this post. Please make sure to read the related posts mentioned above, so that these concepts are well-understood.
- It is critical to have a good idea about these concepts to see how one makes one's future rebirths. Furthermore, the type of rebirth CORRESPONDS to the kind of abhi(sañkhāra) cultivated with "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra."
- That is how "mind to matter" transitions take place. And this is why the Buddha said that the mind is at the forefront.
- All relevant posts at, "Origin of Life."


## XI Dhamma and Philosophy

- Dhamma and Philosophy - Introduction
- Philosophy of the Mind
- Is Buddha Dhamma (Buddhism) a Religion?
- The Infinity Problem in Buddhism
- Free Will in Buddhism - Connection to Sañkhāra
o Subsection: Book Reviews
- "Why Does the World Exist?" by Jim Holt"
- "Waking Up" by Sam Harris"
- "The Language of God" by Francis Collins"
- "'Spark" by John Ratey"
- ""The Life of the Buddha" by Bhikkhu Ñānamoli""


### 11.1 Dhamma and Philosophy - Introduction

1. One may ask the question: "What does Buddhism have to do with philosophy?".

The Merriam-Webster online dictionary defines philosophy as:

- the study of ideas about knowledge, truth, the nature and meaning of life, etc.
- a particular set of ideas about knowledge, truth, the nature and meaning of life, etc.
- a set of ideas about how to do something or how to live

Other dictionaries and books define philosophy in a similar manner.
2. The origin of the word "philosophy" comes from the Greek words "phila" (meaning love) and "sophia" (meaning wisdom). Thus philosophy is "love of wisdom". It is said that Pythagoras (570 BCE) coined the term, and that is the basically the time the Western philosophers started looking for "natural explanations" instead of accepting that a Creator needed to be invoked to explain phenomena that we see around us.

- This method of "acquiring knowledge" was supposed to be based on reason, argument, and observation. But as we discuss at this website, any knowledge gained by that method is necessarily limited, because we have senses faculties that are very limited, and whatever deductions we make with unpurified minds are faulty and incomplete; see, "Dhamma and Science" section for an introduction. Science actually branched off from philosophy, first as "natural philosophy".
- Therefore, Buddha Dhamma has a lot to say about philosophy, even though there is no such thing as "Buddhist philosophy"; there is only "Buddha Dhamma" which describes the nature. The Buddha did not speculate on anything like philosophers. He said he experienced everything that he taught. One time a Brahmin asked the Buddha whether he believed devas and hell beings exist. The Buddha said he KNOWS they exist and could see those beings.
- Buddha Dhamma can sort out the philosophical arguments that have gone back to the Buddha's time (in the Western world); philosophical views have evolved over the intervening time, but Buddha Dhamma has not. Ironically, "the pure form of Dhamma" had been left out of the discussion mainly because "Mahāyāna forefathers" like Nagarjuna, Asanga, and Vasabandhu made up a "Buddhist philosophy".

3. Since Buddha Dhamma is a complete set of nature laws only for its faithful followers, it is logical to present it as a philosophy to those who are not familiar with it or who have not seen enough evidence to believe that claim. In presenting Buddha Dhamma as a philosophy the second definition is a more valid one, because these are not evolving ideas; rather, they were laid down 2500 years ago, and have been documented in the Tipiṭaka, the Pāli Canon.

- It is a set of ideas about knowledge and truth not only about human existence, but ALL that exists in the seen and unseen parts of "this world", which also encompasses not only the Solar system, but an infinite number of such planetary systems.
- This may sound as an arrogant claim, but it is not. One could scan different sections of this site and see that there is a complete theory about the whole existence; it may take another year or more to get even the "basics" of the Dhamma published. As of mid-2015, I have not yet been able to present even a fraction of the Abhidhamma material.

4. My basic incentive for creating this section is to make a request to the philosophy community: It is time to take a close look at Buddha's world view, and see how it compares with existing philosophical arguments on various topics. No one has done a serious study on the worldview of the Buddha.

- It has been difficult to make a true assessment of what the "real Buddha Dhamma"is, because there are so many different versions out there.
- I hope to make a logical presentation to convince the philosophy community. Please make any comments/requests, and I will try to address any serious request.

5. Perhaps as important, I want anyone reading the site to appreciate the significance of what the Buddha told us 2500 years ago. Compared to the pure Dhamma, all philosophical theories are at very early stages. Any interested reader can learn about the current philosophical arguments (and those going back to the early Greek philosophers) and then compare with Buddha Dhamma presented at this site.
6. Within the framework of the Buddha Dhamma all standard philosophical questions have been answered.

- These include, "the relation between the brain and mind", "the nature of death", "whether we have free will', etc. Thomas Nagel's short book listed below gives an introduction to some of such topics.
- Most existing literature on Buddhist philosophy says some of these questions are in the category of "questions that the Buddha refused to answer", which itself is an incorrect statement; see, "Misconceptions on the Topics the Buddha "Refused to Answer". The Buddha refused to answer questions posed by a person who was not capable of comprehending the answers. But he has given the answers in other places.
- We will discuss how Buddha Dhamma provides answers to these philosophical questions one by one, as sufficient background material is added to site.


## REFERENCES

For those who are interested on the subject, here are some references (both for philosophy in general and also on "Buddhist philosophy"; not in any particular order). Among those on "Buddhist philosophy", I have not read a single book that provides a true description of the Buddha's world view.

For those who are not familiar with the subject, I would recommend the first two introductory books on philosophy:
"What does it all mean?" by Thomas Nagel (1987) - Excellent introductory book and only 100 pages.
"The Making of a Philosopher", by Colin McGill (2003) - Another excellent introductory book.
"Buddhist Philosophy - Essential Readings", ed. by William Edelglass and Jay L. Garfield (2009).
"Mahāyāna Buddhism: The Doctrinal Foundations", by Paul Williams (2009)
"Buddhism as Philosophy", by Mark Siderits (2007).
"Buddhist Philosophy - A Historical Analysis", by David J. Kalupahana (1976).
"Causality: The Central Philosophy of Buddhism", by David J. Kalupahana (1975).
"A History of Buddhist Philosophy", by David J. Kalupahana (1992).
'Nagarjuna - The Philosophy of the Middle way", by David J. Kalupahana (1986).
"Causality and Chance in Modern Physics", by David Bohm (1957).
"Conversations on Consciousness", by Susan Blackmore (2006) - input from a number of philosophers.
"Mind - A Brief Introduction", by John R. Searle (2004).
"The Character of Consciousness", by David J. Chalmers (2010).
"Consciousness Explained", by D. C. Dennett (1991).
"The Quest for Consciousness: A Neuroscientific Approach", by C. Koch (2004).
"Rocks of Ages: Science and Religion" by Stephen Jay Gould (2002).
"The Self and Its Brain", by Karl R. Popper and John C. Eccles (1977).
Next, "Philosophy of the Mind", .........

### 11.2 Philosophy of the Mind

1. One nice thing about Buddha Dhamma is that there are no separate theories for the mind, meaning of existence, the physical world, or ANYTHING in this world. Thus I can refer to the section on "Buddha Dhamma" when I talk about the mind, the same way I refer to that section when I discuss "Dhamma and Science."
2. There seems to be three basic problems that the philosophers are trying to tackle regarding the mind (there are many others, but let us start with these):

- How does the mental experience arise in a physical body? Most scientists and philosophers say that it originates in the brain, but they have not been able to make the connection. This is the "mind-body problem".
- How can non-physical mental states of consciousness cause something in the physical world? For example, how can your intention ever cause a movement of your hand? This is the "problem of mental causation". Yet, the case for "physicalism" - that everything in this world is matter-based - is made with this as a premise.
- Finally, how your thoughts refer to something that is happening (or happened) in a distant city? This is called the "problem of intentionality". If you are thousand miles away from home, you can take "tour" of the home, room by room, in your mind.

3. The philosophers are divided into two camps in addressing the above problems:

- One camp says the "physical" and "mental" are two distinct realms. They do not think "mental" can arise from 'physical"; This camp is mostly religious and attribute the "mental" to the concept of a "soul". They are "dualists".
- The other camp is 'materialistic": they say the 'mental" arises from "physical". In the worst case, some materialists deny even the existence of a mental reality, even though I cannot quite understand what that means. Because they are obviously thinking about these concepts, which is "mental".

4. Let us look at the current status of these two camps:

- Following the extreme dualism of Rene Descartes, there have been many dualists, including Stephen Jay Gould whose "non-overlapping magisteria" in the late 1990's put matter and mind into non-overlapping disciplines: matter can be handled by science and morality and mind can be left to religion. However, these days only dualists left seem to be those who hold a dualist view for religious reasons, i.e., a soul.
- These days most philosophers are materialists. With the amazing progress of science and technology, it is hard for most people to believe anything that is not "confirmed" by science. And they think science, based on a purely materialistic approach, should be able to explain everything about 'this world". They believe that it is only a matter of time before brain activity will be able to explain the workings of the mind; see the reference list in "Dhamma and Philosophy - Introduction."
- The inadequacy of the materialist approach is detailed in a comprehensive manner by Thomas Nagel in his recent book, "Mind and Cosmos" (2012); it is an easy read with no fluff and only 128 pages. I was impressed by how close he came to advocating a "mind first" approach, just like in Buddha Dhamma (apparently he does not know anything about Buddha Dhamma and does not even mention it).

5. Mind is the ultimate cause of everything in this world. The Buddha said, "mano pubbangama dhamma, mano setta manomaya...". "Mind precedes all dhamma, all dhamma are mind made...". But Buddha's is not a dualist world view. Mind and matter are intimately connected.

- This is in sharp contrast to both the "dualistic" and "materialistic" views.
- Most people translate the above Pāli verse as, "mind precedes all mental phenomena....." So, we need to examine what "dhamma" means here.
- Dhamma explains how anything and everything in this world comes about "dhamma" means "to bear" or "to explain" or "how anything "comes about". Nothing happens without (multiple) causes.
- In the Sabba Sutta, the Buddha clearly defines what "sabba" or "all" that in "in this world": It is everything that can be experienced via the five physical senses and the mind. Specifically, eye and visible objects, ear and sound, nose and smells, tongue and tastes, body and touch, and the mind and concepts (these are the six internal and corresponding six external "ayatanas"), this is "the all".
- Is there anything that is not included within those 12 ayatanas? There is nothing else in the whole world that is not included in those 12 ayatanas. Six of those are "internal"; eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind, and the other six are external, they exist "out there".
- Therefore, it is NOT correct to say that "dhamma" in the above verse includes only mental phenomena, as many translators of the sutt $\bar{a}$ have done. This is why I keep saying that we need to check consistency all the time. If one thing is not defined properly, then that error propagates and lead to contradictions.
- This "all" can also be expressed as the 31 realms of existence; of those 31 realms, normal humans experience only two realms (human and animal); see, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma". But it is possible to experience other realms via developing mental power, i.e., jhānā: see, "Power of the Human Mind - Introduction" and the follow-up posts. Thus, the Buddha's world view is much more expansive than the ones that are subjected to current scientific and philosophical investigations.

6. According to Buddha Dhamma, the ultimate realities in this world are just 28 types of rūpa (matter), citta, and 52 types of cetasika. Then different combinations of the cetasika in citta gives rise to 89 (121) types of citta.

- Of course citta and cetasika constitute the mind, and 28 types of rūpa constitute matter.
- Another way to state the same thing is in terms of the 6 dhatus: pathavi, āpo, tejo, vāyo, akasa (space), and viññāna. The 28 types of rūpa mentioned above (including akasa dhātu) are derived from the satara mahā bhūta: pathavi, āpo, tejo, vāyo. Viñ̃̄āṇa constitutes of citta and cetasika.
- All inert things and plants in this world (31 realms) are made of rūpa. All sentient beings "are made of" $r \bar{u} p a$ and have viññāna (citta and cetasika), i.e, a mind.
- As I will explain in a separate post, $r \bar{u} p a$ are ultimately caused by the mind; see, "The Origin of Matter Suddhatthaka." But rūpa are inherently unstable (this is basically the root cause for suffering in the material world), and there is a fundamental law in physics which states the fact that matter is unstable and the universe itself"runs down"; see, "Second Law of Thermodynamics is Part of Anicca!."
- When the mind is released from the material body, one attains Nibbāna, i.e., one is never reborn "in this world". It is the material body that is subject to decay and death, and lead to suffering.

7. The reason that I started this website is that it is not possible to provide a reasonable explanation of the Buddha's world view in an essay or even in several essays. At the website, I can make references to related posts. I hope it would be a rewarding experience for anyone who is willing to allocate some time to read AND contemplate.

- Another reason to start the website is that I want to have it all out in the open, so anyone can challenge any inconsistency. I want to find the truth myself, and the only way to do that is to get as many as possible to look at the emerging picture and make corrections to any errors anyone can find.
- Therefore, I would appreciate any comments pointing to any errors or inconsistencies anywhere on the site, in addition to suggestions for relevant topics to discuss.
- There is more to follow. This is an introduction.
- How "physical" arises from "mental" in the most fundamental sense is really complex and we may not get to that for a while. First we will concentrate on how physical bodies of the living beings arise with causes from the "mental". I will be building up the Abhidhamma section and then will refer frequently to that section as we proceed.

8. It is time to make a paradigm change: Consciousness is not only ontologically fundamental, it takes precedence over matter. Mind can create matter. Right now we have evidence that the mind can change the brain; see, "Truine Brain - How the Mind Rewires the Brain via Meditation/Habits." If the brain creates the mind, how can the mind alter the brain?
9. Here are a couple of papers on the subject related to the "mind body problem" for those who are interested (click on them to open):

WebLink: What is it Like to be a Bat - Nagel (1974)
WebLink: All machine and no ghost- McGinn-2012
Next, "Buddha Dhamma: Non-Perceivability and Self-Consistency",

### 11.3 Is Buddha Dhamma (Buddhism) a Religion?

## October 21, 2015; revised November 8, 2015

It is best to learn (or even investigate) Buddha Dhamma with a mindset pretty much the same as when one is trying to learn about a new concept, say in mathematics or science. There are some key assumptions (axioms) involved, which cannot be proven, but do make sense especially if one takes time to contemplate. This is contrary to conventional religions.

1. Merriam-Webster defines "religion" as:

- the belief in a god or in a group of gods
- an organized system of beliefs, ceremonies, and rules used to worship a god or a group of gods
- an interest, a belief, or an activity that is very important to a person or group

The Oxford dictionary has the following definitions:

- The belief in and worship of a superhuman controlling power, especially a personal God or gods
- A particular system of faith and worship
- A pursuit or interest to which someone ascribes supreme importance

2. The word "religion" invokes the idea of a Creator God in most people's minds. Even though this is correct for most major religions of the world, it is definitely not correct for Buddha Dhamma.

- The foundation of Buddha Dhamma is that the world has been in existence "forever" (no First Cause and thus it was not created). Universes come and go, but there have been living beings at all times.
- It may first appear to be inconsistent with the current "Big Bang theory" that says our universe started some 14 billions years ago in a "Big Bang". In fact, major religions embraced the idea of a Big Bang when it was first proposed, since it had connotations of creation. However, when the inflationary theory that describes the Big Bang (proposed in the 1990's) says there are multiple, parallel universes. Thus, the hope for a unique "event of creation" fizzled out.
- Of course "Big Bang theory" is just that, a theory. There are some scientists who do not believe everything "popped up" all of a sudden in a Big Bang. They believe that universes are cyclic, i.e., they transform and evolve; see, for example, "'Endless Universe - Beyond the Big Bang", by P. J. Steinhardt and N. Turok (2007).

3. So, Buddha Dhamma does not count as a religion if one takes the first two definitions from either Merriam-Webster or Oxford dictionary. Yet, it can be included in the third category.

- One could say that most major religions are theistic, i.e., based on the belief of a Creator.
- Buddha Dhamma can be categorized as an atheistic religion, in the sense that there is no assumption of a Creator. It must be noted that in Buddha Dhamma there are beings called "devas" (sometimes translated as "gods") in other realms; they cannot affect our lives in a significant way, much less than creating universes.

4. However, I prefer to label Buddha Dhamma as the "ultimate science". It encompasses all of nature's laws not only pertaining to matter, but also pertaining to the mind. It is the Grand Unified Theory that the scientists are striving to discover, but they are only focusing on the material side.

- Scientists are beginning to realize the importance of the mind. In fact, many scientists are attempting to make a connection between quantum theory and the mind. This is NOT going to work, because any "matter-based theory" cannot explain the mind. Mind is the forerunner: "Manopubbangamā Dhammā..."
- As I build the Abhidhamma section, it will become clear why the mind takes precedence over matter. And it will also become clear why the Buddha is the top-most scientist. He was only concerned with sharing what he discovered with the others.
- The "new found knowledge" about innumerable planetary systems existing in our universe was known to the Buddha and is described in the Tipitaka; see, "Dhamma and Science."
- The Buddha was not interested in "starting a religion" so that he could be worshipped by the masses. Instead of residing in many luxurious residences like the Jetavanaramaya in his last days, he chose to travel by foot to Kusinara enduring many hardships on the way. He wanted to show that his body was not exempt from suffering.

5. When I listen to current debates between those who believe in a Creator and those who don't (atheists), I think the following summarizes the key ideas from each group:

- Atheists correctly point out that there is no evidence supporting the idea of a Creator God. Our ancestors could not fathom the workings of our complex world, and envisioned a Creator, who was supposed to have created the humans and a suitable habitat for them. But many "mysteries" of our world have been resolved with the advance of science, and in fact, these findings contradict key ideas in major religions.
- Those on the other side do not have any "winning points" or scientific evidence, but they insist that the idea of a "totally physical world" goes against our experiences and innate feelings that cannot be denied. That there must be something in addition to a physical body, i.e., there is a "conscious experience" that cannot be attributed to atoms and molecules in our bodies.

6. Buddha Dhamma encompasses both these key points. First, on the side of the atheists, there is no need for a Creator. Natural processes can account for not only what happens on Earth, but an uncountable number of habitable planetary systems in a vast universe.

- On the other hand, science can account for only how the material world evolves. There is something other than inert matter in this world as the theologians argue, and that is consciousness. Consciousness cannot be derived from inter matter. There are six elemental entity types in this world: pathavi, $\overline{a p o}$, tejo, vāyo, akasa (space), and viññāna (consciousness). Consciousness thus cannot be derived from other five. The first four have deeper meanings than just earth, water, fire, and wind; we will discuss this in a future post.
- However, consciousness was not imparted by a Creator. Furthermore, contrary to what most theologians believe, animals are conscious too (even though their consciousness is at a lower level compared to humans).
- This is why one could say Buddha Dhamma is an "atheistic religion", within a narrow context.

7. Some people tell me that Buddha Dhamma is not that different from other religions because there are certain "assumptions" that need to be believed "on faith", for example, that there is a rebirth process. In fact, it is true that "not believing in the possibility of a rebirth process" is a wrong view that could make one eligible to be born in the lower four realms or the ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$ where suffering is much more compared to in the human realm; see, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma."

- However, the axiom of a rebirth process is not be taken as a tenet, like in the case of the Ten Commandments; it is up to oneself to examine and accept or reject that concept. Even a Buddha cannot make anyone be "forced to believe" in anything.
- Thus, there is a difference in what is meant by "faith" in Buddha Dhamma, compared to that in theistic religions. In any theistic religion, one has to accept the idea of a Creator without question; it is THE basis of any major theistic religion.
- Buddha Dhamma just describes the nature of this world; this The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma has some basic axioms just like geometry or the theory of relativity. These "assumptions" can be verified to be correct if one takes time to examine the evidence.
- One could start off by not embracing these basic assumptions, but not rejecting them outright either. One could keep an open mind and explore the key ideas in Buddha Dhamma and decide for oneself whether those assumptions start to make sense as one proceeds.
- In fact, accepting such assumptions on blind faith will not do any good for anyone. One has to comprehend WHY those HAVE TO BE correct in order to make sense of this world that we live in. One has to spend time and critically evaluate the key concepts in Buddha Dhamma.

8. Buddha dhamma based on some key axioms like the rebirth process and the existence of other types of beings in 29 more realms (other than the human and animal realms), has the explanatory power to explain anything in this world, ranging from the existence of innumerable planetary systems (which was only accepted within the past few hundred years by science) to how morality comes about without a Creator; see, "Dhamma and Science" and "Origin of Morality (and Immorality) in Buddhism."

- It may take me another year or two to get the more deeper concepts explained, but I think there is enough material at the site to see that the knowledge of the Buddha (who was a human being just like us) cannot be matched by any other human. It took us the workings of many brilliant scientists from Galileo to Newton to Einstein to realize the vastness of this universe, which the Buddha described 2500 years ago.
- But the even more astounding fact is that the Buddha described in detail how the consciousness arises in a living being, in addition to describing the material world. Science is still under the "wrong view" that consciousness can arise in the brain out of inert matter. I am just beginning to layout the basics of Abhidhamma that have been hidden in the past several hundred years, and have been revealed by a very special Thero in Sri Lanka.
- Whenever possible, I try make connections to current findings in science, and to show the new confirmations as well the wrong concepts still embraced by science. Time will reveal that Buddha Dhamma, in its pure form, cannot be refuted. I have started to add the date of posting of essays, so that we can keep track of these predictions over the coming years.
- And there are no "mysteries" in Buddha Dhamma, even though some concepts are still not amenable to science.

9. I just read the recently published book, "Life on the Edge" by Johnjoe McFadden and Jim Al-Khaliil (2014) which describes how scientists are slowly, but surely, revealing many "mysteries of nature". These are all consistent with Buddha Dhamma, and I can point out a couple of "possible future breakthroughs".

- Scientists will be able to extend the lifespans of humans. There is no set limit to human lifetime in Buddha Dhamma, with lifetimes extending to thousands of years at times.
- It may even be possible to make conditions in a laboratory (chemical concoctions) that allows a lifeform to arise. This does NOT mean that scientists will be able to CREATE LIFE. Buddha Dhamma describes how animals and humans can exist in the "gandhabba state" until a suitable conditions for it to start building a physical body become available; see, "Manomaya Kāya." When a human baby is conceived, for example, what happens is that a matching "gandhabba" taking possession of the zygote in the womb or even out in the laboratory; see, "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception."
- If careful experiments are designed, it will be possible to demonstrate even now that small insects "can be born" out of decaying leaves; what happens is that decaying leaves lead to the formation of the "seed" (right chemical concoction) necessary for a "gandhabba" of that insect species to start a new physical body.

10. For those who would like to look into arguments on why theistic religions do not make sense, below is a compilation of arguments by Sam Harris, a prominent atheist.

- By the way, Buddha Dhamma does not agree with some of the positions of Mr. Harris (issues on how consciousness arises, as we discussed in \#9 above). For example, at the end of the video (last several minutes) he talks about human embryos not being qualified as "human", i.e., there is no life there. There

Mr. Harris says a zygote is the same as any other trillions of cells in a body. That is not even consistent with modern science.

- Modern science has not pinpointed when life begins in a zygote; see, "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception." This is why I am saying that science is incomplete; it does not know about the "gandhabba state" of a human discussed in \#9 above. By the way, a "gandhabba" is not a soul; see, "Ghost in the Machine - Synonym for the Manomaya Kāya?." I have other posts at the site that provide more details, but it may not be for another year or so until all the details are presented.
- With regard to the mind, science is still at the same stage that it was 500 years ago regarding the material world, i.e., when most people thought stars were embedded in a celestial sphere around the Earth; see, "Dhamma and Science."

Please note : The video seems to start around 43 minutes into the presentation. You may need to manually reset to the start of the video.

WebLink: YOUTUBE: Best Sam Harris Arguments - 2 Hour Compilation! - Debate, Interview, and Lecture Footage

### 11.4 The Infinity Problem in Buddhism

July 15, 2017; Revised February 5, 2018; Re-written March 23, 2021; revised August 13, 2022; August 14, 2022; re-written September 24, 2022
The infinity problem in Buddhism is the following. "Each of us" has been in the rebirth process for an infinite time. Thus, "each of us" has been exposed to Buddha Dhamma countless times, i.e., made infinite attempts to attain Nibbāna. How is it possible that all of "us" have not attained Nibbāna?

## Introduction - "Infinite Monkey Problem"

1. The question is based on the following statement in several suttä in Anamatagga Samyutta starting with the "WebLink: suttacentral: Tinakattha Sutta (SN 15.1)", "There is no discernible beginning to the rebirth process." In other words, we have had an infinite time to attain Nibbāna (because an infinite number of Buddhas must have been born too.) So, why have we all not attained Nibbāna yet?"

- This issue has been discussed in discussion forums without a conclusion. See "WebLink: dhammalwheel.com: The problem of infinity in Buddhism" at Dhamma Wheel and "WebLink: suttacentral: The infinity problem in Buddhism" at the Sutta Central forum in 2017.
- This question seems to have its origin in the "WebLink: wikipedia.org: Infinite Monkey Theorem," which states that a monkey hitting keys at random on a typewriter keyboard for an infinite amount of time will almost surely type any given text, such as the complete works of William Shakespeare.
- By the way, this infinite monkey theorem is another evidence of how unimaginably large infinity is: "Infinity - How Big Is It?."


## Detailed Analysis of the Infinite Monkey Theorem

2. First, the monkey theorem is based on a monkey typing on a keyboard and generating random letters. It is assumed that the same monkey will keep typing on the keyboard non-stop for an infinite time.

For example, the probability that the monkey will come up with the word "banana" would be less than $\mathbf{1}$ in $\mathbf{1 5}$ billion, but not zero. Thus it is a theoretically possible outcome, even though improbable.

- But the enormity comes to view when you realize that you have to get a WHOLE TEXT correctly without making too many errors at a stretch (in one continuous period.) For example, to get TWO words correctly, like "yellow banana," has a probability that is the multiplication of the probabilities of getting each word right. The probability that a monkey gets those two words correctly is less than 1 in a billionbillion ( 1 in $10^{\wedge} 18$ ). That is extremely small.

3. The above Wikipedia article says: ".the probability that monkeys filling the entire observable universe would type a single complete work, such as Shakespeare's Hamlet, is so tiny that the chance of it occurring during a period hundreds of thousands of orders of magnitude longer than the age of the universe is extremely low (but technically not zero)."

- That is because scientists estimate the age of our current universe to be only about 14 billion years. Infinity cannot be assigned a number. Any large number you can think about CAN NOT BE the largest number because you can just add 1 to that number to make it bigger. There is no ending! Thus, given an infinite time, it is theoretically possible that a monkey could type out the complete works of William Shakespeare.
- However, as we see below, the rebirth process involving a "lifestream" can not be compared to the same monkey typing on a keyboard for an eternity.


## Two Relevant Issues

4. We will discuss TWO aspects of this issue.

- First, we will show that the infinite monkey theorem's MECHANISM does not apply to the rebirth process. The rebirth process DOES NOT involve a "person/soul/ätman" traveling the Sainsāra (like a single monkey typing for an infinite time.) Nothing like a soul "moves" from this life to the next. Even the next moment in life arises based on causes and conditions based on the present moment, i.e., via the Patticca Samuppāda process.
- Second, we will show that even if an infinite number of living beings has attained Nibbāna, there will still be an infinite number left!


## First Issue

## There Is No "Person" Traveling the Rebirth Process

5. During the rebirth process, various forms of life manifest. Even though we live human lives now, we have lived in most of the 31 realms described by the Buddha. We have been born a Deva, a Brahma, an animal, a hell-being, etc. countless times!

- The concept of a "lifestream" moving from life in one realm to another (rather than a soul incarnating or appearing in different forms) is what the Buddha described. See "What Reincarnates? - Concept of a Lifestream."
- No "unchanging/permanent essence" like a soul moves from one life to the next. If that were the case, stopping the rebirth process and attaining Nibbāna would be impossible! How can a permanent entity cease to exist?
- What is taken to the next life is anusayalgati/samyojana. None of those is permanent. Each one can change even momentarily!
- Furthermore, all those entities are associated with suffering. Elimination of anusaya/gati/samyojana is the end of suffering, not the end of an entity like a soul or an ātman. See "Yamaka Sutta (SN 22.85) Arahanthood Is Not Annihilation but End of Suffering."

6. When one understands that by comprehending "Paticca Samuppāda, Tilakkhana, Four Noble Truths," one becomes a Sotāpanna by removing significant parts of anusaya/gati/samyojana. That is getting rid of the wrong view of a "soul/ātman" or "sakkāya ditṭhi." See "Sakkāya Ditthi and Tilakkhana."

- As that Sotāpanna progresses on the Noble Eightfold Path, more of the anusaya/gati/samiyojana are removed. See "Kilesa - Relationship to Akusala, Kusala, and Puñña Kamma" and "Anusaya, Gati, Bhava - Connection to Manomaya Kāya (Gandhabba)."
- With the attainment of the Arahant stage, ALL anusaya/gatilsainyojana will be lost from the mind. At the death of the Arahant, there is nothing left that can initiate another birth, and thus, the rebirth process stops.


## Path to Nibbāna Is Not a Mechanical Process

7. Therefore, reaching Nibbāna CANNOT be considered a mechanical process and, thus, CANNOT be compared to a monkey hitting arbitrary keys on a keyboard to generate Shakespeare's Hamlet.

- We can consider a monkey typing a single letter to a living-being hearing the correct Buddha Dhamma. Therefore, we can call that a "single-shot" at Nibbāna, corresponding to a single keystroke by a monkey.
- However, a mathematician could still say that there will be an infinite number of such "single-shots" by a living being over an INFINITE time.

8. But the key issue is that it is NOT the same person who heard the correct Buddha Dhamma infinite times!

- Therefore, the problem is with the question itself. The infinity problem in Buddhism is phrased as follows: "Each of us" has been in the rebirth process for an infinite time. How is it possible that all of us have not attained Nibbāna?
- That question assumes that a fixed person/soul/ātman is repeatedly reborn! Paṭicca Samuppāda explains that there is no such permanent entity being reborn. See "What Reincarnates? Concept of a Lifestream."
- We went through the above discussion to show that the two processes cannot be equated. Now, we address the SECOND issue mentioned in \#4 above.


## Second Issue

## Infinite Number May Have Attained Nibbāna

9. It is indeed possible that an infinite number of living beings HAVE ATTAINED Nibbāna in the past.

- Not only that, an infinite number of living beings may have attained Buddhahood in the past. Of course, attaining the Buddhahood is infinitely more difficult than attaining Arahanthood.
- Therefore, the infinite set of living beings who have attained Nibbāna is "much larger" than the infinite set of living beings who have attained Buddhahood.
- The key to this puzzle is to realize that "many levels of infinity" exist. It has been revealed by mathematicians within the past hundred years, thanks to the pioneering work of the mathematician George Cantor. See "WebLink: storyofmathematics.com: George Cantor - The Man Who Founded Set Theory." The following video provides good insights too.
WebLink: youtube: Cantor's Infinity Paradox | Set Theory


## A Nice Visualization of Infinity Within Infinity - The Infinite Hotel Paradox

10. The following video explains why there can be "smaller infinities" types within infinity. In particular, the set of positive integers is a "smaller infinity." Those who have attained Nibbāna fall under that category. Regardless of how many have attained Nibbāna, more could attain Nibbāna.

- The following video discusses an infinite number of buses filled with an infinite number of guests arriving at an infinite hotel. It is shown that the infinite hotel can accommodate all of them and more!

WebLink: youtube: The Infinite Hotel Paradox - Jeff Dekofsky

- I have set the video to stop around 2:10 minutes. It is enough to see that the hotel can accommodate an infinite number of guests at any time. During the presence of a Buddha Sāsana, only a finite number of living beings (humans, Devas, and Brahmas) attain Nibbāna.
- The rest of the video is more mathematical and shows that even an infinite number of buses with an infinite number of passengers in each bus can be accommodated! You can watch the whole video by clicking "watch on Youtube."


## Other Related Issues

11. Of course, several other questions now arise: Where do all these infinite numbers of living beings live? Do they all live in our Solar system? It will take many more future posts to explain these fully, but we can summarize them as follows.

- Brief answers to those questions are as follows: According to the Buddha, an uncountable number of planetary systems are populated with living beings. While an uncountable number of living beings live in our Solar system, there are an uncountable number of such planetary systems (cakkavāla) in the world.

Each cluster of 10,000 such cakkavāla can have a Buddha appearing periodically. Thus, there could have been an infinite number of Buddhās.

- Such details are in suttas in the Tipitaka, mostly in the Dīgha Nikāya. I briefly discussed one sutta: "Buddhism and Evolution - Aggañña Sutta (DN 27)."


## Summary/Additional Resource

12. Infinity is a very complex concept. There are many levels of infinity. Infinity minus infinity can still be infinity.

- Therefore, even as there have been an infinite number of Buddhā and an even higher infinity of those who attained Arahanthood, there are still an infinite number of living beings (including us) who have not yet attained Nibbāna.
- Even more importantly, there is no contradiction per the "infinite monkey theorem" because the premise/assumption of that theorem does not hold for the rebirth process.
- Thus, there is no contradiction in either case.


### 11.5 Free Will in Buddhism - Connection to Sañkhāra

## November 3, 2018; revised July 6, 2019; June 11, 2022

Free will is at the core of Buddhism (Buddha Dhamma). Without free will, attaining Nibbāna is not possible. Connection to vacī and kāya sañkhāra discussed.

## Introduction

1. Free will is at the core of Buddhism (Buddha Dhamma). If one does not have free will, one would not be able to attain Nibbāna.

- In a mundane sense also, the applicability of free will should be obvious. Free will is what determines (within certain limits) whether one will become a successful businessman or a master thief.
- When I said "within limits", we can only compare situations for two people who are born with comparable capabilities. For example, one born with an "ahetuka birth" (born with brain defects) will never be able to achieve much success.
- However, a person born with a "normal level of intelligence" (tihetuka or dvihetuka births) can make decisions that can lead to a wide variety of possible outcomes in the future. For example, one could become a great scientist or a ruthless dictator. Both require a "sharp mind".

2. In the following video by Sam Harris, we can clearly see where modern philosophers get stuck on the issue of free will.

WebLink: youtube: Sam Harris on the Illusion of Free Will

- He agrees that things happen due to causes, but he cannot figure out the causes of many things. He says, "you don't pick your parents, you don't pick your body...". But we do, in a way. That is explained with paṭicca samuppāda in Buddha Dhamma. We even choose our rebirths too; see, "Upapatti Paticca Samuppāda (How We Create Our Own Rebirths)."
- As long as he does not believe in rebirth, Sam Harris will never be able to understand those "missing causes". The rebirth picture provides those "missing causes". Laws of kamma (causes and effects) operate over many rebirths. One cannot analyze the current life in isolation.
- Furthermore, we need to include animals and beings in the other 29 realms too, in order to fully explain the laws of kamma.
- Nature treats every single living being fairly, according to what they have done in the past.
- One is born into a given existence (human, animal, deva, etc), a given family (good, bad), under different conditions (healthy, handicapped, poor, etc), and so on based on one's gati. One's gati are based on the types of sañkhāra that one cultivates (basically how one thinks, speaks, and acts).


## Background Material in Buddha Dhamma

3. Continuing with the key points in \#2: Another key point is that "kammic energy" that leads to future vipāka (results) is generated in one's javana citta. Don't be put off by that word. Javana cittā are basically thoughts that arise in one's mind when one is generating conscious thoughts about speaking/doing moral or immoral deeds.

- Vacī and kāya sañkhāra become abhisañkhāra (strong sañkhāra) that can lead to future vipāka, ONLY IF those actions or speech are either moral (good vipāka) or immoral (bad vipāka).
- That is the difference between sañkhāra and abhisañkhāra; see, "Sañkhāra - What It Really Means."

4. Vacī sañkhāra are responsible for our speech (either out loud or just to ourselves). When we do something (walk, play, etc) we move our bodies with kāya sañkhāra that arise in the mind (basically in the gandhabba). We have control over both those.

- On the other hand, when thoughts arise automatically due to sensory input, those are mano sañkhāra.
- That is the difference between mano sañkhāra (which arises without our DIRECT control) and vacī sañkhāra/kāya sañkhāra (which we have control over).
- Whether just sañkhāra or abhisañkhāra, this distinction holds. For example, we can stop saying anything anytime. We can stop raising our hand anytime we want to, whether it is to say "Hi" to someone (sañkhāra) or to hit someone (abhisañkhāra).

5. As we have discussed before, the word "sañkhāra" comes from "san"+ "khāra" or actions that involve "san"; see, "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Samsāra)."

- "San" is responsible for just getting things done to live the current life (even everyday activities).
- However, if they involve moral/immoral actions that can bring results (vipäka) in future lives, then those arise due to "strong san" or "abhi san" and thus become "abhisañkhāra."
- Kammä are actions (done with sañkhāra that arise in the mind). Most are neutral kamma: They do not bring significant vipāka.
- Such moral or immoral strong kamma - done with abhisankhāra - are the ones that lead to kamma vipāka in the future (either in this life or in future lives).


## Key Idea: Vacī/kāya Saṅkhāra are Willful

6. Let us look at some examples now.

- Thinking about going to the bathroom is a vacī sañkhāra (kammically neutral). One gets the body to move to the bathroom using kāya sañkhāra.
- Thinking about killing a human being involves abhisañkhāra with high kammic consequences or vacī abhisañkhāra; doing the actual killing is done with kāya abhisañkhāra. Those can lead to rebirth in the apāyā because both are based on immoral or apuñña abhisañkhāra (or apuññābhisañkhāra).
- On the other hand, puñ̃na abhisañkhāra (or puññābhisañkhāra) (thoughts responsible for good speech and actions) have good kammic consequences and can lead to "good births" (human, Deva, or Brahma). Even more importantly, they are essential for making progress on the Path.

7. I keep repeating these because it is very important to understand these key ideas.

- All sañkhāra arise in the mental body (gandhabba).
- Then the brain helps to put those into action/speech (i.e., moving body parts).
- Most of those actions/speeches are kammically neutral.
- Good kammā that will have good vipāka in the future are done with abhisañkhāra that have sobhana cetasika (compassion, non-greed, etc). Bad kammā that will have bad vipāka in the future are done with abhisañkhāra that have asobhana cetasika (anger, greed, etc.); see, "Living Dhamma Fundamentals."
- Sañkhāra is the generic word used in the suttā, even if it could be abhisañkhāra. One needs to be able to see which ones are abhisañkhāra based on the actual situation.

8. Mano sañkhāra are those that automatically arise in a mind due to a sensory input, based on one's gati.

- We don't really experience those initial mano sañkhāra and we only experience them when it comes to the next stage called vacī sañkhāra ("talking to oneself").
- This is an important point. Even if one does not say a word when one is "thinking to oneself" that is called $v a c \bar{l} \operatorname{san} k h a \bar{r} a$. If one gets really interested, one may speak out and that is still a vacī sañkhāra.
- If one's interest builds up, one may even take bodily action. Those bodily actions are done with kāya sañkhāra that arise in the mind.
- I strongly urge everyone to re-read the posts: "Difference Between Tanhā and Upādāna" and "Correct Meaning of Vacī Sañkhāra."
- The strength of kammic energy created increases in the following order: mano, vacī, kāya sañkhāra.


## Mano Saṅkhāra Arise Based on Our Gati

9. As we discussed many times, we get "attached" to something AUTOMATICALLY based on our gati and arise as mano sañkhāra. It is important to understand the concept of "gati" (character/habits); see, "The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Āsava)."

- If the attachment is strong enough, the mind will now start thinking about it consciously, i.e., vacī sañkhāra arise and we become aware of these vacī sañkhāra.
- Now, we have the ability to be mindful and think about its consequences and move away from it, as soon as we become aware of this "attachment" to something. Therefore, we can stop such thoughts at the vaci sañkhāra stage; see, "Correct Meaning of Vacī Sañkhāra."
- However, our minds like to enjoy such vacī sañkhāra. It is easy to do and is very tempting. Many people get their sexual satisfaction from just "daydreaming" about either an event in the past or sexual encounters that they would like to have in the future.
- In order to change mano sañkhāra, we need to change our gati; see, "Difference Between Tanhā and Upādāna."

10. Please read \#9 again. That is the key to understanding "free will".

- We have total control over vacī sañkhāra and kāya sañkhāra.
- The reason is that there is a "time delay" between the mind (in the gandhabba) deciding to speak or make a bodily movement and the time takes for the brain to carry out those commands and to move parts of the physical body; see, "Brain - Interface between Mind and Body."
- However, animals do not have this "safety barrier". Lower animals do not have a neocortex. Even in monkeys, the neocortex is only partially developed. Thus, their mano sañkhāra automatically continue as $v a c \bar{\imath}$ and kāya sañkhāra. Also, see, "Truine Brain: How the Mind Rewires the Brain via Meditation/Habits."
- Those are the reasons why humans have free will and animals do not.


## Key Concepts in Satipaṭthāna and $\overline{A n} \bar{a} p \bar{a} n a$

11. Therefore, the concept of free will becomes clear if one can understand the concepts of mano, vaci and kāya sañkhāra.

- In fact, in order to have a firm grasp of Satipatthāna and Ānapāna meditations, it is essential to understand what is meant by "mindfulness" and how vacī and kāya sañkhāra are different from mano sañkhāra.
- The bottom line this: Once we become aware of an action that we are about to take, we have the total freedom to choose to either go ahead with it or stop it.
- We should stop any bad actions that we are about to do and continue with any good actions. That is the basis of Satipatṭhāna and Ānāpāna meditations.
- All we need to do is to cultivate the habit of "catching one's response early enough". "Being mindful" is just that; see, " $\underline{6}$. Ānāpānasati Bhāvanā (Introduction)" and "Mahā Satipatthāna Sutta."

12. If one can understand the post, "Difference Between Tanhā and Upādāna," one can not only see that free will is "built-in" for humans, but one will also be able to see how one can purify one's mind and make progress on the Noble Path.

- As explained in that post - and the reference posts mentioned there - only mano sañkhāra arise without our control.
- We have total control over vacī and kāya sañkhāra, at least when one gets better in practicing Satipaṭ̂hāna/Ānāpāna.
- This is also why humans are different from animals: Humans have the ability to think for themselves and make rational decisions.


## Libet's Experiments on Free Will

13. Scientists misinterpret the experiments on the famous "Libet's experiments" simply because they believe that the mind resides in the brain. Therefore, they wrongly conclude that the "brain activity starts" before one makes a decision; see, "Neuroscience says there is no Free Will? - That is a Misinterpretation!."

- Libet's experiment is very simple: A person was asked to move his/her own finger whenever at his/her will, and scientists monitored that person's brain activity. They concluded that the brain started the "finger moving" process before the person made the decision to move the finger!
- If the brain indeed started the decision-making process, that would confirm that humans do not have free will. But then the question arises what triggered that brain activity? Of course, scientists or philosophers do not have an answer to that question. If human decisions are random, this world would be a very chaotic place.
- However, the explanation is simple with the concept of a mental body (gandhabba) controlling the physical body with the help of the brain.
- As explained in the above post, the decision made by the gandhabba started the brain activity. Scientists did not correctly monitor the time at which the person made the decision, because their "model" was incorrect.

14. Gandhabba or the "mental body" or the "manomaya kāya" is a key concept that has been neglected in even the current Theravāda texts. This concept is ironically somewhat similar to the "ghost in the machine" concept; see, "Ghost in the Machine - Synonym for the Manomaya Kāya?."

- There are several subsections at the website that discuss this concept: "Mental Body - Gandhabba," "Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya)," and "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma."


### 11.6 Book Reviews

"Why Does the World Exist?" by Jim Holt"
"Waking Up" by Sam Harris"
""The Language of God" by Francis Collins"
""Spark" by John Ratey"
""The Life of the Buddha" by Bhikkhu Ñānamoli"

### 11.6.1 "Why Does the World Exist?" by Jim Holt

## Revised October 1, 2021

1. I started writing this post while reading the popular book "Why Does the World Exist? - An Existential Detective Story" by Jim Holt (2012). It is a good book with many thought-provoking questions. Here I would like to point out that most of those questions have answers in Buddha Dhamma.

- On p. 269, equating the Nibbānic bliss to the annihilation of a person, he asks, "...But how can you enjoy something if you do not exist?". To address this question, I initially started the post with the title, "Does Nibbāna Mean Annihilation of a "Person"?". Still, I started addressing other issues in the book and eventually changed the title to be the same as the book title.
- Even many Buddhists are terrified of the idea of Nibbāna, thinking that it means destruction. That is why even many Bhikkhus like to give "blessings" to the effect, "May you attain Nibbāna at the end of much pleasures in the heavenly worlds". That illustrates a total lack of understanding of the profound message of the Buddha.

2. The problem is in the question itself. If a person is to be annihilated, a "person" needs to exist in the first place. Now this is a very deep issue that needs some knowledge of Buddha Dhamma to understand. As the Buddha said in his first sermon, his Dhamma is, "pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu....." or "a concept that has not been known to the world before..."

- To annihilate, something "concrete" must exist. The Brahmins of the day of the Buddha believed there is a permanent "āthma" associated with a prson (a "soul" in the present day.). It is very difficult for all of us to get rid of the perception of "me" or "myself". In fact, that perception is totally removed only at the Arahant stage of Nibbāna; it keeps decreasing as one advances on the Path.
- Thus as long as one "belongs to this world of 31 realms", one always thinks in terms of "me" and "the external world". This is why the Buddha rejected the concept of "no-self" even though most people incorrectly translate anatta as "no-self"; see, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma."
- On the other hand, the Buddha said that it is also incorrect to say there is "self". This is because any "person" changes even moment-to-moment; see, "What Reincarnates? - Concept of a Lifestream."
- In rejecting both "self" and "no-self" extremes, the Buddha said, "this changing being" or "a lifestream" changes moment-to-moment due to changes in the causes that support that lifestream. This is not something that I can explain in one essay and is explained via many posts at the site, including the important section on Pațicca Samuppāda.
- In the book there is a separate chapter on, "The Self - Do I Really Exist?". I will discuss that chapter below, and point out a few more related facts.

3. The book's main theme is "why is there something rather than nothing?" or "how did the world got started?". It summarizes most of the arguments that have accumulated over thousands of years, and of course, come to the inevitable question on "the nature of the Creator God who would not need a cause for being there".

- However, regarding the two questions on existence as expressed above, the Buddha's answer is the simplest: The world has existed forever and it is not possible to pinpoint a specific first cause. The proof is very simple: Suppose there is a first cause; then what caused that? QED.
- Thus in the scientific basis of cause and effect, the absence of a first cause is built in.
- On p. 82 of the book, Jim Holt did point out, "..Scientific thinkers, by and large, have not shared such qualms about eternity. Neither Galileo nor Newton nor Einstein had any problem conceiving of a universe that was infinite in time. Indeed, Einstein added to his field equations a fudge factor - the infamous "cosmological constant" - to ensure that they would yield a universe that was static and eternal."
- And a few philosophers have discussed the problem with "first cause" arguments, as Jim Holt noted. Talking about the late philosopher John Mackie on p. 206, ". Obviously, as Mackie observed, no explanation in terms of a "first cause" could answer the ultimate question of existence, for such an explanation would merely raise the further question of why that first cause -whether it be God, an unstable chunk of false vacuum, or some still more exotic entity- itself existed'.

4. If one accepts that the world has existed forever, then many other questions discussed in the book do not even arise. Thus $100 \%$ of the questions discussed are answered if we start off with the premise that the world has existed forever AND the root causes (greed, hate, and ignorance) for the existence of the world given by the Buddha.

- For example, on p. 7, Leibniz's Principle of Sufficient Reason is discussed: For every truth, there must be a reason why it is so and not otherwise; and for every thing, there must be a reason for that thing's existence. This is basically "cause and effect". The Buddha said that the world exists because of greed, hate, and ignorance; and those causes have no beginning.
- This is related to the issue of the mind taking precedence over matter, and I am slowly building evidence for that in the website. There are some introductory posts in the "Abhidhamma" and "Dhamma and Philosophy" sections.
- On p. 188, Jim Holt discusses the fact that all science says about the "stuff that makes up our world" is that mass is equivalent to energy, "....but it gives us no idea of what energy really is...". This is exactly what is explained in Abhidhamma, and I will get to it eventually. He goes on to say, "...As Bertrand Russell noted in his 1927 book, The Analysis of Matter, when it comes to the intrinsic nature of the entities making up the world, science is silent".
- He also briefly discuss another big issue in philosophy on p. 192: "The conclusion of the philosophers ......that there is more to consciousness than the mere processing of information. If this is true, then science, insofar as it describes the world as a play of information states, would seem to leave out a part of reality: the subjective, irreducibly qualitative part". Actually, as we will see, Buddha's answer solves both this and the issue above in one fell swoop.
- A world without a beginning also gives an answer to the question of "why do I exist" (p. 18). We all have "existed" forever; there is no beginning so the question has no meaning. Another frequently asked question is, "what is the meaning of life?". There is no meaning to life: The bottom line is that we all suffer in this existence ON THE AVERAGE, IN THE LONG TERM while we meander aimlessly among the 31 realms of existence; see, "Evidence for Rebirth."

5. Now the only critical question is how do we know that the Buddha's world view is correct? The answer is that it can explain the complex world around us; it has the "explanatory power". Also see, "Vagaries of Life and the Way to Seek Good Births" and "Good Explanations - Key to Weeding out Bad Versions of Dhamma," among many other posts.

- Furthermore, one can EXPERIENCE the truth of Buddha's teachings and the results for oneself. I have described part of my experience in following the Path in, "11. Magga Phala via Cultivation of Saptha Bojjanga." Do not be discouraged by the title of the post.

6. Now let me briefly discuss the late chapter on, "The Self - Do I Really Exist?". Here Jim Holt comes across the answer himself (p. 256): Talking about Descartes' famous phrase, "I think, therefore I exist", he says, "... ..Did Descartes here infer more than he was entitled to? As many commentators have pointed out (beginning with Georg Lichtenberg in the eighteenth century), the "I" in his ultimate premise is not quite legitimate. All Descartes could assert with certainty was "there are thoughts". He never proved that thoughts require a thinker......" (bold face mine).
7. This is exactly what the Buddha said. There are thoughts, but no REAL thinker; there is the PERCEPTION of a thinker in "one's mind" until one's mind is purified to the level of an Arahant and it becomes clear that there is no "thinker". However, the irony is that until that wisdom is gained, "one's suffering" is real. The suffering is there simply because one thinks there is a real thinker!

- But one cannot honestly say, "there is no-self' as most people try to do unless one is an Arahant; one is just trying to fool oneself in saying that. When something bad happens to "anything that belongs to oneself" one INEVITABLY feels the pain associated with it; see, "Anatta and Dukkha - True Meanings."
- When the mind is purified (i.e., is absent of greed, hate, and ignorance) perception of "self" goes away at the Arahant stage, then the suffering associated with "one's stuff" is not there anymore. When one comprehends the concept of anicca to some extent, this will become clear to some extent. In other words, Nibbānic bliss or nirämisa sukha increases as one advances on the Path, with the mind being purified at each step; see, "Three Kinds of Happiness - What is Nirāmisa Sukha?", and "Nirāmisa Sukha."
- Thus we cannot forcibly get rid of the sense of "I". Only through the true understanding of the Three Characteristics of this world, anicca, dukkha, anatta, that one can slowly start getting rid of that sense of 'I" or "self". Until then there is neither a "self" nor "no-self', but just a stream of thoughts; see, "What Reincarnates? - Concept of a Lifestream." Only at the death of an Arahant that stream of thoughts is ended and the mind becomes free of any attachment to the material world of the 31 realms; see, "Nibbāna - Is it Difficult to Understand?," and "What are Rūpa? Relation to Nibbāna."


## "Waking Up" by Sam Harris

## Revised August 28, 2022

## Sam Harris, "Waking Up: A Guide to Spirituality Without Religion" (2014).

1. I am quite encouraged by the fact that many people are beginning to see through something contrary to basic human instincts: That it is possible to find a different and more permanent form of happiness that is not related to material things.

- Right at the start of the book, when he talks about his first "meditation retreat" at the age of 16 under harsh conditions in the wilderness, the author says he was puzzled by the positive reaction of the older people in the group, "...How could someone's happiness increase when all the material sources of pleasure and distraction had been removed?" (p.2).
- But now, with many years of experience in meditation and studies on human nature as a neuroscientist, he can understand it: "..Unlike many atheists, I have spent much of my life seeking experiences of the kind that gave ride to world's religions. Despite the painful results of my first few days alone in the mountains of Colorado, I later studied with a wide range of monks, lamas, yogis, and other contemplatives, some of whom had lived for decades in seclusion doing nothing but meditating. In the process, I spent two years on silent retreat myself (in increments of one week to three months), practicing various techniques of meditation for twelve to eighteen hours a day" (pp. 13-14).

2. Harris, like many others, has found that something about human life cannot be explained away just in terms of the workings of the material world. But he cannot pinpoint the source of that "something extra."

- As Harris explains, modern science has obliterated the concept of a "divine influence" as has been put forth by various religions. So I was quite interested to see his conclusion on the "source of this extra something."

3. On p.8, he makes a very valid statement: "Spirituality must be distinguished from religion - because of people of every faith, and of none, have had the same sorts of spiritual experiences....Nothing that a Christian, a Muslim, and a Hindu can experience - self-transcending love, ecstasy, bliss, inner light - constitutes evidence in support of their traditional beliefs, because their beliefs are logically incompatible with one another. A deeper principle must be at work". (my highlighting).

- This is exactly what I have been trying to emphasize on this website.
- In the next very paragraph, he says what he found that deeper principle to be: "That principle is the subject of this book: The feeling that we call " $I$ " is an illusion" (p. 9). This is probably the "no-self" theory that is erroneously presented as Buddha's concept of "anatta"; see, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta Wrong Interpretations."
- However, on that same page, he also summarizes most of my conclusions about religions in general, including "Buddhism" the way as it is practiced by most in both Theravāda and Mahāyāna sects.

4. I will quote the relevant sentences from pp. 9-10: "I am often asked what will replace religion. The answer, I believe, is nothing and everything. Nothing need replace its ludicrous and divisive doctrines....But what about love, compassion, moral goodness, and self-transcendence? Many people will imagine that religion is the true repository of their virtues. To change this we must talk about the full range of human experience in a way that is as free as the best science already is".

- And through the rest of the book, he goes through that process. I agree with most, except that while "Buddhism" may be a religion, Buddha Dhamma is certainly not (if religion is defined as providing salvation via following set rituals or having blind faith in an entity or a supreme being).

5. The key to Mr. Harris's not understanding Buddha Dhamma becomes apparent on p. 28: "We can also grant that Eastern wisdom has not produced societies or political institutions that are any better than their Western counterparts. In fact, one could argue that India has survived as the world's largest democracy only because of institutions that were built under British rule. Nor has the East led the world in scientific discovery. Nevertheless, there is something to the notion of uniquely Eastern wisdom, and most of it has been concentrated in or derived from the tradition of Buddhism".

- The problem is that Mr. Harris has not been exposed to Buddha Dhamma, the "non-religious" original teachings.
- The focus of Buddha Dhamma, as delivered by the Buddha, was not on enhancing mundane life and on building a better society. It was focused on the fact that it is a "waste of time" to try to build large cities, develop technology, and in general, to spend too much time on "making things better for this life" because this life is only a brief stop-over in a much longer journey.

6. If one understood the key message of the Buddha, one would see that this life is too short to be "wasted" on such things. This is due to three key foundational aspects of Buddha Dhamma:

- Even though wrought with some suffering, human life is the best in all of the 31 realms of this world for attaining Nibbāna; see the description of the wider world of 31 realms in "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma."
- In the process of rebirth, we spend only a tiny amount of time in this life of about 100 years; see "Evidence for Rebirth."
- And immersing in mundane sense pleasures becomes only a hindrance to attaining the "true and permanent happiness" of Nibbāna; see "Three Kinds of Happiness - What is Nirāmisa Sukha" and "Nirāmisa Sukha?".
- Of course, the Mahāyāna version of "Buddhism," or even the Theravāda version, has veered away from this key message of the Buddha.

7. Yet, I must hasten to point out two additional points:

- The Buddha stated that not everyone could comprehend this key message. Thus, he did provide advice for those who did not wish to pursue Nibbāna and asked for advice on how to live a moral and fulfilling family life while enjoying sensual pleasures. In Chapter IV of Bhikkhu Bodhi's popular book, "In the Buddha's Words" (2005), such advice from different sutta has been extracted into one place; this book also has other categories separated like good rebirths, mind, etc.
- The Buddha never tried to change or influence the political systems that were in place, even though he praised the democratic system that was in place in the small autonomous region of Vajji, which was a republic similar to the one we have now in the United States. Other than openly criticizing the caste system, he stayed away from politics.

8. I am impressed that Mr. Harris has been able to catch at least a glimmer of the uniqueness in Buddha Dhamma even though he has not been exposed to the true teachings of the Buddha: "Buddhism in particular possesses a literature on the nature of the mind that has no peer in Western religion or Western science. Some of these teachings are cluttered with metaphysical assumptions that should provoke our doubts, but many aren't. And when engaged as a set of hypotheses by which to investigate the mind and deepen one's ethical life, Buddhism can be an entirely rational enterprise" (p. 29).

- The author is highly impressed with the Buddhist "vipassana" meditation. However, what he describes in just breath meditation or "samatha meditation"; see, "Bhāvanā (Meditation)".

9. And he has the concept of Enlightenment (Nibbāna) all wrong (this says a lot about the Mahāyāna "Buddhism" that he has been exposed to): "...the state of "full enlightenment" - is generally described as "omniscient." Just what this means is open to a fair bit of caviling. But however narrowly defined, the claim is absurd' (p. 43).

- To understand the concept of Nibbāna, one must understand the worldview of the Buddha as described in the posts mentioned above, and then one needs to read other posts at this site describing Nibbāna (just search with the keyword Nibbāna at the top right box on Keyword Search).

10. Interestingly, there is no mention of purifying the mind of defilements, which is key to true Buddhist meditation; see "The Importance of Purifying the Mind."

- I do not blame the author, of course, but it is sad to see how far "Buddhism" has veered off from the original message of the Buddha.
- It is these three root causes of greed, hate, and ignorance (and the counterparts of non-greed, non-hate, and wisdom) that clarify the basis of morality that he has puzzled over in two other books, "The Moral Landscape" (2011) and "Free Will" (2012).
- As Mr. Harris correctly points out in "The Moral Landscape," 'there is no such thing as Christian or Muslim morality." There is no "Buddhist morality" either. Morality is universal and comes out naturally based on benevolence, compassion, and wisdom having precedence over greed, hate, and ignorance; see "Origin of Morality (and Immorality) in Buddhism."

11. Chapter 2 is on consciousness. The author has a good introduction, and his thinking about consciousness may be expressed here: "I am sympathetic with those who, like the philosopher Colin McGinn and the psychologist Steven Pinker, have suggested that perhaps the emergence of consciousness is simply incomprehensible in human terms" (p. 57).

- The Buddha has fully explained consciousness. Consciousness is NOT an emergent property, it is a fundamental entity. I have several introductory posts on consciousness on the site; see "What is Consciousness?" and follow-up posts.
- I hope those who are interested will read the comprehensive description of the mind provided by the Buddha in the Abhidhamma section of this site, which may not be ready for a comprehensive analysis for several more months. But there are a few introductory posts there.

12. The rest of the book is about the author's experience of trying different meditation types. It is too bad that he was not exposed to real Buddhist meditation. On the other hand, even in countries where Theravāda Buddhism is practiced, breath meditation is widely taught.

- Overall, I am impressed that even with the minimum exposure Mr. Harris had to Buddha Dhamma, he has been able to see that "there is something hidden there." I am glad to say that the Buddha did teach a much deeper doctrine, and I am sure he and many others in the West will be enthusiastic about finding the true message of the Buddha.
- The author knows that as an atheist, he was treading into unknown territory in talking about spiritual experiences: ".......many of my fellow atheists consider all talk of spirituality to be a sign of mental illness, conscious imposture, or self-deception. This is a problem, because millions of people have had experiences for which spiritual and mystical seem the only terms available" (p.11).
- However, once one understands the true message of the Buddha, one can see that there is nothing in his doctrine that goes against the beliefs and convictions of most atheists; Buddha Dhamma describes Nature's laws at a fundamental level.
- The only difference between science and Buddha Dhamma is that science assumes that mental phenomena can be derived from material phenomena. In Buddha Dhamma, the mind is at the forefront; see "Philosophy of the Mind."

13. I encourage those interested to read the book because the author has not only contemplated the subjects of morality, questions on existence, world religions, etc. but has also tried to experience different meditation techniques. I only wish he had been exposed to the true teachings of the Buddha so that he could perhaps make stronger statements about the value of the Buddha Dhamma in addition to finding much more benefits for himself.

### 11.6.3 "The Language of God" by Francis Collins

## Revised August 9, 2019; August 28, 2022

This is a top-rated book (published in 2007), as apparent from many reviews on Amazon. The author is a respected scientist and director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). This post is based on a review I posted on the Amazon site in 2012.

- I have read numerous books to find solid arguments for believing in a Creator. The author has put together the best case he could also use previous ideas of C. S. Lewis and others. The main points in the book can be summarized as follows (not in the order presented in the book):

1. God is responsible for the "Big Bang," i.e., the creation of the universe, and for creating the just right physical parameters (fine-tuning) that enabled human life on planet Earth.
2. The "Intelligent Design" theory needs to be abandoned since it may damage the case for the existence of God.
3. Darwin's theory of evolution does account for leading to the appearance of a "human-like" creature, even though the theory explains the evolution of more complex animals.

- Whether this creature further evolved by itself to be human or whether at some point, God directly instilled a conscience in this creature, he leaves it open.
- Either way, God is responsible for the existence of morality in humans. He prefers to call "BioLogos" the theory of "Theistic Evolution."

4. The existence of "Moral Law" (the ability to differentiate right from wrong) is the fundamental basis for his belief in God.
5. The issue of "pain and suffering" was problematic for C. S. Lewis, and the present author also encountered difficulties in addressing it.

## My comments are as follows:

1. Proponents of the Big Bang theory say that Big Bang was not just one event, but such events are supposed to be frequent. Thus there is no need to invoke a higher power.

- Stephen Hawking, whose book "A Brief History of Time" that the author quoted to make a case for God's role, has since come out with a new book, "The Grand Design" (2010). In that book, he clearly states that the need for a Creator God is no longer there based on new evidence.
- Also, in the inflationary theory, Big Bangs occur all the time, and there is no need to invoke a fine-tuning of physical parameters; see "The Beginning of Infinity" by David Deutsch.

2. Actually "Intelligent Design" is a somewhat better theory than the hypothesis of a God because the proponents of that theory have put forth some formidable arguments for it.

- Of course, I do not subscribe to that theory (which some say is making a case for a Creator God without admitting it). However, Collins does not make a better case for the Creator God hypothesis.
- The problem with the "Intelligent Design" theory is that, of course, the question arises as to how that designer came into being! Many people say it is the same as the God hypothesis.
- If anyone is interested in learning about the "Intelligent Design" theory, a good book is "Signature in the Cell" by Stephen Meyer (2009).

3. The question is, "In this sequence did God instill moral values in the evolving creature?". Is there a clearcut transition from a robotic animal to a human with moral values?

- The "uniqueness of a human," according to the author, is the ability to know right from wrong. Humans indeed have this quality stronger than animals. Some animals also have at least a glimpse of this quality. If you have a pet, especially a dog, you know that it has feelings and even its mind to do things, i.e., it is not like a robot.
- While people sometimes sacrifice their own lives to save others, people like Hitler and Pol Pot have committed unmentionable atrocities. And that was with planning (not just on impulse).
- In Buddha Dhamma, both moral and immoral choices are in the "human psyche"; based on many complex factors (sansāric habits or "gati," family, friends, associates, etc.), people choose to be moral or immoral at different times depending on the situation. Of course, greed, hate, and ignorance play a significant role; see, "Living Dhamma."

4. Now on the existence of "moral law": From \#3 above, it is clear that even though morality is in the human psyche, it does not have a "binding effect" on humans. Humans are, in general, more "moral" than animals. But within the broader world described by the Buddha Dhamma, other sentient beings (Devas and Brahmā ) are more "moral" than humans.

- If the man is to be judged by just one life, why is everyone not given the same chance (including "same morality')? People are born poor, rich, healthy, unhealthy, etc., and some die even before getting a chance to prove their worthiness.
- These apparent "vagaries of life" are a strong argument for the case that this life is only one of many. Furthermore, the diversity that we observe is due to the effects of past actions (kamma vipāka); see "Vagaries of Life and the Way to seek "Good Rebirths."
- The basis of morality (as well as immorality) comes naturally in Buddha Dhamma. See "Origin of Morality (and Immorality) in Buddhism."

5. Of course, according to Buddha Dhamma, the issue of "pain and suffering" - not only in this life but in the cycle of rebirths - is the fundamental problem of existence.

- Again, the "pain and suffering" issue is unexplainable by any approach based on just one life. Like modern science, Buddha Dhamma has a foundation in "causes and effects." Suffering and happiness arise due to past causes, and since most of these effects (e.g., disability at birth, poverty) are even apparent at birth, "past" means past lives.


### 11.6.4 "Spark" by John Ratey

## Early post of 2014; revised August 28, 2019

1. There is a good book, "Spark: The Revolutionary New Science of Exercise and the Brain" by John J. Ratey (2013). It discusses new findings on the effects of regular exercise on the brain as well as the body. (Most of the books I review are likely to be available at public libraries).
2. The book discusses how exercise can keep the brain working at higher efficiency and lower stress and anxiety. Also, regular exercise can rid of addictions, and even Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, ADHD. It also talks about women's hormonal changes and aging too.
3. The key is to engage in a moderate exercise program up to 6 days a week. And to ratchet it up to highintensity once-in-a-while, even for a minute at a time. For example, if you jog, try to run fast for 30 seconds to 1 min once-in-awhile. That is called "interval running."

- The maximum heart rate for a person is $220-\mathrm{AGE}$.
- low-intensity exercise: $55 \%-65 \%$ of max rate
- moderate: $65 \%-75 \%$
- high intensity: $75 \%-90 \%$

4. There are "wristwatch type" heart rate monitors available. But you basically "know" when you are at low intensity (walking), moderate (jogging/slow running), and high (dashing to catch a bus or running a $100-$ meter race).

- Should not do high intensity unless you have been active for a while.
- In the anaerobic range (high intensity), the brain releases human growth hormones (HGH). That is a natural way to "get high."
- Even low-intensity workouts release many other beneficial chemicals. But in high-intensity workouts, they all get a boost. All these are good for the sustenance/growth of neurons so that your memory can be improved.
- But should not do high-intensity regularly unless one is in great shape.
- He also mentions yoga as an enjoyable activity. Any exercise, i.e., just walking, is better than none.
- He discusses how children in a school district in PA are avoiding obesity and health problems and getting good grades because the schools have good exercise programs.
- I find that the best time to meditate is after a good workout and a shower. The body and the mind are refreshed and alert.

5. We are born with a body and a mind that are results of specific kamma vipāka in the past. But we are not bound by either; we can improve both. That does not mean we should try to "beautify" the body; we should make it healthy. The physical body is a "temporary shell" that will be with us for about 100 years, and if we do not take care of it, that will lead to much discomfort.

- We can make conditions conducive to get "good kamma seeds" and to prevent "bad kamma seeds" from bearing fruits; see, "Anantara and Samanantara Paccaya." Do not be discouraged by those Pāli words. The post is easy to understand.

6. Exercise and meditate! That is key to a long healthy life as well for "cooling down" in the sense of getting some long-lasting peace-of-mind or attaining one of the four stages of Nibbāna.

- As we get old, it is imperative to keep both body and mind in good condition. It is hard to concentrate, let alone meditate, with an aching body or a defiled mind.
- Walking a mile or two a day can keep one reasonably healthy. For the mind, solving word puzzles or reading a book is better than watching television.


### 11.6.5 "The Life of the Buddha" by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli

October 13, 2018; revised November 15, 2020

## "The Life of the Buddha" Is a Good Resouce

1. "The Life of the Buddha" by Bhikkhu Ñānamoli is good to read and even to keep as a reference (page numbers quoted are for the 2001 First BPS Pariyatti edition). It is a good book for two reasons:

- A chronological record of the Buddha's life (after the Buddhahood),
- Detailed accounts of events that are not in the sutt $\bar{a}$ (taken from the Vinaya Pitaka).


## Need to Consult All Three Piṭaka

2. The Buddha said that if there is any doubt or a concept that is not clear, one should check with Sutta, Vinaya, and Abhidhamma. These basically refer to the Tipiṭaka (three baskets) of Sutta Piṭaka, Vinaya Pitaka, and Abhidhamma Pitaka.

- Most people refer to the Sutta Piṭaka and forget about the other two. Abhidhamma Piṭaka is a bit hard to understand, and without a firm grasp of basics it is harder.
- Most people think that the Vinaya Pitaka is just for the bhikkhus and bhikkhunis. But there are sections in the Vinaya Pitaka that have details that are not in the suttā. Furthermore, those sections in the Vinaya Piṭaka are easy to understand, as we see below.


## An Example

3. I will provide the following as an example of what is in this book that is not available in any sutta. It describes how the five ascetics attained the Sotāpanna stage over several days with the delivery of the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta.

Here is a direct quote from p. 45 of the book (starting from the point where the Buddha had just finished the first delivery of the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta):
"Then Añ̃ata Kondañña, who had seen and reached and found and penetrated the Dhamma, whose uncertainties were left behind, whose doubts had vanished, who had gained perfect confidence and became independent of others in the Teacher's Dispensation (My Comment: i.e., became a Sotāpanna), said to the Blessed One: "Blessed One, I wish to go forth under the Blessed One and to receive the full admission?"
"Come, bhikkhu," the Blessed One said, "The Dhamma is well proclaimed. Live the holy life for the complete ending of suffering." And that was his full admission.

Then the Blessed One taught and instructed the rest of the bhikkhus with a talk on the Dhamma. As he did so, there arose in the venerable Vappa and the venerable Bhaddiya, the spotless, immaculate vision of the

Dhamma (My Comment: i.e., became Sotāpannas). All that is subjected to arising is subjected to cessation. They, too, asked for and received the full admission.

These, having seen dhamma, attained dhamma, knowing dhamma ... having attained without another's help to full confidence in the teacher's instruction, spoke thus to the Blessed One: 'May we, Blessed One, receive the going forth in the Blessed One's presence, may we receive ordination?"

Then living on the food they brought to him, the Blessed One taught and instructed the rest of the bhikkhus with a talk on the Dhamma. All six lived on the food brought back by the three of them. Then there arose in the venerable Mahānāma and the venerable Assaji the spotless, immaculate vision of the Dhamma (My Comment: i.e., became Sotāpannas), and they too asked for and received the full admission".

## Important Deductions

4. We can learn several important facts from the above account.

- Only Ven. Koṇadañña attained the Sotāpanna stage in the first round in the first night of the delivery of the sutta. It actually took several days for all five ascetics to attain the Sotāpanna stage.
- Buddha actually did not just recite the sutta as it appears in the Tipiṭaka. That recital would have been finished within 15 minutes!
- So, we can see that what is in the Tipiṭaka are HIGHLY CONDENSED summaries of those discourses and possibly many discussions.


## Many Suttā Provide Only Concise Summaries

5. What we see as the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta today is a highly condensed version of the material that was taught by the Buddha over several days, as is clear from \#3 above.

- It appears that the Buddha himself summarized the material in each sutta in a short concise way to a limited number of verses that were suitable for oral transmission (easy to remember). A sutta is supposed to be explained in detail; see, "Sutta Interpretation - Uddesa, Niddesa, Patiniddesa."
- We must remember that all the suttā in the Tipitaka were transmitted down several generations over about 500 years before it was written down. It was not even remotely possible to include all that was discussed over those several days!


## Word-by-Word Translation is a Terrible Practice

6. What happens these days is that even highly condensed sutt $\bar{a}$ are translated word-by-word into English. This is a terrible practice. It is no different from just reciting a sutta!

- One can finish reading a sutta in 15 minutes, and ONE would not understand any of the deep concepts embedded in the sutta.
- Then how could one understand the sutta by just reading a word-by-word translation of a sutta?

7. In fact, this could be why many people to believe that one can attain Nibbāna by just reciting a sutta or a set of verses. This practice is sometimes called "mantra chanting." But there is no basis for that belief.

- Nibbāna can be attained ONLY by cleansing one's mind.
- The MENTAL stress arises ONLY due to lobha, dosa, moha in one's mind.
- As one cleanses one's mind, the mental stress will decrease. This decrease is gradual in the beginning. It will have significant drops at the Sotāpanna Anugāmi stage and then more drops at Sotāpanna, Sakadāgāmi, Anāgāmi stages.
- An Arahant does not have any mental stress. He/she may have physical suffering, but that also will end at death. No more physical or mental suffering!


## There is Value in Chanting Suttā

8. Of course, there is a value in even chanting a sutta. They have been formulated in a format to "calm down the mind," even if one did not understand the meaning; see, "Buddhist Chanting."

- It would be much better if one understood the basic message of the sutta.
- One could get to the Sotāpanna stage ONLY BY fully understanding the concepts discussed in a major sutta like the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta.


## But Some verses Need Detailed Explanations

9. A related key point is that upon attaining the Buddhahood, the Buddha wondered whether the humans will ever be able to understand the deep Dhamma he had just uncovered.

- This is stated on p. 37 of this book. The Buddha was really doubtful whether humans will comprehend his Dhamma, and Brahma Sahampati made an invitation to the Buddha, saying that many beings in the world can understand Buddha Dhamma. He would know because he had become an Anägāmi by listening to Dhamma by a previous Buddha.
- So, the point is that if one thinks one can make progress on the Path by just chanting suttā or even learning the word-by-word translations, one would be very much mistaken.
- In some cases, it can take a book to really do justice in explaining a single verse in some of the deep suttā!
- However, some long suttā, especially in the Dīgha Nikāya, can be translated word-by-word for the most part, since there may not be any deep concepts discussed there.


## Other Good Aspects of the Book

10. Another good aspect of the book is that it provides the background for delivering of some major sutt $\bar{a}$ or verses.

- For example, there is a detailed account (pp. 55-60) of how the Buddha had to perform even a few miracles to convince Uruvela Kassapa, his two brother, and 1000 of their followers before they agreed to listen to the Aditta Pariyaya Sutta or the Fire Sermon.
- So, we can see that it was not easy in those early days for the Buddha to even convince some of the ascetics who had their own beliefs of what Nibbāna was about.

11. The subsequent chapters provide a good chronological account of what happened until the Parinibbāna. One can get a sense of which major sutt $\bar{a}$ were delivered at around what time.

- There are accounts on the two chief disciples, and short accounts of other important personalities such as Anāthpiṇ̣ika, Angulimāla, Visākha, etc. Chapter 7 describes the formation of the order of bhikkhunis.
- Several encounters with the Māra Devaputta are scattered throughout the book.
- One paragraph on p. 109 is on how the Buddha visited the Tāvatimsa deva realm and delivered Abhidhamma. A summary was conveyed to Ven. Sariputta, who expanded it with the help of his students, to the form that we have today.
- There is a chapter on Devadatta, which describes events that are not found in suttā, how he attained (anāriya) jhānāa and iddhi (super-normal powers) powers, how he appeared on the lap of Prince Ajatasattu as a baby using his iddhi powers.
- It provides a good account of Devadatta's efforts to take the life of the Buddha, and how he lost all those super-normal powers and $j h a \bar{n} \bar{a}$ at the end.

12. There is a relatively long chapter on "The Doctrine", including the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path.

- Then, there is another relatively long chapter on the final year of the Buddha's life, including Parinibbāna.
- The final chapter is on the First Buddhist Council (Sangāyanā) that took place 3 months after the Parinibbāna of the Buddha.


## XII Bhāvanā (Meditation)

The numbered posts are to be read in that order. Even for those who are practicing Buddhists, I recommend starting at the Introduction (\#1), and going down the list of topics at least the first time.

- It would be a good idea to read the posts in the following subsection at some point, in order to get an idea about the reasoning behind this approach: "Essential Buddhism."
- 1. Introduction to Buddhist Meditation
- 2. The Basics in Meditation
- 3. The Second Level
$\circ$ 4. What do all these Different Meditation Techniques Mean?
- 5. Ariya Metta Bhāvanā (Loving Kindness Meditation)

○ 6. Ānāpānasati Bhāvanā (Introduction)

- 7. What is Änapāna?
- Is Ānāpānasati Breath Meditation?
- 8. The Basic Formal Ānāpānasati Meditation
- Possible Effects in Meditation - Kundalini Awakening
- 9. Key to Ānāpānasati - How to Change Habits and Character (Gati)
- Introduction to Character or Personality (Gati)
- A Broad View of the "Person" Trying to be a "Better Person"
- How Character (Gati) Leads to Bhava and Jāti
- How Habits are Formed and Broken - A Scientific View
- Karaniya Metta Sutta - Metta Bhavana
- 10. Attaining the Sotāpanna Stage via Removing Ditthasava
- 11. Magga Phala and Ariya Jhānā via Cultivation of Saptha Bojjanga
- 12. Key Factors to be Considered when "Meditating" for the Sotāpanna Stage
- 13. Kammattana (Recitations) for the Sotāpanna Stage


## Important Related Posts

- Anussati and Anupassanā - Being Mindful and Removing Defilements
- Myths about Meditation
- A Simple Way to Enhance Merits (Kusala) and Avoid Demerits (Akusala)
- Anicca - The Incessant Distress ("Pillana")
- Panca Indriya and Panca Bala - Five Faculties and Five Powers
- Possible Outcomes of Meditation - Samādhi, Jhāna, Magga Phala
- What is Samādhi? - Three Kinds of Mindfulness
- Getting to Samādhi via Formal Meditation Sessions
- Are you not getting expected results from meditation?
- How to Attain Samādhi via "Vipassana Pubbanga Samatha" Bhāvanā


### 12.1 1. Introduction to Buddhist Meditation

Revised September 7, 2019; March 16, 2021; June 20, 2022
The top 10 posts in this section describe the fundamentals of Buddhist meditation. The rest of the posts in this section discuss meditation subjects. They clarify unresolved questions and help gain samädhi. The first 11 posts should be followed in that order, at least initially.

## Rāgakkhayo Nibbānan, Dosakkhayo Nibbānan, Mohakkhayo Nibbānan

1. Buddhist meditation is based on gradually reducing greed, and anger/hate, developing wisdom by getting rid of wrong views, and following the Noble Eightfold Path.

- We can get an idea of what "Buddhist Meditation" is by looking at the Path described by the Buddha to achieve various stages of Nibbāna. Nibbāna is not an esoteric concept many people believe. That is why I like the synonyms "niveema" or "cooling down." Nibbāna can be EXPERIENCED even in the early stages.

2. The Buddha defined Nibbāna as "Rāgakkhayo Nibbānan, Dosakkhayo Nibbānan, Mohakkhayo Nibbānan." Nibbāna is the removal of greed, anger, and ignorance from one's mind. That gives the essence of how this "cooling down" results. [SN 38.1 A Question About Extinguishment Nibbānapañhāsutta "Friend, the ending of greed, hate, and delusion is called extinguishment." "Yo kho, $\bar{a} v u s o$, rāgakkhayo dosakkhayo mohakkhayo-idaì vuccati nibbānan"ti.]

- The more one gets rid of greed, hate, and ignorance, the more one experiences Nibbāna or "niveema" or "cooling down."
- One does not, and one cannot, get rid of greed, hate, and ignorance in a few days. It is a gradual process. One can experience the "cooling down" to the extent one can purify the mind. And there will be ups and downs, especially in the early days. Thus ONE MUST HAVE THE RESOLVE to stay on the Path.
- Some people stay with breath meditation for "stress reduction" and avoid anything to do with Nibbāna. They equate Nibbāna with extinction, but there is no need to worry; one has that mindset means that one is nowhere close to Nibbāna. I am not saying this in a derogatory way, but just as a fact. Until one experiences some "cooling down" and gets some idea about anicca, dukkha, and anatta, it is tough to get an idea of what Nibbāna is.

3. Meditation provides ways to achieve this "cooling down" for any person. There are three types of people who are interested in meditation:

- Many people want to practice some basic meditation that the Buddha advocated for achieving some "inner peace."
- Some are convinced about the rebirth process but are mainly concerned about getting a "good birth" in the next life.
- This site's main goal is to provide enough material for one to attain the first stage of Nibbāna, the Sotāpanna stage. After that, one does not need outside help to complete the rest of the journey. However, many people are either not ready to take that task yet. They have doubts about the existence of 31 realms, the process of rebirth, or Nibbāna.


## Nibbāna Is Cooling Down

4. In several posts, I have tried to explain what this "cooling down" is. You may want to read them. They vary from a basic description to more in-depth details. They all deal with reducing greed, hate, and ignorance from our minds.

- The words greed and hate are clear, but many do not understand what is meant by ignorance. The post, "What is Avijija (Ignorance)?" gives a bit deeper description. But since it is essential, I want to say a few words here about ignorance.
- The "traditional method" for achieving some "cooling down" or "calming sensation" is to do "breath meditation" or "kasiṇa meditation." As I questioned in several posts, how can greed, hate, or ignorance be removed via concentrating on one's breath or some kasina object? Such meditation techniques DO NOT remove ignorance and only SUPPRESS greed and hatred.

5. We need to start gradually reducing greed and hate from our minds; this is called "sila" (pronounced "seela") or moral living. Then one's mind becomes clear, and one starts feeling the nirāmisa sukha. Then it will become easier to grasp Dhamma concepts and get rid of avijjā.

- Buddha Dhamma is for the wise; it is not to be followed by blind faith but with understanding. One needs to learn and "see" Dhamma first. A sustained "Cooling down" cannot be attained via following a set procedure like watching the breath.
- One could go a long way (up to the Sotāpanna stage) just by learning Dhamma and comprehending the key concepts. When one grasps the key concepts, it dawns on one that it does not make sense to be too greedy. Or hate someone with a level of hatred that makes one's heart "heat up" to uncomfortable degrees.
- Thus through a better understanding of Dhamma (i.e., removing ignorance), one automatically "cools down." Removing ignorance via learning Dhamma leads automatically to reducing greed and hate.


## Correct World View is Critical

6. That is why "Samma Dittthi" or "Correct Vision" comes first in the Noble Eightfold Path. Actually "samm $\vec{a}$ " means "san" + "m $\vec{a} "$ or "removing defilements"; but for brevity, we will use the word "correct." But keep in mind that "sammā ditthi" means "removing defilements through correct vision." I cannot emphasize enough the importance of learning Dhamma. That is the first BIG step. Without understanding the message of the Buddha, how can one follow his Path?

- When one starts to understand the key Dhamma concepts, one regularly thinks about such ideas and how they should be kept in mind while going through daily chores. That is "samma sañkappa" or "correct concepts." That automatically leads to "samm $\bar{a} v \bar{a} c \bar{a} "$ (correct speech), "samm $\bar{a}$ kammanta" (correct action), and sammā ājīva (correct livelihood).
- When those five steps, one becomes attuned to correct mindfulness ("sammā sati"). Yes. There is "incorrect mindfulness" ("micchā sati," pronounced "michchā sathi") too, like when a master thief plans a robbery. One needs to be "engaged" or focused on accomplishing any task, either good or bad.

7. With cultivated "sammā sati," one will be able to "see" the consequences of any action very quickly. Then one can decide whether to go ahead with it (since only good can come out of that action) or to abandon it (because it is not beneficial for oneself or to others).

- When one sees the benefits of these steps (i.e., "cooling down"), one will be motivated to work harder on all these steps, i.e., one cultivates "sammā vāyāma" (correct effort).
- The culmination is "sammā samādhi" (correct calm state of mind). Yes. There is a "micchā samādhi" too. When that master thief is planning a big robbery, he gets into a kind of samādhi also. He feels a sense of calm too, but that will have terrible consequences down the road.
- The latter three develop at the same time. One could get into "sammā samādhi" just via "samm $\bar{a}$ diṭthi." When one listens attentively to a Dhamma talk or gets absorbed in reading about a key Dhamma concept, one could get into "samādhi." A jhānic state is a deeper samādhi state.


## Reading About Concepts Is Not Enough

8. That is why I recommend everyone to read these posts during quiet time. One will absorb more, and just by contemplating the material while reading, one could quickly get into samadhi. That is what meditation is all about. "Absorbing the good" will automatically force the "bad" out, and one gets into samādhi automatically; we will talk about this "ānāpāna" process in the following posts.

- It may get to the point where one can sit down and get into a jhāna within a minute or two. But not all can get into $j h \bar{a} n a$, and that is not necessary either. Any jhāna attained will be anāriya jhāna, until one attains the Anāgāmi stage. What is necessary is to get to samādhi or "calmed mind."
- I hope you will experience the LONG TERM benefits from the procedures we discuss in this post and the follow-up posts. Initially, it will be a bit slow. But if one sticks with it for a few months, one should see a change in oneself that is not merely temporary relief. For some, it will be faster.

9. In this life, we feel two kinds of suffering: bodily pains and aches and various diseases and mental distress (disappointments to depression).

- Bodily ailments take time to recover. But even those can be reduced by careful planning and being mindful too. If one engages in physical activity (ranging from walking to rigorous exercise) and be cognizant of what one eats, many such ailments will reduce over time.
- Mental suffering could have direct causes in greed, hate, and ignorance. While some are due to past kamma, most can be avoided or reduced by being mindful of what one thinks, speaks, and does. Any thought, speech, or bodily action arising from a greedy, hateful, or ignorant view will cause mental anguish sooner or later.
- The easiest way to determine whether any action is inappropriate is to contemplate the consequences. An action rooted in greed, hate, or ignorance can harm oneself or another being.


## Buddhist meditation Is The Noble Eightfold Path

10. Thus, Buddhist meditation is basically to cultivate the Noble Eightfold Path.

- By preventing killing, stealing, verbal abuse, etc., what we are effectively doing is to "put out existing fires" in our minds and prevent such "fiuture fires" from starting. That is "niveema" or "cooling down" or Nibbāna.
- We should also do things conducive to a calm mindset - associating with like-minded people, actively engaging in moral behavior that makes the heart joyful, etc.
- The most important thing is to learn Dhamma to "see" how all this will permanently liberate one's mind. Then the change will become "permanent".

11. When perfected, one will be doing meditation all day long while doing daily chores. That is what is stated as "āsevitāya, bhāvithāya, bahuleekathāya." That means, "associate and use what is good, and do that as much as possible."
[See, AN 8.1 Mettāsutta āsevitāay bhāvitāya bahulīkatāya
"Friends, the emancipation of heart's (cetovimutti) by loving-kindness (Metta) expected eight good results: associated, developed, and practiced frequently, made a habit of, made a basis of (practised thoroughly), has been implemented, acquainted with, and thoroughly undertaken.
"Mettāya, bhikkhave, cetovimuttiyā āsevitāya bhāvitāya bahulīkatāya yānīkatāya vatthukatāya anuṭ!hitāya paricitāya susamāraddhāya aṭthānisam̀sā pāṭikañkhā.
cetovimutti: [f.] emancipation of heart.
$\overline{\text { assevita }}:[\mathrm{pp}$. of āsevati] associated; practised; frequented.
bhāvita : [pp. of bhāveti] increased; cultivated; developed.
bahulīkata: [pp. of bahulikaroti] took up seriously; increased. (adj. ), practised frequently.
yānīkata : [adj. ] made a habit of, mastered.
vatthukata : [adj. ] made a basis of, practised thoroughly.
anutṭhita : a. [anuṭthahati's pp.] has been implemented, has been affected, has been experienced (to).
paricita : [pp. of paricināti] practised; attended; acquainted with; accumulated; accustomed.
susamāraddha: [pp. ] thoroughly undertaken.
$\bar{a} n i s a m i s a:[\mathrm{m}$.$] profit; merit; good result.$
pätikañkha: :[adj.] to be desire or expected.]

- In a formal meditation session, one does the same. It is best to read a post or two on a given Dhamma concept before (or during) the meditation session and then contemplate those ideas. It is important to compare those concepts with one's life experiences. Then things will become clear with time. For example, why it is unfruitful to "live life lavishly, especially if that involves hurting oneself or others."
- You will be surprised that this process itself will get you to samādhi, and even jhānā in the long term. But we will discuss some other variations too.
- As I have mentioned in several posts, one could even get to the Sotāpanna stage just by comprehending the key Dhamma concepts to some extent.


## Mind Is At The Forefront

12. Buddha Dhamma is all about the mind; Anything we say or do also starts with a thought. The Buddha said, "manopubbangama $\bar{a}$ dhamm $\bar{a} . . . "$ ", 'the mind takes precedence over everything else..".

- It should be clear from the above discussion that Buddha's meditation techniques are compatible with Nature's laws. Regardless of whether one has a religious background or is an atheist, one can follow those guidelines.
- One becomes a "Bhauddhaya"" or a "Buddhist" in his/her mind. If one understands some basic Dhamma concepts and lives by them, then one is automatically a Buddhist. When one gets started on the Path with a firm determination, Dhamma will guide one to be on the right path. ("Dhammo have rakkhati dhammacārim."')
- The foremost goal is to live a moral life without causing harm to oneself or others and to seek some "peace of mind" from the hectic modern life. That is our starting point.

13. I also recommend listening to the following discourse for anyone seriously considering Buddhist meditation (You may need to adjust the volume control on your computer):

## "The Hidden Suffering that We All Can Understand"

WebLink: The Hidden Suffering that We All Can Understand
That is in the post "Starting on the Path Even without Belief in Rebirth" in the "Living Dhamma Overview" subsection of the "Living Dhamma" section.

Next, " 2 . The Basics in Meditation", $\qquad$

### 12.2 2. The Basics in Meditation

Revised August 17, 2019; March 16, 2021; June 29, 2022
We discuss EIGHT elements of a firm foundation for Buddhist meditation. These are EIGHT steps to be followed at all times, not just during formal meditation.

The top 10 posts in this section describe the fundamentals of Buddhist meditation. The rest of the posts in this section discuss meditation subjects. They clarify unresolved questions and help gain samädhi. The first 11 posts should be followed in that order, at least initially.

1. Those who are doing breath meditation or "watching the stomach rise and fall" know that it is relatively easy for some to calm the mind compared to others. Some cannot even keep a calm mind for more than a few minutes; distractions start "popping up."

- This "popping up" is due to the five hindrances (pañca nīvaranáa) that I have described in "Key to Calming the Mind - The Five Hindrances.". These are the "residues" or "gunk" that we have deep inside our minds that start bubbling up to the surface when we sit down to meditate.

2. Let us take the simile of water well contaminated with all the rotten stuff fallen into it over many years; our minds have accumulated gunk over repeated births, not just in this life. When we are engaged in stressful day-to-day activities, those activities stir up the "gunk," and the mind gets clouded. It is like taking a long pole and stirring the well water; the "gunk" at the bottom comes up.

- The two "primary rotten things" we have are the first two on the list of the five hindrances: kāmacchanda (excessive greed) and vyāpāda (deep hate). Even though the word vyāpāda is commonly used, the correct Pāli word is byāpāda.
- Vicikicchā is the uncertainty about how to properly respond to external stimuli (sensory inputs.) The natural tendency is to attach to mind-pleasing stimuli and do whatever it takes to enjoy them. One does these because of the ignorance of anicca, dukkha, and anatta. Vicikicchā is sort of like a "favorite list" from the main ingredients of excessive greed and deep hate, the first two hindrances. Kankh $\overline{\boldsymbol{a}}$ vicikicch $\bar{a}$ is a worse form of vicikicch $\bar{a}$ manifested as having doubts about the Buddha's teachings (because they discourage such attachments.)
- Thina middha or inability to concentrate on Dhamma concepts; one feels lethargic when reading/listening to Dhamma. That is because one does not understand the basic concepts of Buddha Dhamma. An "unsettled" or "excited" mind (uddhacca-kukkucca) is also personal and arises when one feels "superior" or "inferior" compared to others.
- The five hindrances are discussed in "Key to Calming the Mind - The Five Hindrances."

3. When we engage in day-to-day activities, we see, hear, smell, taste, touch, and also think about all sorts of things. If such things cause kāmacchanda or vyāpāda to arise, then some combination of five hindrances can burden our minds. All these are "external stirrers" that make our minds look like whirlpools. All these gang up to get the mind to stress out and "heat up." That is the tension that we feel on a busy day. We need to "cool down"; we need "niveema."

- One way to "cool down" is to turn off those external stirrers temporarily. Some people do this in a "breath meditation" session: One goes to a quiet place and closes their eyes; this will turn off mainly the five physical senses (i.e., we do not see, hear, smell, taste, or touch). That helps to calm the mind of some people, especially if they have practiced it.
- But it is not possible to turn off the sixth one, the mind itself. The mind likes to move around and not to be focused. Many people try to fix their minds on one object, say the breath or the rising of the stomach. That provides only a temporary solution. See, " 8 . The Basic Formal Ānāpānasati Meditation."
- Some people try to "turn off the mind" or try to stop thoughts from arising. That is DANGEROUS. We need to PURIFY the mind, not turn it off. The Buddha had a perfectly pure but very active mind. When one follows the Path, one's mind will become sharper, not inactive.


## The "Big Eight" to Avoid

4. However, if our minds have too much gunk (defilements), then they can disturb/stress our minds even without the aid of "a stirrer." It is like an abandoned old well. It has dirty water, and one needs to REMOVE the existing dirty water first.

- Similarly, if one is engaged in immoral behavior, then the mind is like a well that has dirty and turbulent water. That is due to the BIG EIGHT defilements: killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, gossiping, slandering, harsh speech, and constantly thinking about "mind-made" or "planned" sensual or immoral activities.
- Good examples of the last one: "making up sexual activities" or "how to retaliate to an enemy." it is VERY important to stay from silently engaging in generating angry/lustful thoughts. Many people tend to do that because they think "I am not hurting anyone." But that is not true. You are hurting yourself! A deeper analysis of this issue in "Correct Meaning of Vacī Sanikhāra."

5. The mind calms down (or gets to samädhi) when one lives a moral life (sīla.) Stopping the BIG EIGHT is the start of a moral life (sila.) With that calmed mind (samādhi), one can comprehend deeper aspects of Buddha Dhamma and cultivate wisdom (paññā.) That is the initial order: sīla, samādhi, paññ̄ See, "Sila, Samādhi, Pañ̃ñā to Paññā, Sila, Samādhi."

- However, one must take a gradual approach: "Is It Necessary for a Buddhist to Eliminate Sensual Desires?".
- Just focusing the mind on one object, like the breath, cannot remove those defilements. It can only suppress them temporarily. That is the fundamental problem with "breath meditation."


## 6. Thus, it would be hard to achieve calmness even with breath meditation if one is actively engaged in the BIG EIGHT.

- What we discussed above is a simple version of Kāyānupassanā, the first step in Satipaṭthāna; see, "Satipatthāna - Introduction."
- If one is habitually engaged in one or more of those eight activities, the first thing to do is try to get rid of them. First, start with the worst habit and proceed gradually until all are bad habits removed. It is like emptying the well of the dirty water.
- That is a BIG STEP. It may take a little while, depending on how much "gunk" is there. But one thing is not to rush out and try to do much. That could be stressfil too. The best thing to do is abstain from one or two big ones and experience the "cooling down" that results from it.
- Vain talk is a habit that should be gotten rid of early. It does not do any good for oneself or others. One will inevitably say something inappropriate (possibly slandering and lying too, which are also in the BIG EIGHT) when one gets carried away during the vain talk. Getting rid of it will help with being able to calm the mind quickly.
- The mind needs to see the benefits of doing something before it gets on board. That is why, initially, it may take a firm determination to stick with the plan.
- It is important NOT to get used to "breath meditation." If you are used to it, I urge you to gradually stop and try the procedures described here at least for a couple of months. We want LONG TERM results. Many people get addicted to "breath meditation" to get temporary relief. THAT IS A MISTAKE.

7. Getting rid of bad old habits and installing new good habits is a KEY in the meditation practice; we will talk about habits ("gati," which become "āsavas" over time) in more detail in the next section. Here are some basic ideas that would be helpful:

- To form a new habit takes some effort initially. I tried it out by making a new habit of peeling oranges with my left hand (I am right-handed). Initially, it was hard, and the main problem was that I kept forgetting to use my left hand. I had to set the alarm to remind myself first. But after a few days, I started
remembering, and after a week or two, the new habit was working. Now I automatically do it, and now it is a bit strange to try to peel oranges with the right hand!
- When we make a new habit, a set of neurons in the brain start to wire together for that task; the more we do it, the stronger the neural connections become. That is what happens when we learn to ride a bike, drive a car, or zillions of other things that we do without even thinking about it; see, "Truine Brain: How the Mind Rewires the Brain via Meditation/Habits" and "How Habits are Formed and Broken - A Scientific View."
- In breaking a habit, one needs to do the reverse. When one starts to smoke less and less, the neural connections for that task will become weaker. After a while, it will become more natural NOT TO smoke. The brain will stop giving that signal. So it is critical to have the determination to hold off the urge in the beginning. Try to replace that activity with something else at that time. One can remove any bad habit that way. It is the same principle.

8. The primary formal meditation technique is in the next section. Those who need time to get rid of the BIG EIGHT can also monitor the progress by doing such formal meditation sessions. It is essential to realize that all defilements (bad habits) are removed only at the Arahant stage. So, there is no point in getting discouraged if it takes time to stop bad habits; the key is to make progress and not go backward.

- Sometimes when one starts on the Ariya Bhāvanā, things may look worse before getting better. It is like trying to cool a hot iron by sprinkling water on it when all that smoke comes out and may appear to be getting worse. But one needs to be persistent. One needs to keep in mind that uncountable beings have attained "cooling down" by having faith in the Buddha.

Next, "3. The Second Level - Key to Purify the Mind", $\qquad$

## 3. The Second Level - Key to Purify the Mind

The top 10 posts in this section describe the fundamentals of Buddhist meditation. The rest of the posts in this section discuss meditation subjects. They clarify unresolved questions and help gain samädhi. The first 11 posts should be followed in that order, at least initially.

1. Let us go back to the example of the abandoned well. Now we have done a decent job of cleaning the dirty water that had been there for a long time, i.e., we have reduced at least some of the main immoral acts, the BIG EIGHT.

- Now we need to make sure that things do not fall into the well while we try to make the water even more cleaner; if there is no barrier around it, when it rains mud water can fall into the well. As with the well, we need to make sure that we keep those BIG EIGHT out of our minds as much as possible. This is 'sīla" (pronounced "seela") or moral living.

2. In order to make sure that we will not drift back to the old ways, we need to cultivate moral mindfulness ("sati"): we need to be on the "lookout" for any temptations to break the BIG EIGHT. But there is a catch that most people do not comprehend: bad habits and cravings or "gati/āsavas" that we have are not only from this life, but possibly from previous lives as well.
3. Again, we can use the old water well as an example: When we drained the water out of the well, the well starts filling up with water from underground fresh water oozing through cracks (from underground aquifers) which is pure.

- However, if there is a rotten stuff at the bottom of the well that had been there for a long time, then that pure water gets contaminated. Our bad habits (gathi/āsavas) are like the dirt at the bottom of the well.

4. The water in the above well will now look relatively more clear if it is undisturbed, i.e, when we let the water to settle down. This is effectively what we do in breath meditation or any such samatha meditation. When someone is abstaining from the BIG EIGHT, it is relatively easy to calm the mind by going to a quiet place, closing the eyes, and then focusing one object, say the breath.

- Such meditations are anāriya meditations; they provide only temporary relief. One could also get into anāriya jhānā this way, with lots of practice, especially if one could live a secluded life. Ancient yogis who lived moral lives and stayed away from other humans in forests could attain higher $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$.
- What happens here is that the five hindrances are kept SUPPRESSED. It is like the rotten stuff kept undisturbed at the bottom of the well.
- If one takes a long pole and stir the well, those contaminants start coming up.

5. In the same way, when someone comes out of the quiet place, one gets "disturbed" with external sense stimuli (i.e., when a particularly strong sense object is presented). For someone with a lot of lust, it could be a picture of an attractive person. If someone has a lot of hate towards another, then hateful thoughts can come to the surface just by someone mentioning that person's name.

- This "bubbling up of bad stuff to the surface" is called "anusaya." To stop such anusaya, those gathi/āsava need to be removed (gradually).
- These terms are explained in, "Gathi (Gati), Anusaya, and Āsava."
- This is why people who have a very calm and peaceful experience at a meditation resort come back to regular hectic life and see that experience fade away gradually. That is because it WAS a temporary solution. What we have in mind here is a more permanent solution. But this approach takes a bit more time.

6. So, how do we really clean the well? It is not enough to let the gunk to sink back to the bottom; we need to remove the gunk that has accumulated at the bottom of the well. There could even be toxic things down there. Thus it takes an effort to remove all those. Once those are removed, there is nothing down there that
can contaminate the fresh water coming out. When the well fills up we only need to make sure that things do not fall back in to contaminate the well.

- Similarly, what we need to do with our minds is to remove the bad habits (gathi/āsavas) that have been accumulated over countless past lives and reinforced in this life. If we have hate in our minds, that hate can triggered easily. This is why some people are prone to "flare-ups" than others. If we have extreme greed, we can be tempted easily to act immorally for sense satisfaction through any of the six senses.
- Even though the main ones are greed and hate, there are uncountable number of combinations (when included with ignorance). That is why we see uncountable number of habits/personalities/tendencies in different people. No two persons are alike, even identical twins.

7. Looking at the five hindrances, the main culprits are of course, greed, hate, and vicikicch $\bar{a}$ (the particular set of things one has a liking for, which can be things liked or disliked). The other two help bring out these: the "lazy mind" will not take any effort to suppress bad thoughts; the "dispersed mind" is too dispersed to be focused, to think clearly. All these are intimately connected to the habits (gati/āsavas).

- By the way, if one can remove all the gathi/āsavas, that is when one attains Nibbāna. The Buddha realized the "āsavakkhaya nana" just before attaining the Buddhahood. Āsavakkhaya is "āsava"+"khaya" or removing the temptations; "khaya" is the getting rid of "san"; see, "What is "San"? - Meaning of Sansāra (or Samisāra)."
- Here we are trying to remove some easily removable less potent habits, and at least try to reduce the big ones. The good news is that we can EXPERIENCE the relief or "cooling down" or "niveema" each time we either remove a small bad habit or lessen the severity of bigger ones. We don't have to remove ALL bad habits/cravings in order to experience the "cooling down".

8. After making a commitment to abstain from the BIG EIGHT as much as possible, we need to sort out our bad habits.

- Make a list with little things on the top and more serious things towards the bottom. We all have greed and hate; those are the "big ones"; what we need to do here is try to remove easily identifiable smaller bad habits; for example, explosive temper, stinginess, seeking too much sense pleasures (i.e., being addicted to alcohol, drugs, even excess eating).
- It is important to get rid of the ones at the top (the easy ones), and that will provide incentive to continue. If one tries to tackle the big ones straight away, one might get discouraged and give up the whole effort.

9. Of course, focusing on the BIG EIGHT is very important. If one is engaging in killing animals for pleasure (eg., fishing), then that needs to be stopped if one is serious about meditation. If one is making a living by stealing from others, that needs to be stopped. If one is engaged in sexual activities with other married people, that needs to be stopped, etc.

- Those are common sense things too. If one looks at one's actions and see that it can cause harm for oneself AND/OR others, then one needs to seriously start thinking ways to initially reduce and eventually to stop such actions.

10. There are several posts on habits and gati/āsavas; you may want to find and read them. And contemplate on those ideas. An English discourse on this topic is given in the post, "How Are Gati and Kilesa Incorporated into Thoughts?."

- As I emphasized at the beginning, one has to make an effort; even the Buddha could only show the way. We need to examine what he suggested, think through to make sure they make sense. Then the mind gets on-board, especially when it starts seeing the benefits, even small benefits.
- The key is to get started; when one accomplishes even a small goal that provides the fuel to go further.

11. One could and should use the "four bases of mental power (satara iddhipāda)" in accomplishing these goals. Tackle one goal at a time. As you accomplish more and more goals, the iddhipāda (chanda, citta,
viriya, vīmaimsā) will grow as well. These are the critical factors that the yogis used to cultivate mundane (anāriya) jhānā and gain extraordinary mental powers too.

- Chanda is the desire to achieve the goal. Citta is the determination one makes and the viriya is the effort that one puts in to get it done. Vīmainsā is careful examination of the benefits of breaking the habit and the possible repercussions of keeping the habit. As the four iddhipāda grow (with accomplishment of more and more goals), the vimaims $\bar{a}$ faculty grows in particular; this is a facet of wisdom (pañña $\bar{a}$.

12. In trying to remove any bad habit, it is essential to look at the negative repercussions or bad consequences (called ādeenava or ādinava) from that activity. Let us take the bad habit of getting into a rage as an example:

- Think about the unpleasant feeling of getting "heated up" in a moment of rage. Of course, at the moment of rage one may actually enjoy it: In extreme cases, this is why there are people dead with 30-40 stab wounds, when all it takes to kill a person a couple of stabs; such is the danger of getting into a rage. One feels bad about it only later, and then it is too late.
- Even worse are the samisāric consequences: If rage becomes a dominant characteristic of one's personality, it is possible that this is what will be grasped at the moment of death and a birth of a "similar kind" could result, i.e., birth in a burning hell (this is the principle of Paticca Samuppāda: "pati+ichcha" leading to "sama + uppada").

13. Let us take a few examples to see how some bad habits can be tackled:

- Many people have bad temper (which could develop into hate) which is a result of $v y \bar{a} p \bar{a} d a$. Yes. This is a sansāric habit, and unlike many other habits, this one is hard to control when triggered. This is one that needs to be dealt with when the anger is absent. The best is do the Mett $\bar{a} B h \bar{a} v a n \bar{a}$. We will use the Ariya Mettā Bhāvanā later. For now, one could close the eyes at a quite time, and sincerely say, "May all beings be free of suffering, free of ailments, free of anger, and be happy". If you have a particular person that you are not in good terms, repeat with his/her name. We cannot remove the anger in the mind of that person. We can only remove the anger within ourselves. Do this a couple of times a day and if you do it sincerely it will give results (for YOU to have a peace of mind).
- If you are a person with cravings for sense pleasures (I do not mean necessities), your mind is likely to be frequently seeking such things. Try to cut down on such activities, and also try to do more giving. Donate to charities, give a few dollars to a homeless person. All these will make you feel better; this is called pīti ("preethi" in Sinhala or joy).
- Also, when you simplify your life, the burden on your mind will be less, and you will get a different kind of joy than that from sense pleasures; this is "niveema" or "cool down," or nirāmisa sukha; see, "Nirāmisa Sukha."
- Alcohol or cigarette addiction is another example. Instead of trying to stop such a habit "cold turkey," it is better to cut down gradually. But one MUST have the discipline (the importance of cultivating the iddhipāda comes here) to stick to the plan, and not go back. It also helps to find a replacement activity at that time (taking a less potent drink or chewing a gum, etc). One of the four iddhipāda that is essential here is citta or determination.

14. Now we are at a point where I can introduce the real ānāpānasati bhāvanā that was described by the Buddha.

Next, " 4 . What do all these Different Meditation Techniques Mean?",

## 4. What do all these Different Meditation Techniques Mean?

## Revised April 11, 2020; September 4, 2022

The top 10 posts in this section describe the fundamentals of Buddhist meditation. The rest of the posts in this section discuss meditation subjects. They clarify unresolved questions and help to gain samādhi. The first 11 posts should be followed in that order, at least initially.

1. Buddha Dhamma is focused on purifying the mind of greed, hatred, and ignorance. As the mind is purified, it gains nirāmisa sukha which can be experienced at various levels from the beginning. If one can "stick to" this program for a couple of months, one can look back and see the change in oneself. One should have a more peaceful, calm mind that has "cooled down".

- A mind is impure because it attaches to "things in this world" with the misconception that things in this world (31 realms) can be maintained to one's satisfaction, i.e., with the perception of nicca. Thus the prevailing mindset is that happiness (sukha) should be attained by employing any means. And once attained it can be maintained and thus one is in total control of one's affairs (atta).
- These three misconceptions of nicca, sukha, and atta are the three culprits that keep us bound to "this world" of 31 realms, i.e., the endless rebirth process or samisāra. The Buddha showed that the actual reality of "this world" is described by the three characteristics of anicca, dukkha, and anatta: No matter how hard we try, we cannot maintain things to our satisfaction in the long term (anicca). Thus we get distraught (dukkha), and thus we are not in control and become helpless when born in bad realms like the animal realm (anatta).
- More details in the first discourse at, "Tilakkhana - English Discourses."

2. I am NOT saying that one should not work hard to get a good education and job. That MUST be done. It is impossible to have peace of mind if one is hungry and homeless. But we also need to be aware of the FACT that all mundane achievements are temporary. Even if we get to live this life without a major catastrophe, we have to leave all behind when we die.

- One acts with greed, hate, and ignorance and makes the mind impure because of the wrong perceptions of nicca, sukha, and atta. Then one is capable of immoral acts to get some temporary satisfaction because the bad consequences of such actions may not be clear. However, when one truly understands the reality (i.e., anicca, dukkha, anatta,) such immoral actions become unlikely.
- For that stage to be reached, one has to train one's mind to "take in the good" and "reject the bad". For that, a change in one's habits (with Ānāpānasati meditation) is necessary.

The following is a logical sequence for meditation:
3. First, one must sort out what is good and bad and the consequences of good and bad actions. This is why the vision, Sammā Diț̣thi, comes first in the Noble Eightfold Path. To get to Sammā Diț̣hi, one needs to "sort out the good from the bad."

- Vipassanā (vi+passa means "to see clearly" and discard. Here, where "vi" means "special" and "passa" is to "see." Vidassana (vi+dassana means sort out by clear vision, whereas "dassana" means the vision) means the same thing. Understanding Buddha Dhamma and acquiring the vision are needed to sort out the "good" from the "bad".
- I cannot emphasize enough the importance of vipassanā (vidassana) or insight meditation. Without the "correct" vision, one could strive for the whole life and not get anywhere: one has to understand the true nature of this world (anicca, dukkha, anatta), the Four Noble Truths, and the Noble Eightfold Path. It is not memorization, but understanding that counts.

4. A huge amount of defilements are removed from one's mind with this insight meditation. The key is to understand the "anicca nature of this world". It is the first type of meditation that is needed. One can attain the Sotāpanna stage without doing any other types of meditation discussed below.

The Buddha once took a bit of soil to a fingertip and told the bhikkhus that, "if the amount of defilements a Sotāpanna needs to get rid of is comparable to this amount of soil, then a normal human being has to get rid of an equivalent to the soil in the whole Earth".

- That is not a misprint or an exaggeration. A Sotāpanna is bound to attain Nibbāna within a maximum of seven "bhava." A normal human being could be trapped in the rebirth process for trillions of years to come. We have been through the rebirth process for countless trillions; see "Infinity -How Big is It?".
- Many say, "I do like my life. Why would I not want to be reborn?". The problem is, that future rebirths may not be in the human realm. We have no idea what we have done in our past lives. Thus even if we live a perfectly moral life, there are no guarantees that we will get a good rebirth. This is why understanding kamma, rebirth, etc via insight meditation is important.

5. How does one do insight meditation? Listening to discourses and reading Dhamma concepts are the two main forms of getting the correct information. Then one could contemplate those concepts in sitting meditation. But reading up on Dhamma concepts during a quiet time is meditation; also see, "How to Cultivate the Anicca Sañña" and the follow-up post.

- Once some understanding is reached via vipassana (vidassana) bhāvana or insight meditation, one can start the next two key steps. Mettā bhāvanā and various forms of anupassanā bhāvanā.
- Once one understands the true status of affairs in the wider world of 31 realms, one can really comprehend the amount of suffering that has been hidden. With that understanding, one can engage in the Ariya mett $\bar{a} b h \bar{a} v a n \bar{a}$, an excellent way to pay back our old debts to other beings. This is the second way to purify our minds too.
- I hope I have conveyed the idea that the bulk of work can be done with just insight meditation, contemplating "anicca, dukkha, anatta." However, doing the other two types of bhāvanā, i.e., mett $\bar{a}$ $b h \bar{a} v a n a \bar{a}$ and $\bar{a} n \bar{a} p \bar{a} n a s a t i$, can be helpful for insight meditation too.

6. The last and third way to purify the mind is via anupassana. Anupassana means "discard according to the principles learned" ("anu" means according to, and "passana" means to "see." Another meaning of "anu" is defilements, which is "to be able to see one's defilements"). Anupassanā can take various forms.

- Ānāpānasati bhāvanā is the foundation. Once "ana" and "pana" are sorted out by vipassana (vidassana), one needs to engage in $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p a \overline{n a s a t i}$ all the time. This means one needs to be mindful of what one is about to do and ensure it is the "right thing to do".
- When one starts understanding anicca, dukkha, and anatta, one can start doing the aniccānupassana $\bar{a}$, dukkhānupassanā, and anattānupassanā, and four more related "anupassanā". I will elaborate on this later.
- Satipațthāna bhāvanā (with kāyānupassanā, vedanānupassanā, cittānupassanā, and dhammānupassanā) includes all the bhāvanā techniques that we have discussed so far. It is THE ultimate encompassing everything needed to attain stress relief. It can take one to Arahanthood. $\bar{A} n a \bar{p} \bar{n} n a s a t i$ (not breath meditation) is essentially the same as Satipatṭhana, and that is the first step to attaining the Sotāpanna stage. See "Elephant in the Room 3 - Ānāpānasati."

7. Thus one could make things simpler by just doing insight meditation, $\overline{\text { An}} \bar{a} p \bar{p} n a s a t i$, and the mett $\bar{a}$ bhāvana $\bar{a}$. That is all one needs to do to have a "better state of mind" or even to become a Sotāpanna.
8. The problem with meditation techniques taught even in Theravāda schools these days is the following. They are either breath meditation or chantings. How can one remove defilements by watching the breath? Even though it can calm the mind, there are no long-term benefits. Watching the breath CANNOT reduce defilements from the mind.

- Another popular technique is just to contemplate impermanence. They keep repeating, "my body is impermanent; it is subjected to decay and death." Has anyone achieved any progress doing that for even
twenty, or thirty years? A Buddha does not need to tell us that. All people, belonging to any religion, know impermanence is a fact of life!
- Yet another popular "chanting" is to contemplate the "foulness of the body". That is not what the Buddha meant by the "patikula manasikāra bhāvanā." Again, everyone knows that our bodies are subject to decay and death; see "Mahā Satipatthāna Sutta."

Next, "5. Ariya Mettā Bhāvanā (Loving Kindness Meditation)",

## 5. Ariya Mettā Bhāvanā (Loving Kindness Meditation)

## Revised February 11, 2020

The top 10 posts in this section describe the fundamentals of Buddhist meditation. The rest of the posts in this section are on possible meditation subjects. They can be used to clarify unresolved questions, and to get to samādhi. The first 11 posts should be followed in that order, at least initially.

## Introduction

1. We all have acquired innumerable "bad kamma vipāka" in this cycle of rebirths (samisāra) that has no beginning. There is a very simple recipe for stopping many of such "bad kamma vipāka" from coming to fruition by "wearing out" and ultimately removing the "kamma seeds" (kamma bïja) associated with them.

- We acquire a bad "kamma seed" when we do something wrong to a living being, and we become indebted to that being. Just like we can become "debt-free" by paying off debts, we can pay off that debt. The problem is that we have become indebted to innumerable beings in previous rebirths. In the Mettāsahagata Sutta (SN46.54) and other suttā, the Buddha has explained how much of this debt can be paid off by doing the Ariya metta bhāvanā and also by transferring merits to "all beings" when we do a good deed; see, "Transfer of Merits (Pattidana) - How Does it Happen?."
- Here we focus on the Ariya Mettā Bhāvanā. First some background material to clarify what this means. Also see, "Karaniya Mettā Sutts - Mettā Bhāvanā."


## Mundane Mettā Bhāvanā

2. The standard or mundane Mettā bhāvana (loving kindness meditation) goes something like, 'May myself and all beings be free of suffering, healthy, happy, and be free of all suffering", or some similar (longer) passages.

- Any type of such meditation is of course good. It makes your own mind calm down, and makes you think about the (mundane) welfare of the other beings.


## Ariya Mettā Bhāvanā

3. However, the Ariya Mettt $\bar{a} B h \bar{a} v a n \bar{a}$ has a much more deeper meaning. It is done with at least some idea of the complexity of "this world" with 31 realms and the status of the beings in those realms. In order to cultivate true compassion and loving-kindness one NEEDS TO FEEL the possible suffering in all those realms; see, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma":

- The beings in the lowest four realms (apāyā) undergo unimaginable suffering, both physical and mental.
- In the lowest five realms (the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$ and the human realm), beings have physical bodies that are subject to sicknesses, body aches, and getting old before dying.
- The sixth through eleventh realms are that of the devas. They have spontaneous births with fully formed (but less dense) bodies that are not subjected to sickness, aches and pains. There are no visible signs of old age until close to death. But they also have all five physical senses just like the lower five realms. But their physical bodies are much more dense, "Body Types in 31 Realms - Important of Manomaya Kāya."
- The higher 20 realms that include rūpa loka and arūpa loka have even less dense bodies than the devas, and do not have the physical sense faculties for taste, smell, and body touch. Thus any suffering they have is all mental, and not as intense as in the lower realms.


## The Difference With the Sotāpanna stage

4. Therefore, no living being is free of FUTURE suffering in any of the 31 realms, because unless the Sotāpanna stage of Nibbāna has been attained, even the beings in the highest realm can end up even in the apāy $\bar{a}$ (lowest four realms) in future rebirths.

- And the only way to attain the Sotāpanna stage of Nibbāna is by comprehending the Three Characteristics of this world of 31 realms: anicca, dukkha, anatta.
- The first level of understanding of anicca, dukkha, anatta leads to the Sotāpanna stage; when one attains the Sotāpanna stage, one becomes free from the ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$ FOREVER. This happens via the inability of the mind of a Sotāpanna to generate certain citt $\bar{a}$ with "apāyagām $\vec{\imath}$ " kammic power; see, "Akusala Citta - How a Sotāpanna avoids Apayagami Citta" and "Conditions for the Four Stages of Nibbāna".


## Higher Stages of Magga Phala

5. When the next stage of Nibbāna (Sakadāgāmī stage) is attained, one becomes free of births in the lower five realms where suffering due to physical ailments and diseases are possible. Thus one PERMANENTLY becomes "healthy" by attaining the Sakadāgāmī stage.

- At the Anāgāmī stage, one removes more akusala citta (and other fulfill other conditions; see, "Conditions for the Four Stages of Nibbāna"), and will never be born again in kāma loka including the deva realm. Thus one becomes PERMANENTLY free of any physical suffering.
- Then at the Arahant stage, all defilements are removed from the mind, and one will never be reborn in any of the 31 realms. The mind truly becomes free and one attains permanent nirāmisa sukha; see, "Three Kinds of Happiness - What is nirāmisa sukha?" and other posts on nirāmisa sukha.
- As you can see, the Ariya Mett $\bar{a} B h \bar{a} v a n \bar{a}$ is similar in structure to the conventional one, but the words have deeper meanings. For example, by saying "be healthy" now it is meant to be healthy forever. That means not to be born ever with a body that is subject to diseases and old age.


## Elements of the Ariya Mettā Bhāvanā

## 6. Now we can see how the Ariya Mett $\bar{a} B h \bar{a} v a n \bar{a}$ is formulated:

- "May myself and all living beings attain the Sotāpanna stage and be free from suffering in the apāyā forever"
'May myself and all living beings attain the Sakadāgāmī stage and be healthy forever".
'May myself and all living beings attain the Anāgāmī stage and be content (attain peaceful happiness) forever".
'May myself and all living beings attain the Arahant stage and be free from all suffering and attain the full Nibbānic bliss".
- All four Brahma Vihāra (mettā, karuṇā, muditā, upekkhā) cultivate with this bhāvanā.
- Off course, the Bhāvanā becomes increasingly effective as one starts to comprehend Tilakkhaṇa better.


## Just Chanting Is Not Enough

7. What matters is not the particular set of word used, but what is felt in one's heart. In order to do that one needs to truly comprehend that there is REAL SUFFERING in this world, not only at the human or animal realms but in many other realms.

- The impact of the Mettt $\bar{a} B \bar{a} v a n \bar{a}$ increases gradually with an increased understanding of anicca, dukkha, anatta, because then one realizes the dangers and suffering that all living beings face in future lives.
- The potential of the Metta $\operatorname{Bh} \bar{a} v a n \bar{a}$ is enormous. The Buddha said one could attain the Anāgām $\bar{c}$ stage by correctly doing the Mett $\bar{a} B h \bar{a} v a n \bar{a}$. But that entails understanding anicca, dukkha, anatta, i.e., attaining the Sotāpanna stage or at least embark on the path to Sotāpanna stage.
- However, even before attaining the Sotāpanna stage, one could reap many benefits by doing this correct Ariya Mettā Bhāvanā; see, "Kamma, Debt, and Meditation."


## Essential of Meditation

8. It is best to do Ariya Mettā Bhāvanā and Vipassanā Bhāvanā (meditation on anicca, dukkha, anatta and other dhamma concepts) in a sitting meditation session every day; see, " 4 . What do all these Different Meditation Techniques Mean?."

- Initially, 10-15 minutes would be good for formal meditation. That time will automatically increase as the nirāmisa sukha sets in one starts seeing the benefits. Later on, one could stay in meditation for hours.
- Of course, Ānāpānasati needs to be practiced the whole day. Ānāpānasati means being aware of what is "taken in" ( $\bar{n} n a$ ) and what is "discarded" ( $\bar{p} \bar{a} n a$.) See, "7. What is Ānāpāna?" and other related posts in the meditation section.
- Listening to discourses and reading about Dhamma are also forms of meditation. That should be done during quiet times so the key concepts can be absorbed.


## Results Will Grow With Better Understanding

9. The Ariya Mett $\bar{a} B h \bar{a} v a n \bar{a}$ is one of the most POTENT tools that we have. It is a simple concept, but the main difficulty is with the "Ariya" part. One needs to comprehend anicca, dukkha, anatta for the bhāvan $\bar{a}$ to be fully effective.

- Still, even the mundane version stated in \#2 above is a good start. As one follows the Path and understands the concepts better (not the book knowledge), the javana power in one's thoughts become strong, and the bhāvanā becomes stronger and more effective.
- In the Abhidhamma language, the most potent kusala citta is the "somanassa sahagata ñāna sampayutta asañkhārika citta," i.e., the "thought that arises with joy and wisdom automatically". This thought also gets stronger with increasing wisdom and gets stronger as one gets to Sotäpanna magga, Sotāpanna phala, etc and optimum only at the Arahant stage.
- Yet even when one is following the mundane eightfold path, this citta is there, at a lower strength. One needs to be cultivate it. See, "Buddha Dhamma - In a Chart," and "What is Unique in Buddha Dhamma."

Next, " $\underline{6}$. Ānāpānasati Bhāvanā (Introduction)", ........

## 6. Ānāpānasati Bhāvanā (Introduction)

## Revised July 22, 2020

The top 10 posts in this section describe the fundamentals of Buddhist meditation. The rest of the posts in this section discuss meditation subjects. They clarify unresolved questions and help gain samädhi. The first 11 posts should be followed in that order, at least initially.

1. I hope that several key points are clear from the discussion in the post, " 3 . The Second Level - Key to Purify the Mind":

- Bad habits (gati/āsava) are associated with one more immoral or unworthy acts, speech, or thoughts. We need to discard those.
- To counter the bad habits, one needs to cultivate good habits. For this, we need to improve moral behavior by engaging in ethical activities that bring joy to the heart.
- AND we need to do this all the time; we cannot let bad habits come back, which means we need to be on the lookout for any lapses in our practice. And we need to be on the lookout for opportunities to do moral acts that are beneficial for oneself and others.

2. In a general sense the Päli word $\bar{a} n \bar{a} p \bar{a} n a$, "āna" includes anything that needs to "taken in" for the betterment of life, and "āpana" the opposite. For example, we should eat only foods that are good for the body and stay away from or discard bad foods.

- Nowadays, "āna" is taken to be "breathe in" and "āpana" is assumed to be "breathe out." Now, "sati" means mindfulness, and thus, the word "ānāpānasati" interpreted as "mindfully breathing in and mindfully breathing out." That is the mundane (or "padaparama") interpretation of "ānapāna."
- Buddha meant something deeper that would help cleanse the mind.

3. The Buddha described bhāvanā as follows: "āsevitāya, bhāvitāya, bahuleekathāya,..." or "keep close association, use often, and use all the time (what is good)......" When one is making an effort to form a new habit, one should be thinking about it and doing things to support that whenever possible. Trying to do it in a formal meditation session will not be enough.

- We discussed the current scientific explanation of how repeated acts help form habits by strengthening a set of neural connections in the brain. See, "Truine Brain: How the Mind Rewires the Brain via Meditation/Habits." The same thing works to break bad habits by NOT doing it whenever that comes to the mind. Then existing neural connections will get weaker.
- What is to contemplate: To be mindful to "take in good things (kusala or moral things), and to "discard bad things (akusala or immoral things)." That is the real meaning of ānāpānasati bhāvanā.

4. Now, with all the discussion we have had up to this point, how can just a process of "breathing in" and 'breathing out" mindfully GET RID OF either the bad habits (gati/ās $\bar{a} v \bar{a})$ or the five hindrances?

- Of course, that is not possible.
- But it CAN do one thing, as we mentioned before. If we sit in a quiet place with the eyes closed (i.e., turn off the five physical senses in effect), AND fix the mind on the breath, we can get the five hindrances to settle down and not come up (assuming that we are staying away from committing the BIG EIGHT immoral acts).
- However, this calming down or getting to Samatha is a TEMPORARY solution. The moment we come back to the real world with all its distractions and temptations, those habits take over.

5. The breath meditation needs to be used appropriately, with the understanding that it can provide only temporary relief. This breath meditation is the same meditation that was used by the Hindu yogis to attain mundane (Anāriya) jhānā even before the Buddha.

- Since the time Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga was accepted as the basis of Theravāda Dhamma (in the fifth century CE), this "literal interpretation" of the ānāpānasati has been used.
- The real ānāpānasati bhāvanā is not described in the Visuddhimagga and is not described in any Mahāyāna or even Theravāda texts today. One needs to go directly to the Tipiṭaka to find it; it is described in many suttā, for example, the Assāsa sutta. I could not find an English translation of this sutta. Another one Arittha Sutta, and the translation published at the Access to insight site is not complete, even though it does contain Buddha's admonition to Ven. Arittha that in and out-breathing is only one version of $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p a \overline{n a s a t i}$ (in the sutta it says it is NOT the Ariya or Noble version) : WebLink: ACCESSTOINSIGHT: Arittha Sutta: To Arittha
- Arittha Sutta: To Arittha (On Mindfulness of Breathing)

6. Thus there are two interpretations of the $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p \bar{a} n a s a t i ~ B h \bar{a} v a n \bar{a}$. One is the conventional "breathing" version and the other is the real version recommended by the Buddha, which has a wider interpretation, including breathing to a minor extent.

- The correct meaning is in many suttā. Of course, the main sutta is "WebLink: suttacentral: Ānāpānasati Sutta (MN 118).'The Ānäpānasati sutta is the condensed version of the Buddha's discourses on $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p \bar{a} n a s a t i ~ B h a ̄ v a n a \bar{a}$. As with most main suttā, the discourse was condensed into the form for easy transmission. Other suttā, mostly by Ven. Sariputta, have explained the terms like "āna" and "āpana" in detail (like the Assāsa Sutta).
- I have discussed the sutta at a bit deeper level in " 7 . What is Ānāpāna?" and " 8 . The Basic Formal Anāpānasati Meditation."
- See, "Is Ānāpānasati Breath Meditation?," where I provide a detailed discussion based on the Tipitaka.
- Furthermore, Sinhala commentaries (Atthakath $\bar{a}$ ) were also written to explain the main sutt $\bar{a}$. Unfortunately, these atthakath $\bar{a}$ were burned down shortly after Buddhaghosa wrote his Visuddhimagga and other books. However, three important ones (Paṭisambhidā Magga Pakarana, Pitakopadesa, and Netthipakarana) have survived because they had been included in the Tipitaka. What I describe here is from those books in the Tipitaka.
- Buddhaghosa was a Hindu before converting to be a Buddhist later on; see, "The Life and Work of Buddhaghosa" by B. C. Law (1927). Some say he became a Buddhist in order to introduce Hindu concepts to Buddha Dhamma. Either that or he just used whatever he understood to be the Ānāpānasati without any malicious intentions. Either way, the correct interpretation had been hidden for all these years; see, "Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga - A Focused Analysis."

7. The key message of the Buddha was that we need to remove the greed, hate, and ignorance that we all have in our minds, and by doing that we can experience the nirāmisa sukha that is of better quality and of permanent nature. Let us now discuss the basic meditation technique that will start us on the correct path to achieve lasting happiness.

- More evidence from the Tipiṭaka: "Is Ānāpānasati Breath Meditation?."

Next, "7. What is Ānāpāna?", ........

### 12.6.1 Arittha Sutta - To Arittha (On Mindfulness of Breathing)

SN 54.6
PTS: $\underline{\text { v } 314}$
CDB ii 1768
Arittha Sutta: To Arittha
(On Mindfulness of Breathing)
translated from the Pāli by
Thanissaro Bhikkhu
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At Savatthi. There the Blessed One said, "Monks, do you develop mindfulness of in-\&-out breathing?"
When this was said, Ven. Arittha replied to the Blessed One, " $I$ develop mindfulness of in-\&-out breathing, lord."
"But how do you develop mindfulness of in-\&-out breathing, Arittha?"
"Having abandoned sensual desire for past sensual pleasures, lord, having done away with sensual desire for future sensual pleasures, and having thoroughly subdued perceptions of irritation with regard to internal \& external events, I breathe in mindfully and breathe out mindfully."[1]
'There is that mindfulness of in-\&-out breathing, Arittha. I don't say that there isn't. But as to how mindfulness of in-\&-out breathing is brought in detail to its culmination, listen and pay close attention. I will speak."
"As you say, lord," Ven. Aritha responded to the Blessed One.
The Blessed One said, "And how, Arittha, is mindfulness of in-\&-out breathing brought in detail to its culmination? There is the case where a monk, having gone to the wilderness, to the shade of a tree, or to an empty building, sits down folding his legs crosswise, holding his body erect, and setting mindfulness to the fore.[2] Always mindful, he breathes in; mindful he breathes out.
"[1] Breathing in long, he discerns, 'I am breathing in long'; or breathing out long, he discerns, 'I am breathing out long.' [2] Or breathing in short, he discerns, 'I am breathing in short'; or breathing out short, he discerns, 'I am breathing out short.' [3] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in sensitive to the entire body.'[3] He trains himself, 'I will breathe out sensitive to the entire body.' [4] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in calming bodily fabrication.'[4] He trains himself, 'I will breathe out calming bodily fabrication.'
"[5] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in sensitive to rapture.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out sensitive to rapture.' [6] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in sensitive to pleasure.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out sensitive to pleasure.' [7] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in sensitive to mental fabrication.'[5] He trains himself, 'I will breathe out sensitive to mental fabrication.' [8] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in calming mental fabrication.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out calming mental fabrication.'
"[9] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in sensitive to the mind.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out sensitive to the mind.' [10] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in satisfying the mind.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out satisfying the mind.' [11] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in steadying the mind.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out steadying the mind.' [12] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in releasing the mind.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out releasing the mind.'[6]
"[13] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in focusing on inconstancy.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out focusing on inconstancy.' [14] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in focusing on dispassion.'[7] He trains himself, 'I will breathe out focusing on dispassion.' [15] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in focusing on cessation.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out focusing on cessation.' [16] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in focusing on relinquishment.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out focusing on relinquishment.'
"This, Arittha, is how mindfulness of in-\&-out breathing is brought in detail to its culmination."

## Notes

1. The Commentary reads this statement as indicating that Arittha has attained the third level of Awakening, non-return, but it is also possible to interpret the statement on a more mundane level: Arittha is simply practicing mindfulness in the present moment, having temporarily subdued desire for past and future sensual pleasures, and having temporarily subdued any thought of irritation with regard to the present.
2. To the fore (parimukham): The Abhidhamma takes an etymological approach to this term, defining it as around (pari-) the mouth (mukham). In the Vinaya, however, it is used in a context (Cv.V.27.4) where it undoubtedly means the front of the chest. There is also the possibility that the term could be used idiomatically as "to the front," which is how I have translated it here.
3. The commentaries insist that "body" here means the breath, but this is unlikely in this context, for the next step - without further explanation - refers to the breath as "bodily fabrication." If the Buddha were using two different terms to refer to the breath in such close proximity, he would have been careful to signal that he was redefining his terms (as he does below, when explaining that the first four steps in breath meditation correspond to the practice of focusing on the body in and of itself as a frame of reference). The step of breathing in and out sensitive to the entire body relates to the many similes in the suttā depicting jhāna as a state of whole-body awareness (see MN 119).
4. 'In- \&-out breaths are bodily; these are things tied up with the body. That's why in- $\&$-out breaths are bodily fabrications." - MN 44.
5. "Perceptions \& feelings are mental; these are things tied up with the mind. That's why perceptions \& feelings are mental fabrications." - MN 44.
6. AN 9.34 shows how the mind, step by step, is temporarily released from burdensome mental states of greater and greater refinement as it advances through the stages of jhāna.
7. Lit., "fading."

See also: MN 118; SN 54.8.

### 12.7 7. What is Ānāpāna?

Revised April 2, 2017 (\#4); September 2, 2019; July 23, 2020; June 6, 2022; October 11, 2002
The top 10 posts in this section describe the fundamentals of Buddhist meditation. The rest of the posts in this section discuss meditation subjects. They clarify unresolved questions and help gain samädhi. The first 11 posts should be followed in that order, at least initially.

1. The "WebLink: suttacentral: Ānāpānasati Sutta, (MN 118)" has the following verse:
" $\underline{\text { Ānāpānassati, bhikkhave, bhāvitā bahulīkatā mahapphalā hoti mahānisamisā. } \underline{A} n \bar{a} p a \overline{n a s s a t i, ~}}$ bhikkhave, bhāvitā bahulīkatā cattāro satipatthāne paripūreti. Cattāro satipatthān̄̄ bhāvitā bahulīkatā satta bojihhange paripūrenti. Satta bojihañgā bhāvitā bahulīkata vijjāvimuttion paripūrenti."

That means: "Ānāpānasati, Bhikkhus, when practiced frequently bears many fruits and leads to many benefits. Ānāpānasati, Bhikkhus, when cultivated and pursued, brings the four Satipatthānā to their completion. The four Satipatṭhāna, when cultivated and pursued, bring the seven Bojjhañgā to their completion. The seven Bojjhañgā, when cultivated and pursued, bring vijjā (opposite of avijjā) and vimutti (or Nibbāna) to their completion."

- Now, if ānāpāna means "breathing in and breathing out", how can that lead to the completion of the four satipatṭhānās, the seven bojjhañgas, removal of avijja, and the attainment of Nibbāna? Can anyone seriously think that is possible?
- Instead, ānāpāna MEANS cultivating Satipatṭhāna, Satta Bojjhañga, etc., by "taking in morals" and "expelling immoral" as we discuss below.

2. Satipatthhāna Bhāvanā is a more detailed version of the $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p a \bar{a} a s a t i ~ B h \bar{a} v a n \bar{a}$. Thus it is essential to
 Satipatṭhāna Bhāvanā.

- Section 4 on "Dhammānupassanā" describes how the cultivation of the four types of Satipaṭthāna leads to the removal of the five hindrances and fulfillment of the seven Bojjhañga to their completion. See, "WebLink: suttacentral: Satipatthāna Sutta (MN 10)." That confirms the statements in the $\overline{\text { Annāpānasati Sutta mentioned above. }}$

3. First, let us figure out exactly what the Buddha meant by "āna" and "āpanna" in "āna+ $\bar{a} p \bar{a} n a+s a t i$ " which rhymes as ānāpānasati; of course "sati" is mindfulness.

- "Āna" is taking in; In Sinhala, "ānayānaya" is "import". "āpāna" is discarding; In Sinhala, "apānayānaya" is "export". Thus "āna"+"āpāna" or ānāpāna is "taking in/discarding" or import/export.
- "Assa" is the same as "āna", and "passa" is the same as "āpāna". In Sri Lanka, parents tell their child to


- When cleaning the room, the child needs to get rid of the clutter (passa) but also can take in (assa) something like a flower vase to make the room look more pleasant, or to take in a chair that can be useful.

4. During the time of the Buddha itself, auxiliary suttā as well as commentaries ("Atthakatha") were written to explain the keywords/phrases in the main suttā that were abbreviated for easy transmission; see, "Preservation of Dhamma."

There are two crucial suttā, "WebLink: suttacentral: Assāsappatta Sutta (SN 38.5)" and the "WebLink: suttacentral: Paramassāsappatta Sutta (SN 38.6)" that describe how one should "take in" kusala thoughts and "discard" akusala thoughts; that is "āna" + "āpāna" (ānāpāna) or "assa/passa", for cleaning up (the
mind). The English translation there is hopeless, but one can get the idea by looking at the Pāli version. You don't need to be an expert on Pāli to see that.

- In the Mahasaccaka Sutta, "assa/passa" was also used to indicate "in and out breathing" when the Buddha was describing to Saccaka how he engaged in the "breath meditation" per instructions by Ālāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta while he was searching for the truth as Bodhisatta.
- But the following verses of that sutta describe how he gave up on that technique and moved onto the correct path.
- So, we must ensure a given phrase is used in the proper context, depending on the situation.
- For example, there are several conventional and deeper meanings to the keywords "atta" and "anatta," and one needs to be able to figure out which meaning to use for a given case; see, "Attā Hi Attano Nātho," "Anatta - the Opposite of Which Atta?," and links in those posts.

5. When one knows what kusala/akusala kamma are, the first thing to do is to prevent from doing akusala kamma and to make an effort to do kusala kamma by engaging in meritorious actions (puñña kriya); see, "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)," and "Punna Kamma - Dāna, Sīla, Bhāvanā."

- Thus when one leads a moral life, one automatically engages in the primary form of $\overline{\text { An}} \overline{\text { app }} \bar{p} n a s a t i$.
- AND, one cannot do a proper formal Ānāpānasati meditation and get to even samādhi, let alone a jhāna unless one leads a moral life. The five hindrances are too strong to be suppressed; see, "Key to Calming the Mind - Five Hindrances."

6. Formal $\overline{\text { Annanpanasati Bhā }} \boldsymbol{v} \boldsymbol{a n} \bar{a}$ can be done in a formal sitting or walking meditation session while engaging in the basic version (taking in what is good/discarding what is evil) all the time.

- There is no need to do Samatha Bhāvanā separately. If one does a formal $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p \bar{a} n a s a t i$ session with the eyes closed in a quiet place, one will automatically get into sama $d h i$. Let good thoughts grow, and discard evil thoughts. Very simple.
- Another thing to do in a formal meditation session is to contemplate a particular dhamma concept like anicca, dukkha, or anatta. That means focusing on "āna".
- When one gets to samādhi, the mind goes on "auto-pilot"; you will feel that your mind is taking charge and you need to exert less effort to keep the focus.

7. When one does the basic version while engaged in other activities, one is only mindful of what one is engaged in, i.e., the task at hand. That task presumably does not involve any of the BIG EIGHT we discussed previously; see "The Basics in Meditation." It could be a technical task or a daily chore like washing dishes or driving. Be mindful of just the task (washing, driving, etc). Here one will NOT get into samādhi, so there is no danger of injuring oneself; Many people get into accidents while driving because they are not being mindful of driving.

- However, if one does not have a specific task (say, when riding a bus or waiting at the doctor's office), one could be engaged in Ānāpānasati Bhāvanā. When our minds are not focused on something (like in the cases mentioned above,) all sorts of ideas bubble up. As we discussed in "The Basics in Meditation." These are due to deeply-ingrained habits or $\bar{a} s a v \bar{a}$ that we have acquired not only in this life but also from previous lives.

8. The more we keep reviving or re-living this habit (i.e., doing ana/apāna or assa/passa), we strengthen that good habit (gati).

- We have come all this way in the cycle of rebirths that are mostly filled with suffering because of our bad habits (gati) that have been percolated into a very dense state of deep-seated cravings ( $\bar{a} s a v \bar{a}$ ). It may take some time to develop this "āna/pāna" but you will see results in a few weeks to a few months.

9. In the ānapānapabba of the Satipatṭhāna sutta, it says, "..so sato vā assa sati, sato va passa sati. Dīghaim vā assasanto dīghaím assasāmī ti pajānāti, dīghaì va passasanto dīghaim passasāmī $t i$
pajānāti, ......" Here it DOES NOT mean 'take long breaths in, expel long breaths out'; instead, it means, "get rid of long-established (deeply-rooted) bad habits, and cultivate the long-established good habits".

- Similarly, the next sentence ("..rassam va assasanto...") is not about short breaths, but about those good habits that you started to work on recently, and those bad habits that started to creep into your mind recently (if there are any).
- One cannot purify one's mind by breathing in/out, even though it can get one's mind to calm down (Samatha). The correct way of doing it is doing both Samatha and Vipassanā together.

10. When we think a bit more about this, we realize that what needs to be discarded are micchā ditṭhi (wrong views), micch $\bar{a}$ sañkappa (wrong thoughts or ideas), micch $\bar{a} v \bar{a} c \bar{a}$ (incorrect, harmful speech), micch $\bar{a}$ kammanta (incorrect/harmful actions), micch $\bar{a} \bar{a} j \bar{i} v a$ (incorrect/harmful way of living), micch $\bar{a}$ $v \bar{a} y \bar{a} m a$ (tendency to strive on immoral activities), micch $\bar{a}$ sati (tendency to focus on immoral activities); when one does all that micch $\bar{a}$ samādhi (tendency to get absorbed in immoral ideas/actions) is the result.

- In the same way, what we need to "take in" are sammā ditthi, sammā sañkappa, sammā vācā, sammā kammanta, sammā $\bar{a} \bar{j} v a$, samm $\bar{a}$ v $\bar{y} \bar{a} m a$, samm $\bar{a}$ sati, and when one keeps doing that one automatically gets to sammā samādhi.
- Put in another way, Ānāpānasati is nothing but "taking in" the Noble Eightfold Path and "discarding" the opposite.

11. The longer one "takes in" or "lives" the Noble Eightfold Path and "rejects" the opposite, the easier it becomes to get to samādhi in a formal meditation session. As samādhi grows little by little, one day, one will automatically get into the first Ariya jhāna. However, one more thing is needed before getting to the Ariya $j h a \overline{n a}$, an understanding of anicca, dukkha, and anatta. See "Is Ānāpānasati Breath Meditation?"

- Keep practicing "ānāpāna" as much as possible throughout the day. With time, you will feel the "cooling down" or "nivāna" or "a taste of Nibbāna."
- Buddha Dhamma is NOT about following rituals. It is all about cleansing one's mind, which takes effort and concentration. Initially, it could be challenging, but as one gains samādhi bit by bit, one gets motivated. In a few months, one can look back at one's life and see that it has changed for the better.
- Even though one can start with discarding immoral deeds and cultivating or taking in morals, one needs to know the real meanings of "san," anicca, and anatta to do the Ānāpānasati Bhāvanā in a deeper sense: (i) One needs to comprehend which "san" or defilements to be discarded; see, "San." (ii) One needs to know the deeper meanings of Tilakkhaṇa; see, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta."

Next, "Is Ānāpānasati Breath Meditation?",

### 12.7.1 Ānāpānassati-sutta (Majjhima Nikāya 118)

## Majjhima Nikāya 118

## Ānāpānassati-sutta

Evamं me sutamं - ekam samayam bhagavā sāvatthiyamं viharati pubbārāme migāramātupāsāde sambahulehi abhiññātehi abhiññātehi therehi sāvakehi saddhim-āyasmatā ca sāriputtena āyasmatā ca mahāmoggallānena āyasmatā ca mahākassapena āyasmatā ca mahākaccāyanena āyasmatā ca mahākoṭthikena āyasmatā ca mahākappinena āyasmatā ca mahācundena āyasmatā ca anuruddhena āyasmatā ca revatena āyasmatā ca ānandena, aññ ehi ca abhiññātehi abhiññātehi therehi sāvakehi saddhim.

Tena kho pana samayena therā bhikkhū nave bhikkhū ovadanti anusāsanti. Appekacce therā bhikkhū dasapi bhikkhū ovadanti anusāsanti, appekacce therā bhikkhū visampi bhikkhū ovadanti anusāsanti, appekacce therā bhikkhū timsampi bhikkhū ovadanti anusāsanti, appekacce therā bhikkhū cattārīsampi bhikkhū ovadanti
anusāsanti. Te ca navā bhikkhū therehi bhikkhūhi ovadiyamānā anusāsiyamānā ulāram pubbenāparam visesam jānanti.

Tena kho pana samayena bhagavā tadahuposathe pannarase pavāraṇāaa puṇ̣āya puṇnamāya rattiyā bhikkhusaṁghaparivuto abbhokāse nisinno hoti. Atha kho bhagavā tuṇhībhūtam tuṇhībhūtam bhikkhusamgham anuviloketvā bhikkhū āmantesi: "āraddhosmi, bhikkhave, imāya paṭipadāya; āraddhacittosmi, bhikkhave, imāya paṭipadāya. Tasmātiha, bhikkhave, bhiyyoso mattāya vīriyam ārabhatha appattassa pattiyā, anadhigatassa adhigamāya, asacchikatassa sacchikiriyāya. Idhevāham sāvatthiyam komudim cātumāsinim āgamessāmỉ'ti. Assosum kho jānapadā bhikkhū: "bhagavā kira tattheva sāvatthiyam komudim cātumāsinim āgamessatỉ'ti. Te jānapadā bhikkhū sāvatthim osaranti bhagavantam dassanāya. Te ca kho therā bhikkhū bhiyyoso mattāya nave bhikkhū ovadanti anusāsanti. Appekacce therā bhikkhū dasapi bhikkhū ovadanti anusāsanti, appekacce therā bhikkhū vissampi bhikkhū ovadanti anusāsanti, appekacce therā bhikkhū timssampi bhikkhū ovadanti anusāsanti, appekacce therā bhikkhū cattārīsampi bhikkhū ovadanti anusāsanti. Te ca navā bhikkhū therehi bhikkhūhi ovadiyamānā anusāsiyamānā ulāram pubbenāparam visesam jānanti.

Tena kho pana samayena bhagavā tadahuposathe pannarase komudiyā cātumāsiniyā puṇ̣āya puṇnamāya rattiyā bhikkhusañghaparivuto abbhokāse nisinno hoti. Atha kho bhagavā tuṇhībhūtam tuṇhībhūtam bhikkhusañgham anuviloketvā bhikkhū āmantesi:
"Apalāpāyamं, bhikkhave, parisā; nippalāpāyam, bhikkhave, parisā; suddhā sāre patiṭ̣hitā. Tathārūpo ayam, bhikkhave, bhikkhusamgho; tathārūpā ayam, bhikkhave, parisā yathārūpā parisā āhuneyyā pāhuneyyā dakkhineyyā añjalikaraṇīyā anuttaraḿ puññakkhettam் lokassa. Tathārūpo ayam, bhikkhave, bhikkhusamigho; tathārūpā ayaḿ, bhikkhave, parisā yathārūpāya parisāya appamं dinnam் bahu hoti, bahu dinnam bahutaram. Tathārūpo ayaṁ, bhikkhave, bhikkhusamgho; tathārūpā ayaḿ, bhikkhave, parisā yathārūpā parisā dullabhā dassanāya lokassa. Tathārūpo ayam, bhikkhave, bhikkhusaṁgho; tathārūpā ayam, bhikkhave, parisā yathārūpamं parisam alam̉ yojanagaṇanāni dassanāya gantumं puṭosenāpi.

Santi, bhikkhave, bhikkhū imasmimं bhikkhusaṁghe arahanto khị̄̄āsavā vusitavanto katakaraṇīyā ohitabhārā anuppattasadatthā parikkhīnabhavasamiyojanā sammadañ̃āvimuttā-evarūpāpi, bhikkhave, santi bhikkhū imasmim bhikkhusam̈ghe. Santi, bhikkhave, bhikkhū imasmim bhikkhusam̈ghe pañcannam orambhāgiyānam samimojanānam parikkhayā opapātikā tattha parinibbāyino anāvattidhammā tasmā lokā-evarūpāpi, bhikkhave, santi bhikkhū imasmim bhikkhusamghe. Santi, bhikkhave, bhikkhū imasmim bhikkhusamghe tiṇnaḿ samyojanānam parikkhayā rāgadosamohānam tanuttā sakadāgāmino sakideva imam lokam āgantvā dukkhassantamं karissanti- evarūpāpi, bhikkhave, santi bhikkhū imasmim bhikkhusamghe. Santi, bhikkhave, bhikkhū imasmim bhikkhusamgghe tiṇnam samiyojanānam parikkhayā sotāpannā avinipātadhammā niyatā sam-bodhiparāyanā-evarūpāpi, bhikkhave, santi bhikkhū imasmim bhikkhusaṁghe.

Santi, bhikkhave, bhikkhū imasmim bhikkhusañghe catunnam satipaṭ̣hānānam bhāvanānuyogamanuyuttā viharanti-evarūpāpi, bhikkhave, santi bhikkhū imasmim bhikkhusañghe. Santi, bhikkhave, bhikkhū imasmim bhikkhusanghe catunnam் sammappadhānānam் bhāvanānuyogamanuyuttā viharanti ... pe ... catunnam
 aṭ̣hañgikassa maggassa bhāvanānuyogamanuyuttā viharanti-evarūpāpi, bhikkhave, santi bhikkhū imasmim bhikkhusanghe. Santi, bhikkhave, bhikkhū imasmim bhikkhusanghe mettābhāvanānuyogamanuyuttā viharanti ... karuṇābhāvanānuyogamanuyuttā viharanti ... muditābhāvanānuyogamanuyuttā viharanti ... upekkhābhāvanānuyogamanuyuttā viharanti ... asubhabhāvanānuyogamanuyuttā viharanti ... aniccasaññābhāvanānuyogamanuyuttā viharanti-evarūpāpi, bhikkhave, santi bhikkhū imasmim bhikkhusanghe. Santi, bhikkhave, bhikkhū imasmim bhikkhusañghe ānāpānassatibhāvanānuyogamanuyuttā viharanti. Ānāpānassati, bhikkhave, bhāvitā bahulikatā mahapphalā hoti mahānisamsā. Ānāpānassati, bhikkhave, bhāvitā bahulikatā cattāro satipatṭhāne paripūreti. Cattāro satipaṭ̣̣hānā bhāvitā bahulikatā satta bojjhañge paripūrenti. Satta bojjhangā bhāvitā bahulikatā vijjāvimuttim paripūrenti.

Katham bhāvitā ca, bhikkhave, ānāpānassati katham bahulikatā mahapphalā hoti mahānisamssā? Idha, bhikkhave, bhikkhu araññagato vā rukkhamūlagato vā suññāgāragato vā nisīdati pallaṅkam ābhujitvā ujum kāyam paṇidhāya parimukham̉ satim upaṭ̣hapetvā. So satova assasati satova passasati.

Dīgham vā assasanto 'dīgham assasāmīti pajānāti, dīgham vā passasanto 'dīgham passasāmīti pajānāti; rassam vā assasanto 'rassamं assasāmirti pajānāti, rassam vā passasanto 'rassam passasāmīti pajānāti; 'sabbakāyapaț̣isamivedī assasissāmīti sikkhati, 'sabbakāyapaṭisamंvedī passasissāmỉti sikkhati; 'passambhayam kāyasañkhāram assasissāmı̂ti sikkhati, 'passambhayam kāyasañkhāram passasissāmı̂ti sikkhati. (1)
 assasissāmı̈ti sikkhati, 'sukhapaṭisamivedī passasissāmīti sikkhati; 'cittasañkhārapaṭisamivedī assasissāmı̈ti sikkhati, 'cittasañkhārapaṭisamंvedī passasissāmı$t \mathrm{ti}$ sikkhati;; 'passambhayam cittasañkhāram assasissām $\overrightarrow{\mathrm{r}} \mathrm{t}$ sikkhati, 'passambhayam cittasañkhāramं passasissām $\overrightarrow{1} \mathrm{ti}$ sikkhati. (2)
 assasissāmı̈ti sikkhati, 'abhippamodayam cittam passasissāmı̂ti sikkhati; 'samādaham cittam assasissāmı̈ti sikkhati, 'samādahamं cittamं passasissāmīti sikkhati; ‘vimocayam cittam assasissāmı̂ti sikkhati, 'vimocayam cittam passasissām $\overrightarrow{1} \mathrm{ti}$ sikkhati. (3)
'Aniccānupassī assasissāmı̉ti sikkhati, 'aniccānupassī passasissāmỉti sikkhati; ‘virāgānupassī assasissāmỉti sikkhati, 'virāgānupassī passasissāmīti sikkhati; 'nirodhānupassī assasissāmīti sikkhati, 'nirodhānupassī
 sikkhati.

Evaṁ bhāvitā kho, bhikkhave, ānāpānassati evam் bahulikatā mahapphalā hoti mahānisam்sā. (4)
Katham bhāvitā ca, bhikkhave, ānāpānassati katham bahulikatā cattāro satipatṭhāne paripūretí? Yasmim samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhu dīgham vā assasanto 'dīgham assasāmīti pajānāti, dīgham vā passasanto 'dīgham passasāmîti pajānāti; rassam vā assasanto 'rassam assasāmr ti pajānāti, rassam vā passasanto 'rassamं passasāmı̂ti pajānāti; 'sabbakāyapaṭisamivedī assasissāmỉti sikkhati, 'sabbakāyapaṭisam்vedī passasissām $\overrightarrow{\mathrm{I}} \mathrm{ti}$ sikkhati; 'passambhayam kāyasañkhāram assasissāmıti sikkhati, 'passambhayam kāyasańkhāram passasissām $\overrightarrow{1} t i$ sikkhati; kāye kāyānupassī, bhikkhave, tasmim samaye bhikkhu viharati ātāpī sampajāno satimā vineyya loke abhijjhādomanassam. Kāyesu kāyaññatarāham், bhikkhave, evamं vadāmi yadidamं-assāsapassāsā. Tasmātiha, bhikkhave, kāye kāyānupassī tasmim samaye bhikkhu viharati ātāpī sampajāno satimā vineyya loke abhijjhādomanassam.. (1)

Yasmim samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhu 'pītipaṭisamivedī assasissāmı̈ti sikkhati, 'pītipaṭisamived̄̄ passasissām $\overrightarrow{1} \mathrm{ti}$ sikkhati; 'sukhapaṭisamंvedī assasissāmīti sikkhati, 'sukhapaṭisam்vedī passasissāmīti sikkhati; 'cittasañkhārapaṭisamंvedī assasissāmīti sikkhati, 'cittasañkhārapaṭisamivedī passasissāmīti sikkhati; 'passambhayam cittasañkhāram assasissāmîti sikkhati, 'passambhayamं cittasañkhāram passasissāmîti sikkhati; vedanāsu vedanānupassī, bhikkhave, tasmim samaye bhikkhu viharati ātāpī sampajāno satimā vineyya loke abhijjhādomanassam̀. Vedanāsu vedanāñnatarāhaṁ, bhikkhave, evam் vadāmi yadidamं - assāsapassāsānamं sādhukam̀ manasikāram. Tasmātiha, bhikkhave, vedanāsu vedanānupassī tasmim samaye bhikkhu viharati ātāpī sampajāno satimā vineyya loke abhijjhādomanassam. (2)

Yasmim samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhu 'cittapaṭisaminedī assasissāmīti sikkhati, 'cittapațisamivedī passasissām $\overrightarrow{1} t i$ sikkhati; 'abhippamodayam cittam assasissāmîti sikkhati, 'abhippamodayam cittam passasissām $\vec{\imath} t i$ i sikkhati; 'samādahamं cittam assasissām $\vec{\imath} t i$ sikkhati, 'samādaham cittam passasissām $\vec{\imath} t i$ sikkhati; 'vimocayam cittam assasissāmīti sikkhati, 'vimocayam cittam passasissāmïti sikkhati; citte cittānupassī, bhikkhave, tasmim samaye bhikkhu viharati ātāpī sampajāno satimā vineyya loke abhijjhādomanassam.. Nāham, bhikkhave, muṭthhassatissa asampajānassa ānāpānassatim vadāmi. Tasmātiha, bhikkhave, citte cittānupassī tasmim samaye bhikkhu viharati ātāpī sampajāno satimā vineyya loke abhijjhādomanassam. (3)

Yasmim samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhu 'aniccānupassī assasissāmīti sikkhati, 'aniccānupassī passasissāmīti sikkhati; 'virāgānupassī assasissāmıti sikkhati, 'virāgānupassī passasissāmīti sikkhati; 'nirodhānupassī assasissāmîti sikkhati, 'nirodhānupassī passasissāmīti sikkhati; 'paṭinissaggānupassī assasissāmı̂ti sikkhati, 'paṭinissaggānupassī passasissām $\overrightarrow{1} \mathrm{ti}$ sikkhati; dhammesu dhammānupassī, bhikkhave, tasmim samaye
bhikkhu viharati ātāpī sampajāno satimā vineyya loke abhijjhādomanassam. So yam tam abhijjhādomanassānam் pahānam் tam் paññāya disvā sādhukam ajjhupekkhitā hoti. Tasmātiha, bhikkhave, dhammesu dhammānupassī tasmim samaye bhikkhu viharati ātāpī sampajāno satimā vineyya loke abhijjhādomanassam. (4)

Evamं bhāvitā kho, bhikkhave, ānāpānassati evam bahulikatā cattāro satipatṭhāne paripūreti.
Kathamं bhāvitā ca, bhikkhave, cattāro satipatṭhānā katham bahulikatā satta bojjhange paripūrenti? Yasmim samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhu kāye kāyānupassī viharati ātāpī sampajāno satimā vineyya loke abhijjhādomanassam, upaṭ̣hitāssa tasmim samaye sati hoti asammutṭhā. Yasmim samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhuno upatṭhitā sati hoti asammuṭ̣hā, satisambojjhango tasmim samaye bhikkhuno āraddho hoti. Satisambojjhañgam tasmim samaye bhikkhu bhāveti, satisambojjhañgo tasmim samaye bhikkhuno bhāvanāpāripūrim gacchati. (1)

So tathāsato viharanto tam̉ dhammam் paññāya pavicinati pavicayati parivīmam்sam āpajjati. Yasmim samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhu tathāsato viharanto tam dhammam paññāya pavicinati pavicayati parivīmamsam āpajjati, dhammavicayasambojjhañgo tasmim samaye bhikkhuno āraddho hoti, dhammavicayasambojjhañgam tasmim samaye bhikkhu bhāveti, dhammavicayasambojjhañgo tasmim samaye bhikkhuno bhāvanāpāripūrim gacchati. (2)
Tassa tam dhammam paññāya pavicinato pavicayato parivīmaṁsam āpajjato āraddham hoti viriyam asallinam. Yasmim samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhuno tam dhammam pañ̃āya pavicinato pavicayato parivīmamsam āpajjato āraddham hoti viriyam asallinam, vīriyasambojjhañgo tasmim samaye bhikkhuno āraddho hoti, viriyasambojjhañgam tasmim samaye bhikkhu bhāveti, viriyasambojjhango tasmim samaye bhikkhuno bhāvanāpāripūrim gacchati. (3)
Āraddhaviriyassa uppajjati pīti nirāmisā. Yasmim samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhuno āraddhavīriyassa uppajjati pīti nirāmisā, pītisambojjhañgo tasmim samaye bhikkhuno āraddho hoti, pītisambojjhañgam tasmim samaye bhikkhu bhāveti, pītisambojijhañgo tasmim samaye bhikkhuno bhāvanāpāripūrim gacchati. (4)
Pītimanassa kāyopi passambhati, cittampi passambhati. Yasmim samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhuno pītimanassa kāyopi passambhati, cittampi passambhati, passaddhisambojjhango tasmim samaye bhikkhuno āraddho hoti, passaddhisambojjhañgam tasmim samaye bhikkhu bhāveti, passaddhisambojjhañgo tasmim samaye bhikkhuno bhāvanāpāripūrim gacchati. (5)

Passaddhakāyassa sukhino cittam̉ samādhiyati. Yasmim samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhuno passaddhakāyassa sukhino cittam samādhiyati, samādhisambojjhaño tasmim samaye bhikkhuno āraddho hoti, samādhisambojjhañgam tasmim samaye bhikkhu bhāveti, samādhisambojjhañgo tasmim samaye bhikkhuno bhāvanāpāripūrim gacchati. (6)

So tathāsamāhitam cittam sādhukam ajjhupekkhitā hoti. Yasmim samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhu tathāsamāhitam cittam sādhukamं ajjhupekkhitā hoti, upekkhāsambojjhañgo tasmim samaye bhikkhuno āraddho hoti, upekkhāsambojjhangam tasmim samaye bhikkhu bhāveti, upekkhāsambojjhañgo tasmim samaye bhikkhuno bhāvanāpāripūrim gacchati. (7)

Yasmim samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhu vedanāsu ... pe ... citte ... dhammesu dhammānupassī viharati ātāpī sampajāno satimā vineyya loke abhijjhādomanassam, upatṭhitāssa tasmim samaye sati hoti asammutṭhā. Yasmim samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhuno upatṭhitā sati hoti asammutṭhā, satisambojjhañgo tasmim samaye bhikkhuno āraddho hoti, satisambojjhangam tasmim samaye bhikkhu bhāveti, satisambojjhañgo tasmim samaye bhikkhuno bhāvanāpāripūrim gacchati. (1)

So tathāsato viharanto tam̉ dhammamं paññāya pavicinati pavicayati parivīmamisam āpajjati. Yasmim samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhu tathāsato viharanto tam dhammam paññāya pavicinati pavicayati parivīmamsam āpajjati, dhammavicayasambojjhañgo tasmim samaye bhikkhuno āraddho hoti, dhammavicayasambojjhañgam tasmim samaye bhikkhu bhāveti, dhammavicayasambojjhañgo tasmim samaye bhikkhuno bhāvanāpāripūrim gacchati. (2)

Tassa tam dhammam paññāya pavicinato pavicayato parivimamisam āpajjato āraddham hoti viriyam asallinam. Yasmim samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhuno tam dhammam pañ̃̃āya pavicinato pavicayato parivīmaṁsam āpajjato āraddham hoti vīiyam asallinam, viriyasambojjhango tasmim samaye bhikkhuno āraddho hoti, viriyasambojjhañgam tasmim samaye bhikkhu bhāveti, viriyasambojjhango tasmim samaye bhikkhuno bhāvanāpāripūrim gacchati. (3)

Āraddhavīriyassa uppajjati pīti nirāmisā. Yasmim samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhuno āraddhaviriyassa uppajjati pīti nirāmisā, pītisambojjhañgo tasmim samaye bhikkhuno āraddho hoti, pītisambojjhañgam tasmim samaye bhikkhu bhāveti, pītisambojijhango tasmim samaye bhikkhuno bhāvanāpāripūrim gacchati. (4)

Pītimanassa kāyopi passambhati, cittampi passambhati. Yasmim samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhuno pītimanassa kāyopi passambhati, cittampi passambhati, passaddhisambojjhañgo tasmim samaye bhikkhuno āraddho hoti, passaddhisambojjhañgam tasmim samaye bhikkhu bhāveti, passaddhisambojjhañgo tasmim samaye bhikkhuno bhāvanāpāripūrim gacchati. (5)

Passaddhakāyassa sukhino cittam samādhiyati. Yasmim samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhuno passaddhakāyassa sukhino cittam samādhiyati, samādhisambojjhañgo tasmim samaye bhikkhuno āraddho hoti, samādhisambojjhañgam tasmim samaye bhikkhu bhāveti, samādhisambojjhango tasmim samaye bhikkhuno bhāvanāpāripūrim gacchati. (6)

So tathāsamāhitam cittam sādhukam ajjhupekkhitā hoti. Yasmim samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhu tathāsamāhitam cittam sādhukam ajjhupekkhitā hoti, upekkhāsambojjhanggo tasmim samaye bhikkhuno āraddho hoti, upekkhāsambojjhanggam tasmim samaye bhikkhu bhāveti, upekkhāsambojjhañgo tasmim samaye bhikkhuno bhāvanāpāripūrim gacchati. Evamं bhāvitā kho, bhikkhave, cattāro satipatṭhānā evam bahulikatā satta sambojjhange paripūrenti. (7)

Kathamं bhāvitā ca, bhikkhave, satta bojjhangā kathamं bahulikatā vijjāvimuttim paripūrenti? Idha, bhikkhave, bhikkhu satisambojjhañgam bhāveti vivekanissitam virāganissitam nirodhanissitam vossaggapariṇāmim. Dhammavicayasambojjhanggam bhāveti ... pe ... vīriyasambojjhañgamं bhāveti ... pitisambojjhangam bhāveti ... passaddhisambojjhañgam bhāveti ... samādhisambojjhañgaṁ bhāveti ... upekkhāsambojjhangama bhāveti vivekanissitam virāganissitam nirodhanissitam vossaggapariṇāmim. Evam bhāvitā kho, bhikkhave, satta bojjhañgā evamं bahulikatā vijjāvimuttim paripūrentǐ'ti.

Idamavoca bhagavā. Attamanā te bhikkhū bhagavato bhāsitam abhinandunti.
Ānāpānassatisuttam niṭ̣hitam atṭhamam.

### 12.8 Is Ānāpānasati Breath Meditation?

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## Introduction

1. If you Google "Ānāpānasati", almost all websites that come up identify it as "Buddhist breath meditation" or "mindfulness of breathing". But Tipiṭaka sutt $\bar{a}$ lead to the conclusion that breath meditation is not Buddhist Ānāpānasati Bhāvanā.

- Breath meditation was practiced by yogis even at the time of the Buddha. So, breath meditation predates Buddha's Ānāpāna Bhāvanā. Buddha rejected it because it does not lead to Nibbāna or PERMANENT relief from suffering.
- There are many sutt $\bar{a}$ in the Tipiṭaka that clearly state that Nibbāna can be attained with the $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p \bar{a} n a$ Bhāvanā . It automatically fulfills Satipatthāna, Satta Bojjhañga, and all 37 Factors of Enlightenment. Therefore, $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p \bar{a} n a s a t i$ is infinitely deeper than just focusing on one's breath.
- I will provide evidence for those two statements below. First, let us see what can be accomplished with Buddhist Ānāpānasati bhāvanā.


## $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p a ̄ n a s s a t i$ by Itself Is Sufficient to Attain Nibbāna

2. According to the WebLink: suttacentral: Ānāpānassati Sutta (MN 118): "..Ānāpānassati, bhikkhave, bhāvitā bahulīkatā cattāro satipatṭhāne paripūreti. Cattāro satipaṭthānā bhāvitā bahulīkatā satta bojjhañge paripūrenti. Satta bojjhañgā bhāvitā bahulīkatā vijjāvimuttim paripūrenti."

- Translated, ". Ānāpānassati, when used (bhāvitā) and used frequently (bahulīkatā), completes (paripūreti) four types of Satipaṭthāna. Cattāro satipațthāna, when used and used frequently, completes Satta Bojjhañga. Satta Bojjhañga when used and used frequently, completes the full release (Nibbāna or Arahanthood)".
- The same statement was made in the WebLink: suttacentral: Ananda Sutta (SN 54.13). Most of the suttā in WebLink: suttacentral: Ānāpāna Sainyutta (SN 54) have that phrase or the phrase: ".."Ānāpānassati, bhikkhave, bhāvitā bahulīkatā mahapphalā hoti mahānisamisā." Here, "mahapphalā" ("mahā" + "phala") means the four Noble stages: Sotāpanna, Sakadāgāmī, Anāgāmī, Arahant.
- Therefore, it is clear that $\bar{a} n \bar{a} p \bar{a} n a s s a t i, ~ b y ~ i t s e l f, ~ c a n ~ l e a d ~ t o ~ a l l ~ t h e ~ w a y ~ t o ~ t h e ~ A r a h a n t h o o d . ~ T h u s, ~$ one does not need to do "separate vipassana (insight) meditation after getting to Samatha with $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p \bar{a} n a s s a t i "$ as some suggest.


## Can Nibbāna be Attained With Breath Meditation?

3. The key question is: "Can breath-meditation, by itself, lead to Arahanthood? That is the critical question that needs to be contemplated by those who equate $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p a \overline{n a s s a t i}$ to breathing meditation.

- Nibbāna is the removal of greed, hate, and ignorance: "rāgakkhayo dosakkhayo mohakkhayo idaì $v u c c a t i ~ n i b b a ̄ n a n t i$." This verse is in many suttā, for example, in WebLink: suttacentral: Nibbāna pañhā Sutta (SN 38.1).
- If Ānāpānassati means breath meditation, how could keeping the mind on one's breath by itself REMOVE rāga, dosa, and moha from one's mind?

4. The conventional (and erroneous) teaching in many texts today is that one needs to get to samādhi with $\bar{A} n a \bar{a} \bar{a} n a s s a t i$ and then one needs to do Vipassanā or insight meditation to attain magga phala.

- However, from the above-discussed suttā, it is quite clear that $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p a \overline{n a s s a t i}$ by itself can lead to even Arahanthood!
- Of course, this erroneous interpretation — that breath meditation is Buddhist Annāpāna bhāvanā — is not something that current practitioners came up with. It can be traced back to Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga, see "Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga - A Focused Analysis."


## The Aritṭha Sutta

5. The incorrect version of Ānāpānassati was there even before the Buddha. In the WebLink: suttacentral: Arittha Sutta (SN 54.06), the Buddha, upon finding out that Bhikkhu Ariṭ़ha was practicing the incorrect breath meditation as Ānāpānassati, told him the following. "..Atthesā, ariṭ! ha, ānāpānassati, nesā natthīti vadāmi. Api ca, ariṭtha, yathā ānāpānassati vitthārena paripuṇnā hoti taí suṇāhi, sādhukaì manasi karohi; bhāsissām $\vec{\imath}$ ’ii.

- Translated, "..There is that ānāpānassati, Aritṭha. I don’t say that there isn't. But I will describe the real (yath $\bar{a}) ~ \bar{a} n \bar{a} p a \overline{n a s s a t i, ~ l i s t e n ~ a n d ~ p a y ~ c l o s e ~ a t t e n t i o n . ~ I ~ w i l l ~ s p e a k . " ~}$
- Furthermore, breath meditation was used by yogis at that time even to attain higher jhāna. However, those anāriya jhāna are attained by just SUPPRESSING defilements (kilesa) and will not lead to ANY magga phala. Those who cultivate such anāriya jhāna will also have their next birth in Brahma realms, but after that they can be reborn even in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$.


## Assāsa/Passāsa And Āna/Āpāna

6. The main reason for the incorrect interpretation of $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p a \overline{n a s s a t i}$ as breath meditation is that in many suttā it is described as assāsa/passāsa, which conventionally means taking in/putting out of something, and particularly breathing in/breathing out.

- Āna/āpāna (which rhymes as ānāpāna) in general means taking in/putting out something. It can be breath or anything else.
 kusala/getting rid of akusala, or, equivalently, taking in the Noble Eightfold Path/discarding the micch $\bar{a}$ eightfold path.
- That should be clear to anyone who knows that Nibbāna is attained via getting rid of dasa akusala.


## Evidence from the Tipitaka

7. The WebLink: suttacentral: Assāsappatta Sutta (SN38.5), it is specifically says what needs to be "taken in" (assāsa):

- "Katamo panāvuso maggo katamā patipadā etassa assāsassa sacchikiriyāyāti (what needs to be 'taken in"). Ayameva kho, āvuso, ariyo atṭhañgiko maggo etassa assāsassa sacchikiriyāya (it is the Noble Eightfold Path that needs to be "taken in"). Seyyathïdaim (namely): sammāditṭhi sammāsañkappo sammāvācā sammākammanto sammāājīvo sammāvāyāmo sammāsati sammāsamādhi". [patipad $\bar{a}:[\mathrm{f}$.$] line of conduct; mode of progress. sacchikiriy \bar{a}:[\mathrm{f}$.$] realisation;$ experiencing.]
- WebLink: suttacentral: Parama assāsa Sutta (AN38.6) has the same statement, emphasizing the term "parama" or "superior."
- Therefore, there should not be any confusion about what assāsa means.
 magga phala is described in the WebLink: suttacentral: Padīpopama sutta (SN 54.8), also called the Dīpa Sutta.
- "So satova assāsati, satova passāsati" means "He maintains his mind on dhamma that should be taken in (kusala or moral) and those that should be gotten rid of (akusala or immoral)".
- "paținissaggānupassī assasissāmī’ti sikkhati, 'patinissaggānupassī passasissāmī'ti sikkhati" means, "one cultivates discipline (sikkhati) by removing bonds that bind one to the rebirth process (patinissaganupassi) by taking in morals (assasissāmi) and getting rid of immoral (passasissāmì)".


## Meaning Embedded in Ānāpāna

9. As is the case with many Pāli words, the meaning of the word $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p \bar{a} n a$ is embedded in the word itself. The two words "āna" and "āpāna" combine to rhyme as $\bar{a} n \bar{a} p \bar{a} n a$. When "sati" is added for being mindful of that, it becomes ānāpānassati.

- "A$n$ n" is taking in; In Sinhala, "ānanaya" is "import". "Apāna" is discarding; In Sinhala, "apannanaya" is "export". Thus "āna" + "āpāna" or ānāpāna is "taking in/discarding" or import/export.
- "Assa" is the same as " $\overline{n n a ", ~ a n d ~ " p a s s a " ~ i s ~ t h e ~ s a m e ~ a s ~ " a ̄ p a ̄ n a " . ~ I n ~ S r i ~ L a n k a, ~ p a r e n t s ~ t e l l ~ t h e i r ~ c h i l d ~ t o ~}$ clean his/her room by saying, "kāmaraya (room) assa passa (or aspas) karāganna" ("m0 mbcs qes?exsp ฉ๐๐๐รงคว")
- When cleaning the room, the child needs to get rid of the clutter (passa) but also can take in (assa) something like a flower vase to make the room look more pleasant or to take in a chair that can be useful.
- So, one does not throw away everything or take in everything. One needs to be selective in taking in "good things" and throwing away "bad things." That is where mindfulness comes in. That cannot be done with breath.


## Breath Meditation Can be Harmful

10. Most people are reluctant to give up the wrong "breath meditation" practice simply because they are attached to a "state of well-being" that can be reached with it. But that relief is only temporary.

- It is even possible to attain anāriya jhānā with breath meditation. Yet, those jhānā are also temporary because the defilements are only SUPPRESSED. On the other hand, the Ariya jhānā attained via correct $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p a \overline{n a s a t i ~ B h a ̄ v a n a ̄ ~ a r e ~ p e r m a n e n t . ~ T h a t ~ i s ~ b e c a u s e ~ e v e n ~ t o ~ a t t a i n ~ t h e ~ f i r s t ~ A r i y a ~ j h a ̄ n a, ~ o n e ~}$ MUST have first removed kāma rāga, not merely suppressed it. See "Samādhi, Jhāna, Magga Phala Introduction" and "Mundane versus Supramundane Jhāna."
- It must also be mentioned that breath meditation can be used to calm down one's mind. But one should not expect to make much progress towards Nibbāna using it. If one gets "addicted" to it (as I have seen many people do), it could be a serious distraction to the Noble Path. See "Breath Meditation Is Addictive and Harmful in the Long Run."


## $\bar{A} n a \bar{p} \bar{a} n a s a t i \operatorname{Bha} \bar{a} v a n a \bar{a}$ Is Not Only a Formal Meditation

11. As I have emphasized in the "Bhāvanā (Meditation)" section and the subsection "Mahā Satipatthāna Sutta," one should not restrict either Ānāpānasati or Satipatṭhāna bhāvanā to formal sessions conducted sitting down at an isolated place.

- When the Buddha said, "..Ānāpānassati, bhikkhave, bhāvitā bahulīkatā."" in \#2 above, he meant doing it as much as possible, anywhere possible. That means basically all the time! One just needs to be mindful of one's actions, speech, and thoughts, stopping bad ones and cultivating good ones.
- This is the fundamental approach to practice, see the "Living Dhamma" section for a step-by-step process that can be used by even those who do not believe in the basic tenets of Buddha Dhamma, like rebirth or kamma.
- In particular, see, "Ānāpānasati Eliminates Mental Stress Permanently" and "Ānāpāna and Satipatthāna Fundamentals."


## Mistranslated Verses

12. Some people believe that $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p \bar{q} n a s a t i$ or Satipatṭhāna bhāvanā should be done in formal sessions. That belief has origins in the verse, "Idha, bhikkhave, bhikkhu aranna gato vā rukkhamüla gato vā sunnāgāra gato vā nisidati pallankaì ābhujitvā, ujumं kāyaì paṇidhāya, parimukhaì satim upaṭ!hapetv $\bar{a}$ ", that appears in multiple suttā explaining both $\bar{A} n a \bar{p} \bar{a} n a s s a t i$ and Satipattāna bhāvan $\bar{a}$.

- In most English translations this verse is written as, "There is the case where a monk, having gone to the wilderness, to the foot of a tree, or an empty building, sits down folding his legs crosswise, holding his body erect, and setting mindfulness to the fore."
- But there is a deeper meaning to this verse. For example, in the word "rukkhamūla," "rukkha" is "tree" and "mūla" is the "root"; even though the top of a tree sways back and forth with the wind, the tree trunk close to the root is very stable. Thus "rukkham $\bar{u} l a$ gato $v \vec{a}$ " means getting to a stable mindset. The conventional interpretation says, "having gone to the foot of a tree".
- The deeper meaning of that complete verse is discussed in detail in "Prerequisites for the Satipatthāna Bhāvanā." Then the verse can be stated something like, "get into a calm and stable mindset that is devoid of greed, hate, and ignorance; keep a modest attitude without any sense of superiority; be forthright and honest, and keep the mind on the main object of cooling down the mind." That can be done anywhere, a formal session is not needed, even though that could be helpful.
- One could also use conventional meaning for formal sessions. But the deeper meaning is much more important even in formal sessions.


## Only Three Commentaries Can be Trusted

13. If anyone has any evidence to the contrary from the Tipitaka, please comment on the "Discussion Forum." I will be happy to address any such issues.

- Only three commentaries (Patisambhidāmagga, Petakopadesa, and Nettippakarana [Netti]) can be trusted. Those are in the Tipitaka. All other later commentaries have many inconsistencies and outright misinterpretations; see, for example, "Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga - A Focused Analysis."


## 8. The Basic Formal Ānāpānasati Meditation

## Revised June 17, 2022

## The top 10 posts in this section describe the fundamentals of Buddhist meditation. The rest of the posts in this section discuss meditation subjects. They clarify unresolved questions and help gain samädhi. The first 11 posts should be followed in that order, at least initially.

1. As we discussed in the previous posts of this series, it is important to live a moral life without engaging in the BIG EIGHT in order to achieve the full benefits of meditation. One could start even while making progress on the BIG EIGHT, and these formal sessions will help with those as well.
2. Now let us talk about how to do the correct $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p \bar{p} n a s a t i$ meditation as taught by the Buddha; see, "ㄱ. What is Ānāpāna?."

- First pick out a quiet time slot that you can allocate without having to worry about other tasks. Initially, 10-15 minutes a day would be fine and you can extend the time to several hours when the benefits of proper meditation become clear and you start feeling the nirāmisa sukha.

3. Pick out a room away from external disturbances as much as possible. A room that can be darkened and the door can be closed would be ideal. Sit in a comfortable chair with an armrest, and this becomes important when one starts getting into samādhi, because the body could become less rigid and tends to slide off(however, some people tend to "freeze" just like in samādhi statues in the beginning).

- Anyway, do not make the chair too comfortable because you may fall asleep. With practice this sleepiness will automatically go away, when the mind starts liking the meditation sessions, i.e., when one of the pañcan̄̄varaṇa, thina-middha, is automatically removed. One comes out of samādhi energized.

4. Sit in the chair with the hands-on lap and eyes closed. What we will be trying to do is to ward off any thoughts of lust, cravings, etc. (kāmacchanda), any thoughts of hate ( vyāpāda) in particular, and also any stray thoughts such as on kids or other pending tasks. We want to experience the "cooling down" due to the absence of kāmacchanda and vyāpāda, and also to focus the mind on a Dhamma concept. For those who are starting out, it may be good to do the following first:

- In order to keep the mind from running away, keep saying in your mind, 'May all beings be happy and healthy". Or, you could think about some act of generosity that you did recently. But all of a sudden you may drift to a thought of some type of sensual pleasure (involving any of the senses). Deliberately get rid of that thought and focus the mind back on the original task.
- If a hateful thought (towards someone or something) comes to mind, forcefully stop that thought as well. Here you should deliberately think good thoughts about that person. It is important to remember that even the vilest person has friends/family that love that person. Sincerely say, "May X be happy and healthy". Even if you have good reasons to despise that person, it is important to realize that our task is to remove the hateful feelings that WE have. When we do that, in the future we will not generate strong hateful feelings even if someone does something that may appear to be against us.
- Thinking about the serenity of a Buddha statue helps in the case of both kāmacchanda and vyāpāda (and any stray thought).

5. Once one gets some practice sitting in one place with a focused mind for a little while, one should start meditating or contemplating on Dhamma concepts. It may be a good idea to start with the introductory posts (posts above this post).

- After that, one could read one of the posts from the "Key Dhamma Concepts" on the top menu just before the meditation session and then contemplate those concepts; for example, one could think about examples on "anicca": We cannot maintain anything to our satisfaction over the long term. If you are old enough you have many examples on your own. If you are young, you can still maintain your body, hair, teeth, etc to your liking but when you get to middle age, you will see that it is an impossible task. The
easiest is to think about your parents/grand parents and see how their bodies have changed, how they are unable to keep their bodies the way they would like.
- For this purpose, I have also added new posts on how one can look at the world through Buddha Dhamma in this section. The posts that I have added after the "Myths about Meditation" are good ones to read before the session and then to meditate on those ideas; for example, " A Simple Way to Enhance Merits (Kusala) and Avoid Demerits (Akusala)." The other three posts below that one may be a bit advanced for some; if so, browse around and find ones that are suitable. Eventually, the key concepts in the "Key Dhamma Concepts" section need to be grasped. I encourage everyone to read the posts in the "Moral Living and Fundamentals" section first.
- You could actually read any post from any area of the site and use that as a "focal point" on the meditation session later on. Not all sections are relevant to everyone. Different people can get to samādhi focusing on different topics. The only posts that is absolutely necessary are the ones on anicca, dukkha, and anatta. But if they are hard to grasp, one should probably start at the "Moral Living" section. It is a matter of getting used to new concepts. In meditation, one will automatically "drift to samädhi" when the concepts become clear; the mind becomes awake and clear.

6. Inevitably, your mind will try to wander off during the session. Stopping lustful and hateful thoughts is the main task of this formal meditation session. If any distracting thought comes to the mind, DO NOT let it "run wild"; this is what is called "being mindful". Keep a sharp eye on such stray thoughts and put a stop soon as they surface.

- The other three hindrances (thina-middha, uddhacca-kukkucca, and vicikicchā) will automatically come down. You will be surprised how refreshed you feel after a "good meditation session".
- Initially, it may be hard, but if you are persistent you should be able to see the results within a week to a month depending on the situation with the BIG EIGHT. Those will also gradually diminish too.
- Once one gets the mind to calm down some, one could start focusing on the good/bad habits that one has, in addition to "taking in" Dhamma concepts.

7. In the Anapanapabba of the Satipatṭhāna sutta, it says, "..so sato va assa sati, sato va passa sati. Digham va assasanto digham assasami ti pajanati, digham va passasanto digham passasami $t i$ pajanati, ......" Here it DOES NOT mean "take long breaths in, expel long breaths out"; rather it means, "get rid of old bad habits, and cultivate the old good habits."

- Similarly, the very next sentence ("..rassam va assasanto ...") is not about short breaths, but about those good habits that you started to work on recently, and those bad habits that started to creep in to your mind recently (if there is any).
- This is why understanding how habits are formed and become āsavā is important; there are several posts on this subject.
- There is no way that one can purify one's mind by breathing in/out, even though it can get one's mind to calm down (samatha). The correct way of doing it does both Samatha and Vipassana together.
- In the above verse, sati is a very important term; it is not mere concentration, but contemplation with an understanding of anicca, dukkha, and anatta (actually any form of meditation cannot be done effectively without at least some understanding of anicca, dukkha, anatta).

8. The key to success is to do this as often as possible. You do not need to be in a quiet place either, even though it helps especially initially. As you make progress, try to do it while riding the subway or a bus (but not while driving!), while waiting at the doctor's office, during a lunch break, etc.
9. When one starts on Ariya Bhāvanā, sometimes things may look worse before getting better. It is like trying to cool a hot iron by sprinkling water on it when all that smoke comes out and may appear to be
getting worse. But one needs to be persistent. One needs to keep in mind that uncountable beings have attained "cooling down" by having faith in the Buddha.

- Understanding key Dhamma concepts is key to any type of meditation. Whenever you have time, try to read on different topics. Things will start "falling into place" at some point if it hasn't yet. From that point on, one will start feeling the joy of Dhamma and will be seeking to clarify things with enthusiasm. It is a good addition to have!

Next, "Key to Ānāpānasati - How to Change Character and Habits (Gati)", $\qquad$

### 12.10 Possible Effects in Meditation - Kundalini Awakening

June 25, 2016; revised July 19, 2016; August 9, 2021
In the post, "Can Buddhist Meditation be Dangerous?" in the Section "Myths or Realities," I discussed some possible effects of meditation, both in conventional and in true Buddhist meditations. Here I will focus on Buddhist meditation and explain the physical and mental changes that one may experience. However, this does not mean everyone will experience these; these symptoms cannot be generalized, and some may not even feel them.

1. It is possible that one may encounter some soothing physical sensations first and then even some discomforts when one starts seriously cleansing one's mind. I did not want to discuss this topic until I had enough background material to explain the origins of such effects.

- Some people may feel such first experiences to be not bad at all and even get attached to them. I believe that what is known in Hinduism as "kundalini awakening" manifests this effect. Those are supposed to be encountered in anāriya meditation techniques, where one stops the cleansing process at this stage. It is the goal of most of those non-Buddhist meditators.
- In genuine Buddhist meditation also one may experience certain such effects. However, they will not be painful.
- Before reading this post, it is advisable first to read the introductory post, "Can Buddhist Meditation be Dangerous?," because certain body sensations encountered in the early stages of meditation are discussed in that post.

2. Fully understanding the current post requires some background material on the concept of gandhabba; Click to hear pronunciation:

## WebLink: Listen to "Gandhabba" pronounciation

The inert physical body is made alive by the gandhabba (or "manomaya kaya") that comes out of the physical body in the case of "out-of-body experiences"; see, "Manomaya Kāya and Out-of-Body Experience (OBE)."

- There are many posts at the site that explain various aspects of the gandhabba; see the sections "Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya)," "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma," and "Udayavaya Ñāna."
- While it is not necessary to learn about the gandhabba to attain Nibbāna, if one needs to understand the mechanisms underlying these "meditation experiences," it is the bridge between mind and the physical body. In any case, it is good to know about these possible effects (more of which are discussed below), so that if one gets to experience them, one would not be perplexed.

3. The gandhabba has an "energy body," an invisible blueprint of the physical body. And that fine body is the one that controls the heavy physical body according to the commands from the mind, which is also located in the gandhabba (at the hadaya vatthu).

- The best way to visualize this is to imagine the gandhabba is a fine mesh that overlaps the physical body. It can move any part of the physical body, and is able to move any part that it wishes to move. For example, when the gandhabba moves its fine arm, the physical arm moves with it.
- This is how we control our physical bodies. Of course, there are more details with the brain acting out as an intermediary; see, "Brain - Interface between Mind and Body."
- For example, most of the energy to move the heavy body parts comes from the our food. Gandhabba sends the '

4. The nervous system of the physical body overlaps the fine nervous system of the gandhabba and tries to maintain that overlap all the time. If one sits down cross-legged, for example, the nervous system of the physical body may shift from that of the gandhabba. Then the physical nervous system will try to adjust for that shift, pulling the attached muscles with it.

- That is why it could become uncomfortable, especially for those not used to sitting cross-legged (when one gets used to it, the physical system will learn to adjust quickly).
- Therefore, this effect does not indicate progress in the meditation program. Significant effects are discussed below.

5. Our thoughts (i.e., the cittaja kaya) can influence the fine body (utuja kaya) of the gandhabba. In fact, the utuja kāaa arises out of suddhatthaka produced by the cittaja kaya and the kammaja kaya.

- Thus the fine body of the gandhabba can be affected by two methods: by the kammaja kaya (i.e. by kamma vipāka) AND by the cittaja kaya or according to how we think.
- The first effect can bring about aches and pains in the physical body due to kamma vipāka (by shifting the gandhabba's body to out-of-balance in a short time, so we can feel the shift). These are mostly experienced as we get old (e.g., chronic back pains) and are, of course, not due to meditation. Some of these may get better with meditation.

6. In addition to the shifts caused by kamma vipāka, we can change the equilibrium position of the gandhabba's fine nervous system with consistent thoughts over long periods of time. For example, if we think hateful thoughts a lot, the nervous system of the gandhabba may twist in a certain way; if we think mostly greedy thoughts, it may shift differently.

- Thus, as we think defiled thoughts and act on them regularly, it leads to gradual twisting nerve bundles [meridians being repaired for easy access by the gandhabba] in the gandhabba, and physical muscles also get twisted accordingly. Since it is a gradual process compared to the first effect, we do not normally feel it (until we get old).
- However, when we start cleansing our minds the fine body of the gandhabba tries to come back to its equilibrium position. During a good meditation session, this can happen fairly quickly, and that is when one starts feeling such nerve [meridian] (and muscle) movements. We are basically trying to "undo" those twists in nerve bundles that occurred over years and years.
- This is why this effect is much less in young children. Their nerves have not yet being shifted too much.

7. Thus, the second effect has its origins in our thoughts. Normally such effects occur above the waist, along the spine, neck, and in the head. This is related to the fact that nerve bundles [meridians] propagate through the spine and also there are cranial nerves in the brain. Thus "Kundalini awakening" is an example of this category.

- This effect is experienced by different meditators somewhat differently. But the dominant feature is the "pressure waves" that arise above the waist and are normally located around the spine, neck, throat, and head. These have been attributed to energy centers or "chakras" in Kundalini awakening; see, "WebLink: wiki: Kundalini."
- That is why they say that the kundalini energy is "uncoiled" (or "awakened") during meditation. But this is nothing more than the out-of-balance nervous systems coming back to the equilibrium position. In anāriya meditations, there is not much further cleansing is possible. To proceed further, one needs to comprehend the anicca nature of this world.

8. In Buddhist or Ariya meditations, one should start contemplating the anicca nature when one starts any body sensations. Body sensations indicate that the mind is beginning to affect the body and has made progressed in the cleansing process. Of course, those Hindu yogis who got to this stage had prevented from immoral acts and suppressed such thoughts, and thus had gained a tranquility of mind at least temporarily.

- But if one does not permanently cleanse one's mind, with the comprehension of the true nature of this world (anicca, dukkha, anatta), such corrections are temporary. They can go right back to the twisted positions. Thus one may experience such effects to varying degrees.

9. When one starts comprehending the anicca nature, this "unwinding process" can accelerate (and the body sensations too). This is when one may even start feeling significant discomfort or even mild pain.

- If the body is really "out-of-alignment," the realignment process can lead to different types of sensations; some may be mild, but some could be even a bit painful.

10. Many people experience sweating, which is definitely part of the "cleansing process." Our defiled thoughts lead to the generation of "impurities" in various body sites. The pure citta generated in meditation can burn them, and the body will get rid of the waste via sweat. Thus sweating is also possible during a good meditation session (in the early stages of progress; of course, all these go away eventually).

- Another related symptom is becoming thirsty during a good session; the mouth can get dry. It is good to keep a glass of water close by if that is the case.
- By the way, one can move around even while in a jhāna. In fact, when one cultivates the $j h \bar{a} n a$, one can open eyes and not be bothered by it. I can confirm that. In fact, those who have abhiññ̄ $\bar{a}$ powers are said to be able to do regular work while using abhiññ̄a powers.
- For example, a famous story in the Tipiṭaka describes how Ven. Chullapanthaka had created a thousand copies of himself with abhiñña powers and how they were all sweeping the temple premises.

11. Here is another experience that I have heard people described according to my teacher Thero's recorded desanās:

- "Something propagated from the neck area to the top of the head and stayed there during the session. This happened during subsequent sessions too". Such a "propagation" is probably more like a "pressure wave". This is another "kundalini type" effect.
- When these "pressure waves" are strong, it may be a bit painful too. But be rest assured that those effects will gradually go away as one continues when the nervous system comes back to equilibrium. However, if such sensations persist outside the meditation session, it may be a good idea to go for a medical examination since it could be due to a medical condition.

12. There is actually a way to reduce these sensations to some extent. This was suggested by my teacher Thero in a desana $\bar{a}$ that I listened to. Even if one meditates with the eyes closed (as most people should do in the early stages), the eye balls inside eyelids are in constant motion; they move around a lot.

- One should try to focus the eyes on the nose area. This is done sort of by one's mind, but the eyeballs keep steady, pointing towards nose. In my case, it stopped most of the sensations in the head. Eventually, of course, these sensations go away, once one attains "equilibrium." Then one can proceed even with the eyes open but still focused towards the nose/mouth area.
- Now I do not have any of those "pressure waves" that experienced in the throat area and recently those in the head area also went away. Some of these effects had been there for the past year and a half.
- Getting to the first Ariya jhāna means one has reached the Anāgāmī stage, where one loses desire for all sense pleasures (i.e, transcend kāma loka). See \#9 of "Power of the Human Mind - Ariya Jhānā."

13. Our thoughts or our "cittaja kaya" are the most important of the four types of "kaya" that we have. For a discussion of those four types of bodies, see, "Āhāra (Food) in Udayavaya Ñāna," in the Section: Udayavaya Nāna.

- As discussed there, our physical bodies (karaja kaya) that we value so much are there only for about 100 years, while our human bhava or human existence can last many hundreds of years. The other three types of bodies of kaya that we have are kammaja kaya, cittaja kaya, and utuja kaya. All three of these prevail through the whole human bhava (of course, they undergo constant change); they make a "big transition" when a new bhava is grasped at the cuti-patisandhi moment).
- And it is this cittaja kaya (or basically our thought stream) that is the most important. If we use the cittaja kaya wisely, we can make progress in our mundane lives as well as in pursuing Nibbāna. We will discuss this in detail in the last post on the Udayavaya $\tilde{N}$ āna in an upcoming post.

14. The key point here is that if one starts feeling these body sensations, one has cleansed the mind to the point of being able to comprehend anicca, dukkha, anatta (or any other Dhamma concept) with more ease; see, "Buddha Dhamma - In a Chart," and the post discussed there.

- At this stage (i.e., when feeling thirst, sweating, body sensations, etc.), one is likely to be somewhere

- Of course it is also possible that one could have already comprehended anicca, dukkha, anatta and has attained the Sotāpanna stage without any such symptoms. Each person needs to decide that for themselves; see, "How Does One Know whether the Sotāpanna Stage is Reached?." The fundamental guide is whether one has removed those "apāyagāmī gati" via cleansing the mind. The physical body may or may not give those clues that we discussed above.
- For attaining magga phala, jhānā are not necessary. Furthermore, Ariya jhānā cannot be attained without attaining at least the Sotāpanna stage first; see, "11. Magga Phala and Ariya Jhānā via Cultivation of Saptha Bojianga."
- Mental (and associated physical) phenomena are highly personal. Thus above discussed symptoms may or may not be experienced by a particular person.


### 12.11 9. Key to Ānāpānasati - How to Change Habits and Character (Gati)

## The top 10 posts in this section describe the fundamentals of Buddhist meditation. The rest of the posts in this section are on possible meditation subjects. They can clarify unresolved questions, and lead to samädhi. But one must contemplate on them.

Meditation is all about purifying one's mind. We all have individualized cravings and habits that we have acquired in our past lives that continue during this life unless we act to change or stop them. We need to cultivate good habits and stop bad ones. The only way to do this is to be mindful of our actions and stop bad actions as they start as thoughts in our minds. Most bad thoughts arise due to bad habits; they just "pop up".

- Introduction to Character or Personality (Gati)
- A Broad View of the "Person" Trying to be a "Better Person"
- How Character (Gati) Leads to Bhava and Jāti
- How Habits are Formed and Broken - A Scientific View


### 12.11.1 Introduction to Character or Personality (Gati)

1. Here is a good place to see why the Buddha rejected both the concept of a "self" AND a "no-self" (or "soul" AND "no-soul'". We first need to realize that the task of purifying the mind is very personal; only you know about your mind and only you can purify it. The perception of a "no-self" is a bad starting point to do this cleansing.

- We can easily see that "a person" changes over time, both physically and mentally (see the next post). Thus it is easy to see that a concept of a "soul" or "self" does not hold water.
- However, each of us is DIFFERENT, and UNIQUE; no two are the same even at a fixed time. Even though each person changes, the change itself is unique to "that person" and CAN BE initiated by that person. What makes one person different from another is his/her character (gati).
- For those people who say, "there is no-self" or "there is no real me", I ask: "Then is it OK if someone hits you with a stick or hurt you badly in some way?". Obviously, that is not fine. Just by denying something that is as real as suffering itself, will not make the problem go away. Just being philosophical is not going to make the problem disappear.
- This is why the Buddha rejected both extremes of "self" and "no-self".

2. Actually as one increasingly realizes the fruitlessness of struggling to seek sense pleasures, the feeling of "self" starts to decrease. An Arahant is the closest to a "self-less person"; but even an Arahant has some unique character qualities: nothing to do with greed, hate, and delusion, but more like kammically neutral habits.

- For example, there is this story about a very young Arahant. One day a man came to take this bhikkhu to his house for a "dāna", which consists of a lunch followed by a gift (usually things that are needed for a bhikkhu like a robe, a towel, etc). On the way, they ran into some puddles on the ground and the young bhikkhu jumped over one. The man thought, "Oh, this bhikkhu is not even disciplined let alone having any magga phala; maybe I should not give him the gift". They came across a few more puddles and the bhikkhu went around them. So, the man asked, "Why did you jump over only that one?". The bhikkhu told him, "If I jumped over anymore puddles, I would probably lose my lunch too". It turned out that the bhikkhu was an Arahant with abhiññā powers and read the man's mind! Also it is said that the bhikkhu was born a monkey for many lives in the recent past, and he still had that sansāric "monkey habit" of jumping over things.

3. Habits are formed via repeated use. The Buddha said, "yā yan tanhā pono bhavitha....." or "bhava or habits are formed by tanh $\bar{a}$ for various things, activities. Remember that Tanh $\bar{a}$ means "getting attached to something via greed, hate, of ignorance"; see, "Tanhā - How we Attach via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance."
4. What we are concerned about is only getting rid of immoral habits and cultivating moral habits. This will make oneself a "better person" long before one even thinks about attaining Nibbāna. This can be done with simple process called "āna-pāna" or "taking in good habits" and "discarding bad habits".

- The Buddha said, "bhāve thabbancha bhavithan, pahee thabbancha paheenan" or "keep doing what is good, get rid of those that are not good". The meaning is a bit deeper than that because "bhāve" there refers to making "bhava". The more one does something, it becomes one's "bhava". And the less one willfully stops doing, that "bhava" tends to go away. This is what the neurologists are re-discovering today; see, "How Habits are Formed and Broken - A Scientific View."

5. The bad habits need to be stopped each time it surfaces, right there. The Buddha said, "ette san uppajjamana uppajati, paheeyamana paheeyathi" or "each time a "san" (a bad habit) resurfaces, it needs to be recognized and stopped right then."

- Therefore, one must do this not only in sitting meditation sessions, but as much as possible, whenever possible.
- This is what the Buddha also meant by "asevitaya, bhavithaya, bahuleekathaya," or "associate, use, and do as much as possible whenever possible" everything that helps with A $\bar{n} \bar{p} p \bar{n} n a s a t i$. These are described in the post, "Habits, Goals. and Character (Gati)".

6. I cannot emphasize enough the importance of understanding what is truly involved in annāpānasati. The recent findings on the workings of the brain really helps clarify and highlight some key points that the Buddha emphasized. I think it will help anyone understand the process much better. But first we will take a brief look at how these character qualities are inherited.

Next, "A Broad View of the "Person" Trying to be a "Better Person"",

### 12.11.2 A Broad View of the "Person" Trying to be a "Better Person"

## Revised November 28, 2018

1. Let us see how and why we act with greed, hate, and ignorance. Stated simply, all we do during a day does not happen by chance.

- Our actions are based on our "character" (more correctly gati) AND "our way of thinking about this world based on our views about the world"; "gati" is pronounced as "gati".
- For example, if one does not believe in a rebirth process, or the law of kamma (that each action has consequences), then it may be easier to seek enjoyment at the expense of other beings.

2. What our character or world view today is due to a complex combination of many things, but the main factors are: (i) sansāric habits (also called gati and āsavas), (ii) biological parents who provide parts of the physical body (this is also related to kamma vipāka), (iii) the environment that one grew up AND the current environment (i.e., physical environment and people one associates with).

- Even though the complexity of a "person" cannot be reduced to simple things, those are major ones. As the Buddha pointed out in the Sabbasava sutta (see, "Habits, Goals. and Character (Gati)"), the main things that CAN BE changed NOW are "physical environment and people one associates with" which is a part of (iii) above. If we are talking about a child, then (iii) applies in its entirety.
- Once these "external influences" are taken care of, next is to purify the mind by "taking in" good things and "discarding" bad things or "ānāpāna"; see, "7. What is Ānāpāna?."

3. When we are conceived in the mother's womb, a "blueprint" of the new life is in the form of a manomaya $k \bar{a} y a$ (which is made of undetectably fine matter) descends to the womb and combines with the zygote formed by the combination of an egg from the mother and the sperm from the father.

- This manomaya kāya is the same as gandhabba or pațisandhi viñ̃̄āṇa.

4. The manomaya kāya comes with three rūpa kalapas called the kaya dasaka (blueprint for the physical body), bhava dasaka (whether male or female), and vatthu dasaka (mind element, which has the "gati" in it) that were determined by the kamma vipāka that led to the birth; we will discuss these later in the Abhidhamma section.

- Thus the physical body of the new life is now going to be affected by not only the kaya dasaka, but also the genetic material in the egg and the sperm (DNA of the parents). As the fetus grows, it will also be affected by the food intake by the mother as well as her mental state, home environment, etc. After the birth until death, the physical body (as well as the mind) will be affected by many other factors including the diet and the environment.
- This is discussed in detail at: "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception."

5. Thus there is no "unchanging self" either mentally or physically; everything is in constant flux. But one cannot say "there is no-self' either because the character qualities (gati and $\bar{a} s a v a$ ) that comes in with the manomaya kāya will keep "evolving"; even though they change, there is a continuation of a particular lifestream.

- Each person or animal that born is unique with a complex set of mental and physical parameters that evolve moment-to-moment like a flowing river; see, "What Reincarnates? Concept of a Lifestream".
- We will discuss some of these factors in various sections, but the key point I wanted to get across is the fact that each person has a unique set of character qualities (gati and $\bar{a} s a v a$ ) that have evolved over uncountable number of lives in the past. And those are the key to one's destiny. One has the power to change those.

6. What makes one person different from another is this set of "gati and $\bar{s} a v a$ ", which can be loosely translated as, "character qualities and deep-seated cravings". Some people are calm and quiet while others are rough and boisterous; some like music while other like to watch things or engage in physical activities; the possibilities are endless and there are innumerable combinations of them. That is why each person is different.

- Hidden in these apparently harmless "habits" and "cravings" are the defilements or the tendencies to engage in certain types of activities that are harmful to oneself or the others.
- The key is to focus on the glaring character flaws first: if one engaged in activities such as fishing or hunting, that means willfully taking the life of other beings for one's pleasure. Does that makes sense within the wider world view of any given being repeatedly born in any of the 31 realms? Within that broader view, we can see that any animal, how small or insignificant, has an attachment to its life; and we could have had that very life in the past.
- Take another example of a transaction between two people. The goal should be to make a decent profit for oneself making sure one covers the cost and make enough profit to "stay in business and provide for the family", but not to make the transaction too burdensome on the other party. As we discussed in the post, "Kamma, Debt, and Meditation", one could get into deep debt to other people and beings by exploiting them in many different ways.

7. The easiest way to deal with this is to look at each action mindfully and decide whether that act is "fair" to everyone involved. Of course one could check to see any of the ten defilements (dasa akusala) are committed by that action; see, "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)."

- As I keep saying, one needs to focus on the more extreme violations first. There is no point in worrying about inadvertently killing some insects while gardening if one is engaged in lying and deceit or killing
animals for pleasure. It is good to get an idea of the severity of different acts; see, "How to Evaluate Weights of Different Kamma".

8. This is why it is important to learn Dhamma as much as possible, while engaging in meditation. The Path becomes clear as one learns the subtleties in key Dhamma concepts.

- I am amazed how much I learn each and every day; it is like a picture becoming clearer by the day. You start to see the even smallest detail, and instead of becoming distraught you get a sense of clarity and peacefulness by cleansing the mind. You realize that no one is perfect until the Arahanthood and the key is to make progress, no matter where you are. Each step in the right direction makes you feel better.

Next, "How Habits are Formed and Broken - A Scientific View",

### 12.11.3 How Character (Gati) Leads to Bhava and Jāti

$J a ̄ t i$ (births) depend on gati (habits/character.) Therefore, it is critical to cultivating "good gati."

## Revised August 9, 2021

1. A special knowledge that the Buddha gained at the Enlightenment was the āsavakkhaya ñaña. This is the key to stop the suffering FROM ARISING via getting rid of the deep-seated cravings (āsava) that we all have. Āsavakkhaya ñāna ("āsava" + "khaya," where "khaya" is the opposite of "san"; see, "What is "San"?) is the knowledge on how to remove those cravings (āsava).
2. Throughout the site, I keep emphasizing the importance of understanding (not memorizing) the meanings of the key Pāli words like gati, anusaya, āsava, bhava, jāti, samisāra, and dukkha; they are intimately interconnected in many ways including Paṭicca Samuppāda. The way to stop future suffering (dukkha) from arising and reach Nibbāna is to break the perpetual cycle that lead to a new $j \bar{a} t i$ (birth) at each death.

- Our problems do not go away at death (committing suicide is a bad idea); they merely get started in a new phase with a new body, which could be worse than what we have now; see, "What Reincarnates? Concept of a Lifestream."
- The connections among bhava and jāti on one side and āsava, anusaya, and gati on the other side are intimate, and need to be understood well; see, "Samsāric Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Āsava)," before reading the rest of this post.

3. And this understanding is needed even if one is not seriously thinking about Nibbāna. The whole key to suffering, in general, is embedded in these intricate relationships.

- Bhava and $j a \bar{a} t i$ also happen during this very life; jāti could mean birth of a new desire; see, "Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda" and "Bhava and Jāti - States of Existence and Births Therein."
- It may be a bit confusing for a new person to this site, but have patience and read the inter-connected posts. I have links everywhere to pertinent posts/material. Once you understand the underlying connections, it will clarify everything, like a fog being lifted.
- I have set up links to open them in new windows so that you can go back forth between posts easily and try to "fill-in-the-gaps."

4. A perpetual cycle that is ever-present in the sansāric cycle of rebirths is described in the following verse:
"uppado pavattaì, pavatta nimittaì
nimitta pațisandhi, pațisandhi gati"

- "Uppada" means arising. When āsava (cravings) arise due the triggering of anusaya (hidden temptations,) we need to stop that temptation and break the cycle at "pavattaim" (which means keeping it or go with it).
- If we go along with the temptation ("pavatta"), then it becomes a nimitta (literally a "sign"). A nimitta is a characteristic that is associated with that particular act. For example, for an alcoholic, a picture of an alcohol bottle or a bar (or where one normally drinks), or even seeing a friend with whom one drinks often, can be a nimitta; when any of such a "symbol" comes to the mind, it reminds of the drinking act and gets one in the "mood."

5. Most times, the patisandhi (linking the next rebirth) takes place via a nimitta; this is what is meant by "nimitta pattisandhi" above. At the dying moment, what comes to the mind is likely to be something that one often does, which could become the link to the next life.

- A drug addict, if lucky to be born human again, will be attracted to a mother who is a drug addict.
- For a person with lot of hate, what comes to the mind at the dying moment could be a picture of an arch enemy; then the kammic power shows him a gun or a knife and he will be likely to attack the person with that weapon (in a dream-like state); the next moment he will be in an apaya (hell), which is the "matching place."

6. The worst thing is that the old habits continue and even strengthened in this new life; this is why "pattisandhi gati" meant above. Suppose a drug addict born to an addicted mother is adopted by another family and raised in a drug-free environment. Still, if that child becomes exposed to drugs later in life, he could be tempted to use drugs because of his sansāric habit.

- This is the danger in the rebirth process or sainsāra; one keeps going down the slippery slope unless one changes one's habits with effort. And reversing that trend can be done only in a human life.
- Sentient beings in most realms do not act willfully but according to their sansāric habits. We can see only the animal realm. Clearly, animals do things mechanically (almost like robots, but not quite only because they have FEELINGS). Only the beings in higher realms have genuine free-will and it is optimum for humans.
- You can see that many animals have unique characteristics: such characteristics and habits are associated with that particular existence (bhava). For example, some birds have been building the same type of nests from begimningless time through countless world cycles; but they are unable to make it any better. Migrating birds know exactly where to fly. New born turtles head to the sea right after the eggs are hatched; see the video:


## WebLink: YOUTUBE: New Born, Baby Sea Turtles Race to the Ocean!

7. However, humans can change their destiny. They have free will and the ability to come up with "new ideas." We keep building new things, discovering new things, and making progress.

- We need to keep in mind that we can also purify our minds and become free of this unending and suffering-laden rebirth process. If we ever get birth in one of the lower realms, we will be stuck there for a long time to come.
- The way to purify our minds is to get rid of bad habits. Excessive greed (this includes addictions to anything, including food, money, property, alcohol, drugs, etc.) and anger are the first two things one needs to work on.
- This does not mean one has to give away one's wealth; just don't be too attached to them. One has "earned" that wealth from previous good deeds, so one does not need to feel bad about it. But those things last only about 100 years, and who knows what we will inherit in the next life.

8. And the key to be permanently free of the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$ is to get rid of those bad character qualities (gati) that can give us birth in those four realms.

- We can avoid the niraya (hell) by getting rid of hate; we can stay away from peta (hungry ghost) worlds by getting rid of greed, we can make sure to not get a birth in the asura realm by not getting "free rides," and making our own living honestly ("a"+"süra" means "not able" or those who depend on others).
- An animal birth results from gati that have all three roots of greed, hate, and ignorance; animal realm is called "thirisan" in Pāli or Sinhala: "thiri" is three and "san" is greed, hate, and ignorance. Thus an animal birth is caused by gati that have all three immoral roots.
- In the same way, we can make it possible to be born a deva by being generous to others; we can make it possible to become a Brahma by cultivating mett $\bar{a}$, karuṇa, mudi $t \bar{a}$, upekkh $\bar{a}$; and we can optimize chances for a human birth by cultivating wisdom as well.

9. But no matter how well we live this life, we do not know what kind of "kammic baggage" we carry from previous lives. Thus the only way to avoid the four lower realms (apāyā) with CERTAINTY is to attain the Sotāpanna stage of Nibbāna. And we can do this by comprehending anicca, dukkha, anatta, the true nature of this world.

- When one truly comprehends anicca, dukkha, anatta, one's mind automatically rejects actions that are bound to maintain and cultivate bad gati, and encourage actions that will cultivate good gati. If this is done to the level of getting rid of the four greedy citta with wrong vision and the citta with vicikicch $\bar{a}$, then one becomes PERMANENTLY free of the ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$; see, "Akusala Citta - How a Sotāpanna Avoids Apāyagāmi Citta."

10. Finally, another interesting video from the animal world shows how ants build sophisticated cities. But unlike humans, the ability to do that does not come from ingenious minds; ants have been doing the same for eternity. It is a "characteristic" that is naturally associated with the "ant bhava." Each ant "knows" what to do, just like the baby turtles who race to the sea just after being hatched. It is the same with how birds know where to fly in their long migrations.

- There is so much that the Buddha explained to the world, but the world is still unaware of.


## WebLink: YOUTUBE: Giant Ant Hill Excavated

11. More details on the importance of gati in the rebirth process are discussed in, "Patisandhi Citta - How the Next Life is Determined According to Gati."

### 12.12 Karaniya Metta Sutta - Metta Bhāvanā

October 7, 2018; revised September 6, 2019; revised \#5 on February 11, 2021
Karaniya Metta Sutta is one of the popular suttā in Buddhist countries. However, like many suttā, it has not been appropriately translated in most current English translations.

1. First of all, the actual name of the sutta is Karaniyamattha Sutta. It comes from "karaniyama" meaning "essential to do" (س® CSOO (kalayutuma means "requires") in Sinhala) and "attha" meaning "oneself." That means this sutta summarizes what one must do (to make progress on the Path). But this is not a significant error since Metta bhāvanā is there too.

- Those "requirements" are in the first three verses.
- The actual "Metta bhāvan $\vec{a}$ " part is in verses 4 through 8.
- Verse 9 says that one should do this bhāvanā in all four postures. This bhāvanā is the "Brahma Vihāra" or "living like a Brahma" or "living with the mindset of a Brahma."
- Verse 10: When one fulfills the "requirements" at the basic level, one will get to the Sotāpanna stage. With the cultivation of Metta bhāvanā, one will get to be an Anāgāmi (not born in a womb again).

|  | Pali | English |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 1 | Karañīyamattha kusalena, <br> Yantam santaì padà் <br> abhisamecca; <br> Sakko ujū ca suhujū ca, <br> Sūvaco cassa mudu anatimān̄̄ | What kusala should be done by one who is seeking cooling down (by seeing the unfruitful nature of this world): moral, upright and disciplined, with pleasing manners and humble. |
| 2 | Santussako ca subharo ca, Appakicco ca sallaukavutti; Santindriyo ca nipako ca, Appagabbho kulesuananugiddho | Always happy, bearing only good (gati), with few mundane duties and simple life, with senses calmed and a cooled mind, with few burdens (possessions), and treating everyone the same (regardless of race, color, etc.). |
| 3 | Na ca khuddamsamācare kiñci, Yena viñ̃̄̄̄ pare upavadeyyum; Sukhino va khemino hontu, Sabbe sattā bhavantu sukhitattā | Not engaging in harmful/lowly actions (and this thought that one always holds), may all beings attain Nibbāna (and get to the ultimate happiness). |
| 4 | Ye keci pānabhūtatthi, <br> Tasā vā thāvarā vā anavasesā; Dīghā vā ye mahantā vā, Majjhimā rassakānukathūlā | Whoever there may be with a breath of life, trapped by greed for so long in saysāra, may they be free of fear and greed without exception. |
| 5 | Ditṭhā vā ye va aditṭhā, <br> Ye ca dūre vasanti avidūre; <br> Bhūtā vā sambhavesī vā, <br> Sabbe sattā bhavantu sukhitattā | Those who are seen or unseen, those dwelling far or near, those born as well as those seeking birth (gandhabbā), may all beings attain Nibbāna. |
| 6 | Na paroparam nikubbetha, Nātimaññetha katthacinam kañci; Byārosanā patighasañña, Näñ̃amaññassa dukkhamiccheyya | May no one deceive another, treat everyone like close relatives. May they not wish each other harm, and by seeing the unfruitful nature of this world, may they be free of suffering. |
| 7 | Mātā yathā niyamimputtam àysā ekaputtamanurakkhe; Evampi sabbabhūtesu, Mānasamibhāva ye aparimānaì | Just as a mother would protect her only child with her life, may this protection affect all beings on an equal footing. |


|  | Pali | English |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 8 | Mettañca sabbalokasmim, Mānasambbhāva ye aparimānain; Uddham் adho ca tiriyañca, Asambādhaì averam asapattaìm | May all cultivate mettā towards all beings on an equal footing, those who live above, below, or across. May all be unhindered and without enmity. |
| 9 | Tiṭthà̇ caramं nisinno $v \bar{a}$, Sayāno vā yāvatassa vighatamiddho; <br> Etaì satim adhittheyya, <br> Brahmametaì Vihāram idhamāhu | Whether standing, walking, sitting or lying down, may all sustain this mettā mindset (what the Buddha called Brahma Vihāra). |
| 10 | Ditṭhiñca anupaggamma, Sïlavā dassanena sampanno; <br> Kāmesu vinaya gedhamं, <br> Na hi jātugabbaseyyam punaretī"t $t$ | Being moral based on right vision (a Sotāpanna), and by removing kāma rāga with effort one will never again be in a womb (Sakadāgāmi or higher). |

Note: The pdf file of the sutta itself can be downloaded here: "WebLink: PDF File: Karaniya Metta Sutta."
2. Deeper explanations are in some words like "abhisamecca" ("abhi" + "san" + "avecca"), and "dukkhamicceyya" ("dukkham" + "avecceyya").

- Avecca is the keyword in both cases, and I discussed the deep connection to "icca" and thus Tilakkhaṇa in the post, "Sotapatti Anga - The Four Qualities of a Sotāpanna" (starting at \#9 in the post).
- If anyone needs more explanations of other words, we can discuss it at the discussion forum, but we will look at one more next.

3. Another keyword is "mānasaimbhāva," which comes from "mānasan" and "bhava," meaning one's mind (ideally) does not contaminate beyond the "mānasam"" stage.

- When thoughts (citta) arise, they get contaminated within a fraction of a second due to one's gati. That is discussed in the post, "Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)."
- Therefore, the goal is to improve one's gati, so that one's citta will not contaminate beyond the "mānasaì" stage (reached the Arahant stage). One should strive to approach that mindset right now, at least while meditating.
- As one gets closer to that stage, one will have true mettā AUTOMATICALLY for increasingly more and more living beings. At Arahanthood, one will have boundless mettā to all: "mānasaíbhāva ye aparimānaì."

4. The first three verses in the sutta state how one gets to the Sotāpanna stage by getting to the Ariyakanta silla (unbreakable moral conduct). That is when one will have aveccappasāda (unbreakable faith in the Buddha, Dhamma, Sangha). That is discussed in detail in the post, "Sotapatti Anga - The Four Qualities of a Sotāpanna."

- Then by cultivating mettā, one can gradually get rid of $k \bar{a} m a$ rāga and get to the Sakadāgāmi and Anāgāmi stages.
- However, this is an excellent sutta to listen to and to recite even before getting to the Sotāpanna stage. It is better to recite Päli verses with an understanding of the meaning of those verses. The sound itself is beneficial, especially when pronounced correctly, as done by the Thero in the recording below.
- It is also good to play the recording in the background while doing other things or during meditation. In Asian countries, this it is common practice to play this sutta in the mornings, while everyone is getting ready to go to school or work.

5. A recital of the sutta by Waharaka Thero is below:

WebLink: Karaniya Metta Sutta in mp3
Note: In the recital, the sutta ends around 4:45. The Thero starts reciting the following verse:
"Nakkhatta-yakkha-bhūtānaì
Pāpaggahā nivāranā
Parittassānubhāvena
Hantu mayhaí upaddave"
It is a verse from "Mahā Jayamañgala Gātha" where merits are offered to other beings. See, p. 42 of the following booklet, which is a useful guide:
"WebLink: buddhistelibrary.org: Vandanā: The Album of Pāli Devotional Chanting \& Hymns"

### 12.13 <br> 10. Attaining the Sotāpanna Stage via Removing Ditṭhāsava

The top 10 posts in this section describe the fundamentals of Buddhist meditation. The rest of the posts in this section discuss meditation subjects. They clarify unresolved questions and gain samädhi. The first 11 posts should be followed in that order, at least initially.

July 30, 2015: I have re-written the two posts \#10 and \#11 (previously titled, "10. Magga Phala and Ariya Jhānā via Cultivation of Satta Bojjhañga" and " 11 . How to Select and "Grow" Meditation Procedures for Magga Phala") that were written some time back with different titles. Over the past two months, I have clarified some subtle issues in my experience and technical details. Revised August 5, 2017; September 19, 2018 (updated links).

- First, the order of things: samādhi, magga phala, and then Ariya jhānā in that order; see, "Possible Outcomes of Meditation - Samādhi, Jhāna, Magga Phala."
 "Sotāpanna Stage of Nibbāna" section for details on this and many other aspects.

1. First, it would be challenging to get to even a state of samādhi if one is not keeping up the "conventional" five precepts: abstaining from killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, and using drugs or getting intoxicated. Those things make the mind restless, and hard for the mind to focus attention (the five hindrances "cover the mind"). Just strictly obeying the five precepts may not be effective if one's mind is full of jealousy, extreme greed, hate, etc.; see "The Five Precepts - What the Buddha Meant by Them."

- Just like one cannot see the bottom of a well if it is highly contaminated, the mind (and the body) will not "feel anything" even in a formal meditation session if the mind is "highly contaminated." And there is no point in trying to take out the "small defilements" (such as abstaining from taking a glass of wine) if one is engaged in immoral activities.
- With the "big defilements" removed, one starts seeing a little bit further down the well; similarly, one's mind will become lighter, with less stress, even when not in a formal meditation session. Siting down in a quiet place makes it easier to get to some state of "samādhi," or tranquility.
- The Buddha said that "kusala sìla" leads to the tranquility of the body and mind, leading to samādhi. The "kusala silla" accomplished via gaining Sammā Ditṭhi (to some extent) is all that is needed to attain the upacāra samādhi needed for the Sotāpanna magga/phala. All three samyojana removed at the Sotāpanna stage (sakkāya ditṭhi, vicikicchā, silabbata parāmāsa) are associated with the wrong vision or ditṭhi.

2. Many believe one needs to "get to samādhi" using a separate meditation technique such as conventional breath meditation. Even though one could do that, it would be a waste of time. One can get to samādhi by listening or reading attentively to CORRECT dhamma.

- There is not even a single reference in the Tipitaka where the Buddha asked anyone to do a "Samatha $B h \bar{a} v a n \bar{a}$ " first and then to "vipassana bhāvanā." When one comprehends Dhamma, one's mind gets calm, and through that Samatha state, one can get to magga phala.
- After attaining the Sotāpanna stage, one can get to Ariya jhānā by focusing on that "state of cooling down" that one has already achieved to some extent, to get to jhānā.
- One needs formal meditation techniques to attain higher magga phala, i.e., above the Sotāpanna stage; the reason will become clear shortly. However, it is fine to do formal meditation even to attain the Sotāpanna stage. In the following, I will describe what I went through.

3. To get to samādhi, contemplating Dhamma concepts will make it easier and faster. Also, one can stay in "meditation" for a longer time. Different names used are insight meditation (vipassana), many forms of "anupassanā," and cultivating the "dhamma vicaya" sabbojjhañga. Concomitantly, one must do the correct version of "Ānāpānasati" at all times.

- In principle, working towards the Sotāpanna stage does not require formal meditation techniques even though meditation can help; countless people attained the Sotāpanna or even higher stages of Nibbāna just by listening to a Dhamma discourse.
- It is quite essential to understand this point. Many people have one or more misconceptions about reaching the Sotāpanna stage. (i) Giving up all worldly possessions, (ii) Becoming a bhikkhu or living in seclusion, and (iii) One needs many meditation techniques.
- To clarify this issue, let us examine what is involved in attaining the Sotāpanna stage.

4. Removal of cravings for worldly pleasures or āsavas (āsavakkhaya) leads to Nibbāna; see, "Āsava, Anusaya (Temptation), and Gati (Gathi)."

- Out of the four $\bar{a} s a v a \bar{s}$ that we have, only one goes away at the Sotāpanna stage: dittasava or the craving for wrong worldviews. In the Sabbasava Sutta, this is referred to as removal by clear vision ("dassanena pahātabbā," where dassanena is vision and pahātabba is removal).
- The other three āsavas of kāmāsava (craving for sense pleasures), bhavāsava (desire to live somewhere in the 31 realms of this world), and avijjāsava (ignorance of anicca, dukkha, and anatta) go away at the higher stages of Nibbāna; see the above post.

5. The critical point is that one does "apāyagāmi apuññābhisañkhāra" (or strong immoral deeds that make one eligible to be born in the lower four realms) only when one has wrong worldviews. Contrary to most people's beliefs, one does not need to lose the craving for sense pleasures to attain the Sotāpanna stage. Kāma āsava is reduced in stages in the Sotāpanna and Sakadāgāmī stages and is removed only at the Anāgāmī stage.

- That is why learning dhamma concepts and getting rid of "dittthis" or "wrong views" is key in attaining the Sotāpanna stage, as I emphasized in several posts; if you enter "diṭthi" in the Search box on the top right, you will see many relevant posts.
- We all have many ditthis. These can be removed only by learning the world's true nature, i.e., by learning Dhamma.
- One meaning of Sotāpanna ("sota" + "paññ̄̄") is "one who has cultivated wisdom by listening to Dhamma"; in the days of the Buddha, that was how one learned Dhamma, by listening.

6. Even before meeting my teacher Theros, I had been thinking about dhamma concepts for 3-4 years and trying to get a consistent picture in my mind. Even at that time, I could focus my mind and quickly get to samādhi.

- When I "got stuck" trying to figure out what a particular concept means concerning others, I would look through books and listen to desanās (discourses) on the internet. At this stage, I realized that most of the explanations did not make sense and were not consistent with other key concepts.
- For example, I struggled to explain the rebirth stories to many children. If "being born human" is so difficult as explained in many suttā (see, "Rebirth - Connection to Suffering in the First Noble Truth"), then how can all those children remember their recent past lives? Furthermore, there were "gaps" from the time they died in their previous life to the time they were born in this life.
- Once I met my teacher Thero, I clarified that issue along with numerous others: Birth is different from "human bhava"; see, "Bhava and Jāti - States of Existence and Births Therein." Also, when one dies and has energy left in the "human bhava," one becomes a gandhabba and has to wait until a suitable womb becomes available; see "Mental Body - Gandhabba."
- Thus rebirth in the human realm does not happen instantaneously. One could be in the gandhabba state for years before being directed to a suitable womb. And one can be born in the human realm many times before the kammic energy for that "human bhava" is exhausted.

7. However, I could get to samādhi even before resolving many of these issues. I was making steady progress with the concepts that I could quickly grasp. I would sit at the desk, contemplate, and feel my body lighter and my mind calm. It was much better than just wasting time doing "breath meditation."

- If I sat in a quiet place and meditated (contemplating a Dhamma concept), my mind would "latch on to it," and I could get to an anāriya jhānic experience. That started a year before I learned the true meanings of "anicca, dukkha, and anatta."
- It started with "tingling sensations inside my brain"; I could feel things happening there. And then I could feel "needle pricks" all over the body, and my body would start "freezing," mostly the upper body. These "symptoms" are not common to all.
- Learning Dhamma is a critical part of "kusala sīla," especially for the Sotāpanna stage. Kusala sīla automatically leads to samādhi, as discussed in the "Na Cetanākaranīya Sutta."

8. After I heard the "true meanings of anicca, dukkha, anatta," I made progress very quickly. Looking back now, I may have attained the Sotāpanna stage while listening to that first desana. However, it took me some time to realize and convince myself. One needs to look back at the progress one has made and see that one is now incapable of committing immoral deeds that would make one eligible for rebirth in the apa $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$.

- I was overjoyed with comprehending the "foundation of Buddha Dhamma." It does not make sense to struggle to seek more worldly pleasures and possessions. That is guaranteed to be a failure in the long run. One spends one's whole life making money to enjoy such "pleasures," and before one realizes it, one has come to old age. I would call or e-mail my friends and tell them they needed to listen to desanas by those Theros.
- It took me a little while to realize that most of them could not figure out what I was excited about. Now, looking back, I realize that their minds were not ready. They were too busy making "more money." It was a revelation for me, who had been seriously struggling for a few years. But most people who just spent a bit of their time reading critical concepts do not "connect." Reading Dhamma should not be done the same way as reading a newspaper or a novel; one needs to be engaged.
- After getting the true meaning of "anicca, dukkha, anatta," I spent the next few months scouring the internet for the desanas of those Theros. After five months, I traveled to Sri Lanka and brought back more material to listen to. It was so fulfilling and exciting; I was learning at a very rapid pace. At that time I didn't even think about jhānā, but I could feel "jhānic effects," i.e., my samādhi was getting intense, even though I was not trying to cultivate them.
- September 19, 2018 update: I have been listening to only those desanas by Waharaka Thero for the
 of Waharaka Thero."

9. Even though I had an inkling about reaching the Sotāpanna stage soon after listening to that desan $\bar{a}$, I developed the $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$ some months later. However, those turned out not to be Ariya jhānā though, since they can be attained only by an Anägāmi; see, "11. Magga Phala and Ariya Jhānā via Cultivation of Satta Bojihañga."

- These and other aspects of Ariya and anāriya jhāna are discussed in the section: "Samādhi, Jhāna (Dhyāna), Magga Phala."
- Once I finished investigating and "filling the gaps," the $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$ came almost automatically. The meditation experience I described in \#7 became much stronger; I could close my eyes and "feel the change in the head and the body" within minutes (and, nowadays, within seconds).

10. The above is what I mean when I say, "feel the results of meditation." One can feel it in the body as well as in mind. Let us first discuss the reasons for the "body effect" and the "mind effect."

- We have a very complex nervous system that the brain uses to control various body parts and communicate with the five physical senses. A "duplicate nervous system" is associated with the
manomaya kaya, and as we grow up, those two systems get somewhat displaced. The displacement becomes more prominent when we start enhancing all types of bad habits; they go "out of sync."
- When we start learning Dhamma and avoid the most egregious acts, the two nervous systems try to get to the ideal overlap positions, and one could feel that. That becomes noticeable during meditation. Some people may feel aches and pains, sweating, etc. That is why I had said in other posts that things MAY look worse before getting better. In a way, such "body signals" are a good sign; it means the body is starting to respond.

11. Now to the "mind effect." Many people tell me that they cannot keep their minds focused on even their breath for too long. That is a sansāric habit; the mind does not like staying in one place. It wants to "know" about everything happening in the vicinity and randomly think about past events or plans.

- The only way to remove this "bad habit" is to start thinking about Dhamma concepts slowly. And that cannot be forced either. Unless and until the mind sees the benefits of learning Dhamma, it can be a "chore" to some people. But once one gets some traction, one starts enjoying the "taste of Dhamma," and it is easy to stay focused.
- The key here is that when one learns Dhamma, "ditṭhāsava" (or craving for wrong worldviews) starts to dissolve, initially slowly, but picks up speed as one starts grasping concepts.
- The two critical components of pñnca nīvaraṇa (kāmacchanda and vyāpāda) reduce as diṭthāsava reduced. That, in turn, lead to the reduction of the other three of the pañca nīvaraṇa. This process goes all the way to the Sotāpanna stage.

12. Of course, I did not realize until after meeting my teacher Thero (online) that what I had been doing all along was a crude version of the Satta Bojjhañga Bhāvanā. The crucial part of that is dhamma vicaya (contemplating Dhamma concepts). [vicaya:[m.] investigation.]

- That is how one cultivates the "anicca sañ̃̄ $\bar{a}$ " which is the key to removing defilements permanently. See "What is the only Akusala Removed by a Sotāpanna?" and "How to Cultivate the Anicca Saññā."
- The formal Satta Bojjhañga bhāvanā is discussed in the next post, "11. Magga Phala and Ariya Jhānā via Cultivation of Satta Bojjhangga."
- It is also important to realize that even an Arahant will not lose the sense of taste; one increasingly will lose CRAVINGS for them; see, "Kāma Guna, Kāma, Kāma Rāga, Kāmacchanda."

13. November 11, 2016: I get many questions on this topic, i.e., how to verify one is progressing towards the Sotāpanna stage. The new section, "Living Dhamma," provides a systematic way to achieve that goal and provides guidelines on checking one's progress.

- January 23, 2020: The new "Origin of Life" section attempts to start "at the beginning" and get to more in-depth concepts of anicca, dukkha, and anatta. The deeper I get into the fundamental concepts, I realize there is much more! However, basic comprehension becomes more natural too. I may need to go back and revise many of the old posts. So, I would encourage everyone to read the new series with a deeper understanding.


### 12.14 <br> 11. Magga Phala via Cultivation of Satta Bojjhanga

The top 11 posts in this section describe the fundamentals of Buddhist meditation. The rest of the posts in this section are on possible meditation subjects and can be used to clarify unresolved questions, and to gain samādhi. The first 11 posts should be followed in that order, at least initially.

Revised August 5, 2017; September 19, 2018; revised April 24, 2020

## Introduction

1. There are many ways to get to magga phala. What I have followed is Bojjhañga Bhāvanā and metta Bhāvanā. As explained in the previous post, I first did a crude version of the Bojjhañga Bhāvanā for a few years without even realizing that it was effectively a Bojjhañga Bhāvanā.

- Now I practice Bojjhañga Bhāvanā/Ariya Metta Bhāvanā in sitting meditation and ānāpānasati (and satipaṭthāna) during other times, i.e., suppressing any thoughts/speech/actions that should be discarded and cultivating the opposite. Nowadays, It has become a habit and the moment something not appropriate comes to the mind, I become aware of it. As I keep saying, cultivating good habits (gati) is the key to progress.


## $\overline{A n} \bar{a} p \bar{a} n a s a t i \operatorname{Bh} \bar{a} v a n a \bar{a}$ Comes First

2. Ānāpānasati (and Satipatthāna) helps one to get rid of bad habits/cultivate good habits, and thus change one's gati and āsavā; see, " $\underline{\text { g. Key to Ānāpānasati - How to Change Habits and Character (Gati)," and "Is }}$ Ānāpānasati Breath Meditation?."

- Bojjhañga Bhāvanā helps the mind to get to samādhi while also cultivating the Bojjhañga dhamma. Satta Bojjhañga (Seven Factors of Enlightenment) are listed in the " 37 Factors of Enlightenment"; a brief description is given below.
- The other part of my sitting meditation is Ariya Metta Bhāvanā; see, " 5 . Ariya Metta Bhāvanā (Loving Kindness Meditation)." This routine works well for me.
- Of course, there are many paths to Nibbāna (and to the Sotāpanna stage), and this is the one I took (almost inadvertently). Still, it is critical to realize that attaining the Sotāpanna stage ONLY REQUIRES removing wrong world views or diṭthi, i.e., getting rid of ditthāsava. But this may not be an easy step, because one needs to realize the anicca nature of this world.


## What Are Bojjhaniga?

3. The word Bojjhañga comes from "Bodhi" + "añga.") Of course, "Bodhi" means "bhava uddha" or "Enlightenment" and "añga" means "part."

- Thus, the seven factors in the Satta Bojjhañga are seven factors (satta means seven) conducive to attaining Nibbāna.

4. The key here is that during the Bojjhañga Bhāvanā, one only does "āna" or "taking in good things"; see, "7. What is Ānāpāna?." However, "pāna" or "removing the bad" happens automatically via wisdom gained, i.e., via enhanced vision or sammā ditthi. One's mind is automatically focused on thinking about a Dhamma concept, and once one gets some traction, the mind will get "latched on to it".

- In the early days, when I started contemplating a Dhamma concept I automatically got to samādhi (not $j h a \overline{n a}$ ), i.e., the mind became concentrated on that and the body and the mind both became lighter. I also experimented with breath meditation) at that time.
- This habit of contemplating on dhamma concepts naturally got established as cultivating dhamma vicaya in Satta Bojjhañga Bhāvanā once I met my teacher Thero.


## The necessity to Comprehend Tilakkhana

5. I was able to make real progress only after learning the true meanings of anicca, dukkha, anatta; see, "10. Attaining the Sotāpanna Stage via Removing Ditthāsava."

- Waharaka Thero has explained how to systematically cultivate the seven Bojjhañga dhamma. That involves first establishing sati (moral mindfulness) based on those correct interpretations of anicca, dukkha, anatta. See, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta," and the follow-up posts.
- Of course, one must remove the ten types of micchā diṭthi before being able to comprehend Tilakkhaṇa. See, "Micchā Ditthi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage."


## The Seven Bojjhañga

6. The seven Bojjhañga Dhamma are sati (mindfulness), dhamma vicaya (investigation of dhamma concepts; pronounced "dhamma vichaya"), viriya (effort), pīti (joy), passaddhi (tranquility), samādhi (onepointedness), and upekkhā (equanimity). I will have a post on this later, but I have discussed most of these terms in other posts.

- It is important to again clarify what sati is. Many people think sati is "concentration" or just "paying attention". It is much more than that. It is "paying attention" WITH a frame of mind based on some understanding of anicca, dukkha, anatta: One has contemplated on the "big picture" of the Buddha with 31 realms and a rebirth process that has led to much suffering in the long run.
- Even though one may be enjoying life right now, one knows that it will be of negligible duration compared to the sainsāric (or samisäric) time scale. This is the theme of this website, and there are many posts that one can read.


## Sati Comes First

7. During the whole time of the Bojjhañga Bhāvanā, sati must be there; that frame of mind must be there. Dhamma vicaya is a critical evaluation of a given dhamma concept. One can choose a topic or two for a given session and then contemplate on it. One could do this not only in a formal way, but also just while reading a web post or a book on the subject. Each individual is different, so one needs to figure out which is more suitable.

- One can compare the concept with one's own life experience, and also others' that one can see. For example, when contemplating on anicca, there are several video clips on various posts giving visuals on the inability of anyone to maintain anything, including one's own body, to one's satisfaction in the long run. Also, one can contemplate on the rebirth process and see whether it makes sense, one can contemplate on different applications of Paticca samuppāda, etc.
- When one comprehends a given concept, that leads to the cultivation of the pitti (pronounced "peethi" or "preethi" in Sinhala) sabbojjhañga. This is part of nirāmisa sukha that I have talked about; one starts feeling happiness or a "lightness" making the mind serene. I am sure at least some of you have experienced this while reading posts. This gives one confidence that one is on the right path, and thus one will be motivated to make more effort, i.e., it cultivates the viriya sabbojjhañga.


## First Phase - Learning and Contemplation

8. Thus dhamma vicaya, piti, and viriya sabbojjhañga are cultivated together (of course sati must be there too). At some point though, the mind and especially the body (head) may get tired. If one is making a lot of progress, one may start to experience some pressures in the head or body; not headaches, but just pressure. Some feel like "ants crawling in the head"; the brain and the body (including the nervous system) are adjusting and there is nothing bad about this.

- When this happens one is making progress; the body feeling the effective meditation. Not only our minds but our bodies have been contaminated too, and the nervous systems have been distorted with respect to that in the manomaya kāya. Some of the "pressures" that one feels are due to the "twisting back" of the nervous system to the proper place. These effects may be minimal for some people; this is what I experienced.
- And this burning of defilements leads to the generation of contaminants that need to be expelled and cleansed, via proper breathing (this is not "ānāpāna"). We should not focus on the breath like in the mundane "breath meditation". We are just getting rid of certain "utuja ruppa" that had been in the body due to defilements of greed, hate, and ignorance.
- At this point one should stop the contemplation process and start breathing in and out to cleanse the body; sometimes the body itself automatically gets rid of those things via a long out-breath. This will lead to passaddhi (tranquility) of both the body and the mind, and one gets to samādhi gradually. One needs to think about the lightness of the body and the mind (passaddhi) and the nirāmisa sukha (from samādhi) that results. One also should think about upekkhā (equanimity) too.
- When the body and the mind calm down enough and when one feels relaxed, one should go back to cultivating the previous three sabbojjhañga, i.e., start on the contemplation process of dhamma vicaya.


## Second Phase - Relaxation

9. Thus one should go back and forth between the two routines with three sabbojjhañga each. The sati sabbojjhañga must be there all the time. This is called the two-step cultivation of Bojjhañga dhamma.

- The Buddha compared this process to the washing of dirty cloth by hand. One needs to apply soap and wring the cloth to release the contaminants. But then one needs to soak it in clean water and remove the dirt that came out. After that, if the cloth is still dirty, one applies soap again, and then again wash it. This process needs to be repeated until all the dirt is gone and the cloth becomes clean. And one needs to do it with mindfulness: if there is a stubborn stain left in one place, one may need to use a different chemical to get rid of that spot (i.e., use the appropriate Bhāvanā: asubha Bhāvanā to get rid of sense cravings, metta Bhāvanā to get rid of hateful thoughts, dhamma concepts to get rid of micchā dittthi, etc ) and wash in clean water again. Thus one needs to be mindful (sati) during the whole process.
- In the same way, one goes back and forth between the two routines with sati. Time takes to get to magga phala depends on the individual. Ariya jhānās can be attained only after getting to the Anāgāmi stage; see, "


## Continuing With $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p \bar{a} n a s a t i ~ B h a ̄ v a n a ̄ ~$

10. The Bojjhañga Bhāvanā is formal meditation. As we have seen, one needs to sit down comfortably in a quiet place and contemplate.

- However, Bojjhañga Bhāvanā cannot be done in isolation. One needs to do the Ānāpānasati $B h \bar{a} v a n a \overline{a t}$ all times to get rid of bad habits and to cultivate good habits, and to live a moral life.
- Once one gains some traction and sees some benefits, one will become motivated.


## Alternating Between the Two Phases

11. Initially one should focus on anicca, dukkha, or anatta as the dhamma vicaya subject. Then once some understanding is gained, one's mind attains certain overall cleanliness. After that, like using different kinds of chemicals to get rid of coffee stains or a tar stain, one needs to choose different types of topics (or even meditation techniques) to broaden the understanding/to remove a certain obstacle. Buddha Dhamma is all about cleansing the mind via wisdom, via understanding the true nature of this world.

- Also, it really helps to do the metta Bhāvanā as a part of daily routine. The Buddha stated that If done properly (i.e., with understanding of anicca, dukkha, anatta), the metta Bhāvanā can lead to the Anāgāmi stage; see, " 5 . Ariya Metta Bhāvanā (Loving Kindness Meditation)."
- If one has too many cravings, one could use the "asubha anussati"; if one tends to procrastinate, one could cultivate the "maranānussati". We will talk about these in the future.
- But first, it is important to focus on anicca, dukkha, anatta. At the same time, it may be a good idea to get some idea of the "big picture", i.e., the rebirth process, the 31 realms, etc and then some idea about kamma, sañkhāra, Paṭicca samuppāda, etc. All these are pieces of a puzzle; even though it may look daunting at the beginning when the big pieces are in place, one starts to get a better idea as for where small pieces may fit in. Anicca, dukkha, anatta are the biggest pieces.
- Thus contemplating anicca, dukkha, anatta is a key topic for dhamma vicaya. I still do it every day, at least for a short time. It is said that one really understands anicca nature of this world only at the Arahant stage.


## Attainment of the Phala Moment

11. The Sotāpanna stage (magga/phala) is attained in two consecutive citta. However, it is not noticeable at that time. One realizes that with time, mainly by realizing that one's outlook on life has changed. In particular, the tendency to socialize is likely to be reduced, but there may be exceptions; one realizes how important it is to spend the remaining little time in this life on making spiritual progress and to enhance the "cooling down".

- In trying to attain the first Ariya jhāna, one could start with the Satta Bojjhañga Bhāvanā with the frame of mind of the unfruitfulmess of anything in this world in the long run (anicca, dukkha, anatta); then all mundane thought objects (based on greed and hate) are suspended from the mind. Then one can think about the peacefulness of Nibbāna (the partial effect one experiences upon attaining the Sotāpanna stage), i.e., the change in one's state of mind.
- I use the phrase, "etaì santaim etaì pan̄ītaì yadidaì sabbasañkhārasamatho sabbūpadhipaṭinissaggo taṇhākkhayo virāgo nirodho nibbānan'ti. (WebLink: suttacentral: Mahāmālukya Sutta (MN 64). I emphasize that I have not yet attained the first Ariya jhāna yet, as of August 5, 2017. It is not possible to attain the first Ariya jhāna until one completely removes kāma rāga, as I have realized recently; see, "Dasa Samyojana - Bonds in Rebirth Process." Whatever jhāna that I had must be anāriya jhāna.
- Here is a recording of the Pāli verse by the Venerable Thero (you need to set volume control at your computer):


## WebLink: Listen to verse on Ethan santhang ethan panithang

- One could say in English, "It is peaceful, it is serene, the expelling of all sañkhāra, breaking of bonds, removing greed and hate; Nibbāna", OR "This is peaceful, this is excellent, that is achieved by calming all sainkhāra, breaking all bonds leading to rebirth, ceasing of all attachments, stopping of the samisāric journey, cessation of all causes, which is Nibbāna".
- What matters in not the actual words, but the understanding one has in one's mind. It is best to recite the Pāli verse and recall the meaning while chanting.


## Attainment of Jhāna Is a Possibility

12. It is important to realize that one could attain anāriya jhāna while working towards the Sotāpanna stage (or even higher stages of Nibbāna) by contemplating on the true version of anicca, dukkha, anatta.

- Jhāna are mental states corresponding to rūpāvacara brahma realms, which are realms in this world. They can be attained by either SUPPRESSING or REMOVING kāma rāga, which correspond to anāriya and Ariya jhāna. Either way, one will get to the SAME jhānic state.
- Since even to get to the first Ariya jhāna by REMOVING kāma rāga, one would have to be an Anāgāmi to attain the first Ariya jhāna. That is easy to verify for oneself, since one would lose the craving for any sense pleasures, including sex.
- These and other aspects of Ariya and anāriya jhāna are discussed in the section: "Samādhi, Jhāna (Dhyāna), Magga Phala."
- It is also important to realize that even an Arahant will not lose the sense of taste; one increasingly will lose CRAVINGS for them; see, "Kāma Guna, Kāma, Kāma Rāga, Kāmacchanda."

13. November 11, 2016: I get many questions on this topic, i.e., how to verify one is making progress towards the Sotāpanna stage. The new section, "Living Dhamma," provides a systematic way to achieve that goal, in addition to providing guidelines on how to check one's progress.

- April 24, 2020: I recently finished a long discussion at a deeper level in the new "Origin of Life" section. This is a bit more advanced section.
- These are just different ways of trying to understand the Buddha Dhamma. It is a vast subject.


### 12.15 12. Key Factors to be Considered when "Meditating" for the Sotapanna Stage

## November 13, 2015; revised August 28, 2022

1. First, one needs to understand what is meant by the Sotāpanna stage of Nibbāna. Many people start meditating without an idea of the goal: It is fine to do breath meditation if one only needs to calm down. Others are doing things needed to attain the Arahant stage, which will not work either because one needs to understand the concept of anicca first, i.e., learning the key concepts comes first (dassanena pahātabba).

- If one's goal is to attain the Sotāpanna stage, then one should first read the posts in the "Sotāpanna Stage of Nibbāna" section to get an idea of what is meant by a Sotāpanna and what is involved in getting there.
- There are many misconceptions about the Sotāpanna stage, and those posts could clarify them. I spent a lot of time doing unnecessary things, so I just wanted to make it easier for those who are just starting or doing the wrong things to get there. Of course, one should decide whether what I say is consistent with Buddha Dhamma.

2. I must also point out that many have been "brainwashed" to think that the Sotāpanna stage is impossible to achieve now. It is disheartening to see even some "mahā Theros" in Sri Lanka have given up striving for even the Sotāpanna stage (presumably because they had used the wrong concepts for many years and could not make any progress). But the Buddha clearly stated that his Buddha Sāsana will be there for 5000 years, and we are only halfway through. There will be numerous Arahants also in the near future.

- Many have attained the Sotāpanna stage and beyond within the past few years, and that number is growing. Pure Buddha Dhamma that had been hidden is out and is beginning to spread. Many who have reaped the benefits are trying their best to get the message out. Most of those efforts are in Sri Lanka or the Sinhala language at this early stage.
- Even though it may not be possible for some (those with dvihetuka births) to attain the Sotāpanna stage in this lifetime, an all-out effort will help at least in their future lives. Those who can make it (with tihetuka births) simply have done more in past lives. By the way, if you come across any unknown Pāli words, just enter that word in the Search box, and there will be relevant posts listed.
- In any case, any efforts will have tangible outcomes in this life itself.
- The Buddha clearly stated that there are no language, race, cultural, caste barriers in attaining magga phala, or the four stages of Nibbāna. The critical thing is that one needs to follow the original, pure Dhamma of the Buddha and comprehend his message.
- The key message of the Buddha is that nothing in this material world (31 realms) can be maintained to our satisfaction in the long run (anicca nature.) Thus through uncountable rebirths, we mainly encounter suffering. Some of us may not be experiencing suffering in this life right now, but that does not mean it will be the same in future lives (or even at old age in this life).

3. Secondly, having a road map is NECESSARY to reach an unknown destination. Starting to meditate without an idea of what to meditate on, like just getting in the car and driving without a map showing where the destination is.

- Again, the posts in the "Sotāpanna Stage of Nibbāna" section will be useful.
- The "map" to reveal Nibbāna is the comprehension of the key concepts like anicca. When one reaches the Sotāpanna stage, it is like finding the correct map. Then only one can start driving (i.e., kammatṭhāna or "meditation recitals") to reach the final destination. Reciting things without understanding is fruitless.
- Please contemplate this aspect; I cannot emphasize it enough. Finding the map is the hardest and most important part.
- I have started a new section where a step-by-step process is described to follow; see "Living Dhamma." It can also help one figure out where one is on the Path and clarify many fundamental issues.

4. Third point - related to the second point - is that we need to examine what "bh $\bar{a} v a n \vec{a} "$ (meditation) means when striving for the Sotāpanna stage. It is NOT a formal meditation technique (reciting a given kammat!thāna) that is mainly needed here.

- However, the Buddha said that even listening to discourse is bhāvanā. One could attain the Sotāpanna stage just by listening to a discourse. When listening attentively, one's mind gets focused on it, comes to samādhi, and can get to magga phala via upacāra samādhi.
- What is needed to get to the Sotāpanna stage is the contemplation of the key Dhamma concepts, in particular anicca, dukkha, and anatta, but also to try to get an understanding of the Buddha's world view, with 31 realms of existence, beginningless rebirth process, infinite number of planetary systems (cakkavāla), Pațicca Samuppāda, etc. This is how to "find the correct map" mentioned in \#3 above.
- As explained in those posts in the "Sotāpanna Stage of Nibbāna" section, this meditation (bhāvanā) involves mainly the contemplation (citta) and examination of dhamma concepts (dhamma vicaya and $v \bar{m} m a \dot{m} s \bar{a}$ ). The four bases of mental power (chanda, citta, viriya, vīmaimsā) are very helpful to be cultivated; see "The Four Bases of Mental Power (Cattāro Iddhipāda)."
- In the above, "chanda" is the liking to attain Nibbāna cultivated by learning and forming a desire to learn more Dhamma. I can assure you there is no other pleasure like the "pleasure of knowing the truth, the pleasure of discovering true Dhamma."
- Formal meditation techniques are needed mainly after the Sotāpanna stage, as described in the subsection Key Points from the Sabbāsava Sutta under the post, "The Sotāpanna Stage."

5. Fourth is to have a clear idea of the priority items to get done regarding sila (moral behavior). In one of the early meditation posts, I pointed out that one needs to sort out the "big problems" to take care of before tackling smaller problems. If a vessel leaks due to multiple holes, one needs to seal the big leaks first. Spending precious time trying to plug smaller holes when the water is pouring out through the big holes is a waste of time.

- In the following, I will address the fact that many people have misconceptions about the relative weights of kamma. Please bear with me and read carefully, because some of these ideas go against established and common wrong views. I have discussed some in "How to Evaluate Weights of Different Kamma."

6. For example, many people are afraid of even accidentally killing a mosquito but do not have any problem making plans to hurt another human or spread rumors about another.

- Then others think taking an occasional alcoholic beverage is immoral but spend hours thinking about other sense pleasures. By the way, it is not the sensory pleasures that is the problem, it is constantly thinking about them; this is a subtle but important point; see, "Assāda, Ādīnava, Nissarana Introduction."
- Of course, killing any living being should be avoided, and it is best to avoid drinking alcohol (especially if one tends to get drunk; the problem with drinking is that it makes the mind more exposed to the pañca nīvarana; one's ability to think is diminished when drunk).
- My point is that hurting another human will have much more potent kamma vipäka than killing many mosquito or taking an occasional drink.

7. We can get some ideas on these issues by looking at the Vinaya rules for the bhikkhus. These are the rules of conduct for the bhikkhus. There are 227 rules for fully ordained monks (bhikkhus) and 311 for nuns (bhikkhunis).

- These rules are called patimokkha ("pati" is getting bonded and "mokkha" or "moksha" in Sanskrit is "Nibbāna") because they help stay out of trouble and stay on the path to Nibbāna for the bhikkhus. Remember that in the Satipațthāna sutta, "mukha" in "mukha nimitta" also means Nibbāna.

These rules are categorized according to their importance (or the severity of consequences for breaking them). The top four belong to the class called "pārājika," meaning a bhikkhu who breaks any one of the four has been "defeated" and thus needs to leave the monastic order. [päräjika : [adj.] one who has committed the gravest transgression of the rules for bhikkhus.]

1. Sexual intercourse: any voluntary sexual interaction between a bhikkhu and a living being, except for mouth-to-mouth kissing, which falls under the Sañghādisesa (next level below the pārājika level). [sañghädisesa : [unexplained as regards etym. ; Geiger, P. Gr. § 383, after S. Lévi, = sañgh'âtisesa; but atisesa does not occur in Pāli] requiring suspension from the Order; a class of offences which can be decided only by a formal sañgha-kamma.]
2. Stealing: the robbery of anything worth more than $1 / 24$ troy ounce of gold (as determined by local law).
3. Intentionally bringing about the death of a human being, even if it is still an embryo - whether by killing the person, arranging for an assassin to kill the person, inciting the person to die, or describing the advantages of death.
4. Deliberately lying to another person that one has attained a superior state, such as claiming to be an arahant when one knows one is not, or claiming to have attained one of the jhān $\bar{a}$ when one knows one has not.
5. The next level is the Sañghādisesa. The thirteen Sanghādisesa rules require an initial and subsequent meeting of the sangha (communal meetings). If the monk breaks any rule here, he has to undergo a period of probation or discipline, after which, if he shows himself to be repentant, he may be reinstated by a sanggha of not less than twenty monks.

- Like the pārājikas, the Sañghādisesa can only come about through the monk's intention and cannot be accidentally invoked. However, if the bhikkhu does not go through this to absolve him/herself, then the consequences will be even harsher. These thirteen rules are not relevant to our discussion here, but you can read them at: WebLink: WIKI: Patimokkha
- Two more layers, aniyata, and Nissaggiya pacittiya, pertain to bhikkhus and are again irrelevant to our discussion. They are even less potent and can be overcome by confessing to another bhikkhu and deciding not to repeat.

9. The last set of rules is the "weakest," i.e., with the least consequences compared to all others. They are the 92 "pacittiya" rules, which are minor violations and can be overcome by confessing to another bhikkhu and deciding not to repeat them. The ones relevant to our discussion are:

- 10. Should any bhikkhu dig soil or have it dug, it must be confessed (to avoid killing small animals/insects).
- 51. The drinking of alcohol or fermented liquor is to be confessed.

10. Many people think "life is a life," but that is not so. Here digging soil is not allowed for bhikkhus because many lifeforms (insects, worms) are killed in that process. But this act is listed under the last section of the Vinaya rules (with the least consequences).

- We know that killing an Arahant or one's parents is an "ānantariya kamma," a very potent kamma that will send one to the apa $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$ in the next birth.
- And as we saw in \#7 above, killing or giving the advice to kill even a fetus is a kamma that makes a bhikkhu lose his/her ordination. Killing small insects (inadvertently) by digging soil is a much less potent kamma, as listed in \#9 above.
- Human life is precious because only a human can strive and attain magga phala, AND it is very difficult to get a "human bhava." But even among humans, there is great variation: an Arahant or one's parents are ranked way higher. The importance of parents is related to the fact that it is extremely hard for a gandhabba to find a suitable womb. I will discuss this in detail later.
- We also see that drinking alcohol is a minor offense, even for a bhikkhu, as listed in \#9 above. Bhikkhus do not drink alcohol anyway, but this rule came about because of a particular incident at the time of Buddha.

11. It can also be deduced that stealing is a misdeed with harsh consequences since it is included as a "pārājika" for the bhikkhus.

- We must realize that stealing has many subtle forms, in addition to "taking something that belongs to another without permission." In society, not doing one's part is also a form of stealing. One is benefiting from others' work without contributing to it.
- We also become indebted automatically to our parents, teachers, friends, etc. Even though they may not expect a "payback," we must "respond in kind" whenever an opportunity arises.
- More can be found in the post, "Kamma, Debt, and Meditation."

12. Finally, I would like to point out that it is difficult to quantify the weight of a given kamma generically. For example, "killing an animal" is a very generic statement, and such an act has a broad range of kamma vipāka.

- When you slap a mosquito that bit you while reading a book almost without realizing it, it has very little kammic power. On the other hand, when one aims a gun at a deer and fires to kill it, that will have much more kammic power.
- One way to easily figure out the difference between those two acts is to think in terms of "javana power" of a citta. This goes together with the "intention" and "how bad one wants to get it done." In the above example, you can almost visualize the difference in the mindsets of killing a mosquito versus deer. For more details, see "Javana of a Citta - The Root of Mental Power" and "What is Intention in Kamma?"
- Hitting a person to cause minor pain is done with less javana in the citta. But hitting a person with an iron rod intending to kill has much more javana power, as you can imagine.

13. These are things one needs to contemplate to truly understand the Buddha Dhamma; that is the real vipassana or insight meditation. Getting to the Sotāpanna stage requires learning about such basic things on one's own by thinking about real life.

- Buddha Dhamma is not a "set of rules and rituals" to blindly follow. That is exactly why many people have not been able to make any progress and have even given up.
- When one starts thinking critically and attentively, one develops the four types of (cattāro) iddhipāda discussed in \#4 above. Once one gets traction by understanding a few basic things, Dhamma will be the guiding force to generate chanda (desire) to investigate more and to find more. It is boring and fruitless to blindly follow precepts and rituals that will not get one anywhere.

14. November 11, 2016: I get many questions on this topic, i.e., how to verify one is progressing towards the Sotāpanna stage. The new section, "Living Dhamma," provides a systematic way to achieve that goal and guidelines for checking one's progress.

## 13. Kammattana (Recitations) for the Sotāpanna Stage

## December 5, 2015

1. There are two ways to look at the effectiveness of recitations. First, one could gain some benefit when LISTENING TO recitations (such as recorded chanting of sutta), even without understanding what is said in the sutt $\bar{a}$. However, that benefit will increase if one understood the content.

- The effectiveness of recitations in MEDITATION SESSIONS is somewhat similar. There are many people who have been practicing various types of recitations (kammattana) for 10, 20, 30, or more years without significant results (i.e., magga phala), even though they are likely to feel some calming effect.
- Reciting phrases (in any language) can be quite beneficial if the meanings of those phrases are understood in either of the above cases. Recitation in Pāli can be a bit more effective, since Pāli words tend to condense a lot of meaning. If one starts off with at least some understanding, recitation on a regular basis will help understand the concept at a deeper level.
- For example, the concept of anicca is understood gradually - with a glimpse of it grasped on the way to the Sotāpanna stage, getting a firm foothold at the Sotāpanna stage, strengthening at the Sakad $\bar{a} g \bar{a} m \bar{\imath}$ and $A n a \bar{g} g \bar{m} \bar{\imath}$ stages - and is fully comprehended at the Arahant stage.
- A systematic procedure to get to sammā samādhi to be able to comprehend anicca, dukkha, anatta, is described in the "Living Dhamma" section. It can also help one figure out where one in the Path, and to clarify many fundamental issues. It is not possible to comprehend Tilakkhaṇa until one's mind is purified to some extent. Then one's mind can easily grasp concepts rather than just memorizing them.

2. A mundane example is learning the multiplication table. Some get it easier than others. But with practice anyone can master it. All one needs is to spend some time reciting and memorizing the table, even though only memorization may not be helpful in the final objective, i.e., solving a bit more complex problems.

- We know that this "learning process" can be speeded up by using what one learned in solving some problems. Rather than just memorizing the multiplication table, if one applied it to solve some multiplication problems, the learning time can be drastically reduced and also it is easier to keep in the memory for longer time.
- This is what the Buddha meant by "bhavanaya bahuleekathaya......" Bhāvanā (or meditation) is what one uses frequently: one needs to be thinking about it and examine it in many different situations as much as possible. Then the concept starts to "sink in". Formal recitations can be part of this process. [bahulīkata: [pp. of bahulikaroti] took up seriously; increased. (adj.), practiced frequently.]
- Reciting a phrase repeatedly while contemplating on it (kammattana) is an excellent way to retain and comprehend a given concept, once the concept is at least vaguely understood.

3. Another important benefit of a good recitation session is in subsiding the five hindrances (pañcanīvarana) that makes the mind agitated and not receptive; see, "Key to Calming the Mind - The Five Hindrances." When one is focusing on Dhamma - even by just reciting verses - those greedy, hateful, and irrelevant thoughts are at least temporarily subsided and the mind will not be lethargic or agitated.

- In this respect, just listening to Pāli suttā could be beneficial too. In many Buddhist countries, many people start off the day with chanting of suttā (pirith) in the background. When I was little, I used to wake up to the chanting of pirith on the radio (my mother used to do turn it on the first thing in the morning).
- If the sutt $\bar{a}$ are recited the right way, just listening to them can make the mind calm. I have posted audio files of several sutt $\bar{a}$ by my teacher Thero including a 75 minute session in the post: "Sutta Chanting (with Pāli Text)."

4. Yet another critical benefit is to make the conditions conducive to attract previous "good kamma," and make the mind "tune into" receiving such merits. Each of us has done innumerable good and bad kamma in our previous lives, and they are waiting for "right conditions" to bring their results (vipāka).

- For example, there may be a good TV (or radio) program being broadcast. But if the television (or the radio) is not "tuned in" to the right station, one would not be able to watch (or listen to) the program.
- "Making the conditions right" can bring about both good and bad kamma vipāka too. If one associates with bad friends, that is making conditions for bad kamma vipāka to bring fruits. On the other hand associating with good friends and listening/reading Dhamma can make one's life better. This is discussed in detail in the posts, "Anantara and Samanantara Paccaya" and "Transfer of Merits (Pattidana) - How Does it Happen?."
- I have mentioned in many posts that the effectiveness of absorbing material at this website can be much improved by reading them at a quiet time. In the same way, a meditation session can be made more effective by calming the mind by doing some well-planned recitations. That itself can be a meditation session. What I do is, in the middle of recitations contemplate about relevant Dhamma concepts or my own daily experiences, i.e., do insight meditation in the middle of the recitation itself.

5. One should tailor the recitation session to match one's own personality and needs. For example, if one has a temper, one should spend more time doing metta bhāvanā; if one has excessive greed (for sense pleasures) one could spend more time doing asubha bhāvana (unfruitful nature of things), which is basically to contemplate on the fact that ANY object that is providing sense pleasure is going to decay and destruct at the end.
6. I have thought a lot about how to present a "kammattana program". But it is difficult to decide what kammattana to discuss because each individual is different, and has own preferences and needs. I may still do that in pieces in the future, and I have discussed basic features of some in other posts.

- Here, I think it is better to just provide an audio of recitation session that I go through each day. This is just to give an example of how it can be done, and I know that it helps me in calming my mind and making it more receptive and alert.
- This is somewhat modified compared to what I actually do, because I do some parts in Sinhala which most of you will not understand, and I have also tailored this for those who are seeking the Sotāpanna stage of Nibbāna.

7. It is best to do these recitations in a quiet room, sitting comfortably - but not too comfortably - so that one would not fall asleep initially. Once one gets used to it, one will never fall asleep. Also, it may be better to actually say the words initially to avoid the mind to wander around; one could just recite in the mind later on.
October 13, 2016: I have removed the audio file temporarily until I make a better one. After I started the "Living Dhamma" section, I realized a way to present material in a better way.

But I leave the pdf of the text file:
WebLink: PDF File: Kammattana Example

## Notes:

1. I am assuming that anyone who is interested in these kammattana (i.e., those who have the desire to strive for the Sotāpanna stage) have already read the relevant key posts at Sotāpanna Stage of Nibbāna. Now, let us discuss different sections of the WebLink: PDF File: Kammattana Example.

- Also, the Search button on the top right is very useful for finding relevant posts for any given keyword or a phrase that is not clear.

2. In reciting precepts, instead of the "Pānātipātā Veramani Sikkāhāpadam Samādiyāmi", which says "I promise not take another life of a living being", it is more truthful to say, "I promise not to take another life with any liking for it" (Pānātipātā pativirato hoti), unless one is dedicating a day to strictly observe the precepts.

- For example, if one needs to apply a medication to a wound, that will kill many microscopic living beings; yet, one has to do that in order to heal the wound; thus in day-to-day life, we may have to take actions like that we would not like to; this is what is meant by "pativirato hoti", i.e., one would not do it unless necessary. But if one is observing precepts, one could avoid applying the medication on that day.
- Same for the other four precepts.

3. Note the break in between "itipi so bhagava...". Many people recite it as "itipiso bhagava...", which has a very different and inappropriate meaning.

- I really need to discuss the meanings of these three phrases, and hope to get it done in the "Buddhist Chanting" section in the future.

4. The phrase, "Natti me sanaran annan Buddho me saranan varan" means, "I have no other refuge than that of the Buddha".

- "etena sacca vajjena sotti me hotu sabbada" means something to the effect of "may the truth in my refuge in Buddha, Dhamma, Sangha lead to my well being and success in my efforts".
- "etena sacca vajjena sotti te hotu sabbada" means something to the effect of "may this truth lead to the well being and success in others' efforts".

5. The next phrase (in Sinhala, I am unable to come up with a suitable English or Pāli phrase) means, "I will be truthful to myself, see things as they are, be pure in mind, and endeavor to generate only pure thoughts (prabhasvara or pabasara citta). I plan to write separate posts discussing some of these kammattana. Even a single phrase is so condensed that one could write many posts on each.

- For example, "avanka" comes from "vanka" or "bent" or "not straightforward". If someone is not truthful, then that is "vanka"; "avanka" is the opposite of "vanka."

6. The next three phrases are also very important. I recite it every day. The phrase, "Kayena vaca cittena pamadena maya katan, accayam khama me Bhante bhuripanna Tathagata", means: "If I have done any wrong inadvertently (or due to ignorance) by thoughts, speech, or mind to the Buddha, may I be forgiven for that".

- And then the same phrase directed to Dhamma and Sañgha. For example, I always worry about inadvertently explaining some concept in a way which may not be quite right. Also, when dealing with people, we don't know whether we inadvertently hurt their feelings or do something that they see as inappropriate (and it is possible that such a person may be a Noble person).

7. The next set of phrases are for cultivating anicca sañ̃̄̄̄ and related other factors. The phrase, "Aniccanupassi viharati, nicca sañn̄̄ pajahati" means "I will live my life cultivating the anicca saññā and reject that things in this world can be kept to my satisfaction (i.e., reject the nicca sañ̃ $\bar{a}$ )". Similar meaning can be deduced for the following three phrases.

- In the phrase, "Nibbidanupassi viharati, abhinandana pajahati", nibbida means "stay away from valuing sense pleasures" and viharati means "live accordingly". Abhinandana means "valuing sense pleasures", and pajahati means "avoid".
- "Nirodhanupassi viharati, samudayan pajahati", means stop the wheeling process and reject generating more "san" ("san" + "udaya" combines to give "samudaya"); see, "What is 'San'?."
- "Patinissagganupassi viharati, sambhavan pajahati" means "I will endeavor to break all bonds to this world, and stop making new bhava."
- The last three recitals in this section with "Anissitoca viharati, na ca kinci loke upadiyati" confirm one's conviction that "it is unfruitful to stay in this world of 31 realms, there is nothing in this world that worth craving for (upādāna)".

8. The set of three phrases that come next also help cultivate anicca sañ $\tilde{n} \bar{a}$, and one could review or do insight meditation on anicca, dukkha, anatta right after that.
9. The next section is on metta bhāvanā. I normally recite this in Sinhala, but these English phrases give almost the same meaning. This is also discussed in the post, "5. Ariya Metta Bhāvanā (Loving Kindness Meditation)."

- The relevance to different types of akusala citta is discussed in the post, "Akusala Citta - How a Sotāpanna Avoids Apayagami Citta." The 12 types of akusala citta are discussed in, "Akusala Citta and Akusala Vipāka Citta."

10. The next phrase is the standard phrase to use when cultivating jhāna: see, "11. Magga Phala and Ariya Jhānā via Cultivation of Saptha Bojjanga." Even though it is supposed to be fully effective only after attaining the Sotāpanna stage, it can be used by anyone who has been exposed to the true meanings of anicca, dukkha, anatta, and is pursuing the Sotāpanna stage.

- One could get into at least some kind of samādhi by this time, and do some insight meditation here. Actually, at any of the above kammattana sections, one could do insight meditation related to that section. I normally do this and my sessions sometimes last for much longer times.

11. In the subsequent sections, we start giving merits to all living beings. The phrase, "Idam me nati nan hotu Sukhita hontu natayo", means "May all my relatives (which does include all living beings in the through samisāra) attain peace and happiness due to these merits".

- The next phrase, "ldam vo nati nan hotu Sukhita hontu natayo", can have multiple meanings. If one is doing a group session, it could mean "relatives of others in the group". If one is by oneself, it could mean "distant relatives", who may even be in worlds far away from the Earth.
- Thus when one recites both phrases, it does include all living beings.

12. The next section gives merits to devas (which include brahmā as well), bhūta, and preta, and then to all beings (sabbe satta). It is another way of giving merits as in \#11.

- Then the next phrase in English is straightforward. I specifically included this so that anyone can use this with full understanding. If one had (even inadvertently) done a bad deed to someone that day, one could be thinking about that person and ask for forgiveness. This is a very effective way to calm the mind and reduce tensions, and I hope to write a post on this. If done sincerely, one should be able to see the effects in real life. You may notice that the tensions with that person automatically reduced.
- What happens is that those strong javana citta that you generate can produce cittaja rūpa that can affect that person even over long distances. It is again related to what we discussed in \#4 of the main section (above the current "Notes" section).

13. Then we end the session with the phrase "Idam me puññan āsavakkhaya vahan hotu, sabba dukkha nirujjati" that is recited three times. It means, "May the merits that I have acquired help remove my $\bar{a} s a v a$ (cravings), and lead to the end of all suffering".

- It is to be noted here that "asavakkhaya vahan hotu" is really, "asavakkhaya aham hotu" or "may (these merits) be hetu for cleansing of my asava." It just rhymes as, "asavakkhaya vahan hotu".

14. Of course the above is an example of what one could do. One could use all the kammattana (and add more), or use only the ones that one likes. I don't use them all in a given session, but do use some of them all the time. I just start the session with the first few and select phrases as I proceed. Sometimes, I get into insight meditation (contemplating relevant ideas, connecting with other concepts, etc) following a given phrase and just do that for the whole session.
15. November 11, 2016: I get many questions on this topic, i.e., how to verify one is making progress towards the Sotāpanna stage. The new section, "Living Dhamma," provides a systematic way to achieve that goal, in addition to providing guidelines on how to check one's progress.

### 12.17 New Approach to Meditation

This section has been moved to, "Living Dhamma." Please check there for the follow-up posts.

### 12.18 Anussati and Anupassanā - Being Mindful and Removing Defilements

April 16, 2018; revised August 10, 2022

## Anussati and Anupassana

1. Anussati and anupassanā are two Pāli words that have related but different meanings. It helps to understand the difference because many people today incorrectly use various types of anussati as kammatthāna (meditation subjects). [anussati : [f.] recollection; memory; mindfulness. anupassana $\bar{a}$ : [f.] 1. consideration; 2. realisation.]

- If one understands $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p \bar{p} n a$ and Satipaṭthāna, they are other ways of saying the same thing. They are all different angles of looking at the goal (Nibbāna) and how to get there, i.e., how to cultivate the Path.
- It is ALWAYS good to remember that Nibbāna is attained via getting rid of greed, hate, and ignorance (lobha, dosa, and moha) from one's mind. The only thing to remember is that without comprehending Tilakkhanna, that process cannot be completed. Everything else is just more details on how to get there.
- "Anu" can have two different meanings. One is "according to" or "via this process." The other is "food" for bad viñ̃̄āna, which are essential "keles" or "kilesa" or "defilements." But here, it is the first meaning that is mainly relevant.
[kilesa :'defilements', are mind-defiling, unwholesome qualities. Vis. M. XXII, 49, 65: There are 10 defilements, thus called because they are themselves defiled, and because they defile the mental factors associated with them. They are: (1) greed (lobha), (2) hate (dosa), (3) delusion (moha), (4) conceit (māna), (5) speculative views (diṭthi), (6) skeptical doubt (vicikicchā ), (7) mental torpor (thīna), (8) restlessness (uddhacca); (9) shamelessness (ahirika ), (10) lack of moral dread (fearlessness) or unconscientiousness (anottappa). For 1-3, s. mūla; 4, s. māna; 5, s. ditṭhi; 6-8, s. nīvaraṇa; 9 and 10, s. ahirika - anottappa.]
[upakkilesa : 'impurities', corruptions, imperfections (a frequent rendering by 'defilements' is better reserved for kilesa, q. v. ). A list of $\mathbf{1 6}$ moral 'impurities of the mind' (cittassa upakkilesa) is mentioned and explained in M. 7 \& 8 (WHEEI. 61/62): 1. covetousness and unrighteous greed (abhijjhā-visamalobha), 2. ill will (byāpāda), 3. anger (kodha), 4. hostility (upanāha), 5. denigration (makkha), 6. domineering (palāsa), 7. envy (issā), 8. stinginess (macchariya), 9. hypocrisy (māyā), 10. fraud (sātheyya), 11. obstinacy (thambha), 12. presumption (sārambha), 13. conceit (māna), 14. arrogance (atimāna), 15. vanity (mada), 16. negligence (pamāda).]
- Now we can see the origins of those two words (pada nirutti).


## Buddhānussati, Mettānussati, Asubhānussati, Maranānussati

2. First, let us discuss anussati, which comes from "anu" + "sati." Of course, sati is a mindset (with the Tilakkhaṇa in the background); therefore, anussati means the mindset focused on attaining Nibbāna.

- There are several types of anussati, but four are lumped together as "caturārakkh $\overrightarrow{\boldsymbol{a}}$ " or "Four Protections" that one should try to keep with oneself all the time, which will help one to stay out of trouble.
- This is expressed in the following verse (I have not found the source in the Tipitaka):
"Buddhānussati metta ca, asubham maranānussati; iti ima caturarākkhā, Bhikkhu bhaveyya silava"
Translated: "Buddhānussati, mettānussati, asubhānussati, maranānussati; these are the Four Protections for a Bhikkhu cultivating sīla (moral behavior)."
- These are four things that one should ALWAYS keep in mind to protect one's mind from getting defiled.

3. We already know that "Buddha" comes from "bhava" + "uddha," or uprooting bhava, i.e, stopping the rebirth process to stop future suffering. So, Buddhānussati means keeping that key message in mind.

- Asubha means "unfruitful" and even "harmful." Getting attached to sense pleasures is harmful in the long run, just like a fish biting on a tasty worm on a hook will be subjected to suffering. So, asubhānussati means always to be mindful of the bad consequences of material things that are appealing at the first sight.
- Mettānussati is to keep in mind always that all living beings are in the same boat, suffering in the long run, and thus to have compassionate thoughts about all of them. Of course, that can be implemented at various levels depending on one's progress (mundane mettā to Ariya mettā).
- Especially when one becomes aware of the true meanings of Tilakkhana, one realizes not only the fruitlessness of seeking happiness in this world, but one becomes AFRAID of possible future suffering. When that realization comes, one will make an accelerated effort to cultivate the Path because death can come at any time.

4. Therefore, these four types of anussati are the four types of "mindfulness" that one should always keep in mind. Not only when meditating but even more important when interacting with society.

- These Four Protections, with practice, will help enormously in maintaining Satipațthāna or Ānāpāna while interacting with others.
- For example, suppose someone says something nasty. Instead of getting mad and retaliating, one should immediately recall that one's goal is "bhava uddha," which requires seeing the asubha nature and cultivating mett $\bar{a}$. That one may not have much time leff to get this done (maranānussati).

5. As is the case in many cases, those Four Protections have mundane meanings too. These could also be helpful. Following are the mundane meanings.

- Buddhānussati is to contemplate the nine supreme qualities of the Buddha. This is, of course, a good thing to do.
- Asubhānussati as contemplating the "foulness for the body." That is a misinterpretation. One could do asubha bhāvana to contemplate the real nature of the body. A given male or female body can be enticing when the body is young, but they will both degrade with time.
- Mettānussati is to keep repeating, "May all beings be happy and healthy." Again, not a bad thing to do.
- Maranānussati as reciting "jīvitain aniyatam, maraṇa niyatam" or "this life is impermanent, death is a certainty." While the statement is true, recitation alone cannot do much to remove defilements and purify the mind.


## Aniccānupassanā, Dukkhānupassanā, Anattānupassanā, Asubhānupassanā

6. Now let us discuss anupassanā . In contrast to anusssati, anupassanā is more relevant to formal meditation.

- "Passa" means to "get rid of," as we mentioned while interpreting "assa passa" in discussing ānāpāna bhāvanā.; see \#3 of "7. What is Ānāpāna?."
- Therefore, anupassanā means getting rid of defilements according to the prefix used in front.
- While there are four types of anupassana $\bar{a}$, three are associated directly with Tilakkhana: aniccānupassanā, dukkhānupassanā, anattānupassanā, and fourth is asubhānupassanā. [See; WebLink: suttacentral: Patisambhidāmagga Paññāvagga 3.9. Vipassanākathā for aniccānupassanā, dukkhānupassanā, anattānupassanā and WebLink: suttacentral: Itivuttaka 85 Asubhānupassīsutta for asubhānupassanā]
- Normal humans take this world to be of nicca, sukha, atta, and subha nature. The key to Nibbāna is to realize the true nature: anicca, dukkha, anatta, and asubha.

7. Thus, aniccānupassanā means getting rid of defilements by contemplating on anicca nature.

- Similarly, dukkhānupassanā and anattānupassanā mean getting rid of defilements by contemplating dukkha and anatta nature.
- We have not discussed asubhānupassanā up to this point. This becomes more important for a Sotāpanna to get to the Sakadāgāmi/Anāgāmi stages by contemplating the bad consequences of sense pleasures that appear so enticing.

8. Therefore, for one trying to get to the Sotāpanna stage, the first three anupassanā are more important. However, asubhānupassanā cannot hurt (and even could be beneficial) because that helps calm the mind.

- We need to remember that the tāpa (or burning or "excited-ness of the mind") comes from $k \bar{a} m a c c h a n d a$ and vyāpāda: greed and hate. Both arise due to excess greed or "blindness due to excess desire for sense pleasures"; see, "The Cooling Down Process (Nibbāna) - How Root Causes are Removed" and "Kāma Guna, Kāma, Kāma Rāga, Kāmacchanda".
- For anyone interested in meditation, such basics need to be understood: "Living Dhamma Fundamentals." I can see from the discussion forum that many people worry too much about "deep concepts" without a proper understanding of fundamentals.


## Understanding Dhamma: A Step-by-Step Process

9. We also need to keep in mind that one cannot just start doing formal meditations on these anupassan $\bar{a}$. It is a step-by-step process. One needs to understand Tilakkhaṇa (anicca, dukkha, anatta): "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta."

- Even before that, one needs to get rid of the ten types of micchā ditṭhi by cultivating the mundane eightfold path: "Buddha Dhamma - In a Chart."

The reason for that was discussed in the recent post, "Buddha Dhamma for an Inquiring Mind - Part I." If one has either of the following two views, then it is NOT possible to comprehend Tilakkhana:

- The next life is going to be forever, in heaven or hell.
- This life is all one has. When one dies, it is over. No rebirth or hell or heaven.

10. There are many reasons why those two views will block the path to Nibbāna. Following are a few key reasons:

- Neither of the above views can accommodate the laws of kamma: That one's actions WILL have consequences, which are much more complex than just leading to hell or heaven (and then getting stuck there forever).
- It is impossible to have a consistent picture (world view) without getting rid of wrong views like there is no rebirth process or the gandhabba concept is wrong; see, "Micchā Ditthi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage."
- If one has the above views, one cannot comprehend the dukkha nature. The fact that most future suffering is in the apāy $\overline{\mathrm{a}}$ s and that one needs to stay away from dasa akusala done with powerful and immoral javana citta that "power-up" such births in the apāyā.


## Conclusions

11. I know that I keep repeating some things. But I can see many people skip essentials because they desire to get there quickly. I admire their enthusiasm but do not want people to have false hopes. On the other hand, "just learning concepts" is not enough either, so one MUST put all this to practice, i.e., stay away from
dasa akusala (and keep in mind that micchā ditṭhi is the worst of them; see the post mentioned in \#10 above).

- The bottom line is, if one can truly see the anicca nature, one will have the anicca sañña and will avoid dasa akusala with a high degree of fear of the apāy $\bar{a}$ : "dukkhaim bhayattena."
- Thus one will automatically have Buddhānussati, the desire to reach Nibbāna.
- Furthermore, it will sink into the mind that those enticing things in the world are, in fact, of asubha nature (asubhānussati). One will also realize that all living beings are in the same boat and thus will have mettānussati.

12. Finally, one will also have maranānussati established in one's mind: that one needs to make haste and cultivate the path before death comes, the timing of which is unknown.

- If one reads the WebLink: dhammatalks.net: Maranasati Sutta (AN 6.19), it is clear that the Buddha advised bhikkhus to be keenly aware that death can come at any time and thus to CULTIVATE THE PATH without delay and that maranānussati was not a specific kammaṭ̣hāna. [kammatth $\boldsymbol{a} \boldsymbol{n} \boldsymbol{a}$ : lit. 'working-ground' (i.e. for meditation), is the term in the Com. for 'subjects of meditation'; s.bhāvanā.]
- Another English translation of the sutta is: "WebLink: suttacentral: Mindfulness of Death."

Discussion of this post at "WebLink: Anussati and Anupassanā - Being Mindful and Removing Defilements."

### 12.19 Myths about Meditation

Early post; revised September 11, 2018; December 17, 2019; March 10, 2021

## Nibbāna Is Not Possible With Rituals

1. Once I attended a meditation retreat. Everyone was sitting down on the floor with crossed legs, but after a while, many people "could not endure the pain" and were stretching their legs out or were fidgeting. It was apparent (to me) that many people could not think about anything else but their pain due to the uncomfortable posture. That went on for two days. Other than those who were long-time meditators and were comfortable with the lotus position, I do not believe the others enjoyed the retreat that much.

- Such nonsensical "rituals" are part of the set of wrong views that one needs to remove before attaining the Sotāpanna stage. This particular practice is a "sīlabbata parāmāsa" or "engaging in rituals."
- Such practices do not make sens. Sitting in the lotus position is not a requirement for meditation. Meditation is contemplation. That can be done in any posture, sitting, standing, walking, or lying down.


## We Need to Know What to Meditate On!

2. It is helpfil to think about the goal of meditation. The ultimate goal is to remove greed, hate, and ignorance from our minds and attain Nibbāna. One needs to understand the fundamental concepts of Buddha Dhamma first.

- But even for those who are just interested in achieving some "cooling down" from everyday stresses, it is the same fundamental idea at work. We need to keep greedy, hateful, and ignorant thoughts from arising in our minds. The more we do that, the more relaxed our minds will become.
- Many people automatically associate "breath meditation" with "Buddhist meditation" and spend years on it, and end up discouraged; see a person account, "WebLink: PDF-file: Meditation-Experience-of-Paññobhāsa-Bhikkhu."
- The correct Ānāpānasati Bhāvanā is NOT breath mediation; see the posts at, "Bhāvanā (Meditation)."
- Purification of the mind is the way to achieve temporary relief to the mind. In the long run, it helps attain even the Arahantship. There is no one else monitoring one's progress. It is one's mind that is keeping tabs on one's progress.
- When one does a "formal meditation," one should sit in a comfortable position. It could be the lotus position for those who have practiced it. One could be in the lotus position for several hours when one gets good at it. It is just sitting in a chair for most people, one that is not too comfortable that one may fall asleep!


## Bad Idea to Remove ALL Thoughts

3. Getting rid of evil thoughts can be and should be done ALL THE TIME. The Buddha said, "bhāvanāya bahuleekathāya." That means "meditate as much as possible, whenever possible." And it is done in all possible postures: sitting, standing, walking, and lying down.

- Ven. Ānanda is the only known person to attain Arahanthood while not in any of those four postures. He was making an all-out effort to become an Arahant before the first Dhamma Sangāyanā (Buddhist Council.) Only Arahants were able to attend. But since Ven. Ānanda was the only one who had memorized the whole of the Sutta Pitaka; he needed to attend the Sangāyan $\bar{a}$. The night before the Sangāyanā, he had been exhausted by the effort. But he was still thinking about a Dhamma concept while getting into the bed. He sat down on the bed and raised his legs to lie down. Before his head touched the pillow, that particular point came clear to him, and the "Arahant phala citta" was realized.
- Another story from the Tipitaka relevant to \#1 above is about a minister of King of Kosala, named Santati. He attained Arahanthood while listening to a single verse by the Buddha: "WebLink: tipitaka.net: Dhammapada Verse 142."


## Removing ALL Thoughts Lead to Births in the Asañ $\tilde{n} \bar{a}$ Realm

4. I have seen many meditation programs that describe Nibbāna as removing perception or sañ̃̄̄̄a from the mind.

- Many people wrongly advise that one needs to remove ALL THOUGHTS from one's mind to attain Nibbāna. One time a Deva expressed the same idea to the Buddha: "Isn't Nibbāna attained via removing all thoughts?". The Buddha replied, "No. Nibbāna is realized by removing greedy, hateful, and ignorant thoughts." That account is in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Manonīvarana Sutta (SN 1.24)."
- Some others say that when a thought comes to the mind (about a loved one, a place, or anything material), to say "that does not exist" and forget it. Just because the Buddha said everything changes rapidly, he did not mean phenomena did not exist. Things do not exist for eternity either, because they are continually changing. That is the same argument that we discussed in "What Reincarnates? - Concept of a Life-stream": the Buddha rejected both "self" and "no-self" Paticca Samuppāda explains all phenomena. They arise due to causes and would not occur if such reasons are absent.
- If one cultivates asaññ̄ $\bar{a}$ meditation (by removing all thought that come to the mind), may be born in the realm of asañña Arahmā. In that realm, no thoughts arise in mind. One would stay there for a very long time, only to come back to the human plane and start the rebirth process all over.
- All the above meditation techniques are dangerous. As one develops them, one may become forgetful; sañ̃̄ $\bar{a}$ or perception is a critical mental factor associated with recognizing external objects. If one starts losing memory, that will be a sign that one is on the wrong path.


## Nibbāna is the Removal of Greed, Anger, and Ignorance

5. An Arahant has not removed the capacity to generate thoughts OR perceptions. An Arahant has removed greed, hate, and ignorance (about the Four Noble Truths). Thoughts arise in him/her with saññā, i.e., he/she can identify people or things. They can experience the whole world just like any other human: they can see, hear, taste, smell, touch, or think about any place.

- The only difference is that an Arahant will not generate any greedy, hateful, or ignorant thoughts about anything.
- The concept of Nibbāna is straightforward: "ragakkhayo Nibbanamं, dosakkhayo Nibbanam், mohakkhayo Nibbanam゙". [Extinction of greed (or desire), hatred (or aversion, anger), ignorance (or delusion) gives rise to Nibbāna.]


## Nibbāna Is Approached With the Removal of Greedy, Angry, and Unwise Thoughts


#### Abstract

6. And one CAN experience the "cooling down" as one makes progress on removing greed, hate, and ignorance, even before the Sotāpanna stage. Instead of becoming forgetful, one's mind will become more sharp and alert. One will be able to remember things BETTER, not less. One will become happier, not gloomy or depressed. It is hard for ordinary people to fathom how much stress is associated with a mind contaminated with greed, hate, and ignorance. - The constant stress in an average human mind arises due to greed, anger, and ignorance. That is why people seek sense pleasure, basically to get some relief. But the problem is that any such relief is temporary. Furthermore, many people do immoral things to get such pleasures. So it can make things much worse. Not only does one not get permanent relief, but one will have to pay for the bad kamma that were accumulated by such immoral acts (lying, stealing, sexual misconduct, etc.).


- That is why one can feel the relief right away when one starts living a "clean, simple life." That should be the "base" for beginning meditation. It is impossible to make any progress, no matter how much time one allocated to "meditation", if one is engaged in immoral behavior. One needs to start reducing the BIG EIGHT.
- What the Buddha prescribed was simple yet profound. As one clears the mind of the five hindrances (pañcan̄̄varaṇa) via living a clean life AND start doing the proper Ānāpānasati Bhāvanā, the progress will accelerate with time because one's mind start being able to see more clearly. One will be able to quickly grasp the real meaning of anicca, dukkha, anatta.


## Do All Things "Appear, Destruct in a Moment, and Re-Appear"?

7. Another series of "desan $\bar{a}$ " that I listened to described how an advanced meditator could actually "see" the "formation/breakup" of the material world. That person says that one could see the "impermanence" described in the "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma" post. He explained how he got so afraid when the "world disappeared" momentarily before re-formation!

- A citta never arises as a single unit. It appears in a citta vīthi (series of cittā ) which generally have 17 citta if the citta vīthi occur due to an external sense input coming through one of the five physical sense inputs (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body). And that there are many billions of thought moments per second. However, only a Buddha can actually "see" such a fast time scale.
- The Buddha described to Ven. Sāriputta such minute details in summary form, and it took Ven. Sāriputta, and his immediate followers, hundreds of years to finalize a detailed description of mental/physical phenomena based on such information provided by the Buddha. They were able to complete the Abhidhamma Piṭaka only by the third Dhamma Sangāyanā.
- Even in many textbooks on Abhidhamma, sometimes it is stated that ".. r $\bar{u} p a$ is very short-lived - it endures only for $\mathbf{1 7}$ conscious moments. What arises is almost instantly gone". That is wrong! That is the lifetime of a "hadaya rūpa." A hadaya rūpa is generated in the hadaya vatthu by a sense event through one of the five physical senses. The lifetime of a hadaya rūpa is the time taken to experience that external sense event, i.e., 17 thought moments. (During that short time, the mind grasps an impression of the external $r \bar{u} p a$ ); see, "Does any Object (Rūpa) Last only 17 Thought Moments?."


## Fake Teachings Are Not Restricted to Mahāyāna

8. The problems with Mahāyāna teachings have become apparent due to the advances made in science and technology. See, "Key Problems with Mahāyāna Teachings"" and "Saddharma Pundarika Sutra (Lotus Sutra) - A Focused Analysis."

- However, some of the "fake teachings" that I mention in this post originated in Theravāda countries, particularly in Sri Lanka. That is why it is critically important to learn pure Dhamma before or, at least, during meditation.
- How can one follow the path of the Buddha without knowing the actual path? "Bhāvanāya pahātabba"" (or removal of defilements via meditation) comes AFTER "dassanena pahātabba"" (or eradication of defilements due to wrong views via understanding the true Dhamma.) That is also why Sammā Ditṭhi is first and Sammā Samādhi is last in the Noble Eightfold Path.
- I highly encourage everyone to read as many posts as possible to learn about Dhamma. Regardless of one's familiarity with Buddha Dhamma, one should read those posts in the "Moral Living and Fundamentals" section at least once because they provide the foundation. I know from experience the following. It is hard to comprehend the related advanced material if one does not get the basics right.


## "Feeling Better" Does Not Necessarily Indicate That One Is on the Correct Path

9. In "weeding out" the wrong approaches, a key point to understand is that there are many ways to "feel better." A drug user can instantly get into a "relaxed state of mind" by taking a drug. We don't do that because (i) we know it is a temporary solution, AND (ii) it has terrible consequences.

- Getting "addicted to" anāriya (non-Buddhist) meditations like breath or kasiṇa meditation is only somewhat better. Many get addicted to them because they do not seem to have any adverse consequences in this life. Even though that may be true, they do have harmful implications for the long term because one is wasting one's precious time in this human life on something that does not help in avoiding rebirth in the apa$y \bar{a}$.
- Just because one starts feeling better using a particular technique does not mean it is THE solution. That is why one needs to look at the UNDERLYING BASIS of that approach. I have come across several groups where they are convinced of their "technique" because they "feel better" with what they do. As we just discussed, a "good experience" does not rule out a "better experience" with the correct approach.
- The only way to make a sound judgement of "any theory" or "approach" is to critically examine it and see whether it can explain the realities that we see around us. Can it explain why people are born different? Similarly, why some live relatively better than others, why do only some people get horrible diseases, why do animals experience pain but still cannot do anything about it (i.e., why they have limited minds)? Only pure Buddha Dhamma can explain all these and more.


## Formal and Informal Meditations

10. Finally, once one looks at the evidence and decides on the Path, meditation can be "formal" or "informal." To engage in formal meditation, one allocates a time and place, and it could be any of the following:

- Conventional sitting or walking meditation session. But this is not the only formal way to meditate.
- Listening to a Dhamma discourse delivered by an Ariya (one who has grasped anicca, dukkha, anatta) is an excellent formal meditation session.
- Reading (and contemplating) on a Dhamma concept, say anicca, is also formal meditation. If one reads/listens when the mind is calm, one will grasp more.

11. Informal meditation is possible at any time, anywhere.

- Merely thinking about a Dhamma concept or trying to clarify a Dhamma concept is meditation. That can happen at any time. While lying in bed trying to fall asleep, waiting at the doctor's office, riding a bus or subway, etc. Instead of daydreaming or generating greedy, hateful, or useless thoughts, one could spend that time contemplating Dhamma.


## Suppression or Removal of Five Hindrances Lead to Samādhi

12. In all these cases, one can experience a calming effect due to the five hindrances' suppression. That can lead to even deeper Samādhi if one's mind becomes focused on the Dhamma concept. One could develop a habit of doing informal meditations. But avoid doing that while driving or even when concentrating on a task at work! That WILL have terrible consequences. One needs to use wisdom (being mindful of consequences) while cultivating understanding.

- Five hindrances discussed at "Key to Calming the Mind - The Five Hindrances."

Next, "Is Suffering the Same as the First Noble Truth on Suffering?",

### 12.20 A Simple Way to Enhance Merits (Kusala) and Avoid Demerits (Akusala)

## Revised February 28, 2019; revised May 17, 2019; August 22, 2022

1. This is an important post that should be read carefully. Grasping the basic concept here can prevent many akusala kamma (unmeritorious deeds) and boost the power of a kusala/puñña kamma (meritorious deeds). In addition, it shows the consistency and universality of Buddha Dhamma.
2. The potency of a kamma (good or bad) depends on two key factors. First we need to clarify some basic ideas.

- Any action or speech originates as a "thought". As described in the Abhidhamma section, a citta is of duration much less than a BILLIONTH of a second. Such fast thoughts do not even register in our minds. Once in a while a burst of cittā on a given object gets latched on and stays long enough to register in our minds. Then we consciously think about it and make a decision.
- For example, when I walked to the kitchen to make tea this afternoon, it started as what seemed to be thought of as "having a tea." In reality, that "thought" itself was due to billions of citta going through my mind; the initial "vague idea of having a tea" very quickly got built up by numerous follow-up cittā until I had to get up and walk to the kitchen.

3. Most such "initial thoughts" just do not cascade into strong enough thoughts to make us physically move or even speak out. If the "impulse of the thought" (or "javana") is not strong enough, we just disregard it.

- If you think about it, you will realize that thousands, millions of stray thoughts pass our minds each day. When we ride a bus just staring out of the window, we see zillion things go by and each thing seen is a thought. We do not remember most of it afterward.
- On the other hand, powerful sense inputs prompt us to instantaneous action or speech. Sometimes, we just stay on that stream of thoughts: some people laugh out loud just thinking about a happy event. Other times, if thoughts of a hated person come to mind, one's face gets dark, and muscles get tightened.
- A mother hearing her child cry out is lifted out of her seat instantaneously: She hears the cry in a series of "citta vithi" of "thought streams" coming through the ear door. Subsequently, millions of "mind-door" citta vīthi run within a fraction of a second, identifying that it is a crying sound and it is coming from her child. Subsequently, millions more citta vithi start running, trying to analyze what could be the problem, and then more citta vithi will prompt her to get out of the seat and move towards the source of that sound. All this happens within a fraction of a second, without her being consciously aware.

4. Not all thoughts on the same subject have the same kammic power.

- If some insects get killed while someone is walking on the ground or while cleaning the house, that will have no kammic consequences; because the intention associated with those actions was not to kill any living being.
- As we will see below, several key things contribute to the kammic power: the intention, what kind of knowledge is behind that intention, and whether one does the act enthusiastically are all key factors.

5. Now let us take an example to see how these different factors contribute to the strength of a kamma. Suppose a person who does not know that stealing is a bad thing to do and that it will have bad consequences steals something from a shop. Since he does it with the wrong vision (ten types of micch $\bar{a}$ ditthi), he does not feel remorse for it. Thus the kammic strength is very high; see "Micchā Ditthi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage."

- But if he does it on the urging or prompting of another, then it will have less strong kammic consequences since he did not think about doing it on his own, and thus the "javana" or the "impulse power" of the citta is less strong.
- Now, if he comes up with the idea of stealing by himself AND enjoys doing it, that is the worst.

6. So, now we can see different levels of kammic strengths associated with the SAME ACT of stealing:

- 01 If done with wrong vision, with pleasure, and without prompting, it will have the highest strength (of course, this will be the highest BAD strength).
- 02 If done with wrong vision, with pleasure, and with prompting, it will have the next lower strength.
- 05 If done with the wrong vision, with a neutral feeling, and without prompting, it will have the next lower strength.
- 06 If done with the wrong vision, with a neutral feeling, and with prompting, it will have the next lower strength.
- 01 Somanassasahagatam diṭthigatasampayuttain asañkhārikain ekain.
- 02 Somanassasahagatam ditt!higatasampayuttain sasañkhārikaì ekaì.
- 05 Upekkhāsahagatai் ditṭhigatasampayuttaì asañkhārikain ekai்.
- 06 Upekkhāsahagataì ditthigatasampayuttaim sasañkhārikai் ekai்.

Now in the next four cases, the same act was done by a person who did know that it was a bad act and it will have bad consequences and would do it with at least some hesitation, and thus the "javana" or the "impulse of the thought" would be less, and consequently, the kammic power will be less. So, now we have the last four cases:

- 03 If done WITHOUT wrong vision, with pleasure, and without prompting, it will have the highest (GOOD) strength.
- 04 If done WITHOUT wrong vision, with pleasure, and with prompting, it will have the next highest strength.
- 07 If done WITHOUT wrong vision, with a neutral feeling, and without prompting, it will have the next highest strength.
- 08 If done WITHOUT wrong vision, with a neutral feeling, and with prompting, it will have the least strength.
- 03 Somanassasahagatamin diṭthigatavippayuttain asañkhārikaì ekaì.
- 04 Somanassasahagatain ditthigatavippayuttaim sasañkhārikaì ekam்.
- 07 Upekkhāsahagatai் diṭthigatavippayuttain asañkhārikai் ekam்.
- 08 Upekkhāsahagatai் dițthigatavippayuttaì sasañkhārikaì ekai்.

7. Thus, it is clear that just having an understanding of Dhamma (that it is unfruitful to gain anything at the expense of other beings) will automatically make the kammic power less potent; but this "knowledge" is not the "book knowledge"; it is not effective if one has read about it, but the mind has not grasped it. Wisdom and "book knowledge" are two different things.

- If you think about it deeply, it should become clear that it is the comprehension of anicca, dukkha, and anatta that leads to true knowledge (pañ $\tilde{n} \bar{a}$ ) and helps get rid of avijjä (ignorance). It involves understanding the true nature of this world and that one's actions are bound to have consequences.
- It works in the other way too. Good actions will lead to good results.

8. Thus, the same reasoning is true for meritorious acts (puñnalkusala kamma). There are eight levels, depending on whether one does a meritorious act with/without knowledge, with joy/with a neutral feeling, and without/with prompting, just like in the case of the greed-based akusala citta. Let us take the case of someone donating to build a shelter for homeless people.

- This kusala kamma (meritorious deed) done with knowledge, joy, and without prompting has the highest merit.
- And THE SAME puñña kamma done WITHOUT knowledge, with a neutral feeling, and with prompting has the LEAST effectiveness.
- Thus the same deed done without comprehension of Tilakkhaṇa is a puñ̃̃a kamma. The same deed done with comprehension of Tilakkhana is a kusala kamma.
- The intermediate six are just analogous to the ones for the greed-based akusala kamma.

9. Let us examine how these categories play out in the real world for the above mentioned meritorious act of building a shelter for the homeless:

- If someone understands the value of giving, does it out of the kindness felt for those homeless people, does it without wishing for anything in return, and will be doing it with knowledge. And thus, it will be done without prompting and with natural joy in the heart, realizing that one is making a difference in many people's lives. This is the highest merit.
- If a person did the same deed, but initially it took some prompting from others or even him/herself, it was not spontaneous and thus will have somewhat less "javana" in the thought process.
- Those two scenarios without joy would have even less "javana" in the thought process. Here one may write a check and may not think much about it afterward. But in the above two cases, the person may stay engaged with the act of building the shelter and gains joyful feeling every time he/she thinks about it.
- Now, those four cases can be repeated for a person who does not understand the true impact of that action. The kammic power will be reduced accordingly. Thus a person who does not have an understanding of kammic consequences, the true nature of this world (i.e., that we all may go through such hard times or worse in other lives, etc.), just writes a check out of necessity, may be even to get some votes (i.e., prompting by oneself after seeing the benefits for one's political career) will have the least benefits.
- Thus understanding Dhamma (true nature of the world) leads to spontaneous meritorious actions done with a joyful heart; this leads to saddh $\bar{a}$ (true faith), citta pasāda (joy), and adhimokkha (resolve) to get the maximum impact of the impulse kammic power (javana). Adhimokkha (resolve) is a key factor in the kusala-mūla paṭicca samuppāda, see, "Kusala-Mūla Paticca Samuppāda."


## Notes:

1. This post clarifies the types of different citta given in Abhidhamma. See "Akusala Citta and Akusala Vipāka Citta" and \#4 of "Conditions for the Four Stages of Nibbāna."
2. There are two akusala kamma rooted in hate and two rooted in ignorance. The ways to sort those are different. I will write another post on them.
3. The above description is a simpler version of a post that I did recently: "Javana of a Citta - The Root of Mental Power." It may be a good idea to read that too.

### 12.21 Pañca Indriya and Pañca Bala - Five Faculties and Five Powers

Revised July 18, 2021; July 21, 2021

1. These are included in the 37 factors of Enlightenment; see, " 37 Factors of Enlightenment".
2. "Indriya" means leader. When cultivated an indriya becomes more powerful or "Bala".

- The five mental faculties (Pañca Indriya) are saddhā (faith), viriya (effort), sati (mindfulness), samādhi (concentration), and paññā (wisdom), and there are five corresponding powers (Pañca Bala).
- Those two sets of five factors each are very important in following the Noble Eightfold Path.
- The eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body are the five physical faculties (indriya). They are a different type of "indriya." They are leaders in providing access to seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching. The Pañca Indriya are the "mental" leaders helping with comprehending Dhamma.

3. Let us first discuss the five faculties.

- Saddhā is foremost; without faith (saddhā), one does not have the conviction to follow the Path. However, faith has to be based on wisdom (pañ̃$\overline{\boldsymbol{a}}$ ), i.e., one's faith is built upon seeing the truth of Buddha Dhamma, at least partially.
- Saddhā comes from "sath" or truth and "dhä" meaning "dhāranaya" or "grasp". Thus one will have saddh $\bar{a}$ when one grasps the true nature of this world (tilakkhana) at least to some extent.
- Blind faith is actually a hindrance to progress since one will be following the wrong path. Furthermore, blind faith will not last long, since it is on a shaky foundation. Saddhā of a Sotāpanna is unshakeable, and will never be lost or even reduced.

Thus we can see the saddhā and paññ̄̄ need to progress together.
4. When saddhā and paññā are developed to a certain extent (before the Sotāpanna stage), one realizes the fruitlessness and the dangers of the sansāric journey. Thus one is motivated to make an effort (viriya).

Furthermore, one realizes that one needs to be mindful in one's actions, and thus sati (mindfuiness) starts to build. One realizes that one has to act with yoniso manasikara.

At the same time, one realizes that when the mind is not calm, one can make bad decisions; thus one starts working on calming the mind and to attain a level of concentration (samādhi). Concentration is not really a good translation for samādhi; one does not need to force concentration; rather samādhi comes about when one takes precautions to not to get into "bad situations"; see, "What is Samādhi? - Three Kinds of Mindfulness".
5. Different people have the five faculties developed to different degrees (developed in this life AND also carried from previous lives), and normally one could stand out. The Buddha has shown the following way to identify the predominance of different faculties in a person.

- If someone has a relatively more developed saddh $\bar{a}$, that person is likely to be peaceful and helpful to others with a kind heart. He/she will have no trouble in following the first precept of not harming any other being.
- Then there are people who can easily bear hardships and are very determined; they have a developed viriya (effort) indriya. They can easily keep the second precept (not taking what is not given), and be satisfied with what one earns by one's hard work.
- Those who do not pursue sense fulfillment aggressively have less kāmachanda and are not likely to have any problems with the third precept. They are likely to have a developed mindfulness (sati) faculty.
- When the samādhi indriya is strong, that person is likely to be quiet and does not like to engage in idle chatter; thus keeping the fourth precept on right speech will be easy for them.
- Someone with paññā (wisdom) will be able to comprehend anicca, dukkha, anatta easily and thus to realize the fruitlessness and the dangers of the sansāric journey. Such a person will be able to keep the hardest fifth precept on controlling the mind; see, "The Five Precepts - What the Buddha Meant by Them".

6. Once one identifies the strong faculty, one should try to exploit that to move forward; the other faculties always pitch in to help, so they will grow too. It is important to cultivate all five faculties until they become powers (Bala), but one needs to exploit the predominant one.

- If someone tells a child, "this is not your actual Mom; she is somewhere else", the child will not only refuse to believe that but will run to the mother and give a hug just to show how confident he is. In the same way, saddhā based on paññā can only make one's resolve be strengthened by obstacles.
- For example, when one does not have saddh $\bar{a}$, one can be influenced to change the course by an outside influence. But if $s a d d h \bar{a}$, built on pañ $\tilde{n} \bar{a}$, is strong no matter how strong the influence is one's faith will not be shaken.
- The Buddha gave a simile to understand how indriya can become Bala to overcome difficulties: When a river runs into an obstacle like a large boulder, it splits and goes around it, and merge together after the obstacle. But the indriya needs to be strong enough to do that.
- When indriya (faculties) are strengthened, they become Bala (powers).

7. When the faculties are being cultivated, it is important to try to balance them, while utilizing the predominant faculty's power.

- Some people have pañ̃̃̄a and may say, "it is useless to take precepts or chant "Tisarana" or chant/listen to $s u t t \bar{a}$; it is better to learn Dhamma". But those activities do help in getting the mind to be receptive to Dhamma; see, "Buddhist Chanting."
- On the other hand, just reciting those verses is not enough. In order to recite them with understanding, one needs to learn Dhamma and cultivate paññā.
- Normally, saddhā and pañ̃̄̄̄ go together and need to be balanced. Similarly, viriya (effort) and samādhi (concentration) need to be balanced. For example, when doing formal meditation, too much of an effort can be a drawback for samādhi. As the Buddha told Sona the musician, the strings on a violin need to be just right, not too tight, and not too loose.
- Sati (mindfulness) must be leading and must always be there.
- Sati can be compared to the steering wheel of a car; saddhā and paññā can be compared to one set wheels, and viriya and samādhi can be compared to the other set of wheels. The wheels must be in balance and the steering wheel must be kept at the correct position all the time for the car to go forward. If the wheels are not balanced, the car will just go in circles; if the steering wheel is not managed, the car will go off the road.

8. These five (saddhā, viriya, sati, samādhi, paññā) are cetasika (mental factors). They help define one's character (gati) for the better, and these five are important ones to "take in" or "āna" in ānāpāna sati.
9. The five faculties exercise control in their respective domains: saddh $\bar{a}$ in the domain of adhimokkha (decision or resolve), viriya in paggaha (exertion), sati in upatthāna (awareness), samādhi in avikkhepa (non-distraction), and pañ̃̄̄̄ in dassana (view or vision). When they become Bala (powers), they become unshakable by their opposites - indecision, laziness, negligence, agitation, and delusion or ignorance.

- It is important to realize the value of citta pasāda (joy) and adhimokkha (resolve) that results from saddh $\bar{a}$ based on true understanding: adhimokkha is an intermediate step in Kusala-mūla patticca samuppāda on the way to Nibbāna, see, "Kusala-Mūla Paticca Samuppāda."
- Also, citta pasada and adhimokkha that arise in doing meritorious acts with joy in the heart are key to optimizing the merits; see, "A Simple Way to Enhance Merits (Kusala) and Avoid Demerits (Akusala)," and "Javana of a Citta - The Root of Mental Power."

10. The five indriya become five Bala and are well balanced only for an Arahant. We can reap many benefits even before reaching that ultimate goal by cultivating them, making sure to try to keep them balanced.

- Even for an Arahant, there are some leftover "imperfections" even though they are not defilements; these are some "hard-to-get-rid-of" quirks in personal behavior. For example, there is this story about a very young Arahant who had the habit of jumping over puddles instead of going around them; he had been born a monkey for many lives in the recent past and had carried that habit over to this life.
- Only a Sammā Sambuddha (like Buddha Gotama) is perfect in every respect. This is why he is called "Tathāgata" ("tatha" for "what should be" or the "real nature"; pronounced "thathāgatha").


### 12.22 Possible Outcomes of Meditation - Samādhi, Jhāna, Magga Phala

## Revised May 30, 2018; February 10, 2020

## Introduction

1. As we discuss in the "Bhāvanā (Meditation)" section, meditation is of two types.

- One is done at all times, being "morally mindful." Then the other type is the formal meditation where one contemplates on a given "procedure" while sitting down or walking.
- In Buddhist meditation, the first is more important than the second.

2. Then there are three possible outcomes of meditation: Samādhi, jhāna, and magga phala.

- One gets to samādhi by focusing the mind on one thing. Frequently a mind jumps incessantly from one thing to another. A sound pulls the mind one way, a sight another way, smell, etc., and the mind itself likes to jump around.
- When one is thinking about a greedy or angry thought, the "scatteredness" of the mind is intensified.
- Regardless of the cause, this makes the mind tired.


## What is Samādhi?

3. Samādhi ("sama"+"adhi" where "sama" means "equilibrium" and "adhi" means "dominance") means turning the mind towards an equilibrium state away from distractions (especially greedy, angry, or foolish thoughts.)

- The opposite of the Pāli word "sama" is "visama." When either the body or the mind gets "away from equilibrium," that is "visama" and we become uncomfortable. [sama :[adj.] even; equal; level; similar. (m.), calmness; tranquillity. visama : [adj.] uneven; unequal; disharmonious.]
- A good analogy is the following. We become restless if our environment becomes too hot. Then we try to find a way to cool ourselves. We get very uncomfortable if we are in a "too cold" environment also. Then we try to be warm by turning on a heater or wrapping ourselves with blankets.
- However, if the room temperature is moderate and away from both those extremes, then we feel comfortable. We feel contended.
- A similar effect takes place when the mind stops going to the extremes. A greedy or angry mind is in a "visama" state and is away from samādhi.
- However, if the focus is a dhamma concept, then the mind moves toward "equilibrium."


## Getting to Samādhi

4. Unless one has experienced Samādhi, or especially jhāna, one may not even realize that one's mind is always under stress. Of course, when a deadline approaches and the mind goes to overdrive, we notice that. One can truly appreciate this only after experiencing the tranquility of a focused mind. The mind gets "sensitized" as one gets to Samādhi.

- Most people do not realize how "inherently stressed" our minds are. We get used to things and do not feel even hardships. Only when we get to a "better state," we feel the difference, and then it is hard to go back to the "lower state".
- For example, one who has lived a life of poverty has gotten used to it. However, if one is able to upgrade the lifestyle to a higher level, then one can FEEL the difference and now it will be very tough to go back. One becomes "sensitized". We will encounter this word "sensitized" in many cases when we discuss the Satipaṭthāna sutta.

5. There are three kinds of Samādhi when categorized according to morality, i.e., what the focus is on. There is micch $\bar{a}$ Samādhi and two types of Sammā Samādhi, one mundane (for living a better life) and one supermundane (focusing on Nibbāna).

- A suicide bomber who is assembling a bomb must focus on his task. Otherwise, he will blow himself up. He gets into a micchā samādhi.
- Most people meditate to get some "peace of mind", to get some relief from the pressures of hectic life by focusing on the breath. That is a form of samādhi. When one focuses on a neutral object, like breath, one gets to such a "neutral kind of samādhi".
- The best kind of samādhi is attained when one focuses on a dhamma concept, which takes the mind off pañcanīvaraṇa. See, "Key to Calming the Mind - The Five Hindrances."
- There is a post on different types of samādhi: "What is Samādhi? - Three Kinds of Mindfulness."


## Jhāna Is a Deeper Level of Samādhi

6. Jhāna is a deeper level of samādhi, where the mind really gets absorbed in the object (ärammaña). Then the tranquility is optimized, and there are eight levels of $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$. The first four are the ones experienced by beings in the 16 realms of the rūpa loka, and the last four in the 4 realms of the arūpa loka.

- Jhānā CANNOT be attained via micchā samādhi.
- The jhānā attained via Sammā Samādhi are two types, corresponding to Ariya jhānā and anāriya $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$; see, "Power of the Human Mind - Anariya or Mundane Jhānā" and "Power of the Human Mind - Ariya Jhānā."
- Even though one can get to anāriya jhānā by just focusing on the breath, it does require one to live a moral life. One who is not at least following the conventional five precepts will not be able to cultivate them; see, "Jhānic Experience in Detail - Sāmaññaphala Sutta (DN 2)."
- Of course, the uniqueness of Buddhist meditation is the supermundane Sammā Samādhi, leading to Ariya jhānā, and the four stages of Nibbāna.
- However, one could be distracted from attaining a magga phala if one starts enjoying anāriya $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$. Therefore, it is best NOT to attain anāriya jhānā. However, some people can easily get to anāriya jhānā if they had cultivated jhānā in recent previous lives.


## Permanent Removal of Suffering Attained Only With Magga Phala

7. Thus the highest levels of "peace of mind" are at the four stages of Nibbāna or magga phala: Sotāpanna, Sakadāgāmī, Anāgāmū, and Arahant. However, it is not necessary to PRACTICE Ariya jhānā to attain magga phala.

- For example, one could attain the Sotāpanna stage without practicing jhānā. What is needed for achieving the Sotāpanna stage is upacāra/anuloma samādhi; see, "Citta Vithi - Processing of Sense Inputs."
- Furthermore, unless one has practiced it before, a Sotāpanna cannot automatically get into a jhāna. However, it will be easy for a Sotāpanna to attain jhānā with practice.
- We need to remember that $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$ are mental states of higher-lying Brahma realms. They still belong to the 31 realms of "this world." One needs to lose cravings for jhanic pleasures to attain the Arahanthood.


## Jhāna Not Necessary to Attain Magga Phala

8. What is required to attain magga phala is samādhi. Jhānā are NOT necessary to achieve magga phala.

- We know that there are jāti Sotāpannas born in the human realm. But if a jhāna were REQUIRED to attain the Sotāpanna stage, then that person WOULD NOT be born in the human realm, but in a Brahma-realm corresponding that jhāna. Waharaka Thero emphasizes that in the following desana $\bar{a}$ :


## WebLink: PureDhamma: Listen to Are Jhāna Required for Magga Phala

- Furthermore, just by listening to correct Buddha Dhamma and/or attaining jhāna does not make one become a Sotāpanna. The Thero points out that Devadatta ended up in an apāya, even though he had not only cultivated jhāna but had supernormal powers (iddhi) too. Devadatta listened to many discourses from the Buddha but was not able to attain the Sotāpanna stage of Nibbāna.


## Getting to Ariya jhānā - Only After Anāgāmi Stage

9. One gets to anāriya jhāna by SUPPRESSING kāma rāga and paṭigha. One gets to Ariya jhāna by REMOVING kāma rāga and patigha. See, "Power of the Human Mind - Ariya Jhānā." But before one can use this technique to attain Ariya jhānā, one needs to attain the Anägāmi stage.

- One sits down in a quiet place and first contemplates on anicca, dukkha, anatta nature. One then keeps repeating the following (or the English translation; what matters is one has to have the understanding.) "Etaì santaì etaìm paṇìtaìm, yadidai் sabbasañkhārasamatho sabbūpadhipatinissaggo taṇhākkhayo virāgo nirodho nibbānan'ti." That means, 'It is the only peace, the only happiness: prevent sañkhāra from arising (via) eliminating taṇhā and excess greed and thus stopping the arising of defilements, which is Nibbāna." ['etaiं santamं etaím pañ̄̄taim yadidamं sabbasañkhārasamatho sabbūpadhipaținissaggo taṇhākkhayo virāgo nirodho nibbānan'ti, which means, 'It is peaceful (santaim), it is supreme (pañītaì), which is the calming of sañkhāra and breaking of bond (upadhi) via eliminating tanh $\bar{a}$ and excess greed (rāga), and thus stopping the arising (nirodho) of defilements (sañkhāra, upadhi, taṇhā, and rāga), which is Nibbāna." AN 9.36 Jhāna Sutta upadhi : 'substratum of existence' or bond. In the Com. there are enumerated 4 kinds : the 5 groups (khandha), sensuous desire (kāma), mental defilements (kilesa), kamma.]
- The reciting of a certain phrase (meaningfully, with understanding) is called a "kammatthāna." A given meditation technique is also called a kammatthāna.
- Two important points. (1). One can either say it out quietly or say it in one's mind, (2) This is not chanting; just saying the words will be just a waste of time. One needs to comprehend, to some extent, what is meant by anicca, dukkha, anatta, i.e., some idea of what Nibbāna (or "cooling down" is).
- If one has experienced any kind of "cooling down," it is best to recall that while saying the above phrase. For example, if one does not flare up like one used to, or if one has less attachment to things, that is the best to recall.
- Unlike the Sotāpanna stage, it is relatively easy to confirm the attainment of Ariya jhāna. One must have REMOVED kāma rāga (craving for sensual pleasures, including the urge for sex) even to attain the first Ariya jhāna.


## Summary

10. Thus reaching magga phala and Ariya jhānā REQUIRE the understanding of anicca, dukkha, anatta, the Three Characteristics of existence. Without the "correct vision" or Sammā Ditthi at some level, the mind does not see the unfruitful nature of sense pleasures or the "superiority" of nirämisa sukha.

Next, "Are you not getting expected results from meditation?",

### 12.23 <br> What is Samādhi? - Three Kinds of Mindfulness

Revised May 16, 2019; revised February 13, 2021

## What Is Samādhi?

1. Samādhi ("sama" + "adhi" where "sama" means "same" and "adhi" means "dominance") means the object becomes the priority. Then the mind becomes focused on it. As we discussed in many posts, when the mind becomes focused on one object (ārammana), the ekaggatā cetasika takes over and makes the mind latched "on to it."

- That is how one gets to not only samādhi but also anāriya jhāna using breath meditation, just by focusing the mind on the breath.
- One gets to samādhi on whatever activity one gets absorbed in.
- Being mindful depends on the situation. The kind of mindfulness needed while driving a car is different from the mindfulness required to design something (or read a book). And the mindfulness required to attain a jhāna needs to be different from those two.


## Many Kinds of Samādhi

2. There can be numerous kinds of samādhi. There can be micch $\bar{a}$ samādhi too. For example, when setting up a bomb, one focuses the mind on that that firmly (otherwise it may blow up) and may get into samādhi.

Here we distinguish three types of samādhi or mindfulness:

- Momentary mindfulness (khaṇika samādhi)
- Access mindfulness (upacāra, pronounced "upachāra," samādhi)
- Absorption mindfulness (appanā samādhi)

Let us discuss each type separately.

## Momentary Mindfulness or Khaṇika Samādhi

3. We should always have the momentary mindfulness or khanika samādhi. Here we frequently change the focus from one object to another based on the need.

- We can use momentary mindfulness during the day when we are active. When we talk to someone, we should be mindful of what we say. The more one practices, one will be able to control one's speech by being mindful. It is the same with any physical activity too. When we are about to cross the street, we should be aware of the traffic, etc.
- Many people take this the wrong way, and use it as a formal meditation. It is kind of silly to do the wrong "walking meditation" by saying "lifting the foot," "putting it down," etc., like a robot. That is what happens when Buddha's teachings get distorted.
- For example, when driving, we need to pay attention to the road and then apply brakes if the car in front gets too close. We need to keep an eye on the traffic and be prepared to take quick action. Focusing the mind on the job at hand here translates to shifting the focus to different tasks in an optimum way to drive the car safely.


## Access Concentration or Upacāra Samādhi

4. Access concentration (upacāra samādhi) is more focused. While reading an exciting book, one gets absorbed in it. One cannot be thinking about other things while reading.

- On the supermundane (lokuttara) side, when listening to a Dhamma discourse or reading about a Dhamma concept, one can get into access concentration or upacāra samādhi. Reading a web post on a Dhamma concept can calm one down if done at a quiet time. If read with understanding and focused mind, it is possible to get into a somewhat deeper samādhi.
- All following activities involve access concentration. A programmer writing computer code, a surgeon doing surgery, an architect designing a building, a scientist thinking about a new theory, etc. These are all mundane Samādhi. But one can still feel a kind of in a trance if one gets absorbed in any task.


## Appanā Samādhi or Absorption in Concentration

5. Appanā Samādhi or absorption in concentrations can lead to a jhānic state with practice. Here one needs to find a quiet place and need to close one's eyes and concentrate on just one object.

- In Ariya meditations, the focus is something related to Nibbāna. It could be a Dhamma concept or Nibbāna itself. Ariya Metta Bhāvanā is another.
- In anāriya meditations, this object is usually either a kasina object or the breath or the stomach's falling/rising.


## Some Examples

6. Now, let us look at some general features of the three types.

- For someone with practice, it is possible to get into appanā samādhi (jhāna) very quickly. Thus the difference between the three types of samādhi is not in the time scale. Instead, it is on the goal or the situation at hand.
- Workplace or home accidents happen when one loses momentary mindfulness. If one loses attention on the task at hand, one can pull the wrong switch, cut oneself while chopping vegetables, or even tripping while walking.
- One can be reading something for hours and not get anything in, if the mind wanders off. One can be sitting in meditation for hours and not get into samādhi if the mind wanders off.


## Sammā Samādhi and Five Hindrances

7. In all these three types, achieving mindfulness comes naturally if the five hindrances do not cover the mind; see, "Key to Calming the Mind - The Five Hindrances."

- If one has greedy or hateful thoughts (kāmachanda and vyāpāda), it is challenging to calm the mind.
- Even a simple task can become aggravating and frustrating under the following conditions. One's mind is lethargic (thina middha), one is agitated by being high-minded or low-minded (uddhacca kukkucca), or one does not have a clear idea of the task (vicikicch $\bar{a}$ ).

8. Thus, it helps to live a moral life, i.e., avoid the ten immoral acts as much as possible. And it pays off to make preparations ahead of time.

- Especially for the upacāra and appanā samādhi, one could make sure to get other tasks out of the way beforehand. Then meditation does not have to be interrupted in the middle. Simple things like going to the bathroom and making sure one does not have a full stomach before sitting down to meditate can make a difference.
- Preliminary procedures such as reciting precepts or offering flowers or incense to the Buddha before a formal meditation session is also a part of "getting the mind ready." As we will discuss later, attaining "citta pasāda" or a "joyful mind" has a valid reason behind it.


## Sammā Samādhi and Sammā Sati

9. Samādhi is the endpoint of being mindful (sati).

- Samādhi is a synonym for the cetasika (mental factor) of ekaggatā, i.e., having a focus. One can cultivate it by being mindful the correct way, i.e., via sammā sati.


## Different Types of Samädhi

10. Finally, it is also possible to get into micch $\bar{a}$ samādhi, the opposite of sammā samādhi. A master thief plotting a grand robbery can get focused and be absorbed in that immoral activity. The same is true for a serial killer planning a killing.

- Thus, there are three kinds of samādhi when categorized according to morality. One is micch $\bar{a}$ samādhi. The other two are sammā samādhi: one mundane (for living a better life) and one supermundane (focusing on Nibbāna).

11. One could get into upacāra samādhi by reading this post paying attention to the material. One may need to read related posts or other articles to absorb the material. When the minds gets "absorbed in the issue," it is in a state of samādhi. Of course, that is possible only if the material is interesting for oneself.

- If correctly done, one will have a lower heartbeat, and a calmer and peaceful mind at the end of the reading session. People have attained even magga phala by attentively listening to Dhamma discourses.


### 12.24 Getting to Samādhi via Formal Mediation Sessions

March 25, 2016; revised December 1, 2017

1. It does make sense to do formal meditation even at the very beginning when one decides to follow the Path of the Buddha, but AFTER one has at least read about the correct interpretation of "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta." In the following I will discuss the importance of a daily (or few days a week) formal meditation session.

- When one starts seeing the dangers of staying "in this world" (anicca nature), one needs to reassure the mind that there is an alternative, i.e., Nibbāna or Niveema. Thus, simultaneously with contemplating anicca nature, one needs to encourage the mind to taste the nirāmisa sukha that results from it by cultivating samādhi. A formal meditation session provides that.
- The Buddha gave a simile to explain this effect. In the old days, when people took to the oceans to look for new lands, they took caged birds with them. When they were lost and wanted to find whether they were close to land, they released a bird and shooed it away frightening it. The bird would fly around looking for safety (i.e., land) but will be forced to come back to the ship if no land is found; but if it can see land, it will not come back to the ship. When the mind starts seeing the dangers of amisa sukha or "worldly pleasures", we need to encourage it to enjoy the nirāmisa sukha, i.e., that there is a better alternative.

2. Even before one gets to $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$, one can experience "cooling down" when one engages in regular formal meditation. Looking back to my early days, I remember getting to some sort of samādhi while sitting at the desk and contemplating on a Dhamma concept. The body became light and breathing became slow due to the calmness of the mind.

- It is hard to feel "samatha" or "samādhi" if one is not sitting down or lying down.
- Furthermore, it gives one confidence that one is making progress if one can see the "improvement" in being able to stay in "samādhi" for longer times with practice. To emphasize, this samādhi does not need be a jhāna. It is just being able to stay in one place with a focused mind and with palpable lightness in the body and the mind.

3. Many people who do breath meditation say that it is a samatha bhāvanā to calm the mind BEFORE doing vidassana (insight) meditation. But that is a waste of time. One can get to samatha by doing vidassana (vipassana) or insight meditation.

- As I have discussed in other posts, one should find a quiet place and sit comfortably. One could start the session with Tiratana vandana to calm the mind; see, "Buddhist Chanting." One could make the room dark and light a candle and/or incense to "set the background". Those activities help some people to get into the proper mindset.
- Then one could just start contemplating on a Dhamma concept. One could either listen to part of a desanā or read part of an essay and then start contemplating on that. This is insight meditation.
- Some people who do breath meditation have difficulty in maintaining their focus on the breath; other random thoughts start creeping in. However, if one starts seeing the value of Dhamma and becomes truly interested in learning Dhamma, it will become easier to concentrate on a Dhamma concept. Thus one initially should pick a topic of interest to oneself.

4. With time, it becomes easier to get to samādhi by gradually purifying the mind. But it is important to figure out which areas to focus on in order to gain maximum benefits.

- First, it is important to realize that there are two main categories of "bad deeds" that can have negative consequences; see, "Lobha, Dosa, Moha versus Raga, Patigha, Avijiā" for details.
- Those done with lobha (excess greed), dosa (hate), and moha (covered mind) can lead to birth in the apāy $\bar{a}$ (four lowest realms). Permanent reduction of lobha, dosa, moha to rāga, patigha, avijj $\bar{a}$ happens when one attains the Sotāpanna stage.
- Those done with rāga (craving for sense pleasures), pattigha (friction), and avijja (ignorance) can only lead to rebirth in the higher realms in the kāma loka (human and deva realms), and in rupi and arupi brahma loka. Thus one can concentrate on those after getting to the Sotāpanna stage, but one can start thinking about them too in order to help comprehend the anicca nature as discussed further below.

5. Therefore, our main goal should be to avoid those actions that can lead to rebirth in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$, i.e., avoid those actions done with lobha, dosa, moha.

- In simplest terms, this means getting rid of micchā ditthi and comprehending anicca nature. One of the strongest kind of micchā ditthi prevalent today is materialism: One believes that at death one ceases to exist, i.e., one believes that the mind is a byproduct of the body (brain), and thus when the body dies, that is the end of story. This is also called vibhava tanh $\bar{a}$.
- It is a good idea to review the relevant posts on micchā ditthi to make sure one understands them. The ten types of micchā ditṭhi are discussed in "Three Kinds of Ditthi, Eightfold Paths, and Samādhi." There are also many posts on "anicca, dukkha, anatta."
- Starting on the Eightfold Path for a Sotāpanna Anugami begins with getting rid of micchā ditṭhi, comprehending anicca, and thereby comprehending first stage of samm $\bar{a}$ ditṭhi; see, "Buddha Dhamma - In a Chart" and the post in there.

6. By sorting out priorities (the order of things to be done), we can save a lot of time in getting to the Sotāpanna stage.

- One has the potential to be born in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$ if one has remnants of gathi suitable for those four realms; there are many posts on gathi, bhava, and jathi at the site to read and contemplate on.
- It is imperative to be mindful and avoid actions compatible with "apāya gathi." In the meditation sessions, one could think back to the previous few days and see whether there were any such instances and make a determination to not to repeat such acts. Once it becomes a habit, one can even catch oneself doing it and stop right then.
- For example, if someone does something bad to you, and if you start thinking about "how to get back" in retaliation, that is done with hate and need to be stopped. However, it is OK if one "gets mad" momentarily at such an unprovoked, harsh act by someone. It is only at the Anāgāmī stage that one will automatically stop "getting mad". Even then there may be some annoyance at that person. Only an Arahant has perfect upekkha and will not be bothered to the slightest by ANY provocation.
- Another example is extreme greed (lobha) where one tends to do "whatever it takes" to get what one wants, and also wishing that others should not get those things. Enjoying sense pleasures ( $k \bar{a} m a \operatorname{rāga}$ ) that are acquired through legitimate means is not a hindrance to attain the Sotäpanna stage. Thus engaging in sex with a spouse is done with kāma rāga, but that with another's spouse or a child, for example, is done with lobha.
- A successful meditation program goes hand in hand with a moral lifestyle. They feed on each other.

7. It is also very important to be aware of the dasa kusala, dasa akusala, and also puñ̃̃a kriya; see, "Kilesa - Relationship To Akusala, Kusala, And Puñ̃na Kamma Kamma," "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)" and "Puñña Kamma - Dāna, Sila, Bhāvanā."

- Puñña kriya help one attain the right mindset for meditation. Also, puñña kriya increasingly become stronger kusala kriya as one's understanding of anicca, dukkha, anatta grows.
- A Sotāpanna has COMPLETELY removed only micchā diṭthi from the dasa akusala. Only an Arahant is completely free from dasa akusala; see, "What is the only Akusala Removed by a Sotāpanna?."
- Of course, the tendency to do dasa akusala start decreasing from the time one starts on the mundane eightfold path, even before the Noble Eightfold Path; see, "Buddha Dhamma - In a Chart."
- In terms of Abhidhamma, the apāyagāmī strength of all dasa akusala will be removed at the Sotāpanna stage due to the removal of the 4 ditṭhi sampayutta lobha citta and the vicikicch $\bar{a}$ sampyutta moha citta; see, "Akusala Citta - How a Sotāpanna Avoids Apayagami Citta." Thus if a Sotāpanna commits any of the remaining 9 akusala kamma their strength would be much reduced, because one has removed gathi suitable to be born in the apa$y \bar{a}$, mainly by getting rid of micch $\bar{a}$ ditṭhi.

8. Many people worry about sense pleasures way too early. It is not necessary to forcefully suppress normal sense desires before the Sotāpanna stage, even though it may happen to some extent automatically. Kāma rāga (and patigha) are removed via the Sakadāgāmī and Anāgāmī stages.

- If a vessel is leaking due to multiple holes, one needs to fix the bigger holes first. Trying to plug small holes which are leaking slowly, while water is draining rapidly through gaping big holes, is a waste of time.

9. On the other hand, contemplating on the bad consequences of sense pleasures can lead to a better understanding of anicca (unfruitfulness of worldy things) and the First Noble Truth. In addition to the suffering due to obvious causes such as an ailment or a headache, we are not even aware of most of the suffering that we endure.

- In fact, in a twisted way, we perceive most of our sufferings as enjoyments. It is a "made-up" enjoyment and is called "assāda" ( $\bar{a} s v \bar{a} d a$ in Sinhala).
- This is also a good "meditation topic", and could help one to get to samādhi. However, this should be done when one can come to a stage where one starts to comprehend such concepts. Each person is different, so one should keep trying different options.

10. For example, we enjoy eating, especially if the food is tasty. But why do we have to eat? This seems like a foolish question, but there are beings (brahma $\bar{a}$ ) who do not need to eat anything. They are sustained by their kammic power (previous good kamma). Devas have to consume amurtha to sustain themselves, but that is a very fine food and there is no residue (i.e., they do not defecate or even sweat).

- On the other hand, we have to work hard to make money to buy food, spend time and energy to cook, and then "enjoy a meal" that lasts may be half an hour.
- But all that suffering (working to make money, going to grocery store, cooking, etc) is masked by "made-up mind pleasures" or assāda: We look forward to that meal and forget about all that suffering!
- On the way back from work we may start getting hungry, but that will be masked because we will be thinking only about the meal that is waiting for us.
- Is this any different from a cow who pulls a heavy cart, but forgets about all that suffering because it is focusing on a bundle of hay dangling in front of it?

11. Let us consider another type of hidden suffering that is associated with cleaning ourselves. In the morning, we brush our teeth, take a shower, shave, apply all kinds of fragrances and go to work very happily. We don't even notice the hidden suffering associated with all that work!

- One could experience another facet of that suffering if one can skip a day or two of doing those things. It will be very uncomfortable even for ourselves let alone for the others.

12. In fact, most of the things that we do in a given day are done to just maintain our bodies, our houses, our environment in a presentable condition. Yet, we do not see the suffering associated with all those activities. That is another way to comprehend anicca nature.

- One may think that thinking about such things could make one depressed. That is certainly possible if one did not know about the anicca nature, and also that by following the 37 Factors of Enlightenment one can be released from that suffering.
- The comprehension of the true (anicca) nature of this world, and the hidden sufferings associated with it gives one "anuloma shanthi." This is the joy that comes from grasping the true nature of this world.
- Then by realizing that there is a way to REMOVE future suffering (by following the 37 Factors of Enlightenment), provides one with "sammatta niyama."
- Thus as one makes progress, it is a good idea to think about specific cases where one has gained a "peace of mind". That itself can lead to samādhi. One needs to realize BOTH the dangers of the rebirths process (anicca nature) AND the benefits of following the Path (Niveema or cooling down).
- When one starts experiencing BOTH anuloma shanthi and sammatta niyama, one becomes a Sotāpanna Anugami, which inevitably leads to the Sotāpanna stage; see, "Sotāpanna Anugāmi and a Sotāpanna."

13. Finally, I want to emphasize the importance of trying to extend the duration of the formal meditation session gradually.

- At some point one will start feeling body sensations. And then the mind will "switch over" to a different state. When that first happened to me a few years ago, I was startled. At that point one could let the mind "take over", i.e., stop contemplating and let the samādhi "grow" and possibly lead to jhānā (it is easier for those who have the sansāric habit; but jhānā are not necessary for magga phala). Now one has attained a higher level of samādhi. One could of course continue with insight meditation.
- This is when one starts feeling enhanced nirāmisa sukha. It is not really a "pleasurable feeling" in the sense of what you experience in eating a nice meal, listening to a favorite song, etc. It is rather a calmness of an unburdened mind. Until one experiences it, one is not aware of the real stress that our minds are normally under. One comes out of the meditation session refreshed and alert.
- I would say it is possible that one could start experiencing some kind of benefit when the session is naturally lengthened to half an hour or may be an hour. I am just basing this on my own experience. If people are willing to share their experiences, I can update this post in the future (or even present someone's experience in a separate post). That could help motivate others.


### 12.25 Are you not getting expected results from meditation?

## Revised December 1, 2017

Some people try to attain Nibbānic bliss by trying to "give up all attachment to this world" in their minds during meditation. However, until the mind truly realizes the dangers of this world (the rebirth process), it is unable to give up those attachments.

- One has to attain at least the Sotāpanna stage by "seeing the true nature of this world" before one's mindset becomes amenable to "giving up". This is the hardest part to understand.
- Even before that one needs to get rid the 10 types of micch $\bar{a}$ diṭthi as discussed below.

1. During the time of the Buddha there was a bhikkhu named Potila, who was well-versed with deep Dhamma concepts and was a well known teacher; he had developed abhiñ̃̃̄̄ powers as well, but had not attained even the Sotāpanna stage. His desanās (discourses) were deep and only those at the Anāgām $\bar{l}$ stage (at least Sotāpanna stage) could follow them and get to Arahanthood. One day he went to see the Buddha, paid respects, and told the Buddha that he had been a Dhamma teacher during the times of several earlier Buddhas too, and helped many to attain Nibbāna (Arahantship). [Bhikkhu Potila - see, Potṭhilatthera Vatthu - Dhammapda verse 282]

- The Buddha asked him whether he has attained any magga phala and Bhikkhu Potila admitted that he had not. The Buddha just commented: 'Thucca Potila" and turned his attention to other matters; thucca (pronounced "thuchcha") in Pāli means despicable or "lowly".

2. So, bhikkhu Potila, who had expected praise from the Buddha for helping others, realized that he needs to work on his own salvation before helping others. He strived by himself and could not make any progress; he was trying very hard to "give up all attachments", following the same instructions he was giving others. But no matter how hard he tried, he could not succeed.

- When he sought help from other bhikkhus, they were reluctant to become his teacher because everyone knew he was very knowledgeable in Dhamma. Eventually, he went to this very young Arahant, who was well-known for his teaching abilities, and sought help. The young Arahant agreed to help, only if bhikkhu Potila agreed to carry out everything as instructed, and Potila agreed.
- The young Arahant decided to use an unusual kammatthana (instructions). He took Potila to a large area covered by mud, and asked him to wade into the mud and keep going until told to stop. Potila started wading in mud and kept going until he was told to stop when the mud was all the way up to his chin; he was barely able to move at this point because mud was heavy.

3. The Arahant told him that, "if someone is stuck in mud like that any knowledge about cleaning oneself by taking a bath is not going to help. One needs to get out of the mud first".

- Then he asked Potila to come back. Potila had great difficulty in moving forward initially, since he was all the way up to the chin in thick and heavy mud. While dragging himself out of the mud with great difficulty, Potila realized what the young Arahant was talking about. It is not possible to get out of mud until one realizes that one is stuck there, and getting out of mud required sheer will power. Similarly, he had not realized that he was stuck at a much lower moral level; he needed to cleanse his mind first.
- The "giving up" part comes with a mind that has removed the wrong visions (micchā ditt excessive greed for sensual pleasures. These cannot be removed just by reading or listening about that.

4. Of course one can remove some of it by reading, listening, and contemplating on the validity of the reasons that the Buddha has given, especially on micchā ditthi. One has to realize that kamma (or one's actions) are likely to have their results either in this life or the next, and thus the rebirth process must be valid. Remaining types of micchā ditṭhi are also related to kamma and rebirth. The 10 types of micch $\bar{a}$ dittthi are discussed in "Micchā Ditthi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage".

- The second level of removal of micchā ditt "Micchā Ditthi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage".

5. The simile can be made even better by looking at what happens to ants who get stuck in honey. Here unlike mud, the sense pleasures are appealing and there is no incentive to get out either. Those ants who get stuck in honey, would not even try to get out because they are too busy enjoying the honey. Even when they are barely stuck, and can move out of honey, they would not because they like the taste of honey. Just like that, any living being, whether a human or even the lowly worm, likes to indulge in the sense pleasures, and thus gets stuck.

## - And even when one realizes that one needs to get out of "the honey pot" it is hard, at least initially.

- For that one needs to see the perils of staying in this rebirth process, where birth in lower four realms will lead to unimaginable suffering. Even if one can strive to be born in higher realms, that will not last long. This is "anicca": no matter how hard we try to find refuge in the $\mathbf{3 1}$ realms it is not possible to do so in the long run.

6. With much effort, Potila slowly made his way up to the waist level, and started feeling the lightness of being free of mud. He could now move faster too. He felt the relief when he was out of the mud, and was asked to go and take a shower. Now, cleaning up with soap could be done; but while stuck in mud, there was no use of soap and water. Just like that the deep Dhamma that he had memorized was of no use to him while he was still stuck in mud.

- Eventually, when one comes out of the mud that is like the Sotäpanna level. One is still covered with mud, i.e., one still likes to enjoy sense pleasure. But now one KNOWS that one needs to take a shower, use soap and shampoo, and remove all that mud.

7. What Potila was doing was to give discourses on deep Dhamma that could help an Anāgāmī attain the Arahanthood. Most of those who benefited from bhikkhu Potila's discourses were, ironically, Anāgāmīs. Potila was just reciting the Dhamma without real comprehension but those who benefited were capable of comprehending the true meanings. After that kammatthana, Potila was able to attain the Sotāpanna stage and soon became an Arahant.
(By the way, one cannot attain the Sotāpanna stage by taking instructions from an Anariya, i.e., one who had not attained at least the Sotāpanna stage. But once one attains the Sotāpanna stage, one can learn by himself or from anyone else and get to the higher stages. This is why it was only Sotāpannas or above (mostly $A n \bar{a} g \bar{a} m \bar{u} s$ ) who could benefit from bhikkhu Potila's discourses).

- I believe this actual incident involving bhikkhu Potila highlights a very important point. No matter how much one reads on deep concepts of Dhamma, it is hard to get the idea to sink in unless one's mind is purified to a certain extent. It is critical first to break through the heavy fog of being covered by many wrong concepts and strong attachments. When one breaks through that initial "wall of resistance", then it is easier to comprehend deeper concepts; see "Lobha, Dosa, Moha versus Raga, Patigha, Avijjā."

8. One needs to make progress in a systematic way. Just like it is not possible to learn high school math without learning basic addition/subtraction, one MUST understand the basic concepts first. If one is engaged in killing, stealing, sexual misbehavior, lying, gossiping, getting "drunk" with alcohol, drugs, power, beauty, money, etc, it is not possible to calm the mind to a basic level. And this is the hard part. One is stuck in mud (more like honey, because it feels good to be stuck there).

- And while stuck in mud (or honey), no matter how much meditation one does, it is not possible to get LONG TERM relief. One may be able to go to a meditation retreat and be away from all those "honeyfilled" attractions and enjoy some sense of calmness; but that goes away soon after coming back to "real life" with all those temptations.
- One needs to slowly work one's way through the mud (or honey, because that is how it seems initially first). This is the HARDEST part. No matter how much one READS, that is not going to make much difference until one sets up the stage for the mind to see the reality.
- By the way, this is also why those who meditate on 'there is no self' (there is no 'me') cannot make any progress either. One needs to comprehend the "pointlessness in striving to accumulate material things for oneself' first. If one could tell a full blown lie, hurt someone else, sexually misbehave, etc, then isn't that done to gain something for "me"?


## 9. Here is a rough step-by-step I would recommend (this is of course not for everyone; just for those who know they are stuck in honey):

A. If one is hurting others to get sense pleasure, that should be stopped first. It is double jeopardy; one is not only "getting stuck" due to excess greed, but also going to suffer consequences of harming others. One is not only getting attached to "pleasurable things" but also accumulating bad kamma by hurting others.

- For example, if one is killing animals for fun (sport), stealing valuables from others, having sexual relationships with other married people or young children, planning to hurt someone (even for retaliation), or spreading rumors about someone just to get some pleasure out of it, getting drunk and verbally/physically abusing others, all those would be included here.
- Such immoral activities are the worst, and are called "pāpa kamma". Both lobha and dosa (dvesha) are involved here and one's mind is said to totally covered with ignorance (moha); see, "Lobha, Dosa, Moha versus Raga, Patigha, Avijijā."
- Thus someone in this stage is deeply in mud all the way up to the chin.
B. One notch lower is being capable to do things (of course not always) with EXTREME greed, even if it does not hurt others directly; here one is only up to waist to shoulder level in mud. These are normally the things one does to seek "perceived happiness" by going to extremes.
- When one cannot get "high enough" with alcohol one tends to try drugs, because one has been "desensitized". We all know of many movies stars etc. who get into this trend and end up committing suicide because nothing at the end can bring more pleasure to a highly "de-sensitized" mind.
- Another indication of extreme behavior is living beyond one's means. This is of course relative. If one is living a small (but comfortable) house and wants to move in to a bigger house just for the sake of that by stretching one's resources, that is a sign of extreme greed. If one is already living in a mansion that one has inherited or earned, and there is no financial burden, then there is nothing wrong with that since that will not burden the mind. However, in general, the more fancier the item is, whether a house or a car or anything else, it normally takes more time and effort to "maintain", and inevitably there is a degree of attachment because of the perceived value.
- Such extreme greed could also lead to actions of hate, when someone else gets in the way. Then one may do "pāpa kamma" here as well; it is possible that actions of hate gets one to the higher level.

It is not possible to discuss all possibilities, but one should be able to figure out many such cases. No one else can decide these for anyone. Only each person knows about one's own status of mind. However, any sensible person can make some kind of a judgement for oneself, but not for others.
C. If one is at stage A or B above, one should read those posts in the "Moral Living and Fundamentals" section. It could be helpful to go back and read those as one makes progress, and see that one understands more things than previously. This is hard to explain, but is true. A clear mind sees things much more easily.

- For those who are in stage A or B should read posts \#1 through \#3 below first.
D. Once one gets to the B stage, one should start reading the posts on the "Key Dhamma Concepts" and in particular learn and comprehend anicca, dukkha, anatta.

This is the real key step, to get started on the next stage. Once one gets some traction, there is nothing there to hold back someone from attaining the Sotāpanna stage. It had been hard for hundreds of years only because the correct concepts were hidden. Once one gets some traction, one can start doing any of the bhāvanā.

- As Carl Sagan said, "..think about all those emperors and kings who committed unmentionable atrocities just to have a sense of superiority and power for maybe 50 years. They are all gone"; see, "The Pale Blue Dot........." Even though Dr. Sagan did not know, that is another way to state what anicca is.
- All those emperors and kings will be stuck in the animal or lower realms for billions of years to come. On the other hand, a peasant who lived within his/her means and led a moral life could be living in a deva/brahma realm for billions of years.
- The main point here is that there is no point in trying to seek sense pleasures or accumulate wealth for 80-100 years maximum, because at the end we will not be able to KEEP ANYTHING to our satisfaction. We may have a billion dollars, but if our bodies are worn out, will we be able to get ANY sense pleasures? Will we be able to keep any part of our bodies to our satisfaction? Many people try to "beat the aging process" by using temporary fixes such as botox, but any such effect will also will be temporary.
- It is not possible to really grasp the meaning of anicca, dukkha, anatta, if one is stuck in mud or honey.
E. When one comes out of the mud and start walking (with mud on the body), that is like the Sotāpanna stage. Now one does not even need anyone's help, even though that can help expedite the process; one can figure things out by oneself.
- There are many who know many suttā by heart or abhidhamma concepts, but nowhere close to the Sotāpanna stage.
- We need to understand that Buddha Dhamma is not about JUST LEARNING concepts (even though learning plays a big part), it is all about using what is learned for purifying the mind. As the mind becomes clear, one will start seeing the reality better. In the Buddha's days, illiterate people were able learn Dhamma just by listening, and even attained Arahanthood.
E. The final stage is to realize that even birth in such deva/brahma worlds will be temporary. At some point in the future, they are all going to commit some bad deed and end up in the four lower realms for long times; that is just the nature of this world, where sense pleasures can lure anyone to commit bad actions. But there is no point in talking about that stage, until one gets above the A and B stages, and become a Sotāpanna.
F. The series of posts that I am writing on the Satipatthāna Sutta goes through this process too, from stage A. Therefore, it may be a good idea to read those posts from the beginning as well. The first introductory posts are full of Pāli words, but just go through them briefly even if you do not fully understand. They WILL become clear later, if not now.
- When one starts following the Path, one is bound to break the trend once in a while. A child learning to walk will fall many times. Many people get discouraged when they do an immoral act occasionally; but just to realize that one did a mistake, and that it bothers one's mind, means one HAS MADE PROGRESS. That is why one needs to have the perseverance to get back up with a renewed determination. Just like a child WILL learn to walk, one WILL get better with time.
G. Of course I do not know the level of each person coming to the website. Only each person knows where he/she is relative to the above steps.
- If one truly can purify one's mind and comprehend anicca, dukkha, anatta, that is all it takes to attain the Sotāpanna stage.
- There is material ranging from the basic level to very advanced levels and even more will be posted in the future. This is for the sake of completeness, and also to make sure that any scholar or interested person can gauge the depth of Buddha's true teachings.
- There are also people who really start comprehending Dhamma and start enjoying finding about further details; no other type of "pleasure activity" can match the "enjoyment of Dhamma". Buddha Dhamma is the ultimate "book of nature".
- Furthermore, reading widely on different topics will help build saddhā (faith), which is NOT blind faith but faith built on understanding. When one sees how little modern science knows in comparison to the Buddha, it helps build faith. And pañ $\tilde{a}$ (wisdom) and saddhā grow together.

Next, "1. Introduction to Buddhist Meditation", ..........

## How to Attain Samādhi via "Vipassana Pubbanga Samatha" Bhavana

1. Anariya bhāvanā methods (which include breath, stomach rising/falling, or just repeated recitation of a passage, such as "May all beings be happy and healthy") can suppress the five hindrances and can lead to mundane samādhi. But the effects are temporary, as anyone participated in meditation retreats knows; it feels really good at the retreat, but after coming back and getting into the normal hectic life, that feeling of calmness fades away with time.
2. The Buddha compared such meditation techniques to riding a mule. His most recommended method was "vipassana pubbanga samatha", which he compared to riding a race horse.

- Vipassana means "sort out and get rid of undesired thoughts that come to the mind", pubbangama means precedes, and samatha is calming the mind or attain samādhi.
- Thus in "vipassana pubbanga samatha" meditation, when one does the vipassana bhāvanā, it automatically leads to samatha or samādhi and (Ariya) jhānā.

3. In the Ariya bhāvanā or the "vipassana pubbanga samatha", one's mind is constantly working to GET RID OF the defiled thoughts, not merely to suppress them as in the Anariya version. As one cultivates this Ariya bhāvana aver time, the five hindrances are slowly REMOVED from the mind and the mind gradually shifts towards a permanently calm state. Thus, it becomes easier and easier to attain samādhi, since the five hindrances are gradually removed.

- We talked about a contaminated water well in "The Basics in Meditation" post above. In Anariya bhāvana what is done is basically let the dirt to settle to the bottom of the well by not further stirring the water. The water eventually becomes relatively clear, but in a new session one needs to do it all over.
- In contrast, in the Ariya version, one is constantly REMOVING dirt from the well. Therefore, session after session dirt is removed, and eventually there will be very little dirt to remove and thus the mind will get to samādhi very quickly.

4. In the beginning, it is better to do formal meditation sessions. As one gains practice, one could do it while waiting in the doctor's office or riding a bus.

- First, sit in a quiet place as described in the "The Basic Formal Ānāpānasati Meditation" post. Close your eyes and let the mind relax. Thoughts will invariably start popping up. Disregard any neutral thoughts and immediately get rid of any greedy or hateful thoughts as they start coming up.
- It will be helpful to contemplate the negative consequences of such thoughts.
- For example, if thoughts about an unkindly deed someone did to you comes to the mind, think about the bad consequences of "doing tit for tat": that will only enhance and cultivate defilements in YOUR mind. We do not have control over what others do; but we can control our minds. The more your mind becomes free of any hateful thoughts, the chances of having to face such adversary situations will diminish. You may be surprised, but that is true. Just have perseverance for a few weeks.
- In another example, if you start thinking a greedy thought, say for a tasty, high calorie snack, think about the bad consequences (gaining weight, getting addicted to such impulsive thoughts, etc), and also think about being able to have the confidence of self-control.

5. Do not try to remove all thoughts that come to the mind. This is very dangerous advice that some meditation teachers give. We need to remove ONLY those thoughts that have greed, hate, or ignorance associated with them.

- If any good, meritorious thoughts come to the mind, cultivate them; think further along those good thoughts. It could be a good deed that you did like helping someone, or an alms giving that you participated in, etc.
- If neutral thoughts come to the mind, let them just pass by. Do not cultivate them, but do not try to suppress them either.

6. It could be hard to do this in the beginning. But if you really want to make progress (chanda), can have the determination (citta), make the effort (viriya), and actively engage in looking at the bad consequences of bad thoughts and the possible benefits of good thoughts (vīmainsā), you WILL make progress, AND it will get easier with time. These four iddhipāda will also be cultivated on the way; see the post on "The Four Bases of Mental Power (Cattāro Iddhipāda)".
7. When you actively suppress kāmachanda (excess greed) and $v y \bar{a} p \bar{a} d a$ (hate) by this procedure, the other three hindrances (thina middha, uddhacca kukkucca, and vicikicch $\bar{a}$ ) will automatically reduce. Thus all five hindrances will be gradually removed and your mind will become "free of gunk". See the post on "Key to Calming the Mind - The Five Hindrances".
8. As you make progress, your mind will gain a calmness, a relief, that is permanent. It will get easier and easier to "get to samādhi". The Buddha compared the relief gained by this bhāvana as follows: paying off a big loan that had been a burden to the mind, being released from jail, recovering from a major disease, gaining freedom from slavery, and reaching safety after crossing a dangerous desert. If someone has all those five experiences at the same time, the Buddha said, that is the kind of relief one gets by removing the five hindrances.

- This is the nirāmisa sukha that one gains, when one approaches Nibbāna or Nivana; see the post, "How to Taste Nibbāna". Nibbāna is "cooling down", it cannot matched by any sense pleasure, and it is permanent. One can experience it in varying degrees as one cultivates this Ariya meditation.


## XIII Abhidhamma

- Abhidhamma - Introduction
o Subsection: Essential Abhidhamma - The Basics
- Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)
- The Amazing Mind - Critical Role of Nāmagotta (Memories)
- Citta and Cetasika - How Viññāna (Consciousness) Arises
- State of Mind in the Absence of Citta Vithi - Bhavanga
- Bhava and Bhavañga - Simply Explained!
- Citta Vithi - Processing of Sense Inputs
- Javana of a Citta - The Root of Mental Power
- Cetasika - Connection to Gati
$\circ$ Subsection: Mind and Consciousness
- What is Mind? How do we Experience the Outside World?
- What is a Thought?
- What is in a Thought? Why Gati are so Important?
- What is Consciousness?
- 1. Thoughts (Citta), Consciousness (Viñ̃̃āna), and Mind (Hadaya Vatthu) - Introduction
- 2. Viññāna (Consciousness) can be of Many Different Types and Forms
- 3. Viññāna, Thoughts, and the Subconscious


## - Subsection: Citta and Cetasika

- Citta and Cetasika - How Viññāna (Consciousness) Arises
- What is a Thought?
- What is in a Thought? Why Gati are so Important?
- Cetasika - Connection to Gati
- Javana of a Citta - The Root of Mental Power
- Subsection: Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya)
- Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya) - Introduction
- Does any Object (Rūpa) Last only 17 Thought Moments? Moved to Paticca Samuppāda $\rightarrow$ Understanding the Terms in Paticca Samuppāda
- Hidden World of the Gandhabba: Netherworld (Paraloka)
- Ghost in the Machine - Synonym for the Manomaya Kāya?
- Manomaya Kāya (Gandhabba) and the Physical Body
- Brain - Interface between Mind and Body
- Manomaya Kāya and Out-of-Body Experience (OBE)
- Cuti-Patisandhi - An Abhidhamma Description
- Why Do People Enjoy Immoral Deeds? - Ditthi Is Key
- Key to Sotāpanna Stage - Ditthi and Vicikicchā
- The Origin of Matter - Suddhatthaka
- What are Dhamma? - A Deeper Analysis
- Pabhassara Citta, Radiant Mind, and Bhavañga


### 13.1 Abhidhamma - Introduction

Revised January 9, 2019; August 4, 2019; September 8, 2019; July 19, 2022 (\#9 added); July 25,
2022 (\#10-11 added)

1. "Abhi" means "higher" or "deeper." Thus Abhidhamma is a more in-depth, fundamental description of Buddha Dhamma.

- The result is the same as the material in the sutt $\bar{a}$. Still, Abhidhamma provides a "bottom up" description of the existence, starting with 82 "most basic units" within the four ultimate entities of citta, cetasika, rūpa, and Nibbāna. That was a monumental task, and it took almost 500 years to finalize it at the third Buddhist Council.
- The 81 'basic units" that make up this world are one pure citta, 52 cetasika, and 28 types of $r \bar{u} p a$. Depending on the combinations of cetasika that arise with citta, 89 (or 121) types of contaminated citta (or viññāna) can occur. That will become clear as we discuss it further.
- Abhidhamma Pitaka is fully consistent with the other two Piṭaka of the Tipiṭaka.

2. In the suttā, the Buddha explained the Dhamma concepts using everyday language. And most people can attain Nibbāna without knowing anything about Abhidhamma.

- However, one could study Abhidhamma and see WHY Buddha Dhamma is not a religion but is the ultimate explanation of nature, the Grand Unified Theory. That can lead to a "faith-based understanding" of Buddha Dhamma. It has a thousand-fold more explanatory power than modern science. And for those who like to "get to the bottom of understanding something," Abhidhamma will bring joy to the heart.

Let us take the example of making a cake:

- All one needs to know are the ingredients and how to mix them, and the proper procedures to bake them. That is analogous to sutt $\bar{a}$.
- Abhidhamma's approach is comparable to starting at the atomic level of the ingredients. Then one can describe how those fundamental entities combine to make flour, oil, eggs, etc. Furthermore, one would know the choice of those ingredients and WHY the cake needs to baking at a specific temperature.
- It is mind-boggling what Abhidhamma can accomplish.
- However, instead of being a boring "recipe book," learning Abhidhamma can be a delightful experience if one starts with an understanding of the basics. Furthermore, one can get a much deeper understanding of the Dhamma concepts.

3. Abhidhamma provides a complete, consistent description of the whole existence (encompassing the 31 realms). With this description, there can be no unexplained phenomena at any level. A logician like the late Dr. Kurt Gödel could have a great time with it; see "Gödel's Incompleteness Theorem."

- The scope of Abhidhamma is somewhat comparable to what the scientists are trying to do with a Grand Unified Theory to describe the behavior of inert matter. Einstein devoted the latter part of his life to developing one and failed, and scientists are still far from achieving it. And even if accomplished, it will be able to describe ONLY the behavior of inert matter, not of living beings.

4. Abhidhamma is the Grand Unified Theory of the Buddha. I introduced it in the post, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma." In this Abhidhamma section, I will try to provide further details. My goal is to describe it in an easy-to-grasp simple manner.

- When I taught physics to undergraduate students, I told them not to memorize anything but to grasp the essence of the material. Many students (and adults) try to memorize descriptions of a concept but have no idea how to apply that concept. I used to give them all the complex equations and any other hard-tomemorize material in the tests; what they needed to do was to apply them in solving problems.
- My approach is the same here. For example, in the "Tables and Summaries" post, different types of cittā (loosely-speaking "thoughts") are listed. There is no need to memorize them. One should understand a given Dhamma concept starting from the basics: for example, which citt $\bar{a}$ are immoral and can lead one to rebirth in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$ and WHY.

5. For example, a key concept in Buddha Dhamma is saññā (translated to English as "perception"). But it is much more complicated than "knowing and identifying an object"; see "Sañ̃ña - What It Really Means."

- One of my first goals in the Abhidhamma section is to describe sañ $\tilde{n} a$ and the critical role played by the brain. For that, we first need to understand the connection between the brain and the mind (they are NOT the same). See "Brain - Interface between Mind and Body."
- Abhidhamma can make one addicted to it, as I have become addicted to it. When one starts to grasp how this complex world works, understanding even a bit more of it can bring joy to the heart.

6. However, I must say that even if one can understand the whole of the Abhidhamma theory, one MAY NOT understand the Buddha's message. One must understand the true meanings of anicca, dukkha, and anatta.

- I had so many unresolved questions on parts of Abhidhamma until I listened to the first desana from one of my teachers on July 30, 2013, on anicca, dukkha, and anatta. It was like lifting a fog, and by the end of that desanā, I knew I would be able to 'fill in the blanks" to improve my understanding.
- Abhidhamma can solidify and "fill in the blanks" of Buddha Dhamma from the suttā, which can be exhilarating.


## Background of the Development of Abhidhamma Theory

7. Following is a brief background on how the Abhidhamma Piṭaka of the Tipitaka was developed over roughly 250 years by the lineage of bhikkhus, starting with Ven. Sāriputta. Of course, Ven. Sāriputta was one of the two chief disciples of the Buddha: While Ven. Mahā Moggallāna excelled in supernatural powers, Ven. Sāriputta excelled in Dhamma. He was only second to the Buddha in Dhamma knowledge.

- The minute details on the structure of a citta vīthi (a series of citta) of 17 thought moments, with each citta lasting sub-billionth of a second, can be seen only by a Buddha. The Buddha described such minute details to Ven. Sāriputta. Then Ven. Sāriputta and his group of bhikkhus (and their subsequent lineage) completed the monumental task of making a complete description of the Abhidhamma theory, starting with the fundamental entities.
- As I mentioned earlier, that is a million times more complicated task than putting together a Grand Unified Theory of inert matter (as scientists are attempting to do today). Because a living being has an inert body but a complex mind which makes that inert body "alive."

8. At the First Buddhist Council, just three months after the Parinibbāna of the Buddha, only a theoretical framework was recited. More was added at the second Council, and the task was completed only at the third Council. This completed Tipitaka was written down in 29 BCE at the Fourth Buddhist Council; see "Preservation of the Buddha Dhamma."

- A false statement in many books is the following statement. Abhidhamma was "invented" by bhikkhus after the Parinibbāna of the Buddha.
- Those who make such statements have not either studied Abhidhamma or have not been able to understand the in-depth analyses in Abhidhamma. The minute details of the very fast citta vīthi are discernible only to the mind of a Buddha.
- It is essential to realize that hundreds of Arahants at the Fourth Council wrote the whole Tipitaka. That included the complete Abhidhamma Piṭaka.

9. The description of the events leading to the First Buddhist Council, just three months after the Parinibbāna of the Buddha, is described in the "WebLink: suttacentral: 21. Pañcasatikakkhandhaka" section of the "Cūlavagga" of the "Theravāda Vinaya Piṭaka."

- At the end of that section is a small section with the title, "Tassuddānaim." That summarizes the events of the First Council.
- The following verse is in there: "Upālim vinayam pucchi, suttantānandapaṇ̣itaín; Piṭakaim tīni saǹgītim, akaìsu jinasāvakā."
- That says: "Venerable Upāli recited the Vinaya (Upäliim vinayaim pucchi,) Ven. Ānanda recited the Suttas (suttantānandapanditaim or suttanta annanda panditaì), and all of the 500 Arahants present recited ALL THREE Piṭaka (Piṭakaì tīni sañgītim, akainsu jinasāvakā.) [tīni : see tayo. tayo: [nom. plu. of $t i$ ] three (persons).]
- Thus, there is clear evidence that all three Piṭaka of the Tipiṭaka were recited at the First Council.
- However, only a basic framework of Abhidhamma was available at that First Council. Further refinements/expansions were added to the Abhidhamma Pittaka at the Second and Third Councils. The finalized version was written down at the Fourth Council.

10. In the "Introduction" to his book (Ref. 1), Bhikkhu Bodhi has a subsection on "The Origins of Abhidhamma" (see pp. 9-11 of Ref. 1.) There, he has provided a brief background which I will summarize.

- The Buddha explained Abhidhamma in detail to an assembly of Devas in the Tāvatimsa Deva realm over three months. Each day, the Buddha would descend to Earth for his almsround, meet Venerable Sariputta, and give him a summary of that day's discourse.
- Having learned Abhidhamma from the Buddha, Ven. Sariputta taught it to his 500 student-bhikkhus. However, they had to expand that summary to the form we have in seven books today. That task was completed only by the Third Council, as mentioned in \#9 above.
- The "WebLink: suttacentral: Lomasakangiyabhaddekaratta Sutta (MN 134)" confirms that the Buddha spent in the Tāvatimsa Deva realm: "Ekamidaì, bhikkhu, samayamं bhagavā devesu tāvatimsesu viharati pāricchattakamūle paṇ̣ukambalasilāyam.." OR "One time, the Buddha was staying among the Devas of Tāvatimsa realm."

11. There is also a verse close to the beginning of the "WebLink: suttacentral: Dhutañgapañha (Mil 6.4.2)" section of "Milindapañha" of the Tipitaka directly saying that. It is in Ven. Nagasena's answer to a question by King Milinda on the vast numbers of humans and Devas who attained magga phala while listening to the Buddha.

- "..Nagare rājagahe paññāsasahassāni tīni ca satasahassāni ariyasāvakā bhagavato upāsakaupāsikāyo, puna tattheva dhanapālahatthināgadamane navuti pānakotiyo, pārāyanasamāgame pāsāṇakacetive cuddasa pānakotiyo, puna indasālaguhāyaì asīti devatākoṭiyo, puna bārānasiyaì isipatane migadāye paṭhame dhammadesane atṭhārasa brahmakotityo aparimān̄ā ca devatāyo, puna tāvatimsabhavane panḍukambalasilāyam abhidhammadesanāya asīti devatākotiyo,."
- The "WebLink: suttacentral: English translation (Mil 6.4.2)" there is as follows: "..In the city of Rājagaha three hundred and fifty thousand devout laymen and devout laywomen, disciples of the Blessed One, were walking in the Paths. And there again at the taming of Dhanapāla the great elephant nine hundred million living beings, and again at the meeting at the Pāsānika cetiya on the occasion of the Pārāyana discourse one hundred and forty million living beings, and again at the Indasāla cave eight hundred millions of gods, and again at Benares in the deer park Isipatana at the first preaching of the Dhamma one hundred and eighty million Brahmā gods and innumerable others, and again in the heaven of the Thirty-Three at the preaching of the Abhidhamma on the Pandu Kambala Rock eight hundred millions of the gods,."
- Much merits to the reader TripleGemStudent for providing me with this reference.


## Weakening of Buddha Sāsana

12. The absence of Arahants (in significant numbers) started around the second century CE and coincided with the rise of Mahāyāna and the "contamination" of Theravada, which culminated in the Visuddhimagga of Buddhaghosa; see "Historical Timeline of Edward Conze."

- As we discuss more topics, it will become clear that only Arahants with superior mental power can accomplish the complex task of completing the Abhidhamma Pitiaka. It was compiled without an easy way of recording, let alone having access to computers.
- I have given a breakdown of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka in the post, "Preservation of Dhamma."

13. August 12, 2015: I have brought the subsections on "Mind and Consciousness" and "Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya)" from "Dhamma Concepts" to the "Abhidhamma" section since it is imperative to understand those basic concepts first. Reading those subsections (and "Citta and Cetasika") is a good idea before reading further in the Abhidhamma section.

- It is not necessary to understand the material in all those essays. But the more of those basic concepts one understands, the easier it becomes to grasp the content in subsequent articles.
- Also, we all keep increasing our understanding as we learn Dhamma. I learn new things daily and update the posts as much as possible. The more one learns, the more one can "see the inconsistencies" in other versions of "Buddhism," and possibly in my essays; some of these posts date back to 2014. Please don't hesitate to point out any inconsistencies on this website. I would be grateful. There is a "Comments" tab under each post.

14. September 8, 2019: I have written a series of posts in a new subsection to introduce fundamental concepts in Abhidhamma at "Essential Abhidhamma - The Basics."

WebLink: PDF Download: Bhikkhu_Bodhi-Comprehensive_Manual of Abhidhamma

## REFERENCES

1. "WebLink: PDF Download: Bhikkhu Bodhi-Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma," by Bhikkhu Bodhi (2000); this is a revised and updated version of Ref. 2 below. A pdf file can be downloaded (click the link to open the pdf).
2. "WebLink: PDF Download: A Manual of Abhidhamma," Fifth Edition by Narada Thero (1987).
3. "WebLink: PDF Download: Buddha Abhidhamma - Ultimate Science," by Dr. Mehm Tin Mon; this is a very good FREE publication (click the link to open the e-book); please read the following warning about all three references.

Unfortunately, some concepts in all three references are not correct. In particular, most existing Theravāda texts (except the Pāli Tipiṭaka of course) have incorrect interpretations of anicca, dukkha, and anatta. Also, in all three references, kasina and breath meditation is presented as Buddhist meditations. I will try to point out such problems in relevant posts.

### 13.2 Essential Abhidhamma - The Basics

September 23, 2018
Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)
The Amazing Mind - Critical Role of Nāmagotta (Memories)
Citta and Cetasika - How Viññān̄a (Consciousness) Arises
State of Mind in the Absence of Citta Vithi - Bhavanga
Bhava and Bhavañga - Simply Explained!
Citta Vithi - Processing of Sense Inputs
Javana of a Citta - The Root of Mental Power
Cetasika - Connection to Gati

### 13.2.1 Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)

August 23, 2018; revised (\#18 added) September 12, 2018; January 6, 2019; May 16, 2020; September 22, 2021

## Introduction

1. Even though only one word in the English language ("thought") describes "a unit of cognition" or "a thought," the Buddha explained that such a "thought" arises as a citta, and goes through nine stages of "contamination" to become viññānakkhandha. What we experience is this viññānakkhandha of the "aggregate of viññāṇa." See, "The Five Aggregates (Pañcakkhandha)."

- However, even a contaminated citta is still called a citta for convenience, even in the sutt $\bar{a}$. So, one needs to determine the meaning depending on the context. One needs to have an idea of those nine stages.
- Some of these terms in the nine stages are used interchangeably to as "a thought" in many Buddhist textbooks and internet sites on Buddhism (e.g., citta, mano, viñ̃̃āna.) That is NOT correct.

2. I will make this a post simple because everyone must get the basic idea of how a thought is "contaminated" within a split second.

- It is not possible to stop the contamination of a citta within such a short time. I have even seen some well-known, and respected Dhamma teachers say that one can willfully keep a "pabhassara citta" (uncontaminated citta) from being contaminated.
- I hope this post will make it clear that such a thing is not possible. One's cittā are contaminated depending on one's gati and the sensory input (ārammana) in question. The key to STOPPING cittā from getting contaminated is to change one's gati over time.
- That is done by following the Noble Path, and specifically by practicing the correct $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p \bar{a} n a$ and Satipaṭ! $\mathrm{ta} n a$ Bhāvanā. Not by the "fake breath meditation." That will become clear by the end of the post.


## Nine Stages of a Thought (Citta)

3. Those nine stages of contamination during the lifetime of the fundamental unit of cognition (within a billionth of a second) are citta, mano, mānasan, hadayan, pandaran, mano manāyatanam, mana indriyam (or manindriyam), viññāna, viññānakkhandha. [Yaí cittaì mano mānasaí hadayaì paṇ̂araí mano manāyatanamं manindriyaim viññānamं viññānakkhandho...] A Tipitaka reference is given in the post, "Pabhassara Citta, Radiant Mind, and Bhavanga.""

- Amazingly, these nine steps occur within a split second, and the Buddha said there are billions of citta arising within the blink of an eye. Each citta has three stages: uppāda, țhiti, bhañga (rising, stability, dissolution). Those nine steps occur before it comes to the bhanga or the termination stage.
- It may be hard to believe, but we can prove this true with the following example.

4. Suppose three people A, B, C, are sitting in a small coffee shop. They are all facing the door, and person X walks in. Suppose that person $X$ is a close friend of $A$, the worst enemy of $B$, and that $C$ does not know X . We will also assume that all are males.

- So, let us see what happens within a split second. A recognizes X as his friend, and a smile comes to his face. B recognizes X as his enemy, and his face gets darkened.
- On the other hand, C's mind does not register anything about X , and X is just another person to him. He immediately goes back to whatever he was doing.

5. That is an example of a "cakkhu viñ̃̃äna," a "seeing event." It is over within a split second, just like taking a photo with a camera takes only a split second, where the image in captured on the screen instantaneously.

- However, something very complicated happens in a human mind when a "seeing event" occurs.
- It is critically important to go slow and analyze what happens to see how complicated this process is (for a human mind) to capture that "seeing event." It is far more complex than just recording "a picture" in a camera.

6. Within that split second, A recognizes X as his good friend, and pleasant emotions arise in his mind, and he becomes happy. B recognizes X as his worse enemy, and destructive emotions arise in his mind, and he becomes angry. On the other hand, C identifies X as a man or a woman, and no feelings occur.

- We don't think twice about these observations usually. But if one carefully analyzes what happens, one can easily see that this is an amazingly complex process.
- How does the SAME "seeing event" (seeing X) lead to all these very different changes in the minds of three people? (and the emotions even show up on their faces!)
- No one but a Buddha can see this fast time evolution of a citta.
- The Buddha has analyzed this process in minute detail. We will discuss only the critical basic features here.


## Nothing Faster in the World Than the Arising of a Citta

7. Buddha said it is hard to find any phenomena in this world that change faster than the mind: "WebLink: suttacentral: Añguttara Nikāya (1.48)."

The short sutta says: "Nāhaín, bhikkhave, aññai் ekadhammampi samanupassāmi yaí evai் lahuparivattaì yathayidaì cittaì. Yāvañcidamं, bhikkhave, upamāpi na sukarā yāva lahuparivattaì cittan"ti."

Translated: "I consider, bhikkhus, that there is no phenomenon that comes and goes so quickly as citta. It is not easy to find an analogy (a simile) to show how quickly citta can change."

## Three Features of a Seeing Event (Cakkhu Viññāṇa)

## 8. The "seeing event" has three essential features:

- One gets into an emotional state (pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral, which is called sukha, dukha, and upekkhā in Pāli), which is vedana $\overline{\text {. }}$
- One recognizes the object, and that is called sañña.
- Based on vedanā and saññā, one also generates other mental characteristics such as anger, joy. Those are none other than sañkhāra.
- Of course, this holds for all six types of vipāka viññāna.


## 9. Viñ̃āana is the overall sense experience encompassing all those three: vedanā, sañ̃̄ā, sañkhāra.

- But viññāna can be more than the sum of those three. See, "Viññāna - What It Really Means."
- We can safely say that viññanna (or more correctly viñ̃äṇakkhandha) is the overall sensory experience, INCLUDING one's expectations based on that sensory experience. That is why one's facial expressions may change too, according to such expectations.

10. So, we can see that those three people, A, B, and C will have three different "states of mind" upon that seeing event (ārammaṇa).

- That "mindset" with a set of vedanā, sañ̃ $\bar{a}$, and sañkhāra is called a viñ$\tilde{n} \bar{a} n a$.
- Viññāna is the overall sensory experience that includes all those. And that takes place within a split second.
- There are six types of vipāka viññāṇa corresponding to the six sense faculties. See, "Viññāna - What It Really Means."


## Importance of Character/Habit (Gati)

11. Several key important basic features come out from this simple example.

- There is no single entity called "viñãāna." When we hear something a "sota viñ̃̄āṇa" arises, when we taste something a jivhā viññanna occurs, etc. Altogether six types of vipāka viññ̄ana are associated with the six sense faculties we have. Those are cakkhu (see), sota (hear), ghāna (smell), jivhā (taste), $k \bar{a} y a$ (touch), and mano (mind).
- Any of those will lead to the following outcomes: Sukha, dukha, or upekkhā vedanā arise. One recognizes what type of picture, sound, etc., and that is (saññ̄ $\bar{a}$.) Then other types of cetasika occurring (called sainkhāra) depending on the ārammaña (sound heard, etc.) AND the "nature" of the person (character/habits or gati).
- Gati is sometimes written as gathi as is pronounced in conventional English. However, there is a "Tipitaka English convent" adopted in the 1800s to keep the words short; see, "Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars - Part 1."
- Each person has a unique (but changing) set of good and bad gati. I am not going to discuss this here, but there are many posts on the website on gati.


## Dependence on the "Thought Object" (Ārammana)

12. Let us take a different scenario. Let us assume that X is B 's girlfriend - who is not in good terms with A - and that C is a young male who has never seen X .

- Now, we see that the moods of A and B will reverse. A will be instantaneously unhappy to see X , and B will be happy to X .
- Regarding C, the situation could be different than before. If X appears attractive to him, C may instantaneously form a lustful state of mind.

13. So, we see that the type of cakkhu viñ̃ān̄a depends primarily on two things. It depends on the person experiencing it and the sense object in question (called an ārammaṇa in Pāli).

- In the above two cases, A and B experienced different types of vipāka viñ̃ñaña (seeing something "good" or "bad.") But their experiences reversed when the sense object changed (situation in \#4 versus that in \#12.)
- In the case of C seeing an attractive woman, even though he had no prior contact with her, lustful viññāna arose in C, due to his "lustful" gati.
- If C were an Arahant, C would only generate a upekkhā viññāṇa when seeing the X. An Arahant has removed all gati; one needs to learn about gati to understand this point.

14. Now we see that for a given person, there is no permanently set of good or bad viñ $\tilde{n} \tilde{a} \boldsymbol{\eta} a$. What kind of viññan̄a arises depends on the gati of the person and the sense object.

- We usually call someone a "good person" based on their overall character, i.e., if that person displays more "good character" than "bad character" over time. But only an Arahant can be called a "definitely a moral person," acting $100 \%$ morally all the time.
- Even though this is a complex subject, the basic features are those mentioned above. One needs to analyze different situations in one's mind to get these ideas firmly grasped. That is actual vipassanā meditation!
- One needs to understand how the mind works to make progress on the Path. The Buddha said that the world had never known his Dhamma. And it has the MIND in the forefront. Furthermore, the mind is the most complex entity in the world.


## Simple Explanation of the Nine Steps

15. The first stage, citta, is just awareness that comes with the "uncontaminated" vedanā and saññā and five other universal mental factors (cetasika): phassa, cetanā, manasikara, ekaggatā, and jivitindriya. One is just aware that one is alive and is experiencing something.

- At the "mano" stage, the mind has "measured" what the object is (〇 ßீ๑ [mcenīma or Measurement] in Sinhala). For example, whether it is a tree or a human or a bird.
- In the following "mānasaì" stage, the mind can distinguish among different species. For example, whether it is just a woman or one's mother or a parrot or a hummingbird. That is the "pure and complete awareness": one sees the external world as it is. An Arahant‘s mind will not contaminate beyond this stage.
 attached to the object (or repulsed by it) based on one's prior experiences and gati.
- This attachment gets stronger in the following several stages, and by the time it reaches the viñ̃āna stage, it can be fully "corrupted."
- Finally, that viñãāna gets incorporated to the aggregate of viññāṇa or the viññannakkhandha. With each thought, the viññānakkhandha grows.

17. One crucial observation is that C's mind stopped at the "mānasam" stage. (That is only partially correct, but we don't need to get to details here). However, in the second example, it got contaminated.

- Of course, an Arahant‘s mind will never get contaminated beyond the "mānasan" stage for ANY sense object.
- Specifically, no lobha, dosa, or moha will arise in an Arahant, regardless of what the sensory input.

18. Hopefully, the above basic description will clarify how a citta gets contaminated automatically according to one's personality (gati) and the sense object.

- The critical point is that we do not control those initial citta that arises automatically at the first exposure to the sense object.
- However, when we become aware of this initial response, we CAN control our subsequent citta by being mindful. That is the key to $\bar{A} n a \bar{p} a \overline{n a}$ and Satipatṭhāna meditations and is a different topic. For details, see "Bhāvanā (Meditation)" and "Living Dhamma" and "Paticca Samuppada" sections.

19. Finally, another critical point is that the six types of viñāāna that we just discussed are all vipāka viññāna. These arise due to past kamma, i.e., as kamma vipāka.

- Then there are kamma viñ̃̃āña that we create ourselves; see, "Kamma Viññāna - Link Between Mind and Matter."
- When the Buddha said that we need to stop defiled kamma viññanna from arising, he was referring to the kamma viñ̃āạna. We have control over kamma viññāna. But we do not have control over vipāka viññāna, which are due to past kamma.
- Details on kamma viññāna in the post "Do I Have "A Mind" That Is Fixed and "Mine"?". At a given moment one's state of mind depends on one's gati (character and habits) AND the external sense object.


### 13.2.2 <br> The Amazing Mind - Critical Role of Nāmagotta (Memories)

September 6, 2018; revised September 7, 2018; October 7, 2019; March 10, 2020; June 6, 2021; June 10, 2021; September 16, 2021 (revised \#1); September 22, 2021 (revised \#1)

## Nāmagotta (Part of Pañcakkhandha) Are Memories

1. Here, we will discuss the critical importance of nāmagotta (our memory records). This discussion will be helpful in understanding the post. "Anatta in Anattalakkhana Sutta - Part 1."

- It is important to note that "nāmagotta" has records of all our past events. As we know, each aggregate (khandha) includes all past events. For example, $r \bar{u} p a k k h a n d h a$ includes the $r \bar{u} p a$ we are experiencing now and all past rūpa we have experienced. See, "Difference Between Physical Rūpa and Rūpakkhandha." That holds for the other four aggregates too. Thus, nāmagotta consists of the "past components of pañcakkhandha."
- Let us take person X. If someone shows $X$ an apple, he will say, "that is an apple, and I know how it smells and tastes." Suppose X loses all memory right after that. Now, will X be able to identify that as an apple? Of course not.
- That is another amazing thing about the mind. It can search one's previous experiences with a given object (in this case, an apple) and remember what an apple looks like, tastes like, etc., i.e., all the distinctive properties of an apple. And it can do that in a billionth of a second!
- We discussed this in detail: "Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)."

Important Aside: A mind is constantly interacting with pañcakkhandha and also constantly adding to the pañcakkhandha.

- Pañcakkhandha becomes panca upādāna khandha (pañcupādānakkhandha) when the mind attaches to an ārammaṇa based on gati (character/habits). That initial "attachment" happens within a billionth of a second.
- But if we are mindfiul, we can stop that "attachment" when it is leading to unwise actions. That will slowly change our gati. That will lead to better responses to various types of a $\begin{gathered}\text { rammana over time. That is the }\end{gathered}$ basis of true Ānāpānasati/Satipaṭthāna.
- Of course, practicing Ānāpānasati/Satipatt thāna becomes easier with a true understanding of the anatta nature. Then the mind will wee the unfruitfulness of especially immoral deeds seeking temporary pleasures.)


## Without Memories, There Would Be Only Be a Zombie (or a Robot)

2. Think carefully about the following. If X loses all memories, he will not know what to do with a plate of food put in front of him; he would not identify that as a pizza, a sandwich, etc.

- X will not know how to go home if he is at work when memory loss happens. X would not know even what is meant by "home" and that he is supposed to go home at a particular time.
- If he gets the urge to go to the bathroom, X will not know where the bathroom is.
- You can think about the zillions of things that we take for granted every day that X will not be able to do. X will not be able to function at all!

3. That is why a baby of a few months of age does not recognize anything and does not have any control over "bathroom functions."

- A baby's brain is not developed and thus cannot make contact with the mano loka, where memories are; see, "Nāmagotta, Bhava, Kamma Bīa, and Mano Loka (Mind Plane)" and "Recent Evidence for Unbroken Memory Records (HSAM)."
- Thus a baby is TOTALLY dependent on parents until about a year old until the brain develops to some extent.
- The manasikāra cetasika helps put together memories based on the "rūpa" received from the brain.


## Perception or Identification (Sañ$\tilde{n} \bar{a}$ ) Requires Memories

4. Now, suppose that person X , who has lost all his memories, takes a bite of the apple. Of course, he will taste the sweetness, but he will not be able to IDENTIFY that as "apple taste."

- Furthermore, X may not even generate a liking or the desire to take another bite unless he is hungry.
- That also proves that the CRAVING for the taste of apple was not in the apple. Cravings are associated with one's āsava. And those āsava cannot manifest unless one's memories are intact and hidden anusaya can be triggered.

5. With his memories lost, X's vedanā and saññ̄a will be pretty close to "uncontaminated" pabhassara citta. He will experience a taste (without identifying it as a taste of apple). But he will not generate any sobhana or asobhana cetasika based on any type of attractive or repulsive sense input.

- But of course, he has not attained the Arahant stage. His āsava will be with him, just as a newborn baby will have all its $\bar{a} s a v a$ with it.
- If X lost his memory due to brain damage, his $\bar{a} s a v a$ would not resurface until the next birth if the brain is permanently damaged.
- Details at "Āsava, Anusaya, and Gati (Gathi)." Many examples are discussed in, "Patient H.M. Different Roles of Brain in Memory."


## The Account of Patient H.M.

6. That has happened to a person, and his story is in the book "Patient H.M. : A Story of Memory, Madness, and Family Secrets" by Luke Dittrich.

- Here we must remember that our memories are in the nāma loka can be recalled only by the mana indriya in the brain. See, "Namagotta, Bhava, Kamma Bija, and Mano Loka (Mind Plane)," "Memory, Brain, Mind, Nama Loka, Kamma Bhava, Kamma Vipāka," "Gandhabba Sensing the World - With and Without a Physical Body," and "Brain - Interface between Mind and Body." One needs to spend some time clarifying this key concept.
- The surgeons had inadvertently removed part of the brain of "patient H.M." that contained the mana indirya (surgeons were trying to stop regular seizures that the patient was experiencing by removing tiny parts of his brain).
- With more studies in the future, we may identify the mana indirya in the brain.


## Brain is Required to Capture the External Sensory Object

7. That is why a newborn baby (within a year or so from birth) has a minimal perception capability. The brain has not developed to process all the information that comes through the sense faculties.

- Therefore, a newborn baby's brain cannot transfer anything useful to the hadaya vatthu to identify objects or match each with the set of āsava/anusaya and generate cravings or dislikes for that sensory input.
- A baby's hidden āsava will not show up until its brain develops. According to the Buddha, the brain function attains its total capacity around seven years of age: One can even attain Arahanthood if one is over seven.
- The role of the brain is discussed in "Brain and the Gandhabba" and "Brain - Interface between Mind and Body." Those who really want to investigate this issue can find a lot of information there. I have tried to present a consistent picture using both Buddha Dhamma and recent scientific findings.


## The Difference Between an Arahant and Patient H.M.

8. We can get a good idea of how Arahant's mind works by considering a person X discussed in \#1 through \#5 above (or patient H.M. IN \#6) who has lost all his memories. The only difference is that X or H.M., all anusaya are intact, but they cannot be "triggered."

- For an Arahant, all gati and āsava/anusaya have gone away via cultivating pañ̃̃ā.
- But an Arahant will have all his memories intact. If he has developed abhiññā powers, he will be able to recall memories not only from this life but many, many lives in the past.


## Habits/Cravings (and Thus Gati and $\overline{\text { Asava/Anusaya) Change With Time }}$

9. Most of our cravings are associated with our past habits and desires. Each person has a unique set, AND that set of habits/cravings will change over time.

- All gati and āsava/anusaya arise or — are with oneself — because of the inability to get rid of evils due to ignorance of the fundamental nature of this world: anicca, dukkha, anatta, asubha, etc.
- When one is on the Path, one will gradually get rid of "bad gati" and cultivate "good gati." Then, at some point, one will be able to comprehend the anicca nature. Then one's pañ̃̄n̄ will grow leading to the PERMANENT removal of anusaya in four stages of Nibbāna.
- One should read up on those Pāli terms if one does not understand them. Translating those terms to English does not make sense because no single English word will convey the same meaning as a Pāli word.
- That is NOT memorization. One should comprehend what is MEANT by a Pāli word, not memorize it.

10. Suppose X is a young male. When X - if he has lost ALL his memories - sees an attractive woman, he will see her as an attractive person. But he will not generate any lust for her, no matter how beautiful she is. It is just "seeing" for him. Note here that he would have lost all memories regarding his past sexual activities (in fact, this is why a baby does not generate sexual thoughts.)

- That "picture," which comes to mind, cannot match it with X's past experiences with women. His kāma rāga anusaya is still there but not awakened. The same is true for a baby.
- Similarly, X will not generate any angry thoughts when seeing "an enemy"; he does not recollect the past encounters with the person.
- In the same way, X may touch a red-hot iron because he has no idea that it can burn.
- That is also why babies touch or even try to eat anything and everything. They have no prior experience that some of those could be harmful. In the same way, until that baby grows up and has had sexual experiences, kāma rāga anusaya will stay dormant.
- To emphasize, in the case of X, he had NOT his hidden defilements (anusaya.) IF he gets his memories back, his lust towards attractive women or anger towards an old enemy will trigger. We can make it even simpler: If you lose ALL your memories of your father, would you be able to recognize him when you see him? If you cannot recognize him, would you generate affectionate thoughts when you see him? Of course not.
- There are several real-life medical situations where people had lost memories due to different reasons: "Patient H.M. - Different Roles of Brain in Memory."


## "Live in Just the Present Moment"?

11. These days, there are many "philosopher-types" (like Ekhart Tolle or even Buddhist teachers) who say "forget the past and live in the moment."

- That is utter nonsense.
- One CANNOT forget the past AND live in the present. The Buddha said to live the present moment mindfully, making sure not to make bad decisions.
- The Buddha had a perfect memory. He could remember things as far back as he wished. Often he would give accounts of what had happened in past lives and teach people how to learn lessons from the past.


## An Example from the Tipitaka

12. Finally, in the beginning of the "WebLink: suttacentral: Mahāmālukya Sutta (MN 64)," the Buddha points out this fact that sakkāya ditthi cannot arise in a new-born baby. That is because of what we discussed above. There is no way to trigger the hidden anusaya in that baby's mind.

- To quote the above translation: "For a young tender infant lying prone does not even have the notion 'identity,' so how could identity view (sakkāya diṭthi) arise in him? "
- The Pāli verse is: "Daharassa hi, mālukyaputta, kumārassa mandassa uttānaseyyakassa sakkāyotipi na hoti, kuto panassa uppajjissati sakkāyadițthi? ."
- I had forgotten the name of the sutta. Thanks to reader Siebe for pointing this out at the discussion forum.


### 13.2.3 Citta and Cetasika - How Viññāṇa (Consciousness) Arises

## Revised February 17, 2020

## Necessary Background

1. It is a good idea to read the posts, "Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)" and "Viññāna What It Really Means" first.

- It may be a good idea to read at least the introductory post on the manomaya kāya before reading this post: "Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya) - Introduction."
- When one learns Abhidhamma, one can see why the Buddha rejected both "self" and "no-self" concepts. A "living being" is a momentarily changing entity. It is not possible to say "it does not exist,"
because it does exist. It is just that it continuously evolves ON ITS OWN PATH determined by "gati" at each stage. There is a "dynamic self," which has its own identity or personality or "gati" (which also evolve.)


## Citta and Cetasika Arise Together

2. The name citta came from "chitra," the name for a painting in Pāli or Sinhala. A pure citta has only seven mental factors (cetasika). Cetasika provide "colors for the picture," so to speak.

- But the seven cetasika that are in every citta (universal cetasika or "sabba citta sadharana cetasika") may be considered "colorless." A pure citta is like a blank sheet of paper on which these "snapshots" painted.
- There are a set of 14 "bad cetasika" and a set of 25 "good cetasika." For a rough visual, we may think of the "bad cetasika" as dark colors (black, brown, etc.), and the "good cetasika" as pleasant colors such as green or yellow. Then there are six other "occasionals" (i.e., appear only in some citt $\bar{a}$ ) that are also "colorless," and those can arise with either good or bad cetasika; see, "Cetasika (Mental Factors)."
- Cetasika arise with a citta, decay with a citta, and take the same thought object (ārammaña) as the citta. But a given citta has either good OR bad cetasika; they do not mix.
- And a citta is of very short duration; it lasts much less than a billionth of a second; see, "What is a Thought?" in the next post.


## Sensory Experience Comes in "Snapshots"

3. A living being experiences the "world out there" in a series of very fast "snapshots"; it grasps the "world" in a snapshot called a citta (pronounced "chiththa") that lasts much less than a billionth of a second. As soon as the mind sees that "snapshot", it is gone. But the mind gives us an illusory sense of a permanent "world." It does that by making that "snapshot" meaningful. That requires incorporating our memories as well as our hopes for the future. Let us see how this process as described in Abhidhamma.

- The mind does this with the help of a cetasika (pronounced "chethasika") in that citta called manasikara. We will discuss this later, but I am just trying to get across the basic idea.
- Pāli words are spelled differently compared to "Standard English" spelling. See, ""Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars - Part 1" and ""Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars - Part 2."

4. Therefore, we can visualize each "moment of awareness" of the outside world by the mind like a snapshot. As soon as it comes, it is gone.

Then how does our mind see the outside world as "permanent?" Also, how does it decide a given situation as 'good' or 'bad?' Often, two people look at the same thing and perceive it differently (one may perceive it as as "good" and the other as "bad.")

- Two of the universal cetasika (manasikāra and cetanā,) are responsible for such variations.
- As we discussed in other posts, a record of the "snapshot" that decays is permanently recorded in the mental plane, and these records are called nāma gotta; see, "Difference Between Dhamma and Sañkhāra (Sañkhata)."
- In the same way, our hopes and visions for the future are also in the mental plane. Of course, the past nāma gotta are permanent while the imprints for the future keep changing. The manasikāra cetasika brings in memories from the past and hopes for the future into the current citta, thus a "permanent like" view of the world is composed of the cetanā cetasika, which is responsible for "putting together a citta."
- Furthermore, in one person, "good" cetasika may arise due to a sensory input, but if the "gati" of the other person is opposite, a set of "bad" cetasika may arise in the other person. The cetana cetasika combines them to form a "good" or a "bad" awareness.


## How Do We See?

5. It is basically the same kind of process happens when we see, hear, taste, smell, touch, or think. Let us explain the concept of vision.

- The basic sequence of events in capturing any "input" via the five physical senses was described in "Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya) - Introduction."
- If we keep looking at a picture on the wall, nothing changes because it is a static picture.
- Now let us think about what happens when we look at a water fountain. The water fountain looks like a sort of a solid object. But in reality, there are trillions of water particles rising and falling each second. We do not "see" individual water particles but just the appearance of a "sort of solid object with a certain shape."
- In a "thought" (citta), the manasikāra and cetanā cetasika help the mind put together a "composite" of what is happening to give a more or less "solid appearance."
- Same thing happens in seeing a continuous "ring of fire" when one swirls a light in a circular motion. At a given moment, the light is at a fixed position, but if we move the light fast enough, only see a "composite picture" in the shape of a continuous ring of light.


## The Movie Analogy

6. Another example is a motion picture. When making a movie, many many static pictures are taken and then play them back at fast enough speed. If the playback speed is too slow, we can see individual pictures, but above a certain "projection rate," it looks like real motion. Here is a video that illustrates this well:

## WebLink: YOUTUBE: Animation basics: The optical illusion of motion

## Our Sensory Experience Is Very Similar to the "Movie Analogy"

7. When we see the outside world, what happens is very similar to the above. At the end of the video it is stated that the "movie" we see is an illusion. As the Buddha explained, that holds for real life as well. In real life when we see someone coming towards us, what we actually see is a series of "static pictures" or citta projected at a very fast rate in our minds. That gives us the illusion of a "movie like experience."

- In the above video, it is suggested that all the information from the "previous static frames" were put together by the brain. However, that is true only to a certain extent.
- The brain does put together the individual frames. But it is the mind that incorporates past memories and IDENTIFIES who is in the picture.
- We not only "see" the video, but we also RECOGNIZE what is seen. We identify a given actor, we can even remember previous movies with that actor, we KNOW all about the scenes in the background, etc. It is not possible for the brain to have access to all those memories. This is a point that needs a lot of thought.
- What happens according to Abhidhamma is the following. The brain periodically sends packets of acquired data put together by the cortex in the brain to the hadaya vatthu, which is basically the seat of the mind. Citta vith $h$ arise in accepting that information from the brain, and it is the mind that does all the compiling (with the help of the manasikāra and cetanā cetasika) and that is how we EXPERIENCE it.
- I will go into more details later, but those are the key points.

8. We need to keep in mind that all animals have this capability too. A dog basically sees its environment just like we do and instantly recognizes the objects in the picture. Even an ant does too, even though its "world" is much more limited.

- Think about how a tiny ant can process all that information that allows it to move in a reasonable fast pace in hunting for food. It knows its territory, certain smells, and also remembers how to get back to its nest. All that information is NOT in that tiny body of an ant. More things to think about!


## Brain Is Very Fast Computer

9. In the above video, it is shown that the slowest projection rate where the brain seems to process data is about 20 frames per second; this correspond to a data packet of about 50 millisecond duration. This is consistent with a recent findings from MIT that says the minimum time needed is about 20 milliseconds: WebLink: Detecting Meaning in Rapid Pictures-Potter-2014.

- This is consistent with the Abhidhammic picture of the brain capturing segments of visual data and transmitting that information to the hadaya vatthu, which is the "mind door." That takes place via the cakkhu pasäda that is located on the manomaya kāya close to the hadaya vatthu.
- Abhidhamma, of course, does not mention how long the brain captures visual data for a "seeing event" before sending it to the hadaya vatthu. But it does say that this information is now converted by the brain to a format suitable for transmission to the hadaya vatthu, and is sent there via a "ray system" (kiraña.) I assume that this encoded information is sent at the speed of light. Thus, the information gets to the hadaya vatthu almost instantaneously. Note that the hadaya vatthu is located on the manomaya kāya, but is close to the heart


## But The Mind Is Faster

10. Of course we not only see things, but we also hear, smell, taste, touch, and think other thoughts all at the SAME TIME, it seems.

- The mind processes the information sent by the brain in a billionth of a second, much faster than the brain can process. So, the mind is mostly idle, "waiting for data from the brain."
- Therefore, the "sensing rate" is limited by the relatively slow processing speed of the brain. According to current scientific studies mentioned above, brain processing happens at the millisecond time scale, a thousand-times slower than the mind. However, it is still more than fast enough for us to experience simultaneity in all sensory inputs.


## Science Helping to "Fill-in-the-Blanks"

11. The scientific studies on the "minimum duration of a detectable event" are still at early stages (see \#9 above.) We may be able to put together a more precise sequence of events in the future. Yet we have enough data to put together a qualitative picture of what happens.

- This is an excellent example of how science can help us "fill in the blanks" of the overall picture that the Buddha provided. Of course, such a scientific background was not there 2500 years ago.
- Once the Buddha was in a Simpāsa forest near Kosambi, and he took a few leaves into his hand and told the bhikkhus, "what I have taught you compared to what I know is like these few leaves compared to the leaves in this forest. But what I have taught you is more than enough for you to attain Nibbāna."
- Thus modern science can provide us with details about the "big picture" of the Buddha, and we should be grateful to all those scientists for that knowledge. However, we should use that knowledge wisely and should not get carried away in spending too much time on such details.
Next, "What is a Thought?",


### 13.2.4 State of Mind in the Absence of Citta Vithi - Bhavanga

September 23, 2018; revised January 18, 2021; Re-written November 22, 2021; revised August 31, 2022 (several esp. \#14)
"Bhavañga state of mind" is different from "bhavañga citta" that arises in a citta vīthi.

## Bhavañga State of a Mind

1. At the cuti-patisandhi moment of grasping a new bhava, a new hadaya vatthu (seat of the mind) arises due to kammic energy. Since a human bhava is grasped with a "good nimitta" associated with a "good gati," the bhavañga state associated with that hadaya vatthu will reflect that gati.

- That natural, "born-with" bhavañga state will be there until grasping the next bhava. For example, even if one becomes unconscious, the mind will be in the bhavañga state. A bhavanga state does not have "conscious thoughts" or citttā (plural of citta.)
- That "natural bhavañga" (unlike any "temporary bhava" that we will discuss below) cannot be "felt." For example, while unconscious we don't "feel" anything, but the hadaya vatthu (seat of the mind) is in the bhavañga state.
- It is easier for some to grasp concepts than others. One factor for that is that one's bhavañga is "better" than another. In other words, one with a tihetuka birth will have a better natural bhavañga state than one with a dvihetuka birth.
- I had written a post about bhavañga sometime back (which describes it from another angle), which you may want to read now to "seal in" your understanding: "Bhava and Bhavañga - Simply Explained!."

2. When a mind is not occupied with any specific ārammaṇa (i.e., when it is not focused on a sensory input), it is in the natural bhavanga state.

- As we discussed above, that "natural state of mind" or "the bhavañga" is good in a human. Animals mostly live in fear and uncertainty.
- However, one does not feel it as good or bad. If you see someone just staring into space (and if that person is not in deep thought), that mind is in the bhavañga state. If you talk to him, he would be startled into "wakefulness". If you ask him what he was thinking about, he cannot answer because his mind was not on a particular ārammaṇa. It was in the bhavañga state.
- The bhavañga state can be compared to a started car in neutral gear. It is a dormant state. The mind becomes active when it comes out of the bhavañga state.
- Thinking happens only with an active mind with cittā, and cittā can arise ONLY in citta vīthi. See, "Citta Vithi - Processing of Sense Inputs."


## Switching from Bhavañga to Active Citta Vīthi - an Analogy

4. I have read the following nice analogy, but have forgotten where it was. In this analogy, a man is sitting in the middle of an enclosed small hut with six windows. He is sitting at a desk in the middle of the hut but can easily look up and see any of the six windows.

- The mental body (gandhabba) trapped inside the physical human body is like the man sitting at the table in the hut. Note that a gandhabba is essentially hadaya vatthu and five pasāda rūpa. But those are the critical components where the mental activity occurs, i.e., citta arises.
- When the mind is focused on the bhavañga state, that is comparable to the man absorbed in reading a book sitting at that table. He is not aware of what is happening outside the hut at all.
- In the same way, the gandhabba in the bhavañga state has no awareness of what is happening outside the human body. It is focused on the bhavañga (the nimitta grasped at the beginning of this bhava).

5. The man in the hut could be distracted from the book if a disturbance happens at one of the windows. For example, suppose someone outside comes to a window and knocks on it. Then the man would look up from the book at the window where the disturbance was.

- This is like a sense signal from one of five physical sense doors coming to one of the five pasāda rūpa around the hadaya vatthu. The hadaya vatthu - surrounded by the five pasāda rūpa - is like the man sitting in the hut with windows.
- The only difference is that signals for the mana indriya come directly to the hadaya vatthu, instead of through a sixth pasāda rūpa. Those signals (namagotta and dhammā) come through the mana indriya in the brain directly to hadaya vatthu.


## Coming Out of the Bhavanga State

6. When the seat of the mind (hadaya vatthu) gets a signal from one of the six sense doors, it comes out of the bhavañga state and starts investigating the sensory input. If the sensory input is significant, it will act on it by generating javana citta in a citta vithi.

- As we mentioned in the link in \#2 above, a series of citta $\bar{a}$ arises in citta vīthi. A citta vīthi is based on an ārammaṇa coming through one of the five physical senses always will have 17 citt $\bar{a}$. A citta vīthi can also arise directly in mind ( manodvāra) and manodvāra citta vīthi have 12 or more cittā.
- When an ārammaṇa comes to the mind, the mind "comes out of the bhavañga state". That takes 3 cittā labeled as "atīta bhavañga (AB)" "bhavañga calana (BC), and "bhavañga uccheda (BU)."
- In simple terms, that means it takes three thought-moments (citt $\bar{a})$ for the mind to "get out of the bhavañga state" and start paying attention to the ārammaṇa. That activity takes place in citta vīthi. Let us look at the basic structure of a citta vīthi.


## Components of a Citta Vīthi

7. When a signal comes to one of the five pasāda rūpa, the hadaya vatthu's attention to the bhavañga state will be disturbed. Then three cittā will rise to break away from the bhavanga state.

- Those three citta are called atīta bhavañga (atīta means "old" or "past" in Pāli or Sinhala), bhavañga calana (calana - pronounced "chalana" - means move or vibrate), and bhavañga uccheda (uccheda means to "cut-off").
- Just like it would take the man in the hut a few moments to become aware of the disturbance at the window and to look up, it will take those three cittās to pass before the hadaya vatthu "breaks away" from the bhavanga state. Then it will investigate what the disturbance is.

8. Now, hadaya vatthu, with the next citta will look to see which of the five pasāda rūpa is disturbed. That citta is called the "pañcadvārāvajjana citta," where pañca dvāra means "five doors" referring to the five physical senses.

- If it turns out that the signal is coming through the ghāna pasāda rūpa (i.e., a smell), then the mind will turn to that door. Then a ghānadvāra citta arises. That will be the fifth citta in the citta vīthi.
- Now the mind will "accept" that signal; this is called a "sampațicchana citta."
- Then it will fully realize that signal with the next citta: "santīraṇa citta."
- Up to this point, there have been three bhavañga citta, a pañcadvārāvajjana citta, a ghānadvāra citta (or any one of the five pañcadvāra citta), a sampaṭicchana citta, and a santīraṇa citta; seven cittās in all. All these are vipāka citta.

9. The eighth citta in the citta vithi is called a "votthapana citta." This is a very important citta, where one's mind decides to take action based on the sensory input it receives.

- How to respond to a given sense input (arrammana) is automatically decided by the mind, based on one's gati (pronounced "gathi") and the particular sensory input.
- We have discussed gati before: see, for example, "The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Āsavas)," "How Are Gati and Kilesa Incorporated into Thoughts?," "Cetasika - Connection to Gati," and "Āsava, Anusaya, and Gati (Gati)."
- Depending on the sensory input and one's gati, the mind may decide to ignore the sensory input or take action if it gets attracted to it.
- Possible actions will include one or more of the following: Thinking along the same lines to oneself/talking out about it (with vacī sañkhāra), and possibly taking bodily actions (with kāya sañkhāra).

10. Such actions are implemented with seven javana citta; see, "Javana of a Citta - The Root of Mental Power." This is where mano/vacīlkāya sañkhāra arises. Therefore, the seven javana citta, after the votthapana citta are kamma-generating citta.

- All kammic energies are generated in the seven javana cittā. This is where vacī sañkhāra and kāya sañkhāra are generated. Then physical actions and speech are implemented by the brain, as needed.
- After seven javana cittā, the citta vīthi ends with two tadārammaṇa (T) or bhavañga citta (B), as we discuss next. Note that B here represents a citta, not the bhavanga state. However, it has the same "qualities as the bhavañga state."


## A Pañcadvāra Citta Vīthi

11. Now we can represent a pañcadvāra citta vith hi as follows:
[bhavañga state] "AB BC BU PD CV Sam San V J J J J J J J T T" [temporary bhavañga state] OR [bhavañga state] "AB BC BU PD CV Sam San V J J J J J J J BB" [bhavañga state]

- The difference depends on the strength of the sensory input that triggered the citta vithi. Let us discuss that now.


## Two Tadārammaṇa or Two Bhavañga Citta?

12. If the sense input was particularly strong (like a death in the family), that is a special case. Then those last two cittās will be tadārammaṇa (T), as shown in \#11 above. Here tadārammaṇa indicates a "strong sensory input." Such a strong sensory input is registered in the mind temporarily and "that state of mind" can linger for some time. That time duration can range from a few minutes to several days.

- Such a very strong citta vīthi is called an atimahāntārammana (very strong) citta vīthi. The sensory event "sinks into the mind" and the mind stays in that state for a while before settling back to the natural bhavanga state. This is the situation depicted in the first citta vithi of $\# 11$.
- For example, if one gets frightened by a chasing dog, that agitated and frightened state may last for many minutes. If a parent or a child dies, the resulting sadness may last several days.
- However, eventually, the mind will return to the natural bhavañga state.

13. If the impact of the sensory input is not that strong, but enough for one to think about it, say something, or take action, then the seven javana will still flow. However, it will NOT register in the mind as a tadārammaṇa (which means "a strong thought object"). It is strong because it still generated javana citta.

- In that case, the last two citta will fall back to the "natural bhavañga mindset", B, so now the citta vīthi is: "AB BC BU PD CV Sam San V J J J J J J J B B". This is the situation depicted in the second citta vìthi of \#11.
- Such a citta vīthi is called a mahāntārammana (strong) citta vīthi.

14. If the sense input is not strong enough to generate interest in the mind, no javana citta will be generated.

- In that case, citta will fall back to the natural bhavanga state right after the votthapana citta: "AB BC BU PD CV Sam San V B B B B B B B B B".
- Such citta vīthi are called parittārammana (weak) or atiparittārammna (very weak) citta vīthi. Parittārammaṇa citta vīthi are involved in dreaming. Atiparittārammṇa citta vīthi are involved in breathing. We don't even notice such citta vīthi of the last and weakest type.
- For more details, see; "Javana of a Citta - The Root of Mental Power."


## Strong Sensory Input Leaves the Mind in a Temporary Bhavañga State

15. This is the situation we discussed in \#12 above. Let us discuss some examples.

- For example, many people get into a "state of sorrow" after hearing about the sudden death of a parent, spouse, etc. Even when they are not thinking about that person, they may be just sitting somewhere with very clear features of sadness on their faces.
- Sometimes people get very scared and it shows on their faces, but they cannot even think. They are too scared to think or to speak: "frozen in fear".
- The same thing happens when one gets very angry: They may not say anything but we can see the anger in their faces. They themselves may not know what to do.

16. So, there are many such cases where we just get into a certain state of mind, which can be called "a temporary existence or bhava": the above three examples correspond to "sad bhava", "scared bhava", and "angry bhava" respectively.

- Such a "temporary bhava" or "temporary state of mind" can last many minutes or even days. These may be denoted by $B_{T}$, compared to one's natural bhavañga state, which we can denote by $B$. After some time, the $\mathrm{B}_{\mathrm{T}}$ state will slowly fade away to fall back to the natural B state.
- Active citta vīthi run during such a temporary $\mathrm{B}_{\mathrm{T}}$ state would be influenced by that $\mathrm{B}_{\mathrm{T}}$ state. For example, if one becomes temporarily angry, his following actions could be influenced by that anger.
- The natural bhavanga state (B) is the mindset grasped at the cuti-patisandhi moment; see \#1 above.


## Connection of "Temporary Bhava" to Gati

17. We can see right away that "angry bhava" comes easily to those who are easy to get angry. Such people can be "triggered" easily. Just saying some wrong words can make them angry.

- The same is true for other types of "temporary bhava". Some can be easily frightened. Some can be easily tempted with sense pleasures.
- The tendency to easily get into such "temporary bhava $\left(\mathrm{B}_{\mathrm{T}}\right)$ " will be reduced when one progresses on the Path.
- When one finally gets to the Arahant stage, one will not get into any "temporary bhava"; one has lost all such gati. One will have "an unshakable calm state of mind".
- Thus, for an Arahant, only the natural bhavañga state (B) will be there until death. Of course, any anusaya that was there initially will be gone.


### 13.2.5 <br> Bhava and Bhavanga - Simply Explained!

## January 19, 2018; revised February 5, 2018; January 19, 2021; September 10, 2022

1. There is much confusion about these two key Pāli words: bhava and bhavañga. By clarifying what is meant by them, it would be much easier to comprehend many concepts in Buddha Dhamma, for example, how laws of kamma are enforced by nature via Paticca Samuppāda.

- Even in current Theravāda texts, there is confusion about the difference between bhava and $j \bar{a} t i$. If you have not read the post, "Bhava and Jäti - States of Existence and Births Therein," I recommend reading that first.
- Please do not be discouraged by the Pāli terms. Some have no suitable English terms, and it is better to learn their meanings and use the Pāli terms. Read through first, even if you don't get the full meaning. It will become clear. I will make it simple in this post.
- I will make one or two more posts on this subject to include references from the Tipitaka.

2. Bhava means "the potential for existence" in EITHER one of the 31 realms of possible existence (we can see just the human and animal realms) or some specific state of mind within the current life.

- The first category includes human bhava, animal bhava, Tusita deva bhava, peta bhava, Ābhassarā Brahma bhava, etc., i.e., existence in one of the 31 possible realms. As we will see below, many such "potential bhava" exist for each living being. A new bhava will be grasped at the end of the current bhava based on the relative energies of various bhava (kamma bïja) cultivated in one's past.
- Even during this lifetime, we "live under different existences" based on significant life events. This is the second category. For example, a normally "good person" may become violent for a short time upon seeing his wife in bed with another man, or one will live in a "state of sorrow" for many days upon the death of a loved one.
- Both those are "bhava," states of existence.

3. Bhavañga ("bhava" + "anga," where añga means "part") therefore means a "state of mind" that is inseparable from any existence.

- When not disturbed by a strong external sense input (via the five physical senses or the mana indriya), a human mind is in its natural bhavanga state received at the beginning of this human bhava. Each person's bhavanga state is different (based on the sense object taken in at the patisandhi moment) and feels "neutral" to each person. For example, when one is in deep sleep or "just staring out into space," one's mind is likely to be in one's natural bhavanga state, which we can denote by B.
- On the other hand, when one's mind is deeply affected by some event like in the examples we mentioned above, then the mind goes into a "temporary bhavañga state" corresponding to that event ("state of rage" when angry or "state of sadness" upon the death of a loved one). We can denote this by $\mathbf{B}_{\mathrm{T}}$.

4. Now, this "state of mind" $\left(\mathrm{B}\right.$ or $\left.\mathrm{B}_{\mathrm{T}}\right)$ could be interrupted by a citta vīthi triggered by an external sensory input coming through one of the five physical senses or the mana indriya.

- For example, when another loved one comes to pay respects to the dead loved one (who is in a "sad $\mathrm{B}_{\mathrm{T}}{ }^{\circ}$ ), one's mind may become happy for a few minutes upon seeing that person. Then they may recall a past event about the dead person, and both may get sad again. That "sad temporary bhavañga state" $\left(\mathrm{B}_{\mathrm{T}}\right)$ may not go away for several days. And then the mind will gradually fall back to the natural bhavañga state, B .
- That temporary state of mind may last only minutes or hours for less strong life events.
- For example, if one sees an old friend on the street, one's mind may become happy and talks excitedly. After the friend departs, that "happy" $\mathrm{B}_{\mathrm{T}}$ state may linger for a while. But then it would be suppressed when another thought process starts based on a different ārammaṇa.

5. Therefore, within a given day, one's mind could enter several $\mathrm{B}_{\mathrm{T}}$ states. But unless a $\mathrm{B}_{\mathrm{T}}$ state is triggered by a significant life event like losing a loved one, the mind would fall back to the natural B state when one wakes up the next morning.

- For the reasons discussed above, the natural bhavañga state, B, could be called the "uppatti bhavañga," and those temporary bhavañga states, $\mathrm{B}_{\mathrm{T}}$, could be called "pavutti bhavañga."
- However, such labels are not used in the suttā or Abhidhamma. I mention that to make the connection better.

6. Please reread the above discussion. That should help one get the basic ideas about what bhava and bhavañga are. It is important to note that bhavanga is a state of mind, not citta vīthi (thoughts).

- Another way to describe a bhavañga state is to say that while the mind is in that state, one has corresponding gati (gathi). This is also an important aspect.
- For example, when one gets into a $\mathrm{B}_{\mathrm{T}}$ state of anger, then one, of course, has predominantly "angry gati" during that time. Furthermore, one who generally has cultivated "angry gati" is likely to easily get into a $\mathrm{B}_{\mathrm{T}}$ state.
- By the way, the Sinhala word for bhava is just "Bava"(ออ). For example, when one sees an eye-catching


7. Another important aspect is that when one is in an "angry $\mathrm{B}_{\mathrm{T}}$ state," it is easier to generate more angry thoughts. This is due to the "Anantatra and Samanantara Paccaya": That "state of mind" is receptive to more angry thoughts. This is why it is important to try to get the mind away from the angry state to focus on something entirely different.

- It is good to contemplate the above basic ideas with examples from one's life. For example, when one is angry at someone, it is easier to recall such bad past experiences and suppress any past good experiences coming to mind.

8. When one has a calm state of mind when reading/listening to Dhamma, it is easier to generate compassionate thoughts about others. Therefore, it is important to "set the background" when starting an important task.

- This is why people go to a temple, offered flowers, etc., recite $g \bar{a} t h \bar{a}$, before sitting down to listen to a desan $\bar{a}$ by a bhikkhu. The state of mind is critical. One cannot comprehend deep Dhamma if the mind is angry or even in an excited state (like thinking about a sick child at home, for example).
- This is why it is a good idea to at least recite the qualities of the Triple Gem (Buddha, Dhamma, Sañgha) before starting a formal meditation session; see "Buddhist Chanting."

9. Another important application of the "Annantara and Samanantara Paccaya" relevant to this case is that while in a human bhava, only kamma vipäka are "compatible" with the human bhava and human gati (and thus human body) can bring in vipāka.

- Even if one has kamma bīja suitable to bring harsh vipāka experienced in the apāy $\bar{a}$, they will not be able to bring vipāka as long as one is with a human body. Similarly, any highly pleasurable vipāka has to wait until one is born in a deva bhava with a fine body suitable to experience such good vipāka.
- An animal always lives with fear for its life; that is part of bhavañga. Similarly, a tihetuka human has a natural, pleasant demeanor, an ahetuka human (disabled, etc.) has a weakened mindset. A dvihetuka is in between.

10. Yet another is the state of mind at the dying moment, when the grasping of a new bhava is getting close (if bhava energy is to run out at death, i.e., if there are no more $j \bar{a} t i$ left in the current bhava).

- Here the kammic power will start bringing various thoughts to mind via the mana indriya compatible with the strongest kamma bi$\vec{j} a$. For example, one who is about to grasp a new life in hell (niraya) may start recalling some fear-generating events (even from previous lives), and one's mind could be bent to a "fearful temporary bhavañga state $\left(\mathrm{B}_{\mathrm{T}}\right)$." Then more and more such fearful events will start coming into the mind.
- This is why some dying people's fear can be seen in their eyes, even if their bodies have become nonresponding.
- Some people start to yell with fear when they see an especially unpleasant bhava coming their way. Flashes of the existence awaiting will come to their minds, such as burning in hell, being cut by sharp weapons, or just seeing others engulfed in flames.
- On the good side, some people will remain calm with a pleasant look on their faces, even if their bodies are becoming non-responding. Some smile when they see the scenery of the happy environment they are going to.
- This basic knowledge can explain many phenomena like that.

11. For those familiar with Abhidhamma, bhavañga citta are called "dvāramutta citta" or citta that arise without needing a sense door. Let me clarify this in simple terms.

- When we hear something, that sound comes through our ears, and many citta vithi will be generated at the manodvāra (mind-door) after that initial sotadvāra citta vithi. A seeing event may be started by a picture seen with eyes, etc.
- This is a swift process. For example, we get sensory inputs to the ears and eyes when watching a movie. But citta vith flow so fast that the mind will fall to a bhavañga state $\left(\mathrm{B}\right.$ or $\left.\mathrm{B}_{\mathrm{T}}\right)$ even between the rapidly incoming citta vīthi.
- Therefore, what we see, hear, taste, smell, or body touch are all due to citta vīthi. Even our thoughts generated by the mind (coming through the mana indriya), are due to citta vithi.

12. In contrast, a bhavañga state ( B or $\mathrm{B}_{\mathrm{T}}$ ) DOES NOT come through any of the five physical senses (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body) or the mana indriya in the brain. That is why it is called "dvāramutta citta" or "citta that arise without the need for a sense door."

- Therefore, bhavañga is a "stationary state of mind" that falls back to when there are no running citta vīthi.
- Note that the mana indriya - where concepts and memories come to the mind - is unknown to scientists; see, "Brain - Interface between Mind and Body."
- Bhavañga $\left(\mathrm{B}\right.$ or $\left.\mathrm{B}_{\mathrm{T}}\right)$ is a state of mind with a corresponding gati. There are no associated citta vithi. But of course, some bhavañga citta can appear in a citta vīthi; see "Citta Vithi - Processing of Sense Inputs."

13. It is also important to note that the series of cittā do not flow continuously. It is the kammic energy that runs without a break during saimsāra.

- For example, when one is born in the asañña realm, no citta is generated for 500 mahā kappa. Remember that a mahā kappa is our solar system's age, which lasts about 15 billion years!
- During that whole time, the body of that being in the asañña realm is kept alive by the kammic energy for that bhava, and the bhavañga is active during that time. As we emphasized above, bhavañga is a state of mind.

14. Please keep in mind that it is unnecessary to learn the material in \#11 and \#12 above if one can grasp the basic idea of what is meant by bhava and bhavañga. That is enough to grasp important concepts at a bit deeper level.

- We will continue this discussion in one or more upcoming posts.


### 13.2.6 Citta Vithi - Processing of Sense Inputs

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## Introduction

1. Thoughts (citta) do not arise as individual citta; see, "Essential Abhidhamma - The Basics." They appear in mind due to sensory inputs via the six senses. Those are cakkhu, sota, ghāna, jivhā, and kāya indriya, corresponding respectively to the eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body, and mana indriya (located in the brain; see, "Brain - Interface between Mind and Body").

- Sensory input through any of the five physical senses received and analyzed by the mind in a "citta $v \bar{t} h i "$ (series of cittā with 17 citt $\bar{a}$.) Those are pañcadvāra citta vīthi. Pañcadvāra ("pañca" + "dvāra" where "pañca" is five and "dvāra" is a door) means five (physical) doors. See the post, "What is Mind? How do we Experience the Outside World?."
- Vīthi is pronounced "veethi." The actual Pāli (and Sinhala) term is veethi (meaning "road") since, like a road, the flow is continuous. But vīthi has become the established English word, just like "pīti" for the actual word "preethi." And citta pronounced "chiththā."
- That is because the convention for spelling Pāli words differs from "standard English." See "TTipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars - Part 1" and "Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars - Part 2."
- When we THINK ABOUT those external sense inputs, that involves only manodvāra citta vīthi, and those typically have 10-12 citt $\bar{a}$ in them.
- Here we will describe both types of citta vitthi.

2. According to citta niyāma (or Law of Cittā), a pañcadvāra citta vīthi proceeds in a standard way for an object with great intensity (atimahantārammaṇa citta vīthi). That means the object is of "high interest," and the conditions to grasp that object (arammana) are optimum. For example, if it is a visual object, that visible object is of high interest, and the light conditions for seeing it are good.

## Pañcadvāra Citta Vīthi

The sequence of cittā in a pañcadvāra citta vīthi is as follows:
$\left.\begin{array}{|c|c|c|}\hline \text { \# in the Series } & \text { Citta Type } & \text { Symbol } \\ \hline 1 & \text { Atīt Bhavañga (Past Bhavañga) } & \mathrm{AB} \\ \hline 2 & \text { Bhavañga Calana (Vibrating Bhavañga) } & \mathrm{BC} \\ \hline 3 & \text { Bhavanga Upaccheda (Arrest Bhavañga) } & \mathrm{BU} \\ \hline 4 & \begin{array}{c}\text { Pañcadvāravajjana } \\ \text { (Sense-door adverting consciousness) }\end{array} & \mathrm{PD} \\ \hline 5 & \text { Cakkku Viñn̄āana (eye-door perceiving consciousness) - for } \\ \text { example }\end{array}\right] \mathrm{CV}$

| 7 | Santïrana (Investigating consciousness) | San |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 8 | Votthapana (Determining consciousness) | V |
| $9-15$ | Javana | J |
| 16,17 | Tadārammana (Registering consciousness) | T |

3. When the mind is not dealing with a pañcadvāra citta vīthi or a manodvāra citta vīthi, it is in a "dormant state" called the bhavañga. Bhavañga ("bhava" + "anga" where "anga" means "part of'), thus represents the particular "bhava" of the living being, in this case, a "human bhava." The conventional English term is "life continuum," but we will use bhavañga.

- For a discussion on bhavañga, see "State of Mind in the Absence of Citta Vithi - Bhavañga."
- The bhavañga state is conventionally represented by the following series as if they are a series of bhavañga citta:


## ..B B B B B B B B

However, bhavañga citta can arise only within a citta vīthi.

- When the mind is in the bhavañga state, we do not "feel" anything. Like an eye cannot see itself, the mind in the bhavanga state cannot "see itself." That is the "dormant state" in-between sense inputs. When one is in deep sleep or unconscious, the mind is entirely in the bhavanga state.
- The mind is generally in the bhavañga state. It comes off the bhavañga state when an object of interest comes through one of the five physical senses (cakkhu, sota, ghāna, jivhā, or kāya indriya.) A "dhamm $\vec{a}$ " coming to the "mana indriya" can do that too.
- As we will see later, the mind is in the bhavañga (B) state most of the time even if the mind feels very active. Even while watching a movie, the mind is mainly in the bhavañga state (in between various types of manodvāra and pañcadvāra citta vīthi.) Yet, our brains are stressed to the limit since they need to analyze the movie's sights and sounds at a rapid pace. See "Vision Is a Series of "Snapshots" - Movie Analogy."

4. We can represent the pañcadvāra citta vithi in the above Table as follows:

B B B B B "AB BC BU PD CV Sam San V J J J J J J J T T" $\mathrm{B}_{\mathrm{T}} \mathrm{B}_{\mathrm{T}} \mathrm{B}_{\mathrm{T}} \mathrm{B}_{\mathrm{T}} \ldots \ldots$
Note that this is the strongest citta vīthi. There are many variations WITHIN this citta vīthi; some do not have T or even J citta. Different types of pañcadvāra citta vīthi are discussed in detail in "A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma" by Bhikkhu Bodhi (2000).

- In the above case, the bhavañga temporarily changes to $\mathrm{B}_{\mathrm{T}}$ due to the strong sensory input. See "State of Mind in the Absence of Citta Vithi - Bhavañga."
- In the above example, we took a "cakkhu viññanna" event, i.e., what happens when a picture comes to the mind via the "eye indriya" and the mind investigates that picture.
- First, the "mind comes off the bhavanga state, and that takes three thought moments: AB (atita bhavañga), BC (bhavañga calana), and BU (bhavañga upaccheda). Here "atīta" (or "atheetha") means "past," "calana" (pronounced "chalana") means "move" or "vibrate," and "upaccheda" (or "upachcheda") means "stop" or "break away."
- Then the mind looks at the "five physical senses or pañcadvāra (PD)" and determines through which of the five sense inputs it is coming, and then picks the relevant door, which in the present case we assumed to be cakkhu viñ̃̃āṇa (CV).
- Then it investigates what that "picture" is with the sampaticcana (Sam) citta and decides what type (like, dislike, etc.) with the santīraña (San) citta. Based on those, the Votthapana (V) citta determines what actions to take.
- The all-important seven javana citta arise based on that determination made with the votthapana citta (V). That is where the mind does potent kamma.
- The votthapana citta is the same as manodvāra citta (MD), where the decision is made (see below in manodvāra citta vīthi).

5. In the last two Tadārammana (T) cittā, the mind takes in the "flavor" or the "essence" of the sense object. Then it falls back to the bhavañga state at the termination of the pañcadvāra citta vīthi. Only the very strong (mahantaārammanna) citta vīthi have them, and such strong impressions are "retained in one's memory" for some time (i.e., one will not forget immediately.)

- Until one loses that "temporary memory," it becomes one's 'temporary bhavañga." For example, when one hears about the death of a parent, one will become sad, and that "sad state of mind" will be there for days.
- For a discussion on that, see "State of Mind in the Absence of Citta Vithi - Bhavañga."
- Of course, ALL happenings get recorded as nāmagotta. Even unimportant events get recorded. The ability to recall events depends on one's capabilities. Sometimes, such limited capabilities become possible due to "puñña iddhi" for even average humans. See "Recent Evidence for Unbroken Memory Records (HSAM)."


## The Simile of Tasting a Mango

6. A pañcadvāra citta vīthi is the procedure by which the mind experiences an external object (sight, sound, taste, etc.). The following analogy is in some commentaries to the Tipitaka.

- Suppose a weary traveler is asleep at the foot of a mango tree. This state of being asleep is analogous to the bhavanga state. Now a ripe mango drops to the ground near the traveler. This event resembles a visible object of great intensity coming to the "eye door."
- The mango falling awakens the traveler and causes him to raise his head. This event is similar to the appearance of the visible object at the eye door, causing the bhavanga to vibrate twice and become arrested; now, he is not asleep anymore.
- The traveler opens his eyes and looks around to inquire about the disturbance. That is similar to the pañcadvāravajjana (PD) citta adverting the mind towards the sense object.

7. The traveler sees the fallen mango. That is analogous to the eye-consciousness of seeing the object (CV). Now the man picks up the mango, which is similar to the sampatticchana (Sam) citta receiving the cakkhu viññāna. By the way, sampaṭicchana comes from "san" + "paṭicca"; you can contemplate on this to get the basic idea; see, "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Samsāra)?".

- Then the man inspects the mango to see whether it is suitable for eating. That is similar to the santīraña citta ("san" + "tirana" or "theerana," where "theerana" means "decide on whether the sense object is good or bad") investigating the sense object.
- Then the man decides that the mango is good and edible. That is similar to the votthapana ("vottha" +
 votthapana is pronounced, "voththapana." If it were a rotten mango, one would decide to throw it away.
- If one understands Sinhala, it is easier to understand Pāli. As I have mentioned, the Sinhala language is close to Pāli and not Sanskrit.

8. The man bites the mango seven times, eating and enjoying the taste. That is similar to the occurrence of seven javana citt $\bar{a}$ enjoying the taste of the sense object. These are the "actions corresponding to the decision made with the votthapana citta"; if the mango tastes bad, the mind will generate appropriate javana citta to throw the mango. We will discuss such complex processes later.

- Then the man gathers the remnants of the fruit and the juice sticking to his teeth with his tongue and swallows twice. That is similar to the two tadārammaṇa (T) citttā following the javana citt $\bar{a}$.
- Task completed, the man falls back to sleep. That is similar to the resumption of the bhavañga state.


## Three Manodvāra Citta Vīthi will follow Each Pañcadvāra Citta Vīthi

9. According to the Tipiṭaka, three manodvāra citta vīthi will follow each pañcadvāra citta vīthi. The javana citt $\bar{a}$ in those three citta vīthi become increasingly intense, and it is the javana citta $\bar{a}$ of the last manodvāra citta vīthi that instructs the brain to get the body to act (and initiate speech).

- We will discuss this in detail in future posts. But it takes three more manodvāra citta vīthi to complete the sequence of a thought process initiated by a pañcadvāra citta vīthi. When one gets "absorbed" (for example, keeps looking at an attractive picture), one may be generating numerous of such "one plus three processes," with the mind falling back to the bhavanga state repeatedly in between.
- It will be easier to visualize this process by understanding what happens when we look at an object, for example, in scientific terms; see "Citta and Cetasika - How Viññāna (Consciousness) Arises" (especially starting with \#4 of that post).

Now let us look at a typical manodvāra citta vīthi.

## Manodvāra Citta Vīthi

| \# in the Series | Citta Type | Symbol |
| :--- | :--- | :--- |
| 1 | Bhavañga Calana (Vibrating Bhavañga) | BC |
| 2 | Bhavañga Upaccheda (Arrest Bhavañga) | BU |
| 3 | Manodvāravajjana (Mind-door adverting consciousness) | MD |
| $4-10$ | Javana | J |
| 11,12 | Tadārammana (Registering consciousness) | T |

10. We can represent the manodvāra citta vīthi in the above Table as follows:

B B B B B "BC BU MD J J J J J J J T T" B B B B B.....

- Here it takes only two thought moments to be released from the "bhavañga state": BC (bhavañga calana), and BU (bhavaṅga upaccheda).
- The mind already knows the ārammana (thought object).
- The manodvāra citta (MD) is the same as the votthapana citta, where the decision is made.
- Then seven javana cittā arise, and then the citta vīthi ends with the two Tadārammaṇa (T) cittā.
- Like in the case of a pañcadvāra citta vīthi, we also considered an object with high intensity as an example. We will discuss the variations when handling signals of lower intensities as the need arises. However, this discussion is sufficient to understand how the two types of citta vithi function in the cognitive processes.

11. Now, we can write the complete sequence of citta for a sense event initiated by a pañcadvāra citta vīthi as:

B B B B B "AB BC BU PD CV Sam San V J J J J J J J T T MD J J J J J J J T T MD J J J J J J J T T MD J J J J J J J T T" B B B B B.....

- As mentioned above, three manodvāra citta vīthi will run following the initial pañcadvāra citta vīthi. The object is recognized only after the four citta vithi. But that happens within a billionth of a second.

12. Conversely, manodvāra citta vīthi can arise by themselves.

- Furthermore, even though the length of a manodvāra citta vīthi usually is 10-12 cittā for ordinary people, a single manodvāra citta vīthi can have many javana cittā while in a jhāna.
- In a jhāna, such long manodvāra citta vīthi are interrupted by pañcadvāra citta vīthi arising in between. That is why one could hear external sounds while in a jhāna.

13. But in a jhāna samāpatti, javana citta can keep arising for long times, as long as one had determined at the start:

B B B B B "BC BU MD J J J J J J J J J J J

- Thus, one becomes unaware of what happens in the outside world during that time. There is no way to get back to the bhavañga state or for a pañcadvāra citta vīthi or another manodvāra citta vīthi to arise. Before getting into the samāpatti, one decides how long to stay in the samāpatti.
- People who can get into jhāna samāpatti can display the real power of javana citta.
- A crude analogy: Suppose one is trying to light an oil lamp (oil-soaked wick) with the light of a matchstick. If one is not holding the lighted matchstick steady and the light moves in and out of the vicinity of the wick, it will not light. But if one can hold the light steady, it will light up quickly. Here, the mind is "locked on" that javana citta!
- The following is another analogy for those who are familiar with lasers. One can drill holes in a metal plate using a laser beam. But the metal spot will not heat up and evaporate unless the laser beam is held steady at that spot. Being in a jhāna samāpatti is like keeping a laser beam steady on one spot for a long time.


## Citta Vīthi for Attainment of Magga Phala

B B B "BC BU MD P U A G Pa Fr Fr" B B B
B B B "BC BU MD U A G Pa Fr Fr Fr" B B B
14. The first is the magga phala citta vithi for an average person; the second is for one with "higher wisdom."

- B, BC, BU, and MD are, as discussed above.
- Then it goes through the Parikamma (P), Upacāra (U), Anuloma (A), Gotrabu (G), Path (magga) (Pa), and Fruit (phala) (Fr). [upacāra : [m.] neighbourhood; preparative or preliminary action.]
- As you can see, there is no connection to jhäna. In particular, the magga phala citta vīthi does not go through a jhāna citta. Also, the Gotrabu (change of lineage) citta for magga phala is COMPLETELY DIFFERENT than that in the case of a jhāna citta vith $h$.
- The change of lineage here is to become an Ariya or a Noble Person.
- The change to an Ariya happens even before the Sotāpanna phala moment, at the Gotrabu (G) moment. Gotra means "lineage" and Gotrabu is the change of lineage. Thus, one would become a Sotāpanna Anugāmi with the Gotrabu citta.


## Citta Vīthi for Attainment of Jhāna

B B B "BC BU MD P U A G Jh" B B B
B B B "BC BU MD U A G Jh" B B B
15. The first above is the jhāna citta vith $h$ for an average person. The second is for one with "higher wisdom."

- See above for explanations on B, BC, BU, MD, P, U, A, and G.
- However, Gotrabu (change of lineage) for jhāna differs from magga phala.
- Then it goes through a Jhāna (Jh) citta.


## Parikamma, Upacāra, Anuloma, and Gotrabu

16. Getting to a magga phala or a jhāna does not happen in a single step. One first gets into the parikamma stage and may stay there for some time. Same for other stages until getting to the gotrabu stage.
At the gotrabu stage, the change becomes permanent; it is a "change of lineage."

- The intermediate steps of parikamma, upacāra, and anuloma can be labeled preparation, approach/access, and "getting close to the change of lineage."


### 13.2.7 Javana of a Citta - The Root of Mental Power

Revised July 15, 2020; July 22, 2022; July 30, 2022

## Javana Cittā Are Associated with Abhisañkhāra

1. The power of the human mind has been discussed in several posts starting with "Power of the Human Mind - Introduction." There are different kinds of cittū ; the powerful ones are javana cittā ("javana" means an arrow in flight; it can be highly potent).

- Such javana cittā are responsible for abhisañkhāra, those sañkhāra that are potent and will lead to (good or bad) consequences. Puñ̃̃ābhisañkhāra is the meritorious abhisañkhāra that will lead to good results, and apuñ̃̄ābhisañkhāra is the immoral abhisañkhāra that leads to adverse outcomes.
- Javana cittā arise in pañcadvāra citttā vīthi and manodvāra cittā vīthi when the object (ārammaṇa) is evident and robust; see, "Citta Vithi - Processing of Sense Inputs."


## Vipāka Cittā Do Not Have Javana Power

2. Out of the 54 types of citt $\bar{a}$ in the k $\bar{a} m a$ loka (the 11 lower realms including the human realm), 29 are javana citt $\bar{a}: 12$ akusala cittā, eight mahā kusala citt $\bar{a}$, eight mahā kiriya citta $\bar{a}$, and the functional smileproducing cittā (the latter nine cittā only for an Arahant).

- A kusala citta generates power for rebirth in the human or above realm, and helps progress towards Nibbāna or "cooling down."
- When one does an akusala citt $\bar{a}$, one generates power to form kammic energy for rebirth in the apāy $\bar{a}$ (lowest four realms).
- Thus for average human beings, there are only 20 citt $\bar{a}$ out of 54 that are javana citt $\bar{a}: 12$ for doing evil deeds and 8 for good deeds (here deeds means thought, speech, or bodily action).
- Thus, vipāka cittā do not have javana cittā. Therefore, in detecting any sensory input (seeing, hearing, etc.), javana cittā is absent. They are prittārammaṇa (slight) and atiparittārammaṇa (very slight) citta vīthi. However, based on these vipāka citta vīthi, we MAY instantly initiate potent atimahattārammaṇa (very high) and mahattārammaṇa (great) citta vīthi that will have javana cittō in them.
- Therefore, if we start making plans (buy that picture, re-listen to that song, etc.) based on those visuals, sounds, etc., then subsequent citta vīthi will have javana cittā in them, leading to abhisañkhāra (GENERATE kammic power).

Javana Power Depends on the Type of Citta
3. Not all akusala javana cittā have the same power. Also see "How to Evaluate Weights of Different Kamma" and "12. Key Factors to be Considered when "Meditating" for the Sotāpanna Stage."

- Out of the eight greed-rooted citt $\bar{a}$, those four done with pleasure (somanassa-sahagata) are more robust than the done with neutral feeling.
- Next, those associated with micch $\bar{a}$ dittthi (or ditṭhi-sahagata) are more powerful than the four generated without wrong vision (or ditt hi-vippayutta).
- The power of greed-rooted citt $\bar{a}$ depends on whether they arose spontaneously (sometimes erroneously labelled as asañkhārika) or occurred intending to receive something in return, i.e., sasañkhārika.
- The two hate-rooted akusala citt $\bar{a}$ always arise with displeasure and are associated with aversion (dislike.) One that is spontaneous (unprompted) is stronger than the prompted.
- The two ignorance-rooted akusala citt $\bar{a}$ always arise with neutral feelings. The one based on vicikicch $\bar{a}$ is stronger than that based on uddhacca.


## Javana Strength of Akusala Citta

4. The above list gives the order of strength of the akusala citt $\bar{a}$ and appears in that order in "Conditions for the Four Stages of Nibbāna."

- Thus the first lobha citta that is "connected with the wrong view, accompanied by pleasure" or in Pāli, "somanassa-sahagata, ditthi-sampayutta citta" is the strongest akusala javana citta.
- The last of the 12 akusala citta is "one accompanied by equanimity and associated with highmindedness" or, in Pāli, "upekkha-sahagata uddhacca-sampayutta citta."


## Javana Strength of Kusala Citta

5. The power of the human mind can work both ways, for the good or the bad. Now let us see how the eight mahā kusala (wholesome) cittā rank according to the javana power.

- Here again, four done with a joyous heart (somanassa-sahagata) take precedence over those done with neutral feeling.
- Next, those done with knowledge, called "ñāna-sampayutta," have higher power compared to those done without knowledge ( $\tilde{n} \bar{a} n a-v i p p a y u t t a)$. Here, knowledge could be at two levels: (i) understanding how the laws of kamma work and (ii) understanding anicca, dukkha, and anatta in addition to (i).
- Finally, they are sorted by whether the response is spontaneous (higher-merits) or prompted/induced by an expectation of a profit (sasañkhārika).

6. Thus, the most potent kusala citta is "one accompanied by joy, associated with knowledge" or in Pāli, "somanassa-sahagata, ñāna-sampayutta citta".

Here one does a good deed with a complete understanding of its benefits and thus with a joyous heart. The action is spontaneous and joyful BECAUSE one is fully aware of its ethical consequences. Since it is automatic, the knowledge must be in one's mind.

- The weakest kusala citta is "one accompanied by the neutral mind, dissociated with knowledge, and for one's advantage" or in Pāli, "upekkha-sahagata, ñāna-vippayutta, sasañkhārika citta." Here one may do a good deed without knowledge and on the prompting of others or after some deliberation. Such acts will bring benefits, but since they have less javana power, the benefits are less.


## Some Examples of "Javana Power"

7. Let us take some examples for clarification.

- Some people are so deep on the wrong path that they enjoy committing evil deeds. Or, they get into a mindset where such deeds become enjoyable. We have heard of a person killed by multiple stabbings with the body gruesomely mutilated. Such an act is the worst of the worst.
- It should be easy to imagine why the javana for citta associated with such "passionate" killings are very intense. The killer is absorbed in that act and is generating potent mental power to carry out the physical act; by the way, any physical activity originates in citta. Thoughts lead to actions. See, 'Neuroscience says there is no Free Will? - That is a Misinterpretation".
- That is also why a kamma becomes a "kamma patha" or a "strong kamma" for bodily action. See "Details of Kamma - Intention, Who Is Affected, Kamma Patha." One needs a strong javana to carry out that task. If one is aware of the consequences of such acts (i.e., do not have micchā ditthi or wrong vision), then even if one started stabbing, one may likely that one may catch oneself and stop.

8. Conversely, even the smallest act of kindness can bring many benefits if done with complete understanding and a joyous heart. Here the "mental power" or the javana comes through knowledge. We see these kinds of 'small acts of kindness" all the time, and we can even share in those merits when our hearts become joyful too.

- Writing a check for a lot of money is easy for a wealthy person. If done to get publicity or due to "outside pressure," it would not bring many benefits. If a poor person shares what they can with another in a worse situation with joy, that will bring much more benefit.


## Saimvega - Indication of Javana Strength

9. High javana power manifests as "sanvega" (san + vega, where "vega" means fast) or one's emotions. See, "What is "San"? - Meaning of Samsāra" for the meaning of "san"). Therefore, "samivega" depicts a potent emotional condition. If it is for the "good," one will be doing puññābhi sañkhāra (meritorious acts), and an evil deed done with "sam்vega" will be a potent apuññābhi sañkhāra (immoral actions).

- In the literature, "sanvega" is commonly written as "saimvega"; as with many other such words, replacing "san" with "saim" leads to distortion of the meaning of the word. Other such misspelled words are sà̇̀sāra, samvedana, samyoga, and sam̀vara; see, "What is "San"? - Meaning of Samsāra."
- However, some words like "samm $\vec{a} "$ ("san" + "mā") are correct because that is phonetically correct.
- In the Sinhala language, "sainvega" is commonly used to describe emotionally intense situations, mostly sad situations. However, we can see that it can apply to any emotional situation.


## Emotions Felt Close to the Heart, Not in the Brain

10. The mind and the heart are in close contact. Even that person who derived pleasure by stabbing someone many times will have a heavy heart until death, no matter how bad a person they are. It is in human nature. Of course, when we do a meritorious act, too, we feel joy in our hearts.

- We "feel" close to the heart because citta arises in the "hadaya vatthu" close to the physical heart. The hadaya vatthu is in the manomaya kāya, like an "energy field" spread through the physical body. See "Manomaya Kāya (Gandhabba) and the Physical Body" and "Ghost in the Machine - Synonym for the Manomaya Kāya?."


## Javana Strength Depends on the Level of Desire (Good or Bad)

11. The javana power in our thoughts significantly affects "how engaged we are." The potency of a good or an immoral citta depends on the strength of the desire to get it done. Three out of four bases of mental power, chanda, citta, viriya, originate due to this; see "The Four Bases of Mental Power (Cattāro Iddhipāda)."

- And the fourth factor of $v \overline{\operatorname{lomam}} \dot{\sin }$ (reasoning/investigation) is vital because that is how one gains the allimportant $\tilde{n} \bar{a} n a$ (wisdom); see \#5,\#6 above. When one truly comprehends anicca, dukkha, and anatta, that leads to the cultivation/growth of the pañ̃̃ $\bar{a}$ cetasika, reducing ignorance (avijjā).


## It Is Good to "Re-live" Past Good Experiences

12. Another thing that comes out of this analysis is that it is good to contemplate the past good deeds and "re-live" that experience to gain citta pasāda or a joyful mind.

- Similarly, it is NOT good to do that for past evil deeds. It is better to forget them and get a new start. If something like that comes to the mind, focus the mind on a good deed.
- That is part of "Ānāpāna." We need to keep and cultivate "good things" and "discard" bad things; see, "7. What is Ānāpāna?."
- Our thoughts are what ultimately matter, and they arise due to our character (gati); the more we do "Ānāpāna" correctly, the more our "gati" will change for the better.

13. Finally, These javana citta have the power to produce suddhatthaka, the fundamental building blocks of $r \bar{u} p a$; see "The Origin of Matter - Suddhatthaka."

Next, "Cuti-Patisandhi - An Abhidhamma Description",

### 13.2.8 Cetasika - Connection to Gati

## Revised March 26, 2022; August 26, 2022

Cetasika that arise in citta influence a person's moral and immoral character (gati).

## Seven Universal Cetasika

1. In the introductory posts in Abhidhamma we saw that there are seven universal cetasika (mental factors) that arise with every citta (loosely translated as a thought, but not correct); citta is pronounced "chiththā" and cetasika pronounced "chethasikā."

- The seven universal cetasika are essential in forming any kind of citta, whether immoral (akusala) citta, moral (kusala) citta, or a citta that does not have any kammic potential.
- Some other cetasika provide "character" to citt $\bar{a}$. Whether a given citta is good or bad depends on whether a "good" or "bad" set of cetasika arises with it; see, "Citta and Cetasika - How Viññāna (Consciousness) Arises." They are listed in "Cetasika (Mental Factors)," and you may want to print them out for reference when reading this post. There is no need to memorize them. With time, one may even know them by heart.
- Out of the 54 types of citt $\bar{a}$ in the kāma loka, there are 12 akusala citta and 8 kusala citta. The other 34 are vipāka citta and kiriya citta which do not generate kammic power.


## Six Cetasika That May Appear in Kusala or Akusala Citta

2. Then, there are six cetasika called particulars (also called occasional) or pakinnaka that MAY appear in any citta. Therefore they do not determine the PURPOSE of the citta, but they HELP with any type of purpose that was intended.

- For example, viriya cetasika could be in a kusala citta and it can also be in an akusala citta. In either case, the viriya cetasika will HELP intensify the effort with that citta.


## Cetasika That Appear Only in Kusala or Akusala Citta

3. Out of a total of 52 cetasika, the other $39(=52-7-6)$ cetasika determine whether a given citta will be an akusala citta or a kusala citta.

- 14 cetasika (called asobhana or immoral or bad cetasika) could be present in an akusala citta. Out of those, 4 ALWAYS are present in any akusala citta; those 4 are asobhana universals.
- The other 25 cetasika (called sobhana or moral or good cetasika) can be present only in kusala citta, and 19 of those are ALWAYS in any given kusala citta; those 19 are sobhana universals.
- Therefore, 11 cetasika (7 universal plus four universal immoral) arise with every akusala citta. There may be other immoral and particular cetasika as well.
- There are 26 cetasika ( 7 universal plus 19 universal morals) that arise with every kusala citta. Six more moral cetasika may arise in some kusala citta.


## Sainsāric Habits ("Gati") and Cetasika

4. Therefore, sobhana and asobhana cetasika determine the kammic nature of a citta. If we want to eliminate all akusala citta, we need to remove the 14 asobhana cetasika from our minds (they come up automatically with our gati and $\bar{a} s a v \bar{a})$.

- In other words, our samsāric habits ("gati") and cravings (" $\bar{a} s a v \vec{a} ")$ are embedded in the 14 asobhana (and 25 sobhana) cetasika, such as lobha and dosa. For example, one may have dominant "lobha gati" (excess greed) or "dosa gati" (strong hate). But typically, we have a mixture of many different inter-mixed gati.
- In the same way, cultivating good "gati" and "cravings" (basically for moral deeds) leads to "good cetasika."


## Sainsāric Habits ("Gati") and Asobhana Cetasika in Akusala Citta

5. As we follow the Noble Eightfold Path, the 14 asobhana cetasika are reduced in strength and eventually removed. When reaching the Sotāpanna stage, the two asobhana cetasika of ditthi and vicikicchā are REMOVED, and all others reduced to some extent. In particular, lobha is reduced to rāga level, and dosa is reduced to patigha. That is why a Sotāpanna will never be born in the apāy $\bar{a}$.

- Raga has 3 components: kāma rāga, rūpa rāga, and arūpa rāga, corresponding to attachment to the kāma loka, rūpa loka, and arūpa loka respectively. At the Sakadāgāmī stage, kāma rāga and patigha are REDUCED to the level that one will never be born at or below the human realm.
- At the Anāgāmī stage, both kāma rāga and patigha are REMOVED. Thus all bonds to kāma loka are broken, and one will never be born again in kāma loka.
- All asobhana cetasika are removed at the Arahant stage.

6. We can easily see why four immoral universal cetasika arise with every akusala citta. These four are: moha (delusion or moral blindness), ahirika (shamelessness of wrong), anottappa (fearlessness of immoral), and uddhacca (restlessness).

- We do not realize, but when we get greedy or hateful enough, we can become morally blind. One loses any sense of decency just for a short time, but that is enough to commit an immoral act.
- Then we lose the fear of doing wrong and the shame of doing wrong because our minds are covered (it takes only a fraction of a second to generate a citta and sometimes even to act on it if the javana is strong enough). That inevitably leads to a restless mind (uddhacca) too.

7. Now, let us discuss the seven pairs in the universal moral cetasika list, starting with the pair of kāyapassaddhi (tranquility of mental body, which leads to the tranquility of the physical body itself); cittapassaddhi (tranquility of consciousness). These seven pairs are states of mind and body that correspond to some "cooling down." When doing a kusala kamma, the body and mind relax and "cool down." That is the first glimpse of Nibbāna as one is already on the mundane eightfold path.

- That is why the Buddha said that the state of mind does affect the state of the body. When one starts on the lokuttara eightfold path, these cetasika all get more robust, one starts feeling the "nirāmisa sukha," and thus one becomes motivated to follow the Path.
- But it is important to emphasize (as I have stated many times), that things COULD get worse before getting better. When one deprives the mind of things it has gotten used to, it does not like that. Until it sees the benefits of staying on the Path, it may try to pull one firmly in the "wrong direction." One needs to be persistent, and this is where one needs to cultivate the cattāro iddhipāda (chanda, citta, viriya, and vīmamisā).

8. It is important to realize that the 19 universal moral cetasika can arise in ANYONE regardless of one's religion or any other "label." All of them will arise when doing a good deed (or speech or thought). They can occur when one is on the mundane eightfold Path (nothing to do with a religion per se); see "Buddha Dhamma - In a Chart." [per se: by or in itself or themselves; intrinsically.]

- Also, note that hiri (shame of immoral deeds) and ottappa (fear of the consequences of evil deeds) are the two that are opposed to the immoral ones of ahiri and anottappa. That means one can sort out right from wrong (moral from corrupt) in that instance.
- Then there is saddhā (faith) and sati (mindfulness), which grow even more after embarking on the Path. Here, saddh $\bar{a}$ is not the faith in Buddha, Dhamma, Sangha, but the faith that such a moral act will bring about good outcomes.
- And sati is NOT Sammā Sati, but just the mindfulness of being involved in a moral act. However, once one gets on the lokuttara eightfold Path, it can become Sammā Sati.
- The other two familiar ones are alobha and adosa cetasika; they are opposite to the immoral ones of lobha and dosa. Alobha is a not mere absence of lobha but also embodies generosity. Adosa is not the mere absence of dosa but embodies compassion.
- Then there is tatramajjhattata (neutrality of mind; "majjhatta" means "in the middle"). That is not upekkhā, one of the Satta Bojjhañga; see " 37 Factors of Enlightenment."
- Thus far, we have discussed the 19 universal moral cetasika in \#7 and \#8. Now let us discuss the six moral cetasika that arise only with some kusala citta.


## Six Sobhana Cetasika Require Understanding of Tilakkhaṇa

9. It is easier to list the six moral cetasika that do not necessarily arise with each kusala citta. These are the ones that NEED TO BE CULTIVATED with the comprehension of anicca, dukkha, anatta.

- They are $\operatorname{Samma} \bar{a} \bar{a} c \bar{a}$ (speech that is conducive to eliminating "san"), Sammā Kammanta (actions that are conducive to eliminating "san"), Sammā$\overline{A j j} \bar{i} v a$ (a lifestyle that is conducive to eliminating "san"), karuṇā ("Ariya" compassion), muditā ("Ariya" appreciative joy), and pañña (wisdom) which is the same as Sammā Ditṭhi.
- Of course, those are developed to some extent when someone lives one's life morally, but they will NEVER grow to higher stages until one understands anicca, dukkha, and anatta, at least to some extent.
- That is why samm $\bar{a} v \bar{a} c \bar{a}$ is not just "good speech" or samma $\bar{a}$ kammanta is not just "good deeds." Sammā ("san" + " $m a a^{\prime}$ ) means 'to remove 'san'," i.e., done with an understanding of anicca, dukkha, anatta; see, "Why is Correct Interpretation of Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta so Important?."


## Amoha Is Not Paññā

10. However, amoha does not mean wisdom (pañn$\tilde{a} \overline{)}$ ! Amoha is not a cetasika but is a root cause. It is in all kusala citta in the sense that the immoral cetasika of moha is not present at that moment, i.e., the mind is not "covered."

- Some people interpret amoha to be paññā; not so. Paññā (wisdom) or lokuttara Sammā Ditṭhi needs to be cultivated via comprehending anicca, dukkha, and anatta, and starts when one is on the Sotāpanna magga; see, "Buddha Dhamma - In a Chart" and "What is Unique in Buddha Dhamma."
- The more pañ̃̃̄a one has, the more likely one would generate amoha thoughts more frequently!
- No matter how intelligent one is, one cannot start cultivating pañña until one hears the correct interpretations of anicca, dukkha, and anatta.


## Directing Pakiṇnaka Cetasika Toward Noble Path

11. Now, let us briefly revisit the six particulars (also called occasional) or pakiṇnaka that we mentioned in \#2 above. They are vitakka (focused application), vicāra (sustained application), adhimokkha (dominate), viriya (effort), pīti (joy), chanda (desire).

- As we can readily see, these six can be in kusala or akusala citta and make them stronger.
- That is why it is said that "Dhammo ha ve rakkhati dhammacārim" or "dhamma will guide one in the direction of dhamma that one follows", applies to both moral AND immoral paths.
- Vitakka (focused application of thoughts), when cultivated in the lokuttara Path, can become sammā sañkappa. Similarly, viriya (effort) can become sammā vāyāma.


## Good and Bad Gati Associated with Sobhana and Asobhana Cetasika

12. Therefore, Abhidhamma helps us understand the connection between cetasika and gati and how "bad gati" are removed at each stage of Nibbāna (see \#5 above). We can also see from the above discussion how 8 of the cetasika (related to "good gati") turn into components of the Noble Eightfold Path when one starts on the Sotāpanna magga. We discussed only seven above (highlighted in bold red). The eighth one is the universal cetasika, ekaggatā (one-pointedness) which can become sammā samādhi.

- However, depending on one's behavior and understanding, all these eight could be developed in the direction of the immoral (micch $\bar{a}$ eightfold path), mundane moral (lokiya eightfold path), or the lokuttara Noble Eightfold Path; see "Three Kinds of Ditthi, Eightfold Paths, and Samādhi."
- Looking from different perspectives, there could be many types of samādhi. For a discussion on three other types of samādhi, see "What is Samādhi? - Three Kinds of Mindfuilness."

13. This world is very complex. And the Buddha has analyzed it in many different ways. But they are all selfconsistent. If one can get some traction, there is no other pleasure better than finding out about this world, the pleasure of Dhamma.

- "Sabbaratim dhammarati jināti" means "from all tastes in the world, the taste of Dhamma wins." Here "rati" means "taste." Thus, the "taste of Dhamma" optimizes for an Anāgāmī.
- However, at Arahanthood, one loses all interest in worldly things, including Dhamma. The Buddha said, "A boat is needed only to cross a river; one should not carry it after crossing it. Just like that, even my Dhamma needs to be used only to find the true nature of this world, and then it should be discarded too".


### 13.3 Mind and Consciousness

What is Mind? How do we Experience the Outside World?
What is a Thought?
What is in a Thought? Why Gati are so Important
What is Consciousness?

1. Thoughts (Citta), Consciousness (Viññāna), and Mind (Hadaya Vatthu) - Introduction
2. Viññāna (Consciousness) can be of Many Different Types and Forms
3. Viññāna, Thoughts, and the Subconscious

### 13.3.1 What is Mind? How do we Experience the Outside World?

## Revised January 17, 2019

1. Everything that we experience comes through six "doors" or "āyatana" we have to the outside worlds: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and the mind. Through those six doors we can see pictures, hear sounds, smell odors, taste food, feel things physically by touch, and be aware of concepts (say, mundane things like remembering past events or make plans about future events, or think about a black hole in the middle of the universe or a mathematical concept).

- The six sense faculties (and the corresponding six external "āyatana" which are rūpa, sadda, gandha, rasa, pottabba, dhamma or visuals, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and concepts) are what the Buddha called "sabba," or "everything." These are 12 āyatana ( 6 internal and 6 external).

2. All those sense experiences are done with citta or thoughts. But this is probably not a good translation. We normally associate a "thought" with an idea or one visual event, etc., a moment of "experience." But citta is very fast and no one can experience a single citta which lasts a billionth of a second or less; see, "Citta and Cetasika - How Viññāna (Consciousness) Arises."

- Don't be fooled by the title of that post. It has a simple description of how the "mind" puts together all six sense inputs to give the illusion that we see, hear, smell, taste, touch, and think all at the same time (at least start reading at \#3 there).
- It is a good idea to also read the posts, "Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)" and "Viññāna - What It Really Means" first.

3. When we look at an object, the "eye" generates visual consciousness (cakkhu viñ̃̃āna): Comprehending what is seen is accomplished via a series of very fast thought processes. There are billions of thoughts per second, so each citta or thought moment is billionth of a second; see, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma." Let us see how the mind "sees" an object in a series of very fast "snapshots" alternating between the "eye" and the "mind":

- The "eye" captures a snapshot of the object and the brain transfers that captured information to mind: that process takes 17 thought moments or citt $\bar{a}$ (let us abbreviate it as TM); this series of TM is called a "sense input citta vīthi" (or pañcadvāra citta vīthi). Next the mind analyzes that "imprint" with three citta vīthi that involve only the mind. These latter "mind-only citta vīthi" (manodvāra citta vīthi) are shorter, around ten TM, and try to discern what the object is. It may first try to discern the color of the object for example.
- Then the "eye" takes another snapshot and transfers that "imprint" to the mind, which in turn receives it in a pañcadvāra citta vīthi containing 17 TM , analyzes that in 3 more manodvāra citta vīthi containing about 10 TM , and makes better sense of the color. This "back and forth" process goes on until the object is determined.
- This process is slowed down only due to the time needed for the brain to put together the information captured by one of the five sense faculties (pañcadvāra), for example, the eyes. This time is of the order of 10 milliseconds; see, "What is a Thought?." Thus there can only be about 100 ( 600 if they are processed in parallel) or so "sense events" per second; since science show that the brain has different regions for processing different sense inputs, the latter number (600) is probably right.

4. Since these citta vithi run very fast, once the brain sends an "information packet" to the mind it is processed very quickly, within billionth of a second. Thus the process is slowed down only by the brain. Still, everything about the object is grasped in a small fraction of a second.

- Now, many of you may be thinking, "this looks like some far off theory made up by someone." The Buddha said he experienced everything that he taught. Phenomena in this fast time scale are discernible only to a Buddha.
- Once the Buddha explained the key aspects to Ven. Sariputta, it was Ven. Sariputta and his group of Bhikkhus that developed the Abhidhamma, where all these details were worked out. It took generations of bhikkhus to develop the Abhidhamma to the final form that was recited at the Third Sangayana (Buddhist Council) and was written down in the Tipitaka in 29 BCE (we know that there were many Arahants before 100-200 CE; see the timeline in "Incorrect Theravāda Interpretations - Historical Timeline"). For us, the truth of these minute details become apparent as all observable phenomena are EXPLAINED using all three forms of Dhamma in the Tipitaka: Sutta, Vinaya, and Abhidhamma).

5. As all this information comes in, the mind recognizes the object; this is sañ$\tilde{\boldsymbol{a}} \overline{\boldsymbol{a}}$ or perception. Based on that recognition feelings (vedan $\overline{\boldsymbol{a}}$ ) are generated (for example when we see a friend we generate a happy feeling; if it is someone we don't like, it is a unhappy feeling, etc).

- Once everything about the object is grasped, then if it is an "interesting object", the mind may start its own "wheeling around" process: the "pati +iccha sama+uppada" or paṭicca samuppāda process leading to the accumulation of sañkhāra: see, "Paticca Samuppāda - Introduction," "Nibbāna - Is it Difficult to Understand," "Sañkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka," and other related posts. All these tie up together, but one needs to be a bit patient since there are many inter-coupled concepts.

6. Thus experiencing a visual object in the above example generates all kinds of mental phenomena: vedana, saññā, sañkhāra, and during this whole process we have the viñ̃āṇa or citta flowing. Viñ̃āṇ̄a is the momentary consciousness, a citta. In the above example, it alternates between visual consciousness (cakkhu viññāna) and the mind consciousness (mano viññāna).

- The baseline state of a citta, i.e., when the mind is not looking at an external object or thinking about it, is called "bhavañga." Here we do not "feel" anything, for example when we are in deep sleep. The mind falls back to the bhavañga state even in between pañcadvāra citta vīthi.

7. Same kind of process happens with any of the five physical senses (the "back and forth switching" between the sense faculty and the mind). When someone is just remembering a past event or planning something, those are exclusively mind processes (only manodvāra citta vīthi take place).

Now let us look at some details on how the mind processes all the "signals" from the real world where multiple "signals" come in.

- When we watch a movie, what happens is the projector projects about 30-50 static pictures per second on the screen; a movie is a series of static pictures. When the projection rate is above 30 frames a second or so, our eyes see a continuous movie, not individual frames. Thus even though cittā run at billions per second, we do not "experience" them individually, not even close.
- This fast rate of citta vīthis (which, as we saw above run at about 100 citta vīthis per second) also make it possible to perceive all six inputs from the outside world "simultaneously"; at least we experience them as "simultaneous." For example, we can be watching a movie and enjoying some popcorn; so we see and hear the movie, and taste popcorn and feel the popcorn cup, and also may be thinking about something related to the scene on the screen; all at the "same time."
- Citta vīthi just alternate among the six sense inputs; it is possible only because there are hundreds of citta vith $h i$ per second. Since it happens so fast, we experience them all as "simultaneous", just like the static pictures projected at a fast rate on a movie screen are perceived as a continuous "movie."
- Not only that, but the mind can ignore a multitude of "signals" that are of no interest to one's own habits ("gathi") or cravings ("āsavas"). And those depend on the individual. Two friends could be walking on the street, and one (woman) stops abruptly and starts looking at a dress on a shop window. The other (man) looks at it, shrugs, and wants to move on; he would not have even noticed it.

8. As we saw, information to the mind comes via the brain. All five physical sense inputs (vision, hearing, smell, taste, touch) come through the brain. Thinking about concepts involves the brain too (those involve only the manodvāra citta vīthi), and that happens much faster compared to the processes associated with the five physical senses; we will discuss that later.

- When someone gets old, the brain starts functioning less efficiently; see, "Manomaya Kāya and Out-ofBody Experience (OBE)." Or, the brain may get damaged due to a kamma vipāka; for example, getting Alzheimer's disease is a kamma vipāka.
- As the body gets old, various other body parts also start functioning less efficiently and are also vulnerable for many kamma vipāka to come to fruition. Kamma vipāka are not deterministic; they come to bear fruit only when conditions become suitable (see, "Sañkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka"). Thus meditation and regular exercise help keep both the body and the mind (through an efficiently working brain) in good condition.

9. In any case, the mind goes to the "baseline or dormant state" called "bhavaña" even in between these citta vithi. When the mind is fairly inactive, say when someone is dozing off, the mind is mostly in the bhavanga state. When someone is unconscious or in deep sleep, it is in the bhavañga state for the whole duration. When seeing a dream, the mind is active.

- Even when citta vithis run at a fast rate of about 600 per second (say, while watching a movie or while playing a competitive sport), the mind drops to the bhavañga state while the brain is processing those "10 millisecond information packets", as discussed above.
- The above discussion is all about receiving information from the outside world and then getting attached to "things" ("tanhā"), generating mano sañkhāra, etc.

10. Based on that process, we may decide to take further action too, either verbally or bodily, thus generating vacī sañkhāra and kaya sañkhāra: We may speak or do some physical activity. All those are done with the mind too, and each action done with thought process or citta vithi.

- This is why the Buddha said, "mano pubbangama dhamma, ,,,", i.e., "mind precedes everything that we do...." We cannot even lift a finger without generating a citta vīthi, i.e., without the initiation by the mind. The physical body, with the brain acting as a "sophisticated control center", helps the mind to achieve whatever physical activity it wishes; see, "Neuroscience says there is no Free Will? - That is a Misinterpretation!."

Further reading: "A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma," by Bhikkhu Bodhi (2010). This book has summarized citta and cetasika very well. But discussions on paṭicca samuppāda or anicca, dukkha, anatta are not correct.

Next, "What is Consciousness?",

### 13.3.2 What is Consciousness?

## Revised July 16, 2020

1. Philosophers through the ages have struggled to figure out how consciousness arises in a human being. For "materialists" everything that makes a human being originates in the body, and they have been trying to explain consciousness in terms of something that comes out from the workings of the brain.

- For the "dualist" consciousness is totally distinct from the material body, and falls into the realm of theistic religion (related to a "soul").
- According to the Buddha, consciousness, together with the body, are two of the five "aggregates" that a human being consists of. And Consciousness does not arise from the body, but arises with the body at the conception.

2. First of all, let us define consciousness.

- The Buddha said that being conscious is "being aware," but with feelings and perceptions, and the ability to "recall the past."
- There are several definitions of consciousness in modern science, but the general consensus among the scientists and philosophers is that the state of being conscious is a condition of being aware of one's surroundings as well as one's own existence (or self-awareness).
- Therefore, we could say that science and Buddhism are attributing similar the same meaning to the word "consciousness".
- However, the Buddha's definition of consciousness takes into account the critical roles played by the vedanā (feelings), saññ̄̄ (perceptions), and the manasikāra cetasika among 52 other mental factors (cetasika), which combine to produce the viññāna which can be roughly translated as consciousness.

3. As to the origins of consciousness, we have three "theories":

- Contemporary science is totally matter-based: the universe started with the "big-bang" which created all existing matter, and all living beings "evolved" from this inert matter, and thus consciousness also evolved by some (yet unknown) manner.
- The theistic religions believe, of course, that humans were created with built-in consciousness by an Almighty-God, and animals were also created (sans consciousness).
- The Buddha's is different from both above: It states that living beings (humans and animals) with built-in consciousness are different from inert matter, but they were not created. Rather, there is no traceable beginning to sentient life; life always existed, and it will exist forever (until Nibbāna is attained). Everything has a cause, so does life.

4. Consciousness is more than registration of a visual event, or an auditory event, for example. It has associated a variety of mental factors such as sañña (perception) and vedan $\bar{a}$ (feelings).

- A camera captures an image of a cat, but it is not aware of the presence of the cat. On the other hand, a dog sees a cat and becomes aware of its presence. It not only sees the cat, but knows exactly where it is and can try to catch it.
- Have you ever thought about how we can not only see things, but know exactly where they are? Without this ability, we can not even walk without bumping into things. How do we know that the person in front of us is only a few feet away? Consciousness is associated with a sentient being with a MIND. Science cannot yet explain this capability.

5. There is also the issue of the phenomenal quality of the conscious experience: qualia, subjective feelings, the redness of red, the warmness of warmth, etc. How do these arise in a being made up of inert atoms? There are basically two approaches to solve this problem in modern philosophy and science:

- One is that it arises as an emergent property in the neuronal activities in the brain. The other is the proposal of duality by Rene Descartes in the 17th century that persists to the present; see, for example, David Chalmers, "The Character of Consciousness", (2010).
- A subset of these scientists believe that consciousness is associated with the microtubules in a cell (for example, see "The Emerging Physics of Consciousness" Ed. by Jack A. Tuszynski (2006) and John Smythies, "Brain and Consciousness: The Ghost in the Machines", Journal of Scientific Exploration, vol.

23, No. 1, pp. 37-50, (2009)). Despite much research, the question of how qualia and subjective feelings arise from dead matter remains a mystery.

- Just because a cell responds that does not necessarily mean it has consciousness; the cell can expand and contract (chemical reactions) in response to environmental stimuli. In a way, something similar happens when a plant turns towards sunlight; of course, plant life is not sentient. Thus, just because an entity responses to outside influence does not necessarily mean the entity is "mentally aware" of the outside influence, i.e., that it is conscious.

6. Therefore, all these scientists and philosophers are a long way off of solving the issue of the four mental aggregates of feelings, perceptions, volitional formations (sankkhāra), and consciousness that make up the mental aspects of a human being. They are mainly focusing on consciousness and perception at this early stage, and even then are totally disregarding the intrinsic mental nature. It will be interesting to see what progress they can make by just taking a totally materialistic approach.
7. There is evidence, though, that some leading scientists are beginning to suspect that a complete "world view" cannot be achieved without taking into account the mental aspects. This trend started with the invention of quantum mechanics at the beginning of the 20th century, and is gaining traction slowly. Some interesting ideas are discussed in a number of books including "Wholeness and the Implicate Order" (by David Bohm, 1980), "Quantum Enigma" (by Bruce Rosenblum and Fred Kuttner, 2006), "Biocentrism" (by Robert Lanza, 2009).

- However, attempts to explain the mind as a manifestation of quantum phenomena will also fail, because it is the mind that precedes matter; see, "The Double Slit Experiment - Correlation between Mind and Matter?."

8. Consciousness (viñ̃̄āna) discussed in this section does NOT take account the fact that consciousness of any living being (other than an Arahant) is contaminated by defilements. This our awareness is not pure; it is like looking through a foggy window. This is discussed in the "Viññāna (Defiled Consciousness)" and "Expanding Consciousness by Purifying the Mind."

Next, "1. Thoughts (Citta), Consciousness (Viññāna), and Mind (Hadaya Vatthu) - Introduction",

### 13.3.3 What is a Thought?

## Revised January 24, 2019

There are many confusing terms in Abhidhamma like citta and mano which have been differently interpreted in different books. In order to clarify these concepts, I am writing a few posts in the "Dhamma Concepts" section under "Mind and Consciousness" starting with: "1. Thoughts (Citta), Consciousness (Viññāna), and Mind (Hadaya Vatthu) - Introduction." I highly recommend reading those, and especially, " $\underline{3}$. Viññāna, Thoughts, and the Subconscious."

1. In Buddha Dhamma, a thought or a citta is the briefest moment of awareness experienced by a sentient being. Citta is pronounced "chiththa." There are well over billion of cittā (plural of citta) in the blink of eye.

- Let us keep in mind that a citta takes much smaller than a billionth of a second. What we experience is the cumulative effect of millions of citt $\bar{a}$.

2. A pure citta only has seven cetasika (phassa, sañ̃̄ā, vedanā, cetana, ekaggata, jivitindriya, and manasikara) in it; see, "Cetasika (Mental Factors)." Thus it is the purest form a "thought", but it is too brief for anyone to experience.

- The first thing to note is that one will never be able to experience a single thought if we mean by a thought to be a citta, even though we say, "I just had a thought". The briefest awareness that we actually experience is probably a fraction of a second; Scientists say it is about 10 milliseconds. But that 10 millisecond time is mostly spent by the brain in processing the sense input; once that is done, a series of
citta with 17 citt $\bar{a}$ flow in a very brief time (less than a billionth of a second), and that is what is registered in the mind. We will discuss this later in detail.
- This series of citta with 17 citt $\bar{a}$ is called a citta vīthi (pronounced "chiththa veethi"); see below.

3. Even a single citta has three phases: uppada (rising), thiti or thithi (reached peak but still changes), and bhanga (dissolution). Thus a citta arises and fades away very fast.

- Only a Buddha can see such details as I pointed out in the Introduction. Even people with highest abhiññā powers (attained via jhān $\bar{a}$ ) cannot even come close to seeing such details.
- This is why Abhidhamma is a special section of Buddha Dhamma that needs to take "as is", i.e., we just have to believe what the Buddha said. We cannot hope to verify these details by our own experience (for example that there are a certain number of citta in a citta vithi as discussed below). Yet, Abhidhamma is very valuable in clarifying any issue down to the minute detail.

4. A pure citta with 7 cetasika does not last. Even though it starts as such a pure citta, within the duration of the citta itself (less than a billionth of a second), it gets contaminated by either a set of bad cetasika like lobha (greed), issa (envy) or a set of good cetasika like saddhā (faith) and sati (mindfulness).

- Before it starts decaying, it goes through NINE STAGES to become viñ̃̃ānakkhandho (this is NOT the aggregate as in the common usage of viñ̃änakkhandha; rather, here the mind has coupled the information in the previous stages of this citta with past viñ̃ān̄a and future viññanna that are in the mind and has made a "composite").
- However, the convention is to call this whole process still a citta.
- All this happens in less than a billionth of a second! This process keeps repeating in the citta to follow and the process is cumulative, i.e., as more and more citta flow by, the awareness of the event gets stronger, and we actually begin to feel it.
- It may be a good idea to read about citta vīthi before proceeding: "Citta Vithi - Processing of Sense Inputs."

5. Thus what we experience is the cumulative effect of numerous citta vithis. That is why the Buddha talked about kandhas (which means "heaps" in Pāli or Sinhala) as in "heaps" of feelings (vedanākkhandha), perceptions (sañ̃̄ākkhandha), volitions (sañkhārakkhandha), and consciousness (viñ̃āạakkhandha); those are the "heaps" that we actually experience in a "thought".

- If cittā fly by that fast, and captures six kinds of possible "inputs" (through the five physical senses and the mind itself), how do we "experience" seeing, hearing, etc "at the same time" but still sort them out?

6. This is because the mind is the most powerful entity in this world. All five physical senses just provide traces of inputs ("memory imprints"), and billions of them arise and perish each second. The mind keeps a record of all past events and MAKES A COMPOSITE SENSE EXPERIENCE moment-by-moment.

- For example when we hear someone say "apple", even the letter "a" is comprehended by the mind via billions of citta; then " p " is captured, and by that time " a " sound is gone from the ear.
- We speak (and are able to understand) about 150 words/minute. The minimum "packet of information" that the brain (not the mind) can process is estimated to be about a hundredth of a second (10 milliseconds) by the scientists. This comes about 1-2 letters in such a "packet".
- When it has captured the whole word "apple", the mind automatically matches that with all the past memories and instantly produces an awareness or a mental picture of an apple; past memories, as well as hopes for future, are recalled by the mansikāra cetasika and the citta is "put together" by the cetanā cetasika.

7. The mind can do this because it can process billions of citta vithi per second!

- But there is a "bottleneck" at the brain, which takes a relatively long time to process. The brain takes a relatively long time to process a "packet" of information that comes in.
- Therefore, the mind falls back to the bhavanga state in between the comprehending of information packets. For example, right after receiving the letter "a", it falls to the bhavañga state and waits until the next packet with " p " comes.

8. Furthermore, the mind is capable of processing multiple inputs (received via the five senses) that are coming in mixed up.

- For example, after hearing the letter "a" that comes through the ears, the mind may get a "packet" with information about the smell of the apple. But the mind is capable of "sorting out" these different inputs.
- It is also able to carry out its own mental processes (thinking and coming to conclusions about what is perceived through the five senses by comparing it with past memories) such a fast speed, that it appears to be done in "real-time".
- There is nothing that is faster than the mind in this world; see, "Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)." Also, see the previous post, "Citta and Cetasika - How Viññāna (Consciousness) Arises."

9. Now the mind "knows" what that person was referring to, and has a mental image of an apple.

- If someone hears the word, "lemon", one could even feel the sour taste of lemon; the mind brings it back from the past memories.
- Even if we see just the outline of a familiar person at a distance, the mind "fills in the blanks" and flashes an image of that person in your mind so you know who it is.

10. One sensory "event" does not happen in one citta. A sensory event from one of the five physical senses is captured by a single citta (say, cakkhudvāra citta for a seeing event), but that information is processed by a string of citt $\bar{a}$ with 17 citt $\bar{a}$ in it; this "string of citt $\bar{a}$ " is called a citta vithi (pronounced "chiththa veethi'). A citta vīthi for 'seeing" is referred to as a citta vithi at the "eye door" or the eye, one for "hearing" occurs at the "ear door" or the ear, etc.

- When one citta vīthi provides a sensory input, that information is then processed by three citta vīthis that involves only the mind; this citta vithi "at the mind-door" is variable; it has around 12 citta normally. But in a jhāna samāpatti, which is solely a mind door process, there can be a very large number of citta without interruption.
- Thus there are two types of citta vith hi involved in processing a sensory input: a long one with 17 citta to CAPTURE an input from one of the five physical senses (pancadvara) AND three manodvara citta $v \bar{t} t h i$ (at the mind-door) with about 12 citta. Both types are thus involved in cognition (awareness) processes; there are other processes by the mind that we will discuss later.
- Only one citta vìthi runs at a given time; they do not overlap.

11. Thus it is mind-boggling if we try to imagine the frantic pace the mind works at. At this point, it may be a good idea to look at an analogy to simplify things a bit.

- A movie is generated by a series of static pictures. When a movie is projected on a screen, static pictures are projected at a rate of about 30 frames a second, and we see the movie as a continuous progression of events; if the projection rate is low, we can see it frame by frame or as "packets of information" separately. When we watch the movie, we do not perceive those static pictures or "packets of information", but we perceive a continuous progression without any gaps.
- This was described in \#4 of the previous post, "Citta and Cetasika - How Vinnana (Consciousness) Arises."

12. In the same way, when we perceive that our mind is hearing a word, but in reality that word is the result of many citta vithi originated at the ear door; and the scene that appears simultaneous is the composite of many citta vithi coming through the eye door and none of it happens "at the same time".

- Just like the movie projected at 30-50 frames a second, citta vithi are generated at many frames a second. (I had previously mentioned billions of citt $\bar{a}$ and that is not correct; the flow of citta vīthi is subsided by the processing time of about 10 milliseconds needed by the brain to process each each sense input). Thus we feel that we are watching, hearing, tasting, smelling, touching, and thinking all at the same time.
- To repeat for emphasis: Our minds processes probably less than 100 citta vithi per second. However, each citta vīthi with 17 citta (for five sense inputs) or about 10 citta (for mind inputs) and each of those citta vīthi take less than billionth of a second. Even though it takes the brain to process a sense input about 20 milliseconds or so, that information is grasped by the mind in less than a billionth of a second.
- While the brain is processing a sensory input, the mind falls back to the bhavañga state.

13. Just like a movie reel, there is actually a tape (not a physical one) that is recorded in the "mind plane"; this is the origin of the "nama gotta" discussed in, "Difference Between Dhamma and Sañkhāra." That tape is there forever, and allows one with abhiñ̃̃̄̄ powers to look back to any time in the past; see, "Recent Evidence for Unbroken Memory Records (HSAM)."

- Therefore in order to verify rebirth or to look at really old memories, all one needs to do is to develop abhiññā powers! And there are people, including my teacher Theros, who can do this today.

14. A citta evolves into viññāṇa and that is actually what we experience; see, "Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)" and "Viññāna - Consciousness Together With Future Expectations."

- There is only one citta at a time. But there is a memory, as we just discussed. And that memory is normally hidden because the mind is covered up by the defilement, and when one develops abhiñ̃ $\bar{n} \bar{a}$ powers what one is really doing is to clean up the mind so everything becomes clear.
- One who develops abhiññ̄a powers through anāriya jhānā just let the gunk settle at bottom and see just the upper layers; but one who has developed abhiññā powers through Ariya jhānā is doing that by "cleaning up" the gunk so a much more penetration to deeper past is possible; see, "Solution to a Wandering Mind - Abandon Everything?."

15. Thus any of individual sense experiences are VERY BRIEF (the duration of a citta vīthi). It is the mind that puts everything together and presents us with a "movie- like" experience. This is what the Buddha meant when he told Bahiya Daruciriya in the Bāhiya Sutta (Udāna 1.10). From that sutta, "diṭthe ditṭhamattaì bhavissati, sute sutamattaì bhavissati, mute mutamattaì bhavissati, viññ̄āe viññātamattam bhavissatī'ti" or "seeing is just a trace of seeing, hearing is just a trace of hearing, enjoying is just a trace of enjoyment, experiencing is just a trace of experience".

- It is the mind (specifically the viñāāna khandha or the aggregate of consciousness) that put everything together and present it as a smooth movie-like experience.
- Here, ditța, suta muta, viññāta mean "seeing, hearing, enjoying (with smell, taste, and touch), and consciousness respectively; "mantan" means "a mātra" in Sinhala or "a trace" in English. Thus "seeing" is just trace of a visual event lasting only a billionth of a second. Then it passes away and a new one comes in. It is like taking a series of pictures with a camera. It is the mind that makes everything appear solid, permanent, and stable. This is the deeper meaning of that verse.

16. If all this appear too technical, do not worry about it. It took me a long time to figure it out. I got the final details worked out recently by also combining information from recent scientific studies. The Buddha could not use today's technical terms, but what he said in summary form is completely compatible with science. But science is still way behind in terms of the bigger picture.

Next, "What is in a Thought? Why Gati are so Important?",

### 13.3.4 What is in a Thought? Why Gati are so Important?

## Revised March 1, 2020

There are many confusing terms in Abhidhamma like citta and mano which have been differently interpreted in different books. In order to clarify these concepts, I am writing a few posts in the "Dhamma Concepts" section under "Mind and Consciousness" starting with: "Thoughts (Citta), Consciousness (Viññāna), and Mind (Hadaya Vatthu) - Introduction."

1. In the previous post, we saw that a thought (citta; pronounced "chittha") lasts much less than a billionth of a second. The more surprising part is that each citta has structure! Each citta "contains" multiple cetasika (mental factors.) Actually it is more accurate to say that each citta rises with a number of cetasika and they all perish together within a billionth of a second.

- Of course, a citta does not arise by itself. It is in a citta vīthi involved in "sensing the outside world." That can occur via one of the six senses. Such a citta vīthi has either 17 citt $\bar{a}$ (for those sensing events involving the five physical senses) or about 10 citt $\bar{a}$ in citta vīthi involving only the mind. In between those, the mind is at the "bhavañga" state, which is commonly described as "bhavañga citta."
- The citta (including those "bhavañga citta") flow CONTINUOUSLY within a life and then start a new stream at the next life; there is no break in between the two lives.
- The stream of thoughts we have, has been running non-stop since the beginning-less time; see, "What Reincarnates? - The Concept of a Lifestream".
- However, we do not "feel" all the citta. There are "gaps" in between citta vith $h$ mainly with the mind in the Bhavañga state.

2. The cetasika (mental factors) provide different qualities to each citta. A citta is moral (kusala), immoral (akusala), or neutral (kriya) depending on the what type of cetasika rise with it.

A complete description of 52 cetasika are given in, "Cetasika (mental factors)". A brief summary:

- There are 7 universal cetasika that rise with ANY citta.
- Six others CAN appear in any citta, i.e., only some of them may be in a given citta.
- There are 14 asobhana cetasika (non-beautiful mental factors) that appear only in akusala citta.
- There are 25 sobhana cetasik $\bar{a}$ (beautiful mental factors.) Nineteen sobhana cetasik $\bar{a}$ appear in each and every kusala citta, and thus, those 19 are called beautiful universals.

3. Let us first discuss the 7 universal cetasika. These arise with ANY citta. A citta with just these is called a "pabhassara citta" because it is the "purest form" of a citta. It becomes a "viññanna citta" as it develops in time within a billionth of a second! See, "Citta, Mano, Viñ̃nāna - Stages of a Thought."

- What we actually experience are "viññāna citta," as viññāna khanda (aggregate of viññāṇa or a "heap of viññāna").

The 7 universal cetasika that arise with any citta are:

- Phassa (contact), sañ̃̄̄̄ (perception), vedanā (feeling), cetana (intention), ekaggata (onepointedness), jivitindriya (life faculty), and manasikara (memory).

4. The phassa (contact) cetasika is what makes contact with the "object of the citta" whether it is sense input from one of the five physical senses or a concept that makes contact with the mind.

- In Paṭicca Samuppāda, this is the phassa in the step "saḷāyatana paccayā phasso". Of course, salāyatana are the six senses. Thus it is phassa that makes it possible for the mind to make contact with the world.
- Sañ̃̄̄̄ (perception) identifies the object by working with manasikāra (memory), and vedanā (feeling) arises.
- Depending on the object, one will generate good, bad, or neutral feeling, and also different types of cetasika (greed, shame, compassion, etc) can arise; cetanā (intention) puts it all together and "prepares" the citta. Based on the types of cetasika in the citta, it could be a good or bad thought. This is why cetanā can be good or bad, and the Buddha said: "cetanā is kamma."
- Ekaggatā is the ability to keep the mind on one object. J̄̄vitindriya maintains life in the current life (keeps the body alive) until death. And manasikāra is the all-important memory. Manasikāra has ALL memories (or nāma gotta) from the beginning-less time; see, "Difference between Dhamma and Sañkhāra" for a discussion on nāma gotta.
- This is why the present citta is the precursor to the next citta and that next citta is NOT totally different from the previous citta; manasikāra, for example, just keeps building up on the past citta. "Cause and effect" is at work from citta to citta, maintaining the "personality" or "gati" of the given lifestream. This is why the Buddha rejected the notion of a "no-self", as well as a "self".
- Yet it is important to realize that "gati" can change even in a citta, for example, one attains the Arahanthood with a single citta (of course with billions of citta vith making gradual progress towards it).

5. So, we can see the basic working of a citta with these 7 universals; they carry out the most fundamental and vital functions of recognizing the object, matching it with old memories and figuring out what it is, and also sukha, dukha, or neutral feeling arise because of that recognition.

- Yet all that does not happen in a single citta. When an "input" comes through one of the six senses, it is captured by a citta vīthi containing 17 citta for a physical sense input and about 10 citta for a mind input as we discussed in the previous post. Then that "captured event" is discerned and analyzed by three follow-ups "manodvāra citta vīthi", i.e., by the mind.
- Even then we actually experience only the "net result" of millions of such citta vithi, as we mentioned in the previous post. But due to the extreme rapidity of these processes, we feel like we are using all six in real time. We are not. The mind is always analyzing a set of events that have already gone by. This is discussed in the Bāhiya Sutta (Ud 1.10), "diṭthe ditṭamattam bhavissati .........". What we experience NOW is what has already transpired.

6. But invariably other cetasika (other than the 7 universal) arise as the citta develops in time, and the citta becomes kusala citta, akusala citta or a kriya (neutral) citta depending on the cetasika that arise with the citta.

- Sobhana cetasika arise with kusala citta and asobhana cetasika arise with an akusala citta.
- These cetasika types do not mix, i.e., no sobhana cetasika arise with an akusala citta etc.

7. Now the question arises: If citta arise and fall and go by so rapidly, how do we willfully stop akusala citta from arising? Especially when exposed to a tempting external object like an eye-catching figure.

And the answer lies in a very simple concept that I have discussed in many posts:

- This is where one's character qualities (gati) and āsava come into play. One automatically responds with the "set of values" one has.
- By changing one's habits one can change one's character (gati) and eventually change one's deep-rooted cravings ( $\bar{a} s a v \bar{a}$ ). Even though the answer is simple, it takes a long time to get rid of bad habits and cultivate good habits, at least initially.
- The with time, as that gati loses its power, one will be less and less tempted when subjected to the same sensory input. For example, this could be the sight of an attractive figure or an enemy.

8. The key to reducing such bad gati is to forcefully suppress that bad-thought as soon as you become aware of it. Even though a bad thought arises automatically, one becomes aware of it after a few seconds.

- As soon as you become aware of a bad thought you should think about the bad consequences and forcefully stop that thought stream. Just start thinking about something good or start doing something that needs your full attention.
- When you keep doing this for a while, that tendency will slowly reduce, i.e., that bad gati will lose its power.
- For example, if one needs to quit smoking, as soon as one starts lighting a cigarette one should think about the bad consequences of smoking and throw it away. Keep some mints handy and pop one in your mouth. Finding a "replacement activity" always helps to break a bad habit.
- If it is hateful thought, one could stop it and start thinking about something good. Recalling something pleasant, say a picture of the Buddha, can help. Always have a "replacement" ready.
- One needs to keep doing this faithfully in order to make the old habit weak.

9. When one gets rid of bad habits and cultivates good habits, the ne ural connections in one's brain get rewired. The brain changes gradually and that is how the thoughts change. This is the an easy answer to using the modern science.

- But there is a deeper analysis. Not only the physical brain changes but also our manomaya kāya is transformed. Eventually, that is what controls the brain; see, the couple of posts on manomaya kāya and also, "Neuroscience says there is no Free Will? - That is a Misinterpretation!" for details.
- This idea of gradually changing one's habits holds the KEY in making progress on the Path or even on achieving mundane goals, as I have discussed in other posts.

10. Therefore, initially one responds with one's current set of values or gati. But after a few moments, one CAN think about the consequences and make corrections to the initial automatic reaction.

- This is further explained in terms of the instant reaction coming from the limbic system in the brain and the "reasoned out" corrective action coming from the neo-cortex or "the thinking brain"; see, "Truine Brain How the Mind Rewires the Brain via Meditation/Habits."
- And that is how we slowly change our gati, by willfully making corrections to the initial "auto-response". This is what makes us different from animals. Animals do not have this ability, at least not to our level.
- The more you "catch" such "inappropriate auto-responses" and stop them, the more effectively we can get rid of bad habits, cultivate good habits and change our gati (character) in the right direction. This is "ānāpāna sati", i.e., one keeps good thoughts and gets rid of bad thoughts willfully; see, "What is Ānāpāna?" in the Meditation section.

11. As mentioned above, cetasik $\bar{a}$ present in a given citta determines the quality and/or the function of the citta.

- An immoral (akusala) citta have one or more immoral roots; avijjā (delusion cetasika) is in any immoral citta.
- A moral (kusala) citta will always have non-greed and non-hate cetasika. Wisdom (paññā) cetasika rises only in citta with all three roots ( tihetuka citta).
- We have come across many of the cetasika in the posts on various topics: the five hindrances are of course included in the 14 asobhana cetasika.
- The four bases of mental power (cattāro iddhipāda) are four of the sobhana cetasika, i.e., chanda, citta, viriya, vīmainsā. Here citta means "thinking about the goal" and thus is sammā sañkappa when
fully cultivated. Vīmaimsā is another name for pañña and becomes sammā ditthi when fully cultivated; see, " 37 Factors of Enlightenment."
- Some of the factors in the Noble Eightfold Path are directly in the set of sobhana cetasika, for example, sammā vācā, sammā kammanta, and sammā ajjīva. Other cetasika like sati and paññ̄a, when cultivated become sammā sati and sammā ditṭhi.
- Similarly, ekaggatā in the universal cetasika set becomes sammā samādhi, and viriya and vitakka in the set of particulars become sammā vāyāma and sammā sañkappa when cultivated.

12. As we noted, we can control a bad series of thoughts like planning a robbery or even making a quick plan to steal an item from a store. There is enough time to think about the consequences of such a bad action and deliberately stop such thoughts. But one needs to be in a fairly stable "state-of-mind" to be able to do that. When the mind is agitated, the mind cannot see "right from wrong". The five hindrances are covering the mind.

- Sometimes people commit horrendous crimes in the spur-of-the-moment. One can get into a rage and shoot someone with a gun that is close by. How do we stop such quick reactions? By being mindful to control that bad gati, which is the tendency to get mad at the slightest provocation. See \#10 above.
- When one keeps reducing one's "bad gati," those really dangerous gati - which could lead to rebirth in the apāy $\bar{a}$ - will be permanently eliminated when one becomes a Sotāpanna. With that achieved, that mindset persists even in future lives. As we saw, a patisandhi citta in the new life arises based on the cuti citta of the past life, so it has all the "gati" from a past life. Changing to a "gati" of a Sotāpanna is a change in the lineage (gotrabhu.) One becomes an Ariya or a Noble person forever.

Next, "Why Do People Enjoy Immoral Deeds? - Ditthi Is Key",

### 13.3.5 1. Thoughts (Citta), Consciousness (Viññāṇa), and Mind (Hadaya Vatthu) - Introduction

It will be beneficial to read this post even if one is not interested in learning Abhidhamma.

1. After writing a few posts in the Abhidhamma section, I realized that it is a good idea to write introductory posts on English meanings of some Päli key words related to the mind. In the end, words do not matter and what matters is grasping of the concepts involved. But conveying the concept correctly REQUIRES the use of right words.

- This is a bit of a problem because there are no words in English that truly conveys the meaning of some Pāli key words when talking about the mind (like mano and viñ̃än̄a). Thus what I need to do is to write several introductory posts describing such keywords (like what I did for anicca, dukkha, anatta).
- More details will be given in the Abhidhamma section, but the posts that appear in this section provide just the basics.

2. A Citta (pronounced "chiththa") is widely translated as a "thought", viññāna as "consciousness" and mano as "mind". I am going to keep using the former two, but am going to use "hadaya vatthu" as the Päli word for mind. Let us first discuss the reason for using this term for the mind.

- Hadaya vatthu is where citta (thoughts) arise; thus it is appropriate to call it the mind or even more appropriately "seat of the mind". Hadaya vatthu is the "link" between the "mano loka" (mind plane) and the "material plane" whether it is in kāma loka, rūpa loka or arūpa loka (i.e., anywhere in the 31 realms). Mind or the hadaya vatthu is a very fine $r \bar{u} p a$ (matter); in technical terms, hadaya vatthu is formed at patisandhi as a vatthu dasaka.
- By the way this hadaya vatthu is the only trace of matter associated with a living being in the arūpa loka. It is much smaller than an atom; only a form of "suddhāshtaka [suddhatṭhaka]" in the form of a "dasaka."
- For example, if a cuti-patisandhi transition occurs from a cat to a human, then the "cat hadaya vatthu" dies and a "human hadaya vatthu" is formed and the very next citta arises in the "human hadaya vatthu" or the "human mind" in the "human gandhabba"; see, "Cuti-Patsandhi Transition Abhidhamma Description". With that in mind, let us discuss the ultimate "primary elements".

3. In the absolute sense (paramatta), there are four entities: citta, cetasika (pronounced "chetasika"), rūpa (pronounced "rüpa"), and Nibbāna. The last one, Nibbāna, does not belong to "this world" of 31 realms. Therefore, there are only citta, cetasika, and $r \bar{u} p a$ that are in anything and everything in this world.

- Citta and cetasika are "nama" and all tangible things are made of "rupa".
- There are 89 (or 121) types of citta; 52 kinds of cetasika, and 28 kinds of $r \bar{u} p a$. These are all listed in the "Tables and Summaries" section.

4. A citta (thought) does not arise by itself, but arises with a number of cetasika (mental factors). There are 7 cetasika that arise with ANY citta, and normally there are other cetasika that arise in addition to those seven. This is discussed in "Cetasika (Mental Factors)".

- There are "good" and "bad" cetasika. The familiar ones are lobha, dosa, moha and alobha, adosa, amoha, but there are many others. These determine whether a given citta is a "good" (kusala) citta or a "bad" (akusala) citta. There are only good or bad cetasika in a given citta; they do not mix.

5. Even though a citta arises and perishes within less than billionth of a second, it gets contaminated during its lifetime. Starting as a "pure citta" ("pabasvara citta" which is also called "prabhasvara citta" in Sanskrit) with those 7 universal cetasika, it gradually degrades by incorporating many other cetasika into a "contaminated citta" or viññāṇa. Without going into details, the nine steps are:

- citta, mano, manasan, hadayan, pandaran, mana indriyan, manayatan, viññāna, vinnanakkhandho. [Yaì cittaì mano mānasai் hadayaì paṇ̣araì mano manāyatanaì manindriyaì viññānaim viññanạakkhandho...] But this happens during the life of the citta itself (in billionth of a second) according to the "gathi" that we have. This is why we cannot control our initial thoughts; but as those initial thoughts turn to speech and bodily actions, we may have time to control them.
- But we still use the term "citta" to denote the final outcome; in order to differentiate the one that the sequences started off, we call it a "pure citta" or a "pabasvara citta."
- What we end up is basically what we call vinnanakhandha, and all this happens within a billionth of a second. This "contamination process" cannot be controlled willfully at that early stage; it happens automatically based on one's "gathi." The only thing we can do is to change our "gathi."

6. We can use the following analogy: If we start off with a glass of pure water that can be compared to a pure citta with just the 7 universal cetasika. If we add a bit of sugar (mano), salt (manasan) it gets a bit contaminated but we cannot see the contamination. Now we add a bit of brown sugar and we can see the water turning to brown; this is like the hadayan stage. Then we keep adding chocolate, milk, etc, the water gets really contaminated; but it is still mostly water. A contaminated citta is like at the viññanna stage; it is a citta that is contaminated.

- The citta of an Arahant does not contaminate beyond the masanan stage (While in the "Arahant phala samapatti" enjoying Nibbānic bliss, an Arahant has the pabasvara citta or the pure citta). All others get to the viññanna stage, but of course the "level of contamination" is much lower even by the time one gets to the Sotāpanna stage, because one has gotten rid of any "gathi" associated with the apāy $\bar{a}$.
- As we can see, it is not possible to control such a fast process by sheer will power; it is a matter of "cleansing the mind" progressively of the contaminants of greed, hate, and ignorance.
- Now we can see why "mano" cannot be the mind. "Mano" is just a bit "contaminated" citta. It gets progressively contaminated and by the time it comes to the "viññāna" step it has captured all relevant cetasika for that ārammaña or the "thought object".
- At the last step, a very profound thing happens. The manasikara cetasika brings in to play all relevant past viññāṇa (which are fixed as "nama gotta") as well as one's "hopes and dreams" for the future that are relevant to the "event in question". For example, if the thought occurs due to seeing a nice house, one may compare that house with houses like that one has seen before AND one's "dream house" that one is hoping to build one day. Therefore, in the "final version", a citta is a very complex entity that reflects not only the "nature of the object seen" but also one's own likes/dislikes for it.
- This last stage of the citta or Viññanna is the "composite awareness" for that particular event, which also has one's own likings, dislikings, etc for that particular event; see, "Citta, Mano, Viññāna - Stages of a Thought."

7. And we do not, and cannot, just perceive a single or even a few vinnanakkandho; rather what we "feel" as a "thought" is the sum of many such vinnanakkandho, and we still call that a "citta" or a "thought"; see, "What is a Thought?" and "Citta and Cetasika - How Viññāna (Consciousness) Arises".

- We also alternatively call such sense experiences "citta," "thoughts," "consciousness," and "viñ̃āạna."
- Thus it is critical to understand that what we mean by viñ̃ān̄a in general is the sum total of many cittā; in paticca samuppāda, at the "avijjā paccayā viññāna," viññāna means this sum total of many cittā or even more accurately the sum total of many of vinnanakkhandho.

8. Now I would like to point out a few important conventions:

- It is important to remember that a thought can have many meanings even in English: WebLink: WIKI: Thought
- Normally "citta" is used to denote a thought, and "viññāna" is used to denote the "awareness" associated with a thought. It is fine to do that most of the time, but if a discussion gets technical one could come back to this post and refresh memory as to the details.
- And as you can imagine, such an "average of thoughts" may have many type of cognitions and underlying "awarenesses", and we will talk about the different types of viñ̃̃āna in the next post, "2. Viññāna (Consciousness) can be of Many Different Types and Forms".


## 2. Viññāna (Consciousness) can be of Many Different Types and Forms

## Revised August 4, 2021; July 1, 2022

1. Viññāna is unique to sentient beings. Plants are alive but have no viññāna; they respond to the environments but are not capable of "thinking." Sentient beings are aware that they are alive and just that basic awareness of "being alive" is not really a viñ̃̃āna.

- This purest level of viñ̃̄āṇa (the awareness of being alive) is called the "citta" (pronounced "chiththa") stage.
- A citta arises with 7 concomitant "mental factors" (cetasika, pronounced "chetasika"), and this is described in "Citta and Cetasika - How Viññāna (Consciousness) Arises." To emphasize, a pure citta arises with universal cetasika; a citta always has those 7 cetasika .

However, a citta gets "contaminated" by other cetasika as soon as it arises. Within the lifetime of a citta (which is less than a billionth of a second), it progressively gets contaminated by "good" or "bad" cetasika, and this happens in nine stages! See the previous post: "Thoughts (Citta), Consciousness (Viññāna), and Mind (Hadaya Vatthu) - Introduction."
2. As discussed in " $\subset$ Citta and Cetasika - How Viññāna (Consciousness) Arises," additional cetasikā provide "color" to a citta: if a set of "good cetasika" arise with the citta it becomes a "good thought" or a "good viññāna"; if it is a set of "bad cetasika," then the thought or the viññaña is bad (those cetasika do not mix). Also, there are neutral thoughts or neutral viññāna that are neither good nor bad.

- Viññāṇa can be experienced in many different ways; since it is hard to come up with different names for each case, they are all bundled together as viñ̃̃āna. Words like citta, viññāna, mano, as well as cakkhu viññāna, sota viññāna, etc., and vipāka viññāna are used in different contexts, and that can be confusing to many regardless of whether their native language is English, Chinese, or even Sinhala, which is the closest language to Pāli. But each term has its own "subtle identity," and as we discuss more, those subtle differences will become clear.

3. Viññāna is often translated as "consciousness," but viñ $\tilde{n} a \underline{n} a$ can be used in many different contexts like "subconscious" or "layers of consciousness."

- The same problem is encountered by those who speak the Sinhala language because there the word "sitha" (ひூூ) is used on many occasions to represent the Pāli words citta, mano, and viññāna. Similarly, in Sinhala, "yati sitha" ( $\omega$ §ో万) is used to denote the subconscious.
- This "subconscious" in English (as introduced by Sigmund Freud) is not a separate citta (there can be only one citta at a time). But, each citta can have "layers of consciousness"; the manasikāra cetasika plays a big role here.
- For example, at a given time, we may have several "subconscious" viññāna (expectations): we may have plans to buy a certain car, getting ready to go on a trip next week, in the process of building a house, etc.; all these are in the subconscious and each citta. If we see a car on the road that looks like the car we are interested in, the viñ̃̄āna alerts us to it, and we take a good look at it.
- As the Buddha advised bhikkhus, what really matters is to convey the meaning. Just like in the case of Pațicca Samuppāda or taṇhā, it is best to use the Pāli words and comprehend their meanings; those key words convey deep meanings that may take several words or even sentences in any other language to get the idea across.


## Types of Viññāna associated with Kamma and the Sense Doors

Viññaṇa is complex and can be presented in different types and forms. We will start by looking at "two categories" of viñ̃̄āṇa.
4. First, we can categorize them according to kamma (or sañkhāra) associated with the viññ̄āna: Kamma viñnāna and vipāka viññāna.

Let us describe in plain English what these terms mean.

- We can put viññ̄āna into two categories: Those viñ̃ñ̄ṇa that arise while doing a kamma (sañkhāra) is a kamma viññanna. For example, when one steals something, one has an awareness of that; that is the "viññāna that one is stealing."
- Then some arise as kamma vipāka, and thus we do not have much control over them; they just happen to us and are called avyākata viññāna or vipāka viññāna. I like the term vipāka viññāna than avyākata viñ̃āṇa because then it is easy to differentiate those two kinds. For example, when one is walking on the road and sees something valuable on the roadside; that is a cakkhu viññāna (seeing something) and also a vipāka viññāna (due to a kamma vipāka).

5. When traveling by car and looking out of a window, we see many different things. But most of it we do not pay any attention to, even though we are "aware" that we see things. Those are vipāka viññāna, they are "presented to us," but most of them may not interest us.

- Then all of a sudden, we see something that "piques our interest," say, a nice house by the roadside. Then we focus on that and may keep looking at it until it moves out of our range. That is a vipāka viññāna that triggered a "gati" in us; it was of interest. And it could put us in a position to acquire more kamma by initiating a kamma viññaṇa. An easy way to remember is that "kamma viññanna" are those arising via "sañkhāra paccayā viññāṇa" in Paṭicca Samuppāda; see \#6 below.
- For example, if we really got interested in that house, we may start thinking about how nice would it be if we could build and live in a house like that. Now we are making sañkhāra (i.e., generating kamma) based on that "seeing event." Thus such thoughts (or viññāna) that followed the initial vipāka viñ̃āạna of "seeing the house" are kamma viññāna.
- Our life experiences belong to basically one of those two categories.

6. Vipāka viññāṇa arise with sensory input; only these can be truly called "consciousness." We can differentiate them into six categories, this time based on the sense door: thus we have cakkhu viññāna (vision consciousness), and sota (sound), ghāṇa (smell), jivhā (taste), kāya (touch), and mano (mind) viññāna (consciousnesses).

- In the previous example, the both types of viññāna were all initiated by cakkhu viññ̄āa, a "seeing event or consciousness." At the kamma viññāna stage, they turned to an "expectation" (more that consciousness) because those thoughts about acquiring a house originated in our minds.
- Thus if you contemplate a bit on this, you can see that we can put ALL our experiences into one of those two "divisions," i.e., we can analyze them to be in the vipāka viññāna or kamma viññāṇa categories.

7. Let us discuss something fundamental to Pațicca Samuppāda.

- The Paṭicca Samuppāda cycle starts with "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra", and "sañkhāra paccayā viññāna". This viññāna is NOT a vipāka viññạ̄na, but only a kamma viñnäạa.
- When we see something, hear something, etc., those are things that HAPPEN to us. Thus there is no avijjā (or ignorance) initiating that consciousness. There is no kusala-mūla or akusala-mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda cycle associated with such a consciousness (vipāka viññāna).
- However, if we now decide to act on it (say, take another look at it because we like it), then we may be initiating a sañkhāra (kamma) event: now this new event initiates an Idappaccayatā Paṭicca Samuppāda cycle with "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra," which leads to, "sañkhāra paccayā viññạ̄a," i.e., this viñ̃̄āna was initiated by a sañkhāra; thus it is a kamma viññāṇa.

8. Usually, what happens in our lives is that we are bombarded with sensory inputs via all six senses. We tend to turn our attention to many because we are afraid that "we may miss out on something." This is the root cause of the lack of "peace" in our minds because we are constantly moving our attention among the six senses, going back and forth. If we have too many "likings," our mind will be pulled in all different directions trying to follow all those sense inputs.

- We can reduce this effect by avoiding busy environments (i.e., going to a secluded place). But, we still cannot "turn off the sixth sense input," i.e., the mind, unless we purify our minds. This is the key to meditation. It is not possible to have "peace of mind" if the mind is burdened with greed, hate, and ignorance (wrong vision or micchā ditṭhi).

9. Thus, an Arahant can have a peaceful mind even when in the busiest place. A Sotāpanna can do that to a certain extent too.

- Even before any of the "magga phala" is attained, one can easily get to samādhi and then to jhānā by gradually getting rid of the defilements associated with "wrong vision" just by learning Dhamma (mainly anicca, dukkha, anatta).
- Then we can reduce the number of different types of kamma viñ̃nāna going through the mind ("Sounds like my neighbor's car leaving, I wonder whether she is going to the mall?", 'I wonder what (my enemy) is up to today?", "I wish I could have a body like that!", "How come I don't have a nice house like that?"; these are all types of kamma viññāna that we burden our minds with unnecessarily.
- And it is important to realize that it is not easy to turn those off, they WILL BE turned off automatically when we purify our minds first by learning Dhamma ("What is the use of thinking about unnecessary things? There are better things to think about that provide lasting happiness").

Next, "3. Viññāna, Thoughts, and the Subconscious",

### 13.3.7 3. Viññāṇa, Thoughts, and the Subconscious

Revised February 25, 2020

## Cetasikā (Mental Factors) Determine the Nature of a Citta (Thought)

1. A thought (citta) arises based on a specific thought object (ārammaṇa), say thinking about buying a car or going for a walk. There is only one citta at a time, but each lasts less than a billionth of a second. The word citta is pronounced "chiththa." See, ""Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars - Part 1."

- Cittā (plural of citta) flow at a very fast rate. We do not experience individual citta, but the overall effect of billions of cittā that arise in a second.
- Each citta has many cetasika (mental factors) in it, including the all-important saññā, phassa, manasikāra cetasika.
- Then there are "good" and "bad" cetasika in a citta that describes the "quality" of the citta.
- When someone is angry, most cittā at that time will have anger/hate (patigha and/or dosa cetasika.) When the same person is feeding a hungry person his/her cittā at that time will have the benevolence and/or loving-kindness cetasik $\bar{a}$.
- The good and bad cetasikā do not mix, i.e., one either has a good thought or a bad thought. For discussion on cetasika, see, "Cetasika (Mental Factors)."


## What Is Viñnāāna? - Role of Cetasikā

2. Even though we simply think about a "thought," a thought is really a complex entity, that goes through nine stages within a billionth of a second. It ends as viññāna or viññānakkhandha. See, "Citta, Mano, Viññāna - Stages of a Thought." Viññāna represents the overall experience of "thought" and is largely described by the cetasik $\bar{a}$ in those citt $\bar{a}$.

- Of course, no one experience a viññāna due to a single citta; rather what one experiences is the average of millions or billions of cittā. A bunch or a heap is called khandha in Pāli or Sinhala. Thus what we experience is a viññānakkhandha or the overall effect of a bunch or a heap of cittā.
- Viñ̃̄āṇa is complex and multifaceted. But they are primarily of two types: vipāka viñ̃̃āna and kamma viññāna See, "Viññāṇa - What It Really Means."
- We can look at those two types in a simple way as follows.

3. The manasikāra and saññā cetasika are in each and every citta, and they can incorporate all past memories, habits (gati) and cravings ( $\bar{a} s a v \bar{a}$ ) to a given citta. It is the cetana cetasika that "puts it all together." Only the mind of a Buddha can "see" such amazing details. It all happens within a billionth of a second!

- Our gati and $\bar{a} s a v \bar{a}$ (plural of $\bar{a} s a v a$ ) may not be displayed in each citta. Rather, they lie dormant, waiting for a "trigger" to come up. For example, greedy thoughts arise only when a "pleasing thought object" is in play, as in seeing a tasty dish or an attractive person.
- Therefore, the way we think (viñ̃̃āna) depend on our gati (habits/character,) āsavā (cravings,) AND the particular "thought object" or ārammaṇa.
- Of course, we can get rid of certain gati/āsava and cultivate new ones.
- The main goal of Ānāpāna and Satipatṭhāna meditations is to remove bad gati/āsava and to cultivate good gati. See, "Is Ānāpānasati Breath Meditation?" and "9. Key to Ānāpānasati - How to Change Habits and Character (Gati)."


## Vipāka Viññāṇa and Kamma Viññāṇa

4. The mind is directed to a new thought object (or arammaña) with a vipāka viññāna that may come through any of the six sensory inputs. For example, we may be walking down the street, but an attractive item in a shop window may catch our attention.

- Now, if we like that item, we may start thinking about buying it. That is a kamma viññāna. Now we have generated a new viññāna with a desire to buy that item. A kamma viññāna has an expectation. We may not buy it at that time. But if we go home and again start thinking about it (generating vaci sañkhāra,) then we build up that viññāna via "sañkhāra paccayā viññāna" step in Paticca Samuppāda. Therefore, a kamma viññāna arises only in the mind.
- Without getting deep into the issue, we can just say that a kamma viññāna is an expectation. Once formed, a kamma viññāna will stay with us at least for a while. It will grow only if we keep thinking, speaking or doing things (with $v a c \bar{c}$ and $k \bar{a} y a ~ s a n ̃ k h a ̄ r a) ~ r e l a t e d ~ t o ~ t h a t ~ e x p e c t a t i o n . ~$


## Kamma Viññāṇa Come Back as Vipāka Viñṇ̣̃̄̄a

5. When we build such an expectation, the memory of that can come back as a vipāka viñ̃̃āna at a later time.

- For example, the memory of that item in the shop window in \#3 above may come back to the mind via one of the six senses later on. For example, we may hear about it on the radio, we may hear someone else talking about it, etc. It may even "pop into the mind" too.
- That item in the shop window is a "thought object" or a ārammana.
- Then if we keep thinking, speaking, doing things related to that ārammaṇa, that associated viñãāṇa will grow.


## What is Subconscious?

6. Such vipāka viññāna are waiting in the background to bring their fruits. There may be many types hiding beneath the surface. This is what Sigmund Freud called the "sub-conscious".

- When I am paying for my groceries, my thoughts stay focused on that transaction. But there can be many types of viññāna lurking "in the background". I may be building a house, studying for an exam, planning a trip, planning a birthday party for my child, etc. and all those "viññaṇa" are working in the background even though I am not thinking about any of them at the time I am paying for my groceries.
- However, any of those, and even some things that I had not been thinking about for a long time, can be there in the "subconscious". But there is no separate "subconscious" as such.
- All these different types of viññāna cannot be there in a single thought (citta), and there is only one citta at a time; see, "What is a Thought?". Then how is it possible for many types of viññāna to be lurking in the background? That is what we discussed in \#2, \#3 above. Based on the particular ārammana, the cetanā cetasika "transforms" a pure citta to the "contaminated" viññaṇa stage in several steps.

7. The more one does something repeatedly, there starts a kamma viññāna for that particular event or behavior. For example, when one starts smoking, a viññāna starts building, and the more one smokes, the stronger the viññāna gets. This is called "feeding the viññāna" by doing it again and again. In other words, habits are formed via repeatedly feeding the viñ̃̄̄̄na for that habit.

- When a certain viññāna is pleasing to the mind, that viññanna tries to get fed frequently. When someone has the habit of smoking the viñ̃āạa for that tries to deviate his/her attention to smoking at every
possible opportunity. For example, if a smoker sees an advertisement for smoking, that "triggers" the liking or the viññaña for smoking that was in the subconscious.

8. But it works the same way for a viññāna that got established with a dislike also. For example, if someone did something really awful to you in the past, the hearing of his/her name will bring back that viññāna.

- This is why we get "attached" ( $\operatorname{tanhh} \bar{a})$ to things we like as well for things we dislike and is the meaning of $\operatorname{tanhh} \bar{a}$ (get bonded via greed or hate); see, "Tanhā - How We Attach Via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance."


## Viññạ̄a Are Not Permanent

9. Not all viññāna keep accumulating in the background. Those weaker ones, especially if don't get fed, diminish and disappear.

- For example, suppose I had planned an overseas trip and had been making preparations for it. The more preparations I make and the more thoughts I have of the trip, those are "food for that viññana", and it grows. If I see a new article with that country's name, I would immediately read the article. But suppose, a major war breaks out in that country before my trip; then I would cancel that trip right away. I will no longer be planning for the trip and my mind will "not be interested" in it anymore. Since that viññāna for "visiting that country" is not going to get fed anymore, it will be gone in a short time.
- We don't even need to actually physically do the activity to "feed the viññāna" or make a habit stronger. There are studies that show that one could improve the game of basketball, for example, by just visualize practicing, and getting the ball mentally. These are called "mano sañcetana $\vec{a}$ ". Focusing attention on a given task can be very powerful.
- One's associations strongly influence which of those different types of viññaṇa will grow by "getting fed" frequently. If one starts associating with people who drink regularly, one's viññāna for "getting drunk" will grow as one keeps feeding that viññāna by drinking frequently.


## Summary

12. A built-up viññāna can form a habit (gati.) As the habit or the gati gets stronger, it can be carried over to the next life, possibly in two ways.

- If a human dies and has time left in the "human bhava" then when he/she is reborn as a human most of the previous gati will be there.
- A really strong habit could lead to a "pațisandhi viññāna" at the dying moment and can lead to a corresponding "bhava" based on that particular gati. For example, an extremely greedy person, may acquire a "peta bhava" at the dying moment and be born as a "peta" or a hungry ghost.

13. Thus viã̃̃āṇa is very complex. It is not just "awareness." Viññāna also has one's "hopes and dreams" as well as "likes, dislikes, and habits". It also includes the "subconscious." It is a complex combination of the 52 cetasikā.

- Of course, not all cetasikā are involved in a given citta or in our thoughts. Sobhana (good) cetasikā do not arise with asobhana (bad) cetasikā in a given citta.
- See, "Cetasika (Mental Factors)" for a discussion on cetasikā.


### 13.4 Role of the Brain in Human Consciousness

Brain - Interface between Mind and Body
Body Types in Different Realms - Importance of Manomaya Kāya (located at The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma)

### 13.4.1 Brain - Interface between Mind and Body

April 22, 2016; revised September 22, 2019; \#17 added March 31, 2021

## The brain is Not the Mind

1. Contrary to what scientists believe, our minds are not in the brain (this is another prediction from Buddha Dhamma that will be proven correct in the future).

- The "mind door" where citta (or thoughts) arise is at the hadaya vatthu is not located not in our physical bodies. It is in the manomaya kāya of the gandhabba; see, "Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya)Introduction."
- The gandhabba has a subtle body and it is not a "body" in the sense we usually think about. It is more like an energy field that overlaps the physical body; see, "Ghost in the Machine - Synonym for the Manomaya Kāya?."
- The hadaya vatthu overlaps the heart in the physical body. When we hear traumatic news, we feel a burning sensation close to the heart, and not in the head. We don't say, "Oh, my head felt like burning when I heard the news." It is the heart area that feels it. (Head may start hurting later if one keeps thinking about the loss).
- On the other hand, when we overuse our five physical senses or when we think hard about a difficult problem, it is the head that hurts. Because in those situations, the brain has to do a lot of processing. While watching a movie, our brains work overtime to convert those sensory inputs from the eyes (cakkhu indriya) and the ears (sota indriya). When we think about a hard problem, the mana indriya in the brain has to work hard; see below.


## Two Overlapping "Bodies" - Physical Body and Gandhabba (Mental Body)

2. A physical body is a temporary shelter or a "shell" for the gandhabba's subtle body. The gandhabba receives sense inputs from the outside world via the physical body. See, "Body Types in Different Realms Importance of Manomaya Kāya."

- Since a given physical body has a lifetime of around 100 years, we have to "build a new physical body" when the current one decays and finally dies. (That is if we have extra kammic energy for the human bhava); see, "Bhava and Jāti - States of Existence and Births Therein."

3. Before entering the mother's womb, the gandhabba has a very fine "body," more like an "energy packet." Thus, it cannot experience taste or touch, even though some can "digest odors" and become a bit denser.

- A gandhabba waiting for a womb usually is about the size of a fully-grown human, but it has very little "matter" that is visible to us. At the moment of "okkanti" or entering the mother's womb, he/she will enter THROUGH the mother's body and collapse to the size of the zygote when taking possession of it; see, "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception."
- Thus a gandhabba, when outside waiting for a suitable womb, is just like a ghost shown in the movies. Of course, a human cannot see it even using technological advances. It is much smaller in mass than the first cell formed by the union of the mother and father, the zygote.
- The physical body grows starting with that single cell (zygote) using the nutrition from the mother. After the baby is born, it grows to the full size of an adult by consuming food.
- Thus it is useful to have this visual, where a very fine gandhabba trapped inside a physical body of over a hundred pounds controls it.


## Brain - Interface Between the Physical Body and Gandhabba

4. Once inside a physical body, gandhabba has to use the physical body to interact with the outside world. It is like being trapped in a solid shell. Initially, its mind will be in the bhavañga state (see, "Citta Vithi Processing of Sense Inputs") and will not be conscious about its environment, except for body sensations.

- In a human, the brain first processes the signals coming through the "physical senses" (eyes, ears, etc.). The brain transmits that information to the five pasāda rūpa located in the gandhabba. Those pasāda rūpa then pass that information to the hadaya vatthu (seat of the mind) in the gandhabba; see, "Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya)- Introduction."
- That is how our minds receive information from the external world.
- Now the question arises: "How do the sense inputs coming through the eyes, ears, tongue, nose, and the body, are transmitted to the pasāda rūpa located close to the hadaya vatthu?." Note that the hadaya vatthu overlaps the physical heart.

5. It is the brain that acts as the intermediary between those physical sense inputs and the five pasāda rūpa. It processes the incoming information to a form that can be understood by the mind (hadaya vatthu).

- First, the sense inputs coming in to the physical body through the eyes, ears, tongue, nose, and body go to specific regions of the brain. That has been well-researched by scientists over the past hundred years. The following figure shows the specific areas of the brain that analyze the data from the five senses.

- Science is unable to explain how the mind comprehends the corresponding signals after the processing of those signals. For example, in vision, there is no "picture" formed in the back of the head; see "On Intelligence" by Jeff Hawkins (2005) for a helpful discussion.

6. The signals for vision, sounds, smells, and taste come into the body through specific body parts. In contrast, the touch sensations can come from anywhere in the body, and conveyed via an intricate system of nerves:


- These nerve signals go to the brain for processing (see the "touch and pressure" processing area in the figure in \#5 above).


## Gandhabba (Mental Body) Overlaps the Physical Body

7. By the way, it is essential to note that the misty gandhabba has a similar "nervous system" that overlaps the physical nervous system shown above. Yes. That is extremely fine, more like an "energy field." That is not entirely relevant to the present discussion, but the physical body is there to impart kamma vipāka via body aches, diseases, and injuries.

- The physical nervous system has to align with the nervous system of the gandhabba. That alignment could change (due to kamma vipāka), which makes our body's nervous system go out-of-alignment for proper body function leading to aches and pains. See, \#6 of "11. Magga Phala and Ariya Jhānā via Cultivation of Saptha Bojijanga."

8. The signals from the other four senses go to specific brain areas (indicated in the figure in \#5 above) via specialized neural pathways. For example, the optical nerve carries the visual signal to the brain:


- Once the brain processes those sensory inputs from the five physical senses, they are "transmitted" to the corresponding five pasāda rūpa in the gandhabba (manomaya kāya). See below.


## Mana Indriya in the Brain

9. So far, we have identified five of gandhabba's "windows to the outside world" from his/her "shell" or the physical body: eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and the body.

- What about the "dhamma" that are the finest rūpa (these are called mano rūpa) that interact with the physical body? That is how we think about "random things" out of the blue. For example, we may be washing dishes in the kitchen, and all of a sudden, thoughts about a friend or a relative may come to mind.
- Thoughts about a friend - who may be a thousand miles away - come through the mana indriya in the head (inside the brain). Of course, science is not aware of that.
- We discussed this in a previous post: "What are Dhamma? - A Deeper Analysis."

10. So, how do the signals processed in the brain due to incoming vision, sound, smell, taste, touch, and dhamma are passed to the five pasāda rūpa and the hadaya vatthu? Details in "Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya)- Introduction."

- It is well-known that there are electromagnetic brain waves of different types (alpha, beta, theta, and gamma). I will write a post on this in the future. These waves are called "kirana" in the Tipitaka.


## The Origin of Citta Vīthi

11. When information comes to one of the five pasāda rūpa, it passes on that signal to the hadaya vatthu by impinging (hitting) the hadaya vatthu. That results in the hadaya vatthu vibrating 17 times, just like a clamped blade vibrates a certain number of times when hit by an object; see, "Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya) - Introduction" and "Citta Vithi - Processing of Sense Inputs."

- That is the origin of a citta vīthi of 17 citta. Each citta in a citta vīthi corresponds to a single vibration of hadaya vatthu. This 17 thought-moment time is the lifetime of a hadaya rūpa (vibrational energy) of the hadaya vatthu.
- It is a common mistake to take this to mean that any r $\boldsymbol{r} \boldsymbol{p} \boldsymbol{a}$ has a lifetime of 17 thought moments. That is a terrible mistake; see, "Does any Object (Rūpa) Last only 17 Thought Moments?."
- It is not possible to describe these details in one or even several posts. One may need to look through other posts to clarify some concepts. The "Search" button on the top right is an excellent resource for this task.

12. Any of the five pasāda rūpa has to strike the hadaya vatthu to pass on its signal. However, signals from the mana indriya can exchange information with the hadaya vatthu directly.

- When the mana indriya interacts with the hadaya vatthu, that also results in citta vīthi. Such manodvāra citta vīthi do not have a fixed length.
- Still, only one of the six sense-signals can be in contact with the hadaya vatthu at a given time. But since the process is swift, billions of citta vīthi can run through the hadaya vatthu "in the blink of an eye".


## Two Inter-Dependent "Bodies"

13. Therefore, this whole process involves interaction between two overlapping systems. The physical body and the corresponding subtle "energy body" of the gandhabba.

- When the gandhabba escapes from the body under stressful situations, it can float above the physical body. Then the physical body becomes inert until the gandhabba returns to it; see, "Manomaya Kāya and Out-of-Body Experience (OBE)."

14. Thus it is clear that the brain plays a significant role in shaping our future. Similarly, the five physical senses play vital roles too.

- If one of the five physical senses are damaged, we lose the corresponding "window to the external world". We will not be able to see If both eyes are damaged. If the sensors inside the ears go bad, we will not be able to hear, etc.
- But the most critical is, of course, the brain. If the brain is damaged, sensory signals cannot be processed, and we will not be able to interact with the external world. Thus, being brain dead is virtually equivalent to being dead.
- However, if one's brain becomes damaged due to an accident, for example, it will not affect the gandhabba inside. It is just that the gandhabba will not be able to communicate with the external world. And if damage to the brain results in the death of the physical body, the gandhabba will just come out of the dead body and will wait for a suitable womb.


## Next Existence Determined by Gati and Kamma Vipāka

15. It does not matter whether one gets killed due to an accident or dies due to an illness or old age. The gandhabba's future is determined by his/her gati (or gathi), past kamma (kamma bija), etc.

- If the physical body dies in an accident, the gandhabba will immediately come out of the dead body. Then it will wait for a suitable womb if there is still more kammic energy left for the human bhava (in an accident, that is likely).
- But if one gets to old age and dies or dies due to illness - and if one has exhausted kammic energy for the human bhava - then the cuti-patisandhi will happen at that time. If one is to become a deva, a deva will appear instantaneously in the corresponding deva world. If one is to become an animal, an animal gandhabba will emerge from the dead body and will have to wait for a suitable womb to become available.

16. It is also clear why we need to take good care of the body, our sense faculties, and of course, our brains. Gandhabba's (our) ability to make decisions depends on all those faculties working in optimum condition.

- We have a short lifetime of around 100 years to get rid of our defiled (immoral) gati. We also need to cultivate good (moral) gati, and comprehend the real nature of this world (anicca, dukkha, anatta), and be free from future suffering.
- We need to try to get to the Sotāpanna stage of Nibbāna and be free from the four lowest realms ( $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a})$. At least, we must make progress towards that goal so that in a future life, we will have a tihetuka birth that makes it easier to attain Nibbāna.
- To accomplish those things, we need to eat well, exercise well, and take care of our bodies to perform optimally. It is also necessary to stay away from drugs and alcohol. And to associate with those who have similar goals (and stay away from those with bad habits).

17. Some scientists/philosophers are beginning to understand that memories are not stored in the brain. See, "WebLink: getpocket.com: The Empty Brain."

Thanks to reader Diogo Roberto R. Freitas for alerting me to the above article.

### 13.5 Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya)

Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya) - Introduction

Does any Object (Rūpa) Last only 17 Thought Moments? Moved to Paticca Samuppāda $\rightarrow$ Understanding the Terms in Paticca Samuppāda

Hidden World of the Gandhabba: Netherworld (Paraloka)
Ghost in the Machine - Synonym for the Manomaya Kāya?
Manomaya Kāya (Gandhabba) and the Physical Body
Brain - Interface between Mind and Body
Manomaya Kāya and Out-of-Body Experience (OBE)
Cuti-Patisandhi - An Abhidhamma Description
These posts complement some of the posts in the "Udayavaya Nāna" section, which is important for the Sotāpanna stage of Nibbāna. All these are pieces of a complex puzzle, but they are all inter-consistent. So, don't worry if you do not understand it all; with time it will all make sense and will lead to unbreakable faith in Buddha Dhamma even through future lives. Faith comes via true understanding.

### 13.5.1 Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya) - Introduction

## Revised April 22, 2016; revised February 16, 2021

## Gandhabba Is the Essential "Seed" for the Physical Human Body

1. A human-being is born at the cuti-patisandhi moment first with just the "mental body." That is the manomaya kāya or a gandhabba. Once that gandhabba "descends" to a womb, the physical body starts growing.

- In most realms, beings are born fully formed (opapātika births). But in the human and animal realms, first, the blueprint of that life-form arises at the cuti-patisandhi moment .
- Once born a gandhabba, It can make many new physical bodies in a given bhava. For example, a "human bhava" may last many hundreds of years. But a human body lives only about 80 years. Therefore a "human gandhabba" can make many "human bodies" during existence as a human; see, "Bhava and Jāti - States of Existence and Births Therein."
- This is why there are resemblances of both mental and physical characteristics between the two lives in rebirth stories.


## An Example

2. Let us take the example of a being born many times as a cow making a transition to a human bhava at the end of the "cow bhava" (an infrequent event).

- The transition from a cow to a human occurs in the last citta vithi of the "cow life". See, "CutiPatisandhi - An Abhidhamma Description." At the end of that citta vitthi, a human gandhabba comes out of the cow's dead body. That gandhabba has a subtle body that cannot be seen, but it is a "blueprint" of the human body. But the "gross physical features" will be partially determined by the parents of the new life.
- This gandhabba now awaits a suitable womb to be available. Of course, the gandhabba cannot decide on a womb. Instead, when a right womb becomes available (i.e., matching the "gati" of the gandhabba), it will be pulled into the womb by the kammic energy.
- When a sperm fertilizes an egg in a womb, a single cell called zygote results. But there is no life there until the gandhabba enters the womb and is incorporated with that zygote. Now the zygote becomes an embryo, then a fetus, and once out of the womb grows to a full-size human according to that blueprint in the gandhabba.
- More details can be found at, see, "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception."

3. At the cow-human transition in the last citta vith $h$ of the cow life, some significant changes occur in that lifestream. The concept of a lifestream, which is really a very basic introduction, is discussed in "What Reincarnates? -Concept of a Lifestream."

- Of course, the most significant change is that now the lifeform has a mind that is at the human level, not at the animal level; the baseline "consciousness level" has shifted. This is expressed in several ways in the manomaya kāya of the gandhabba.
- At the cuti-patisandhi transition, the kammic energy creates three very fine rūpa called vatthu dasaka, kāya dasaka, and bhava dasaka. We will discuss these in detail later, but they basically correspond, respectively, to the mind-door (or the mind), the blueprint for the human body, and dominant features including male or female character (it is not just the sex type, since rūpi Brahma $\bar{a}$ also have bhava dasaka, but are gender-neutral).
- As the physical body grows, first inside the womb and then outside the womb, the subtle body of the manomaya kāya expands with it when the physical body grows from the single cell. Thus overlapping the physical body that we see, there is a subtle body (manomaya kāya) of the gandhabba. Gandhabba means the same as the manomaya kāya.
- Therefore, the gandhabba is really like a "driver" driving or navigating the physical body; see, "Ghost in the Machine - Synonym for the Manomaya Kāya?."


## How Does the Gandhabba See and Hear Outside the Physical Body?

4. The subtle body of the gandhabba or the manomaya kāya has all key "sensing units" of hadaya vatthu (mind-door) surrounded by the five pasāda rūpa (cakkhu, sota, jivhā, gandha, and kāya.) A gandhabba is in the form of a very subtle matter at the suddhatthaka level. It is an invisible "energy body." A physical body would be inert without a gandhabba inside.

- The gandhabba, when outside the physical body, can experience the world without eyes, ears, etc. See \#6 of, "Out-of-Body Experience (OBE) and Manomaya Kāya."
- The gandhabba sometimes comes out of the physical body in traumatic situations like during heart operations. Then it can see doctors operating on its own physical body! Such "out-of-body experiences" (OBE) have been reported; see, "Manomaya Kāya and Out-of-Body Experience (OBE)."
- The main thing to remember is that hadaya vatthu is the mind-door. It is surrounded by the five pasāda rūpa (cakkhu, sota, jivhā, gandha, and kāya.) The pasāda rūpa correspond to the five physical senses of the eye and ear, tongue, nose, and touch.


## Gandhabba Inside the Physical Body

5. The physical body is really a "shell" controlled by the mind (hadaya vatthu).

- When a gandhabba is inside a physical body, "seeing" and "hearing" happens with the help of the physical eye and the physical ear. It is like being inside a military tank. One needs to use the sensors mounted on the tank to see and hear what is going on outside.
- For details, see, "Out-of-Body Experience (OBE) and Manomaya Kāya."

6. The world is experienced through the physical body, and this interaction is slow compared to the fast pace of the citta. The sensory data are collected by the five physical senses of eye, ear, nose, tongue, and
body. They are then transmitted to the brain via the central nervous system, which takes millisecond scale time.

- At the brain, data for a specific time interval (possibly around 10 milliseconds; see, "Citta and Cetasika How Viññ̄āna (Consciousness) Arises") are processed and then converted to a format suitable for transmission to the five pasāda rūpa and the hadaya vatthu, via a fast "ray system" (called "Kirana" in Pāli or Sinhala).
- Individual "packets of information" from each of the five senses are then transmitted to the corresponding pasāda rūpa located on the manomaya kāya, which overlaps the physical body; information from the mana indriya are sent to the hadaya vatthu.


## Detailed Explanation

7. For example, let us consider a "packet of data" sent from the physical eye to the brain. This information is processed by the brain, converted to a "ray system," and is transmitted to the cakkhu pasāda. Now the cakkhu pasāda vibrates and hits the hadaya vatthu that is located close to it. (The five pasāda rūpa surrounds by the hadaya vatthu. That causes the hadaya vatthu to vibrate 17 times, much like a gong hit by an iron rod vibrating for a certain fixed number of times.

- The 17 vibrations of the hadaya vatthu correspond to the 17 citta in a citta vīthi. Such a citta vīthi is called a pañcadvārāvajjana citta vīthi because it is initiated by one of the five physical senses or pancadvara ("panca" or five + "dvara" or "door").
- Imagine a blade clamped at one edge and is hit by an object on the other edge; it vibrates for a certain FIXED number of times per second; that number is called the frequency of vibration and is fixed for a given material. And one can see the blade vibrating. Pretty much the same thing happens when the hadaya vatthu vibrates when hit by one of the pasāda rūpa, and this "vibration" is called a hadaya rūpa, which thus has a lifetime of 17 citta or thought moments. Therefore, the hadaya rūpa is not a physical rūpa but basically is a mode of vibration.
- The misconception that any rūpa has a lifetime of 17 thought moments arose because of not understanding that it is the hadaya rūpa with 17 thought moments.
- In other words, this information packet is received and processed by the hadaya vatthu within those 17 citt $\bar{a}$. The information is fully received by the fourth citta (vibration,) and then the rest of the citta in that citta vīthi deal with this information. This "information processing" by the hadaya vatthu will not be completed until three more citta vīthi run by the hadaya vatthu itself. Such citta vithi initiated by the mind itself is called a manodvara citta vith $h$, where manodvara means the "mind-door".
- Information packets from the mana indriya are sent directly to the hadaya vatthu.

8. Thus, we can see a huge difference in time between the physical body acquiring senses data (time of the order of 10 milliseconds) and the mind processing that information within a billionth of a second using one pancadvara citta vīthi and three manodvara citta vithi.

- Even if the five senses keep sending data continuously, the mind is "just sitting there" most of the time. Let us examine this in a bit detail: Suppose the brain keeps sending data from the eye non-stop; since each "packet" takes, say 10 milliseconds, then in a second, there will be 100 "data packets" of vision coming in. If the brain is going at full speed, it can send at most $500(=100 \times 5)$ "data packets" from all 5 physical senses in a second. The mind will then be spending less than a millionth of a second in processing all that data since it takes less than a billionth of a second to process one "data packet" (from the previous bullet).
- During those gaps, the hadaya vatthu also interacts (both ways) with the mana indriya. It also gives instructions to the mana indriya on how to control the physical body in response to the sensory inputs.
- Thus most of the time, the mind is just sitting there, which is called the "bhavanga" state of mind. In this state, the mind is actually taking the object that came to the mind at the patisandhi (rebirth) moment in that last citta vīthi of the last life. Bhavañga ("bhava" + "anga" or associated) denotes that this state of the mind is characteristic of this new life, in the present case as a human. Just like the eye cannot see itself, the mind cannot see this "bhavanga." It is the current state of mind itself.


## The Bhavaña

9. In the example that we started with, the "cow mind" has now switched over to a "human mind." It has the object taken at the patisandhi moment. But we do not become aware of what is in the bhavañga.

- You may remember that there are times when one just stares blankly "out into space," and if someone asked, "what were you thinking about?" we would be hard-pressed to recall anything that we were thinking about. Here the mind was mostly in the bhavañga state; we are aware that we were alive but did not have "actual thoughts" going through the mind.
- In reality, even when we think we are fully engaged, the mind is mostly in the bhavañga state. As we discussed in a previous bullet, it takes very little time for the mind to process data. Even if all five physical senses keep sending data about the outside world non-stop, the mind takes less than a millionth of a second to process data coming in within a second!


## The Mind Decides on Actions

10. However, the sixth sense or the mind (hadaya vatthu) itself is also initiating citta vithi either to process information from the five physical senses or "think about those senses inputs." Furthermore, it also start citta vithi to get the physical body to speak and do any work. That information is relayed to the mana indriya, which works with the brain to carry out those instructions.

- For example, if the mind gets interested in a sound, it can direct the body to walk towards that sound source. To do this, it sends instructions to the mana indriya in the brain via the same "ray system" instantaneously. The mana indriya then decodes that information - and working with other parts of the brain - sends instructions to the muscles in the legs (via the nervous system) to move. Those bodily movements take time because the mechanical motions are comparatively slow.
- Speech is done in the same way. The mind sends the information to the brain, and the brain gets the vocal cords to move to produce the sounds. Here is a short video showing how the muscle movements give rise to sounds:


## WebLink: YOUTUBE: Inside the Voice

## Brain Is Just a Fancy Computer That Follows Instructions by the Mind

11. Thus, we can see that the brain is just a very fancy computer, carrying out the mind's instructions.

- Now the questions arise, "Why is nature going through all this trouble to give us a physical body that is cumbersome and slow?". The main answer is that this is to impart kamma vipāka.
- For example, a deva has a subtle body that is not subject to aches and diseases as for humans; that was acquired by a good kamma vipāka. On the other hand, there are some petas (hungry ghosts) who suffer from hunger. They have large bodies but tiny mouths.
- In the human realm, our individual bodies are "pre-designed" by kamma vipāka to impart varying degrees of suffering. That is why some people are relatively healthy, while others have health problems. There are, of course, ways to reduce or even get rid of such problems. One could make suitable conditions (eating well, exercise, etc.) for a healthy body.
- We do not realize the constant stresses that we are subjected to (both physical and mental) because we are used to them. By living a moral life, we can begin to experience the nirāmisa sukha achieved by
"liberating the mind from burdensome thoughts." When one gets to $j h \bar{a} n a$, this is further enhanced, and at higher jhāna, one sees quite significant relief from "dissociating from the body." Then one makes a big jump in attaining the Sotāpanna stage.

It is possible that I may not have clearly explained some concepts. If you send me a comment referring to the corresponding item number, I can clarify it. Also, when you read other posts in this section, things will become more apparent. This basic description is critical if one is really serious about learning Abhidhamma.

Next, "Ghost in the Machine - Synonym for the Manomaya Kāya?", ........

### 13.5.2 <br> Hidden World of the Gandhabba: Netherworld (ParaLoka)

## February 18, 2016; updated April 5, 2016; July 14, 2021

[Title changed (see the red highlights) from Hidden World of the Gandhabba: Netherworld (Para Loka) to Hidden World of the Gandhabba: Netherworld (ParaLoka)]

## Gandhabba Is Human

1. I have discussed the fact that when a living being gets a "human bhava" it does not necessarily mean that it is born with a human body during all that time; see, "Bhava and Jāti - States of Existence and Births Therein."

- For example, when a human dies and still has kammic energy left for the human bhava, then it is very unlikely that it will be conceived as a human baby right away. At death, a "human gandhabba" with a fine body leaves the dead body and has to wait in that state until a suitable womb becomes available. There are a large (uncountable?) number of such human gandhabbā waiting for a suitable womb.
- This is one reason that a mother and father are so revered. No matter how bad they may be in some cases, just the fact that they made it possible for a gandhabba to have a human body, makes them invaluable.


## Gandhabba Is a Human (or Animal) Without a Physical Body

2. Beings are born as humans because they crave the sensory pleasures associated with the human body. The most valued are the tastes and the bodily pleasures. A gandhabba has an "energy body" that we cannot see weighing much less than 0.01 g ; see, "Manomaya Kāya (Gandhabba) and the Physical Body." A gandhabba born at the cuti-patisandhi moment is much smaller than an atom in modern science. Some could inhale aroma (gandha) and get a bit denser, thus the name "gandhabba" ("gandha" + "abba").

- A gandhabba is unable to taste solid food or experience physical touch. But they can see and hear very well. Thus their life is miserable since they can see normal humans engaging in "pleasurable activities". That is what they crave too, but they are unable to experience them.
- When a zygote is created in a womb as a result of intercourse (see, "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception"'), there are a huge number of gandhabbā waiting to "get hold of that zygote". But of course, they don't have a choice; only the gandhabba matching the "gati" of the father - and especially the mother - is pulled into the womb.

3. Therefore, even though a human "bhava" may last thousands of years, the actual time that one is "born with a human body" (human $j \bar{a} t i)$ could be a fraction of that time. This is another reason why a "human birth" is so precious that it should not be wasted.

- Among the 31 realms, it is only in the human and animal realms that physical bodies can manifest from time to time within a bhava. Within animal bhava, some animals are born via eggs, while others are "womb-born." There are an uncountable number of "animal gandhabbä" waiting for a suitable womb at any given time.


## Gandhabbas Live in Paraloka

4. Both the human and animal gandhabbā can be said to live in "paraloka" ("paralowa" in Sinhala); see "Micchā Ditthi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage." . It is a world that a normal human cannot see, even though they can see us. Of course there is no English word for it, but "netherworld" or "the hidden world" seems to convey the idea.

- Paraloka is not a distinct realm in the 31 realms. Just like human and animal realms co-exist, the paraloka co-exists with the human and animal realms, but we normally cannot see those beings in the para loka (unless one develops abhiññā powers). One can imagine there is another world with human and animal gandhabbā.
WebLink: Listen to Pronunciation "paralowa" or 36 eஏə is the Sinhala word, for the Pāli word "paraloka"
- Those with "human (or animal) bhava" spend their time either in "this world that we can see" or in the "paraloka" or the "hidden world" (netherworld).
- Many people are not even aware of the existence of "para loka," because (like the concept of the gandhabba), it is not discussed in the Visuddhimagga. It is unfortunate that current Theravāda relies on Visuddhimagga (written by an Anariya) rather than the Tipitaka.


## Tirokuțta - "Able to Go Through Walls"

5. The "Tirokutta Sutta (kp 7)" in the Khuddakapätha describes a "tirokutṭ"" who hangs around the home that he/she departed from. An English translation there: "Outside the Walls."

- The meaning of the word "tirokutta" becomes apparent in the "Dutivasamanabrāhmana Sutta (51.17)." The phrase, "tirokutṭain tiropākāraì tiropabbataì asajjamānā agamaìsu, seyyathāpi $\bar{a} k \bar{a} s e "$ appears in the beginning of that sutta. That means, "going unimpeded through a wall, a rampart, or a mountain as if through space."
- Therefore, "tirokutta" is a being who can travel unimpeded through the walls. Those with iddhi (supernormal) powers can do that as detailed in the Dutiyasamaṇabrāhmana Sutta (51.17.)
- However, the Tirokuttta Sutta (kp 7) is specifically about persons who died and have come back to "hang around" their formal homes. These could be gandhabbās or petās (pretās in Sinhala.)
- However, gandhabbās are not petās (pretās in Sinhala). Petās (pretās in Sinhala) do not make "dense bodies" as human and animal gandhabbas do.


## Petās (Pretās in Sinhala) Are Different from Gandhabbās

6. The idea behind giving a special offerings ("dāna") to the bhikkhus after the death of a person is mainly for the benefit of the gandhabbā (and also petās (pretās in Sinhala). This is a common practice in Buddhist countries. Normally it is done after seven days and after three months etc of death, and I will discuss the reasons for those specific dates in a future post.

- Not all beings can receive merits. Especially those in the niraya (hell) are unable to do so because they don't have the right mindset to receive merits (absence of samanantara paccayā). See "Anantara and Samanantara Paccayā."
- Those who can benefit most are the gandhabbas and petās (pretās in Sinhala).
- Also, note that gandhabba are totally distinct from petās (pretās in Sinhala) or hell beings in the niraya. Only gandhabbas live in "paraloka" waiting for suitable wombs. Petās (pretās in Sinhala) and hell beings have instantaneous (opapātika) births, just like devas and Brahmā.

7. It has been described how the Buddha saw human beings wander from life-to-life when he first comprehended the cutūpapāda ñāna during the night of his Enlightenment; "cutūpapāda" comes from "cuti" for death and "upapāda" for birth.

- Thus cutūpapāda ñāna is the knowledge about the rebirth process. But this particular description was restricted to births and deaths associated with a single human bhava.
- Cuti is pronounced "chuthi", and "cutūpapāda ñāna" is pronounced "chuthupapāda gnāna".
- WebLink: Listen to Pronunciation: "cuti and cutūpapāda ñāna"

8. That description by the Buddha was not about the general wandering among the 31 realms, but is on how a being in a human bhava wanders from human birth to human birth with gandhabba states in between (i.e., going back and forth between "this world that we can see" and the "other world that we cannot see" or the para loka).

- The description is as follows: If one is situated in the upper level of a building at a four-way junction, he can see the street below. He can see many people wandering in the street (gandhabb $\bar{a}$ wandering around). Sometimes, one goes into a house and stays there for a long time. This is compared to a gandhabba entering a womb and making himself a physical body; that house is the analogy of a physical body.
- Then at the death of that physical body, the gandhabba comes out and starts wandering again (a person walking on the street); he may be wandering the streets for a long time before entering "another house", i.e., to get a chance to go into a matching womb.
- Sometimes, he may enter a house and may come right out. This can be compared to an unsuccessful pregnancy. A gandhabba taking hold of a zygote, but for some reason cannot stay there and has to come out, mostly because it turns out to be a mismatch of "gati" of the potential mother.
- Thus it describes a human being going back and forth between "this world" and the "other world" or the "netherworld" ("para loka"). Once the kammic energy of the human bhava is exhausted, a new "bhava" is grasped.
- If the new bhava is not human or animal, then one would be born instantaneously in another realm (brahma, deva, asura, peta (preta in Sinhala), or niraya). There are no gandhabbā associated with those realms.
- Thus we can see that bhava and $j \bar{a} t i$ mean the same in all the other realms. In those realms, bhava automatically leads to $j \bar{a} t i$. For example, one with deva bhava is always a deva.


## Rebirths With Human Bodies

9. When one studies the accounts of people (of mostly children) describing their rebirth stories, there are always "gaps" between births; see, the references (books) cited in "Evidence of Rebirth." For example, see, "Children Who Remember Previous Lives: A Question of Reincarnation", by Ian Stevenson (2000).

- During those "gaps" in between successive human births, they had been in the gandhabba state, i.e., they were in para loka.
- When one dies in an accident especially at a younger age, it is more likely that their kammic energy for the human bhava had not been exhausted. Thus they are more likely to be in the gandhabba state, waiting for a suitable womb.
- This is why in most rebirth stories the previous life tends to have been terminated by an unexpected incident (killed by someone, a natural disaster, etc).
- This "memory from the past life" fades away as children grow, and that is why it is mostly children who provide these accounts. As they grow old, these memories disappear gradually.

10. A gandhabba changes with time (just like everything else). In fact, it is even possible that if a gandhabba properly receives merits from a giving (dāna) mentioned in \#5 above, he/she can gain a deva or Brahma bhava and be born instantly in such a realm.

- On the other hand, another human gandhabba, who had been engaged in behavior appropriate for an animal (say, a dog) in the previous human life, could cultivate those "dog sañkhāra" as a gandhabba and slowly transform into a "dog gandhabba" while in paraloka.
- When we think about these possibilities we realize how complex life is, and why we need to be mindful of the consequences of our actions. Not only that, we need to avoid doing things mechanically and understand the reasons behind even meritorious actions like alms-giving (dāna). I have seen many alms givings that are conducted in a "party-like" atmosphere. One needs to do it with the proper mindset with the gandhabba(s) in mind.


## Other Related Issues

11. Another interesting bit of deduction is how the concept of a soul or "āthma" came to be established by the ancient Hindu yogis. Even to attain higher anāriya jhān̄̄ (above the fourth jhāna) that enables one to acquire the ability to see previous lives, one has to have that "gati" of cultivating jhānā through recent human lives. Therefore, such a yogi with powerful abhiñ̃̃̄̄ powers can be expected to have had many recent human lives.

- Thus it is possible that such yogis would have been born human hundreds of times (with gandhabba states in between). When they looked at their previous lives, they could see that every time they died a gandhabba came out, and sooner or later took hold of another human body. Thus it is this gandhabba that they thought was the indestructible "āthma" or "soul". They could look back hundreds of lives and always see that they were born as human again and again.
- Thus, in the Hindu scripture Bhagavad Gita, getting hold of a new body is compared to discarding an old suit and wearing a new suit. As far as those yogis could see, it was the same gandhabba that came back in a different physical appearance! Thus for them it appeared that there was an unchanging entity coming back in a different form; this is why it is called "reincarnation".

12. Our world is much more complex than we can ever imagine. The Buddha said that only a Buddha can truly comprehend the complexity of this world: There are four "unthinkable" or "acinteyya" subjects for us; see, "WebLink: suttacentral: Acinteyva Sutta (AN 4.77)". English translation there: "WebLink: suttacentral: Unconjecturable (AN 4.77 by Ven. Thanissaro)".

- Even though we do not need to comprehend everything (and we cannot), it is beneficial to learn these concepts at least to some extent.
- If one can comprehend anicca, these in-depth analyses are not needed. But especially these days, humans do not have the ability to grasp anicca right away. So, learning Dhamma and appreciating the unmatched knowledge of the Buddha gives one the confidence to persevere in one's efforts.


### 13.5.3 Ghost in the Machine - Synonym for the Manomaya Kāya?

## Revised July 14, 2019

1. The "mind-body problem" has been a central problem of philosophy since Descartes formulated it over 350 years ago. René Descartes proposed that while the physical body is subjected to the physical laws, there is a soul associated with a human body which is normally called the "mind" and it is non-material; for him, having a mind amounted to having an immaterial soul, outside the physical space, whose essence consisted in thinking. This is the so-called "Cartesian dualism".

- Here mind and body are on equal footing, each in its own domain.

2. Philosophers no longer take this "dualism" view seriously. Instead current philosophers have adopted a "material monism" that claim that our world is fundamentally material; this is materialism or physicalism. The only question they are debating on is how the "mental" arises from "material", i.e., how thoughts arise in a material brain.

- We must note that the Buddha's worldview is totally different from both the above. It is "mental monism", i.e., that our world is fundamentally mental. This is why he said his Dhamma is "pubbe anunussetu dhammesu" or a Dhamma (or a theory on nature) that was not known to the world.
- This world view of the Buddha has been hidden for many centuries.
- This is of course a paradigm shift and a shocking one too at the first glance. But I hope to convince you with evidence gathered from various fields of study and illustrate the consistency across diverse disciplines.
- It must be mentioned that this monism is not the "mental monism" (or "idealism") that a few philosophers have proposed. They say that material things are mere imagination. On the contrary, the physical world is very real, it is just that it cannot provide any lasting happiness because of its transient nature.

3. In 1949 Gilbert Ryle introduced the phrase "ghost in the machine" to ridicule the concept of Cartesian dualism in his book, "The Concept of Mind". It is said that with that book, he put the final nail in the coffin of Cartesian dualism. Of course, the "ghost" is the soul or the mind and the machine is the body, in "ghost in the machine".

- In Buddha Dhamma, it is not a called a "ghost" but a "gandhabba"; see, "Mental Body - Gandhabba."
- And unlike in Decartes' ghost, gandhabba has a trace of matter. Furthermore, even the basic building block of a physical body (cell) has origins in the mind. Therefore, mind and matter are inter-related and inter-dependent; see, "Origin of Life - There is No Traceable Origin."

4. I think the ghost in machine analog is actually a good one to describe a human or an animal. The body actually plays a secondary role, and the mind is the controlling entity. But the "ghost" or the manomaya $\boldsymbol{k} \bar{a} y a$ is NOT all mental; it has a fine form of matter even though it would not be detectable by current scientific instruments.

I must emphasize that this concept is NOT a version of dualism. Mind and body are interdependent: "viññ̄ạna paccayā nāmarūpa" and "nāmarūpa paccayā viññạna"; a manomaya kāya has both nāmarūpa and mind.

- This manomaya kāya is made by the last citta vīthi of the previous existence (bhava), which is called cuti (pronounced "chuthi") citta; see, "What is a Thought?" in the Abhidhamma section. Thus this fine material form was PRODUCED by the mind. This is why it is said, "mano pubbangama $\bar{a}$ dhamm $\bar{a} . . .$. .", i.e., "the mind precedes EVERYTHING...".
- You probably have seen pictures of a "misty ghostly figure" rising out of a physical body in literature on "astral projection" or "out-of-body experience". That is a good visual, but of course only people with abhiññ̄ $\bar{a}$ powers can see them.
- Many people have, though, experienced this out-of-body experience usually under stressful conditions. Most common is the case when a patient undergoes an operation and is unconscious, but recalls later how he/she was able to see the operation from above. This seems to happen more often to women than to men; see, "Manomaya Kāya and Out-of-Body Experience (OBE)."

5. When one has cultivated abhiññā powers, one can bring out the gandhabba or the manomaya kāya out of the physical body. Then the body is lifeless, until the gandhabba comes back into the body. The "ghost" or the manomaya kāya can now see and hear without the aid of a physical ear or eye. Thus it can "focus" on events happening far away, and can see and hear what is going on at that place.

- All this may sound very esoteric but there is a lot out there that is not "captured" by our five physical senses; see, "The 4 percent Universe : Dark Matter, Dark Energy, and the Race to Discover the Rest of Reality" by Richard Panek (2011).
- Our eyes can see only an infinitesimally small part of the electromagnetic spectrum from 390 nm - 700 nm . The human audible range is commonly given as 20 to $20,000 \mathrm{~Hz}$, though there is considerable variation between individuals. Modern scientific instruments can expand these, for example, to see in the infrared frequencies with infrared cameras, etc.
- The "ghost" does not need light to see, or a sound wave to travel in air to hear.

6. The manomaya kāya has all six senses in the sense that all five pasāda rūpa corresponding to the five physical senses and also the hadaya vatthu that is the "seat of consciousness". The hadaya vatthu, where citta (thoughts) are originated, lines up with the physical heart, not the brain. Thus we can say that mind is located close to the heart, and is not in the brain; brain is like a computer that helps run the physical body; see, "Neuroscience Says there is no Free Will - That is a Misinterpretation!."

- The five pasāda rūpa in the manomaya kāya are also located close to the hadaya vatthu. Signals between the five physical sense faculties (eye, ear, etc) - called five indriya - and the five pasāda rūpa, and also between the (frontal cortex of the) brain and the hadaya vatthu, occur via a "ray system", probably electromagnetic, and are thus very fast.
- However, the "eye" is not just the "eye ball" but includes associated processing units in the brain, which is the visual cortex. It is the visual cortex that sends the signal to the "cakkhu pasäda" located close to the hadaya vatthu. When the cakkhu pasāda receives a signal from the visual cortex ("eye indriya"), it hits the hadaya vatthu which in turn vibrates 17 times corresponding to a "citta vith hi."
- The same process occurs for the other four physical senses. The "motor cortex" sends/receives signals from all body parts using the central nervous system, and sends "ray signals" to the "kāya pasāda." I will discuss this in detail later.
- The five pasāda rūpa are located around the hadaya vatthu much like the five small balls (clappers) are situated around the "main clapper" in temple bells in Sri Lanka (I am not sure whether this true in other countries). Such a bell symbolizes the five pasāda rūpa around the hadaya vatthu.
- When the "ghost" is inside the physical body, it cannot see or hear without the aid of the physical senses of eyes and ears. Similarly, the mind cannot "think" without the aid of the brain.
- This is why the efficiency of all six senses degrade with time: Because the physical body degrades. As we get old, all six physical sense faculties of eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body (outer skin), and the brain degrade, and lose their effectiveness.

7. Thus in the visualization as a "ghost," the manomaya kāya has all six senses. But it cannot use the kāya pasāda outside the physical body since not enough "matter' is in the gandhabba to "feel" the touching sensation. Similarly, the manomaya kāya ("ghost") cannot taste or smell when it is outside the physical body.

- Thus the gandhabba can only see and hear when outside the physical body. And it can do those without any limitations imposed by physical eye or physical ear, i.e. it can see and hear things far away.

8. When a human dies, if there is still kammic energy left for the "human bhava", i.e., the potential to be born as a human, then there is no patisandhi citta at death. A pattisandhi ("pati" + "sandhi" = bind to a new life) happens when a transition to a "new bhava", for example to a "deva bhava" or an "animal bhava", happens. If the "bhava" remains the same and the next birth is also human, the manomaya kāya ("ghost" in this new terminology) or the gandhabba just comes out and waits until a suitable womb becomes available. The old physical body is now lifeless and just decays.
9. If the kammic energy for the "human bhava" is exhausted at death, then in the last citta vithi the transition to a new "bhava" takes place. Then a new manomaya kāya for the new existence (bhava) is
formed within that final citta vīthi, and at the end of that citta vīthi, the new manomaya kāya corresponding to the new life comes out of the dead body. If it is deva, then a new deva is instantly born in the deva loka. If it is an animal, say a dog, then a manomaya kāya (or gandhabba) that resembles the form of a dog comes out of the dead body and will wait until a suitable "dog womb" becomes available.

- As mentioned in other posts, births in 29 realms happen instantaneously, i.e, a fully formed figure is born at the very instant of death in the previous life. An intermediate "gandhabba state" with a manomaya $k \bar{a} y a$ (a "ghost" in the current analogy) that needs to wait for a suitable womb is involved only for birth in human and animal realms.

10. There is another interesting facet: The kammic energy automatically prepares the "blueprint of the body" to deliver the kamma vipäka (consequences of previous actions). Thus the physical body has "built-in" defects and flaws that may become evident at birth or at different stages of life: for example a cancer may develop at latter stages of life. This is the reason why some people are born handicapped; some have healthy bodies, beautiful bodies, ugly bodies, and a healthy person may die suddenly too; the varieties are endless.

- Furthermore, the nervous system is also setup to induce various effects as kamma vipāka. The incessant "urge to do something" works at different levels for different people. This actually reveals a deeper meaning of the First Noble Truth of Suffering; if you are ready for a deeper analysis, see, "Anicca - The Incessant Distress ("Pilana")".

11. Therefore, the concept of a "ghost in the machine" may be useful to describe the gandhabba state or the separation of the manomaya kāya from the physical body in the cases of out-of-body experience (OBE), or with abhiññā powers. However, it must be kept in mind that in this case, the "ghost" does not depict an unchanging soul and also it is not totally "mental"; it has very fine material (rūpa) associated with it, that is invisible to the naked eye, but is visible to someone with abhiññā powers.

- Contrary to the idea of a soul, the manomaya kāya will keep changing even during an given existence and will make a huge transition at a new existence, for example when an animal is reborn a human or vice versa.

12. The main usefulness of this "ghost in the machine" concept is to accurately describe the physical body for what it really is: a temporary "residence" for the gandhabba. The "residence" decays with time and finally dies and then the gandhabba needs to find a new "residence". The gandhabba derives its uniqueness or the "personality" via sansāric habits (gati and āsavas), and the gandhabba has the power to change those habits; see, "Habits, Goals, and Character (Gati)."

- Further information can be found on several posts on the manomaya kāya and gati (or gathi). You can do a keyword search using the "Search" button on the top right.

13. Here is a recent article by the philosopher Colin McGinn on the current theories on the "mind body problem" (click to open the pdf):

## WebLink: PDF file: All machine and no ghost - McGinn-2012

- Also see, Thomas Nagel’s book: 'Mind \& Cosmos: Why the Materialist Neo-Darwinian Conception of Nature is Almost Certainly False" (2012).
- Obviously, both of them have had no exposure to Buddha Dhamma. But I am very much impressed that they have came to the conclusion that mind MUST play a central role.

14. A gandhabba with a fine body cannot "seen" with our eyes, because they are "more energy that matter". It is possible that the entities detected by "ghost detectors" are such gandhabbas.

- There are "ghost detector" apps made by many soffware companies that can detect "ghosts"; if you Google, "ghost detector" you can explore more on that. Even though right now this is done mostly for fun, it will be shown to be correct concept in the future. These detectors detect "packets of energy" that we cannot see with our eyes.
- Whether these ghost detectors actually can detect gandhabbas or not I am not sure. But the concept matches what is described in the Tipitaka.

July 14, 2019: I recently started a new subsection, "Origin of Life" to point out that not only the mental body (gandhabba), but also the physical body (which is a vast collection of cells), have their origins in the mind.

### 13.5.4 Manomaya Kāya (Gandhabba) and the Physical Body

Revised April 20, 2016; July 31, 2017; September 6, 2019; March 14, 2021; July 16, 2022

## Introduction

1. Manomaya kāya means a "mental body." We should not perceive the "mental body" in the same way as the physical body of ours. The mental body is mostly energy than matter. It is called a "body" more in the sense of a "collection," as in a "body of water" or a "body of evidence."

- The Pāli term for a physical body is āhāraja kāya or karaja kāya.
- The mental body or "manomaya kāya" is also called gandhabba kāya or simply gandhabba. The manomaya kāya is made of three parts called utuja, kammaja, cittaja.

2. Therefore, we have four types of bodies (kāya): āhāraja, utuja, kammaja, cittaja. The āhāraja kāya is the physical body. The other three are parts of our "mental body," the gandhabba.

- It is easy to visualize a "person" consisting of two overlapping bodies: the physical body that we see and the gandhabba with an "energy body" (it is not a body in a sense we are used to but more like a "misty ghost"). The fine body of the gandhabba "overlaps" the physical body.
- The gandhabba makes the physical body "alive." Without it, the physical body is like a piece of wood and is inert. If you touch a dead body you will feel the difference compared to touching a live person.
- A dead body is comparable to a metal wire without a current flowing through it. When a current flows through the wire, it becomes "energized."
- In the Tirokudda Sutta in the Khuddaka Nikāya, gandhabba is called a "tirokudda."

3. The physical body (karaja kāya) that we see is built from the food we eat (āhāraja kāya). Starting with a single cell (zygote) in the womb, it grows by taking food from the mother.

- The gandhabba consists of the other three kāya: kammaja, cittaja, utuja.
- Under stressful conditions (or with abhiñ̃ñ̄ powers), the misty gandhabba can come out of the physical body, and the physical body is no longer under the control of the gandhabba. But it is not dead because the $j \bar{\imath} v i t i n d r i y a$ that maintains life is still there.
- Only at death do both the gandhabba and the jīvitindriya leave, and the body becomes inert like a log.


## Kammaja Kāya is Primary

4. Let us follow the time sequence of how a gandhabba evolves to acquire a physical body (in human and animal realms only.) That happens via several steps per Tipiṭaka: "jāti sañjāti okkanti abhinibbatti khandhānaim pātubhāvo āyatanānaim patilābho." See, "WebLink: suttacentral: Vibhañga Sutta (SN 12.2)."

The basis of all the other three $k \bar{a} y a$ is the kammaja kaya; it arises from the kamma seed responsible for that particular bhava or existence at the cuti-patisandhi moment.

- A kammaja kāya has three components called "dasaka" or "ten units." Those ten units are eight suddhatthaka and modes of rotation and spin. The three components are vatthu dasaka (hadaya $v a t t h u$ or the seat of mind), kāya dasaka (blueprint of the final human body), and bhava dasaka. The
latter is loosely translated as man/woman nature, but it encompasses many other features related to one's gati or bhava).
- More details at "The Origin of Matter - Suddhatthaka" and "Gandhabba - Only in Human and Animal Realms."
- The formation of the kammaja kāya is called the " $j \bar{a} t i "$ moment of birth.

5. Immediately following its birth, kammaja kāya gives rise to a thought stream (cittaja kāya).

- Both kammaja and cittaja kāya start producing fine rūpa and immediately give rise to a very light physical form called the utuja kāya. At this stage, cakkhu, sota, ghāna, and jivhā dasaka are also present. That is called the "sanjāti" moment of birth.
- This subtle body with three kāya (kammaja, cittaja, utuja) is a gandhabba. Since all three types of $k \bar{a} y a$ have their origin in mind, the gandhabba is a "mind-made body" or a manomaya kāya. But soon, it will acquire a faint physical body by inhaling aroma (gandha $+a b b a$ ), thus the name gandhabba. Therefore a gandhabba would have all four 'bodies" (kammaja, cittaja, utuja, karaja).
- The five sets of dasaka (kāya, cakkhu, sota, ghāna, and jivhā) arrange around the hadaya vatthu (vatthu dasaka) in the subtle or "misty" body of the gandhabba. This gandhabba may exist in that state for a long time, waiting for a suitable womb.
- That manomaya kāya or the gandhabba will now have to wait for a suitable womb to enter. That could take months or years.


## Gandhabba Descending to a Womb

6. When a suitable womb becomes available, this fine gandhabba enters the uterus. At that time, it collapses to a size smaller than a single cell and merges with the single cell (zygote) formed by the union of mother and father. This moment of entering a womb is called the "okkanti moment" of birth.

- The physical body (karaja kāya) results from that single cell (zygote). It grows first by extracting food from the mother's womb and then consuming regular food once born as a baby.
- The physical body grows according to the "blueprint" in the subtle body of the gandhabba. The subtle body of the gandhabba expands with it so that it overlaps the physical body. For example, there is a nervous system in the gandhabba that overlays the physical nervous system.
- The initial growth stage of the fetus inside the womb is the "abhinibbatti stage" of birth.

7. Then, the fetus inside the womb starts developing and forms the physical senses and the brain over many weeks. The eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and nervous system grow during this time. Furthermore, the brain develops too. It will have processing units to analyze signals from those five physical senses.

- In Buddha Dhamma, the cakkhu indriya is NOT just eyes but also includes the brain's associated processing centers. Similarly, for the other four indriya: sota, ghāna, jivhā, and kāya.
- Signals generated in these five indriya get to the five pasāda rūpa located around the hadaya vatthu (seat of the mind) as described in "Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya)- Introduction."
- The "khandhānan pātilābho" stage of birth is complete with the formation of all six sense faculties.
- When that baby is born (i.e., comes out of the womb), that physical body can use all six āyatana (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind) to interact with the external world. The final stage of the birth process is "āyatanan pātilābho."
- A better description of āyatana at "Contact Between Āyatana Leads to Vipāka Viññāna."

8. Ven. Sariputta discussed that sequence of events when he analyzed the Dhammacakka Pavattana Sutta in detail to the bhikkhus in the WebLink: suttacentral: Sacca Vibhanga Sutta (Majihima Nikaya 141):
"Katamā cāvuso, jāti? Yā tesaì tesam sattānam tamhi tamhi sattanikāye jāti sañjāti okkanti abhinibbatti khandhānaiं pātubhāvo āyatanānaì paṭilābho, ayamं vuccatāvuso: 'jāti.""

- Those who do not believe in the gandhabba state (i.e., a gandhabba) need to contemplate that point. The gandhabba state is there only in human and animal realms.
- At death, if that human bhava has more kammic energy left, the gandhabba comes out of the dead physical body and waits for a new womb.
- If kammic energy for the human bhava is exhausted, then a cuti-patisandhi transition occurs, and the above discussed time sequence is repeated. A brand new gandhabba in a new bhava emerges from the dead body. For a technical analysis of this process, see, "Cuti-Patisandhi - An Abhidhamma Description."


## The Manomaya Kāya

9. We can get an idea of the fineness of the manomaya kaya from the following comparison. The average human weighs about $70 \mathrm{~kg}(70,000 \mathrm{~g})$ and has a body volume of about 70 L ; the Density of a typical fog (that we can barely see) is approximately 0.1 g per cubic meter. Thus the weight "of the fog of volume equivalent of a human body" is about 0.01 g .

- Thus a "human body made of fog" weighs only a tiny fraction of the average human weight.
- For another comparison, the weight of a mustard seed is about 0.002 g .
- A gandhabba would have a "misty body" like a human figure made of fog, but will be MUCH SMALLER weight; it is immeasurably small. Sexual intercourse between a man and woman creates a zygote (a human cell) in the womb. Then a gandhabba descends to the uterus and takes hold of the zygote; see, "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception."
- My late Noble teacher, Waharaka Thero, has seen how a gandhabba enters a womb. When getting closer to the mother, gandhabba rotates rapidly and loses all its body other than the hadaya vatthu, $j \bar{v} i t i n d r i y a$, and bhava dasaka. So it becomes much smaller than an atom in modern science (at the suddhatthaka level). That tiny body (which would not be seen even by the most powerful microscope) is pulled into the womb through the mother's body and gets attached to the zygote in the womb. I heard him describe this in a desana.
- So, a human body starts with two cells from the mother and father (which make the zygote) and an even smaller gandhabba. Thus virtually all the weight of a human comes from nutrients. First from the mother's body, and once comes out the womb by eating food.

10. We can easily see the role of the manomaya kāya with the actions by its three components:

- Kammaja kāya is the most important. It is the blueprint for that existence (bhava). It has the blueprint of the physical body too.
- Cittaja kāya is what we EXPERIENCE moment-to-moment. We see, hear, smell, taste, touch, and think about concepts with thoughts: cakkhu, sota, gandha, rasa, phoṭthabba, and mano viñ̃̄āṇa.
- Those thoughts NORMALLY depend on our habits (gati), āsava (cravings), and kamma vipāka, all in the kammaja kāya; see, "What is Mind? How Do We Experience the Outside World?."
- If thoughts arise ONLY DUE TO our past kamma and the habits and cravings acquired through them, then kamma would be deterministic. And we will be like robots (which is the case for many beings, like animals). LUCKILY, we can THINK on our own (unlike animals) and change our destinies.

11. That last sentence summarizes the message of the Buddha. Please do not lose this opportunity to get out of this saminäric suffering when we have this precious human life, which will last only about 100 years.

- Even if we are reborn humans, what guarantees will we have to listen or read about Buddha Dhamma?

12. If anything is "transferred" from one existence (bhava) to another, those would be the "gati" and " $\bar{a} a v \bar{a}$ " of that lifestream. But they also keep evolving. If we do not act mindfully, we let our minds "go with the flow." Then our actions will be determined by our samisāric habits. That would only further strengthen such habits. That is why it is essential to identify bad habits, eliminate them, and cultivate good ones.

- That is the process of mind purification called Bhāvanā (Meditation) detailed in Satipatthāna (see "Mahā Satipatthāna Sutta"), Ānāpāna sati (" 6 . Ānāpānasati Bhāvanā (Introduction)"). I have also written about the Sabbāsava sutta: "Habits and Goals," and a bit more in-depth analysis in "Key Points in the Sabbāsava Sutta" at the end of the post, "The Sotāpanna Stage."
- Also, see the post, "The Importance of Purifying the Mind."


## Living Beings in Other Realms Have Different "Bodies" and Different Manomaya Kāya

13. The above description is valid for humans and animals. In Brahma realms, there are only manomaya $k \bar{a} y a$ and no physical body. There are physical bodies in the deva realms, but those are much less dense than human bodies.

- In other realms, different mechanisms (mainly opapātika births) operate; see, "Gandhabba - Only in Human and Animal Realms."

14. In the post, "What Reincarnates? - Concept of a Lifestream," we mainly talked about the cittaja kāya, the stream of thoughts, and the physical body. We saw that, If an animal dies and is reborn a human:

- The physical body in the animal realm is very different from that in the human realm.
- The cittaja kaya, or the stream of thoughts associated with animal existence (bhava), is also very different from the cittaja kāya of human existence (bhava). That is what is meant by "bhava paccayā $j \bar{a} t i$ " in the Paṭicca Samuppāda: the birth is according to the bhava that latched on at the moment of death, i.e., "upādāna paccayā bhavo"; see, "Akusala-Mūla Pațicca Samuppāda."

15. Thus, it is clear that both the physical body and manomaya kāya make "quantum jumps" (large instantaneous change) when switching from one existence (say an animal) to another (say a human).

- The kammaja kāya has all the kammic potentialities (kamma seeds) acquired up to any given time; see, "Sañkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka," and "Samisāric Habits and Āsavas." But one of those seeds becomes operative for the "new bhava," and becomes the "bhavañga" for that life. The remaining kamma seeds are all 'tag-along" in the new bhava, and one of those will rise to the next bhava or existence; the same "gati" are in all seeds. Thus, whether an animal or a human, the new life will display somewhat similar habits (gati) and cravings ( $\bar{s} a v \bar{a}$ ).
- That is why "no-self" was not approved or rejected by the Buddha: the new life is not the same as the old life. But it is not completely different either, because those gati and $\bar{a} s a v \bar{a}$ propagate (but they all keep changing too). And similarly, the Buddha neither approved nor rejected the idea of a "self."
- A living being is a "life-stream" that changes moment-to-moment based on cause and effect: Paticca Samuppāda. Even though there is no "unchanging entity" such as a "soul," the life-stream has its characteristics (gati and $\bar{a} s a v \bar{a})$, which also keep evolving.

More on the Manomaya kāya at: "Manomaya Kāya and Out-of-Body Experience (OBE)."
Next, "Ghost in the Machine - Synonym for the Manomaya Kāya?",

Re-written October 24, 2019; revised January 30, 2020; February 16, 2021 (\#6 added); July 16, 2022

## Two Types of Bodies - Physical Body and Manomaya Kāya

1. We humans have two "bodies." Manomaya kāya is the "mental body" (with a trace of matter) born at the beginning of human existence or human bhava. That manomaya kaya is pulled into a womb when a "matching womb" becomes available, which is the start of a "physical body." Within a human bhava, there can be many "human births (jāti)" with different "physical bodies." See, "Bhava and Jāti - States of Existence and Births Therein."

- More details on the two types of "bodies" at "Manomaya Kāya (gandhabba) and the Physical Body."

2. One could visualize the manomaya kāya or the "mental body" as an "energy field" (it has some fine $r \bar{u} p a$, too) overlapping the solid physical body. All vital functions happen in the mental body. Thoughts generate in the seat of the mind (hadaya vatthu). There are five pasāda rūpa (cakkhu, sota, ghāna, jivhā, kāya) around the hadaya vatthu responsible for detecting sights, sounds, smell, taste, and touch.

- That manomaya kāya can leave the solid physical body under some conditions. Those who have cultivated supernormal powers (iddhi) can willfully come out of the physical body. During heart operations, manomaya $k \bar{a} y a$ of some patients come out, as discussed below. In both cases, manomaya $k \bar{a} y a$ can see and hear without the aid of physical eyes and ears.
- That is hard to visualize for us. But as you read more posts on the manomaya kāya, you will see that it makes perfect sense.
- We experience the world with the "mental body" or the monomaya kāya (also called a gandhabba.) This is explained in, "Ghost 1990 Movie - Good Depiction of Gandhabba Concept."


## When Inside the Physical Body Manomaya Kāya Depends on the Physical Body

3. When the manomaya kaya is attached to the physical body, the hadaya vatthu needs the physical body's help to see, hear, smell, taste, feel the touch, and recall memories. One can think of the manomaya kāya as being "trapped inside" the physical body. Physical eyes need to capture images of external objects; ears need to capture sounds; the nose helps smell; the tongue helps taste, and the body's nervous system feels the touch.

- The brain analyzes all those "signals" and transmits them to the five pasāda rūpa located in the manomaya kāya around the hadaya vatthu.
- The brain is part of the physical body and is the interface between the physical and mental body (manomaya kāya).

4. The seat of the mind (hadaya vatthu) and the five "internal senses" (pasāda rūpa) are born with the manomaya kāya at the time of human bhava (patisandhi). All these are very fine rūpa that our eyes cannot see. Thus one can visualize the manomaya k $\bar{a} y a$ as an "energy field" that overlaps the physical body and provides vitality to the inert physical body.

- The Buddha compared the situation of a manomaya kāya separating from the physical body to a sword pulled out of its sheath or a snake shedding its skin. Once the manomaya kāya leaves, the body is like an inert log. And that is precisely what happens when one dies. The vitality is gone the instant the manomaya kāya comes out.


## Manomaya Kāya of a Human (or an Animal) is "Gandhabba"

5. When a person dies, if he/she has more kammic energy left in the human "bhava," then the manomaya kāya leaves of the dead body. Then it will wait until another suitable womb becomes available. The manomaya kāya is still in the human bhava, but we cannot see it. It is in "paraloka" or the "netherworld."

- While waiting in the paraloka, they could inhale aroma (gandha) from plants and food and get denser. Thus the name "gandhabba" ("gandha" + "abba" where "abba" means "taking in").
- That is why the manomaya kāya of a human (or an animal) is called "gandhabba." For more details, see "Clarification of"Mental Body" and "Physical Body" - Different Types of "Kāya."
- This gandhabba may stay in that form for even years until pulled into a suitable womb with matching "gati."


## How Does the Gandhabba See and Hear Outside the Physical Body?

6. When outside a physical body, gandhabba sees and hears differently. Seeing does not involve light, and hearing does not require air.

- Perhaps the best way to think about this is how Brahma sees. As we have discussed, Brahma does not have physical eyes and ears. A Brahma is just like a gandhabba.
- Furthermore, Brahma realms are well above the Earth, and there is insufficient air for sound to travel. Brahmā can hear without sound waves traveling through the air. In the same way, they can see without light. Those mechanisms are not perceivable to us.
- That is why they can see and hear over very long distances. This is meant by "Dibba cakkhu/Dibba sota" or "divine eye/divine ear."
- Therefore, gandhabbā can see and hear over long distances. That does not require light/air or (physical) eyes/ears.

7. Therefore, a gandhabba can see and hear more flexibly. The capabilities of the physical eye and physical ear are much limited.

- A gandhabba cannot smell, taste, or touch because its body is too subtle (it is more like an energy field.) Thus, it cannot make physical contact.
- When the manomaya kaya is separated from the physical body, it can see and hear without eyes and ears. "Seeing" does not need light (one could look at things far away), and "hearing" does not need air as a medium for the sound to propagate (one could hear sounds from far away). Both mechanisms involve "Kirana" (or "rays" in English, similar to electromagnetic radiation).
- Furthermore, the gandhabba can "travel" very fast; it is not physical travel. For example, the sutta talk about the Buddha or Arahants with iddhi powers traveling to deva loka in a time comparable to the time taken to "stretch a bent arm."


## Gandhabba Inside the Physical Body

8. When the manomaya kāya (gandhabba) merges with the physical body, "seeing" and "hearing" happens with the help of the physical eye and the physical ear. It is like being inside a military tank. One needs to use the sensors mounted on the tank to see and hear what is going on outside.

- Now, "seeing" happens with the help of the physical eye. The physical eye is like a camera that takes a picture. The brain processes that image and sends it to the cakkhu pasāda rūpa in the manomaya $k \bar{a} y a$. Same with the ear. Thus, eyes and ears can be considered sensors mounted on that military tank.
- Therefore, seeing and hearing also degrade with old age, as the physical eyes and physical ears age.
- The brain is like the computer in that tank that processes the information coming in through the sensors.
- Therefore, if there is damage to any of these three "physical instruments" (brain, eyes, ears), the ability to think, see, or hear can be degraded or lost. See "Our Mental Body - Gandhabba" and "Brain Interface between Mind and Body."

9. However, actual "seeing" and "hearing" still happen at the two pasāda rūpa (internal eye and internal ear) associated with the manomaya kāya.

- For example, have you ever wondered how to judge the distances as we move around, avoiding bumping into things and each other? The physical eye cannot "judge distances"; see, "The Sense of Being Stared At" by Rupert Sheldrake (2003, p.12). Our eyes can see many things simultaneously and judge the relative distances of all things. This ability is in the pasāda rūpa and not in the eyes or the brain.


## Out-of-Body Experiences (OBE)

10. The hadaya vatthu of the manomaya kāya (gandhabba) overlaps the physical heart when the two bodies are together. However, in some situations, the manomaya kāya can separate from the physical body. That leads to "out-of-body experience (OBE)."

- In his book, "Travels," the famous author of Jurassic Park, Michael Crichton (1988, p. 307,) mentions his ability to "shift my awareness out of my body and move it around the bedroom." He says, "..I didn't think anything about it... I assumed that anybody could do it.. ."
- Recently, a woman described how she thought that "everybody could do it": ABCNEWS: Woman Has 'Out of Body' Experiences Whenever She Wants
- A series of books, including "Journeys of the Body," has been written by Robert A. Monroe based on his experiences.


## Near-Death Experiences (NDE)

11. Only a few people can experience OBE at will. Typically, OBE happens under stressful conditions, most commonly during heart operations. These have a unique name of near-death experiences (NDE.) The following video provides a good summary:

## WebLink: youtube: Near Death Experiences \& Evidence of the Afterlife

- Of course, there are many books on NDE. "Consciousness Beyond Life" by Pim van Lommel (2010) gives detailed accounts of NDE case studies experienced by people undergoing heart operations.
- A recent book, "Dying to be me: My Journey from Cancer, to Near Death, to True Healing," by Anita Moorjani (2012), describes the NDE experience in detail.


## Our Thoughts Do Not Arise in the Brain, and We Do Not See With Our Eyes

12. The mind-door is the hadaya vatthu in the gandhabba or the manomaya kāya. Thoughts arise in the hadaya vatthu in the gandhabba, even when the gandhabba is INSIDE a physical human body. See, "Gandhabba Sensing the World - With and Without a Physical Body."

- "Seeing" happens in the cakkhu pasāda rūpa in the gandhabba. When outside a human body, that cakkhu pasāda can see by itself.
- When inside a human body, that cakkhu pasāda is shielded by the body. In that case, the visual signal must come through the eyes, processed by the brain, and that signal is transmitted to the cakkhu pasäda rūpa.
- Sometimes, people are born with the cakkhu pasāda rūpa, but the optic nerve (or the physical eye itself) may be damaged. They cannot see because the brain is not getting a signal from the eyes. But if the gandhabba can come out of the body, it can see by itself without needing the help of the brain. The following video clearly illustrates this situation.
WebLink: youbetube: Near Death Experience - Blind woman 'sees' while out of body
- However, in other cases, one may be born blind because one may not have the cakkhu pasāda rūpa. In that case, even if the gandhabba comes out of the body, it would not be able to see.
- All five sensory faculties are in the gandhabba, or the manomaya kāya. The brain first processes those signals, and then those signals arrive at the corresponding pasāda rūpa. Each pasāda rūpa transfers the signal to the hadaya vatthu and it is the hadaya vatthu that really "sees," "hears," etc.

More information at, "Mental Body - Gandhabba" and "Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya)."
A new series of posts discusses life in great detail, "Origin of Life."

### 13.5.6 Cuti-Patisandhi - An Abhidhamma Description

Revised May 26, 2021; re-written September 7, 2022

## Paṭisandhi Does Not Happen in a Womb

1. Many people believe that pattisandhi, or the linking to a new life, happens in a womb (in human and animal realms). But that is not correct. Patisandhi citta is experienced in the next very citta after the cuti citta of the old life in the last citta vitthi of the dying person.

- The new life form (gandhabba) emerges from the dead body right after the last citta vīthi (However, if the next life is an opapātika one, the life-form arises fully formed). Here we will discuss the case where the new life is either human or animal and thus a gandhabba is formed; see "Manomaya Kāya (Gandhabba) and the Physical Body" and "Ghost in the Machine - Synonym for the Manomaya Kāya?".
- A human baby is born in a series of steps following the paṭisandhi moment. See \#8 of "Antaräbhava and Gandhabba."

2. Pațisandhi ("pati"" is to "bind" and "sandhi" is a "joint" in Pāli or Sinhala.) Thus patisandhi means joining a new life at the end of the old. That happens a thought-moment after the last citta of the current bhava.

- If the next life of a human is human or animal, then the gandhabba for that life comes out of that body at the end of that last citta vīthi. Of course, the gandhabba has a very fine body, which can be seen only by a person with abhiññ̄a powers.
- On the other hand, if a human bhava ends and Deva bhava start, a fully-formed Deva will appear in a Deva realm at the end of the last citta vithi of the human bhava.
- The following analysis is technical and suitable only for those familiar with citta vithi processes in Abhidhamma. However, the conclusions are informative, so you may want to go through them. Citta vīthi is discussed in "Citta Vithi - Processing of Sense Inputs."


## Paṭisandhi Takes Place in the Last Citta Vīthi of the Current Bhava

3. The last citta vīthi of the old life with 17 citta run in the standard way: atīta bhavañga, bhavañga calana, bhavañga upaccheda, pañcadvārāvajjana, cakkhu viññāṇa, sampaṭiccana, santīraṇa, votthapana, and then javana sequence ( 7 javana citta) starts. After the fifth javana citta, there are two more javana citta left. The sixth is the cuti citta, and the seventh and last javana is the patisandhi citta.

- In the last citta vīthi, a previous kamma vipāka provides an ārammaṇa (thought object) associated with that kamma vipāka through one of the five sense doors: it is normally a visual or a sound associated with the new existence (bhava). Even though the person's physical faculties may be weak, the person will see or hear very clearly whatever the nimitta presented by the kamma vipāka.
- Then at the votthapana citta, the mind decides to act on that ārammaña based on the person's gati. The person has no control over it. It is called "kammaja purejāta; cittaja pacchajāta," i.e., kamma vipāka comes first, and then accordingly, the javana citta flow grasping that new bhava:

[^6]Tasmā punabbhovo hoti, evan loko pavattati"
OR,
"kamma lead to vipāka; (the ignorant being) attaches to ārammaṇa arising due to vipāka and does more kamma

Thus the cycle of rebirth repeats, and that is how the world exists."

## Vipāka Brings in Ārammaṇa

4. First, a vipāka brings in an ārammaṇa. An ignorant person gets involved in it and makes a new kamma, "kamma sambhava." That "vipāko kamma sambhavo" process is initiated at the votthapana citta. The votthapana citta decides how to proceed with the ārammaña (object) from the kamma vipāka. The living being normally gets attached to that object via greed/hate/ignorance. That can lead to two effects:
i. generates new kamma in javana citta in regular citta vīthi. See "Vipāka Vedanā and "Samphassa jā Vedana"" in a Sensory Event."
ii. grasps a new existence (bhava) in javana citta if it is the last citta vithi for that existence.

- Thus "vipāko kamma sambhavo" starts with the first javana citta. Each subsequent javana strengthens via āsevana paccayā from the previous javana. Thus, after five javana-citta, kammicenergy is optimized. That holds for both above cases.


## Last Citta Vīthi for an Existence

5. The sixth javana-citta is the cuti citta, and the next patisandhi citta grasps the new bhava.

- Cuti citta happens in the last citta vīthi just after the actual cuti (death) because it is pacchajāta to kammaja cuti event.
- Linking to the next life happens at the 7th javana citta or the patisandhi citta.
- That last citta vīthi marks the death of that old hadaya vatthu. A new hadaya vatthu arises at the patisandhi moment for the next manomaya kāya. That is a human gandhabba if the new one is a human bhava.


## Kamma Vipāka Brings in a Specific Ārammaṇa

6. The last citta vīthi brings the kammic vipāka to energize the next bhava. If the mind grasps the àrammaṇa brought in by that vipāka citta, then javana citta will arise to power the new life: "kamma vipāka vaḍ̣̣hanti." The "vipāko kamma sambhavo" happens at the votthapana citta, i.e., a decision is made on whether to accept that $\bar{a} r a m m a n a$. That decision depends on the level of avijj $\bar{a}$ (arising due to one's gati and āsavā, as well as the ārammaṇa in question).

- A Paṭicca Samuppāda cycle starts with an ārammaṇa coming in via one of the six sensory faculties. Thus a PS cycle starts at the "phassa paccayā vedanā" step. See \#12 of "Difference Between Tanhā and Upādāna" and \#7 of "Contact Between Āyatana Leads to Vipāka Viññāna."
- For example, at the death of Ven. Angulimāla, kammic energy would have brought in an ārammaṇa that re-creates the killing of another human. If Angulimāla still were a killer, his mind would have grasped that nimitta; that would have led to rebirth in niraya (hell.) However, since he became an Arahant, his mind would not grasp it. Ven. Angulimāla did not grasp ANY ārammaṇa and thus was not reborn anywhere.
- Thus, unless "phassa paccayā vedanā" becomes "samphassa paccayā samphassa-j̄̄̄-vedanā," PS will not proceed to the "tanhhā paccayā upādāna" step to grasp the new bhava. See "Dukkha Samudaya Starts With Samphassa-Jā-Vedanā."
- The above example illustrates the stopping of the Upapatti Paticca Samuppāda at the "phassa paccayā vedanā" step in "Akusala-Mūla Upapatti Paticca Samuppāda."
- This "vipāka kamma sambhavo" starts with the first javana citta and builds up gradually up to the fifth javana citta. Now the sixth javana, cuti citta, had been determined from the beginning of the citta vìthi. The seventh javana citta grasps the new existence (bhava.)


## Last Citta Vīthi

7. Now, let us look in detail at the last citta vīthi of the old life. This citta vīthi got started by the last bit of kammic energy from the old life, and it will run its course of 17 citta before it ends. It is like throwing a stone. The person throwing the stone would have released all the energy by the time the stone leaves his hand. But the stone will be traveling until all that energy is spent. In the same way, even though the kammic energy for the old life has ended, the last citta vīthi will run its course of 17 citta, including the last two bhavañga citta after the seven javana citta.

- Cuti or death is not a citta; it is the end of the kammic energy of the old life. Cuti (or the death of the old hadaya vatthu) happens just after initiating the last citta vīthi, and the cuti citta is in the last citta vīthi. Paṭisandhi is not a citta either.
- Here the old bhavañga has ended too, but there are two bhavañga citta left in the last citta vīthi. The new vatthu rupa cannot be formed until this last citta vīthi runs its course. That is because as soon as one is formed, it will start its citta vīthi, and no two vīthi can be there simultaneously.
- At the very end of that last citta vithi (after the last two bhavañga citta,) kammic energy creates the manomaya kaya for the new existence (bhava.) Thus, patisandhi, or the arising of the new hadaya vatthu, happens just after that last citta vīthi.
- In other words, cuti happens at the beginning - and patisandhi at the end - of the last citta vithi. There is a "gap" of 17 citta in between.
- Therefore, cuti/patisandhi are different from cuti cittalpatisandhi citta. It is a subtle point. Don't worry if you don't understand that subtle point.


## New Hadaya Vatthu Arises at the end of the Last Citta Vīthi

8. When this last citta vithi ends, the old hadaya vatthu is dead too; it had exhausted all its kammic power. The next citta vithi starts with a new hadaya vatthu of the new life powered by a new kamma $b \ddot{j} a$. The new hadaya vatthu is formed by the new kamma seed grasped at the 7th javana (the patisandhi citta), and the first citta vīthi for the new life starts immediately.

- If a human bhava ends and the next bhava is an animal, then that animal gandhabba comes out of that body at the end of that last citta vithi.
- On the other hand, if a human bhava ends and Deva bhava start, a fully-formed Deva will appear in a Deva realm at the end of the last citta vìthi of the human bhava.
- Let us consider a specific example.


## Human to Animal Bhava

9. If a human dies and the next life is an animal, that animal gandhabba out of the dead human body. It has the blueprint for the new physical body of that animal.

- That animal gandhabba now has to wait for a suitable womb. It is not that gandhabba decides which womb is good; rather, when a womb that matches the gati of the gandhabba becomes available, gandhabba will be pulled into it by the kammic energy. That is true for humans and animals.
- A single cell called zygote results when a sperm fertilizes an egg in a womb. But there is no life there until the gandhabba enters the womb and is incorporated with that zygote. Now the zygote becomes an embryo, then a fetus, and once out of the womb, grows to a full-size human or an animal according to that blueprint.
- Science has been unable to explain how all the complex body parts of a human or animal develop, starting from a single cell. This is how it happens. The blueprint for all the complex body parts is in the gandhabba, not in that single cell; see "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception."


### 13.6 Abhidhamma via Science

July 15, 2016; revised February 16, 2021

1. In this section, I have two goals:

- Introduce Abhidhamma in a scientific way that can be understood not only by people with scientific backgrounds but anyone with an interest. It will complement the other section on Abhidhamma, which necessarily involves a lot of Pāli terminologies.
- To demonstrate that the current hypothesis by scientists that consciousness originates in the brain is not correct.

2. I will also make predictions in this section on what the scientists are likely to confirm in the future.

- We all are impressed by the scientific advances made during the past 100 years or so making our lives easier and more productive. I am actually a cheerleader for scientific and technological advances.
- Physics had been my passion since high school days, and that changed when I started learning Buddha Dhamma several years ago. I still love and work on topics of interest in physics (and science in general). Fortunately, I am finding that those two interests are not mutually exclusive, and there is significant overlap. In fact, this section is the result of my two overlapping interests.

3. Despite the advances in science and technology, there is much about the human mind that science does not understand, and has not even begun to understand. Western science is based on the five physical senses, leaving out the most important one, the mind.

- At the present time, in 2016, scientists have the wrong view that consciousness originates in the brain.
- All scientific theories relating to the mind are based on this wrong hypothesis. However, Buddha Dhamma says not only that the mind is a sense of its own, but it is the most powerful of all six senses.

4. I will first discuss some interesting phenomena that scientists have discovered recently and are currently grappling with many diverse areas of science. Then I will discuss the layout of the brain of humans and animals, and how that information can lead to satisfactory explanations of those phenomena by taking into account the Buddha's view of the mind as described in Abhidhamma.

- Instead of using Pāli words to describe Abhidhamma (which can be boring to those who are new to Abhidhamma), my hope is to explain Abhidhamma concepts in the context of such already observed phenomena.
- Posts on Abhidhamma at, "Abhidhamma."

Topics in this Section (I have moved a couple of posts from the Dhamma and Science section to here because they discuss possible future discoveries/present misinterpretations in science):

- Neuroscience says there is no Free Will? - That is a Misinterpretation!
- The Double Slit Experiment - Correlation between Mind and Matter?
- Vision (Cakkhu Viññanna) is Not Just Seeing

Here is another post from the Abhidhamma section that has a deeper analysis on the brain-mind connection:

[^7]
### 13.7 Why Do People Enjoy Immoral Deeds? - Ditṭhi Is Key

1. Most of us feel uncomfortable when we do something immoral or unethical. For example, I remember how my heart rate went up when I stole a cookie or a candy when I was little. We all know how the heart rate goes up and the whole body gets tense when we get angry. Those are definitely not enjoyable moments.

- Therefore, immoral deeds normally make one uncomfortable and even feel like one is "on fire" in extreme cases. This is called "tāpa" ("burning")in Pāli or Sinhala. In the Satipaṭthāna sutta, "atāpi sampajāno" means having a mindset to avoid such deeds; see, "Satipatthāna Sutta - Structure."
- When one stay away from bad deeds, the heart "cools down"; this is Nibbāna or "nivana" or "niveema" ("cooling down").

2. When a thought comes to our mind (mostly triggered by seeing, hearing something related), the decision to act on it may come automatically based our "gathi." If an "enemy" comes into our view when we are walking down the road, thoughts of anger may arise immediately leading to a "fire" in the heart, depending on how "bad" we perceive that person to be. Here the cetasika "dosa" dominates our thoughts. Such thoughts that come automatically to one's mind are due to one "gati" and are the strongest; sometimes they are labelled as "asankharika" citta.

- Other times, one may hesitate to do an immoral act, but after deliberation or due to encouragement by others may go ahead and do it; such thoughts are called "sasankharika" citta.
- When I was thinking about stealing cookies as a child, if I did it with a prompting by a sibling, or I myself did it after not been able to overcome the greed, that would have been a "sasankharika citta."
- In another example, the stronger version of "lobha" may be in our minds when we compete for something valuable. Here the desire is not only to acquire it, but we also do not want others to have it. Here the "fire" in the heart is more noticeable compared to the above case of desiring a cookie, which comes under "rāga" category.
- So, there are many shades of strength for both good and bad thoughts.
- Even if we do some of these "bad deeds" once in a while, we feel that it is wrong to do them. The stronger the bad deed, the stronger that we "feel" them.

3. However, some people seem to enjoy doing bad deeds. We have heard about people who got tens or hundreds or stab wounds when they died in knife attacks. The person who did the stabbing seem to have been enjoying it; killing of a person does not need that many stabbings. This is a rare event that we all agree is disgusting; we are horrified by the mere thought of it.

- But there are milder versions that seem "normal" to more of us.
- Some people get enjoyment watching other people suffer, say when engaged in a fight. We have seen pictures of people kicking the opponent while the opponent was down on the ground, even unconscious. This is of more common occurrence in torturing animals. Many people enjoy watching "cock fights".
- In the even more common occurrence of fishing, most people do not "see" the suffering of a fish as it is writhing in agony hanging by the hook, or convulsing while fighting for "water to breath". These are not immoral people, but their perception about animals has been cultivated to the point that they do not see animals as living beings.

4. Ditthi or "wrong vision" play a key role in generating feelings and desires. If we have been taught that killing animals is not an immoral thing to do, then we do not feel uncomfortable doing such an act. People enjoy fishing or hunting because they do not perceive killing fish or deer as an immoral thing to do.

- Instead of getting a "fire" in the heart, they feel a joy while fishing or hunting.
- And this is not restricted to any particular religion. I know many "Buddhists" who enjoy fishing and hunting. On the other hand, most "Buddhists" consider drinking to be immoral, even though "drinking"
per se is not one of the dasa akusala (of course excessive drinking can induce one to do immoral things). It just depends on what "ditt this" one has.
- In parts of India, some people believe that washing in a particular river will help "wash away" bad merits. But then the fish in that river should be completely devoid of any bad merits, since they live their whole lives in water. Even such "apparently harmless" wrong visions still cover the mind, and prevent the mind from seeing the reality.
- The problem is that most such ditthis propagate from generation to generation without people actually examining the sense of such beliefs.

5. Dittthi is one of the key immoral cetasika (mental factors), and the opposite samm $\bar{a}$ ditṭhi or paññ $\bar{a}$ (wisdom) is of course a "moral cetasika."

- A key point about cetasika is that moral and immoral cetasika DO NOT arise together in a citta. A thought is either moral OR immoral. A moral thought has one or more of "moral cetasika" such as alobha, adosa, compassion, etc. and an immoral thought has one or more of immoral cetasika such as lobha, dosa, shamelessness, fearlessness of wrong, etc.

6. The cetasika "pīti" (pronounced "peethi" or "preethi") which means "joy" is one that can be associated with either a kusala or akusala thought. The same thing is true for the cetasikas vimamisā (liking) and viriya (effort). These three cetasika are included in the six types of cetasika called "particulars" that can be in either type of thought, kusala or akusala; see, "Cetasika (Mental Factors)."

- Thus if one does not believe that killing fish or other animals is immoral and can lead to bad results in future lives, then a person with that ditthi can enjoy fishing/hunting ( $p \bar{i} t i$ ), can form a liking for it (chanda), and enthusiastically make preparations for fishing/hunting trips (viriya).
- On the other hand, someone with samma $\bar{a}$ diṭthi will definitely feel at least uncomfortable in doing such an act, will not like it, and will not strive to do such acts. He/she will gain joy by doing things with thoughts that have only moral cetasika, and also may have chanda and viriya associated with such activities.

7. Thus there are many types of "micchā dittthi" that tend to make people comfortable with immoral acts.

- It must be noted that the word "diṭthi" is used in Buddha Dhamma to specifically denote micchā ditṭhi or "wrong vision". The opposite is samma ditṭhi or pañña (wisdom).
- Some people do not have a problem with killing other human beings if those are presumed to be "nonbelievers". They have been taught all their lives that it is "good thing to do" and will pave the way to heaven.
- It is amazing how one's mind can be made to accept certain activities as "acceptable" by conditioning over time, especially if started at young age. This is also called "brain washing". This is why ditthis are very difficult to break. Yet, with a determined mindset, one can break ditthis.
- The key is to critically evaluate both sides of the particular issue at hand. Does it make sense to say one can go to heaven by killing people? Other than someone's promise, is there any truth to that statement? Is there a doctrine that EXPLAINS HOW "killing unbelievers can pave the way to heaven?".
- The key problem is that human mind likes to "take the easy way". It is easier to try to justify one's vision or position rather than trying to spend time looking deeper into the issue to make an informed decision. But one needs to think about the consequences that can last for unimaginably long times.

8. Some people just enjoy killing other people; serial killers are a good example. Such people have extreme version of the moha cetasika; they are totally and completely morally blind.

- While most of us cannot even fathom, "how can such a person go to sleep at night?" after killing another person for fun, they actually sleep well with a content (but perverse) mind.
- People like Pol Pot and Hitler planned systematic killing of millions of people for many years. In their "ditṭhi" that was the right thing to do, and many others started believing in that "dittthi" too.

9. This is why getting rid of "dittthi" and embracing sammā dittthi is the first step in the mundane Eightfold Path first and then in lokuttara Eightfold Path; see, "What is Unique in Buddha Dhamma?."

- Having wrong kinds of vision (ditthi) can be very dangerous, since one may not even realize that one is doing immoral things because of that dittthi. Such ditṭhis can only be removed via learning Dhamma. One becomes a Sotāpanna just by eliminating such wrong visions and perceptions. The three sayyojana (or samiyojana) that are removed at the Sotāpanna stage (sathkāya diṭthi, vicikicchā, sīlabbata parāmāsa) all arise due to micchā diṭthi.

10. When we analyze at the akusala citta we can see why. All immoral acts are done with just 12 types of akusala citta: eight based on lobha (greed), two based on patigha (dislike), and two based on moha (ignorance).

- All "ap $\bar{a} y a g \bar{a} m \vec{\imath}$ " deeds (those acts responsible for rebirth in the four lowest realms or $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a})$ are done with the first four lobha citta and the vicikicchā citta; see, "Akusala Citta and Akusala Vipāka Citta."
- Those first four akusala citta are "ditṭhi sampayutta" or "done with wrong views". The cetasika vicikicchā also arises due to not knowing the true nature of the world, i.e., anicca, dukkha, anatta. Thus all five akusala citta that are removed at the Sotāpanna stage arise due to micchā dittthi, wrong visions about the world.

11. If one believes one is not doing an immoral act while doing that immoral act, then he/she is likely to do it with pīti, chanda, and viriya., i.e., with joy, liking, and makes effort joyfully to get it done.

- Of course ignorance of law is not an excuse, as stated in the latin phrase, Ignorantia juris non excusat. It holds true for the natural laws stated in Buddha Dhamma as well.
- Even worse, according to Buddha Dhamma, immoral acts done with joy are the worst. That is why out of those first four lobha citta, those two done with joy are the absolutely worst: the "somanassa sahagata ditt!hi sampayutta citta" and the "somanassa sahagata ditṭhi sampayutta sasankharika citta."
- In English, these mean, "act done with joy and wrong vision due to gati" and "act done with joy and wrong vision prompted by other factors". The first is the worst since it comes automatically; the second citta arises after some deliberation, and thus has less potency, or javana.

12. Therefore, now we can see why some people do immoral acts with joy and make them even worse; they simply have wrong world views or dittthi. This is why learning Dhamma is so important.

- As the Buddha said, "My Dhamma has never been known to the world before". So, none of us will know precisely what is moral or immoral, without hearing or reading about them.
- However, as humans we have the innate sense of knowing roughly what is moral/immoral. These come from our previous lives. But depending on the environment that we grew up, we may have acquired certain "wrong visions" or "micchā ditṭhi" or "diṭ!hi."
- This is why teaching children to be moral and making sure they associate with only "good friends" is critical. Those habits learned at young age can last a lifetime unless changed via a determined effort.
- And since one person's diṭthi is different from another's, it is absolutely critical to spend time and verify which ditṭhis are the wrong to be adhered to in the long term. Many people do not believe in rebirth, but according to Buddha that is a micch $\bar{a}$ dittthi that can lead to the adverse outcomes in the future. One needs to examine the evidence and decide for oneself. In addition to looking at , "Evidence for Rebirth," one should also examine, "Complexity of Life and the Way to Seek "Good Rebirths".

13. Finally, the reverse is true too: Those moral acts that are done with joy and knowledge (wisdom) or "correct views" (sammā ditṭhi) will lead to vipāka or outcomes with highest merits.

- Getting rid of wrong views is acquiring correct views or cultivating sammā ditṭhi. The more one becomes knowledgeable in what is moral and what is not, one easily BECOMES joyful while doing
moral deeds; joy and wisdom feed on each other. Of course, chanda and viriya will grow simultaneously too.
- Thus the "somanassa sahagata ñāna sampayutta citta" or the "thought with joy and wisdom that comes out automatically" is the strongest moral citta (or sobhana citta). The next highest is the "somanassa sahagata ñāna sampayutta sasankharika citta" or the "thought with joy and wisdom prompted by other factors".
- Here, wisdom starts at the mundane sammā ditṭhi level, increases as one one embarks on the Sotāpanna magga, then Sotāpanna phala, and so on until becoming "fully enlightened" at the Arahant stage; see, "Buddha Dhamma - In a Chart."
- The power or javana of a kusala citta is enhanced with enhanced wisdom. Thus the power of a citta of an Arahant is much stronger compared to that of a Sotāpanna, and that of a Sotāpanna is much stronger compared to a normal person.
- Of course the javana of a citta with strong ignorance (moha) is strong too, and thus makes the deed even more potent and will bring about unbearably bad outcomes (vipāka).

14. Even though many people perceive Abhidhamma to be complex, if started with good basics, Abhidhamma helps clarify many complex issues very clearly. Learning about types of citta and how different cetasika play roles in one's habits ("gati") will help clarify many issues.

Next, "Javana of a Citta - The Root of Mental Power",

### 13.8 Key to Sotāpanna Stage - Diṭ̣hi and Vicikiccā

1. The attainment of the Sotāpanna stage accomplishes the first and foremost goal of a Bhauddhayā : to remove the possibility of rebirth in the lowest four realms, where suffering is unbearable.

- Even though I have analyzed different ways one can comprehend the "requirements" to be fulfilled to attain the Sotāpanna stage (they are all equivalent), one way to easily remember those requirements is to realize that a Sotāpanna has REMOVED two key immoral cetasika: diṭthi and vicikicchā.
- See, "Cetasika (Mental Factors)" and "Ditthi (Wrong Views), Sammā Ditthi (Good/Correct Views)" for introductions to the types of cetasika or "mental factors" that highlight one's "gathi" in one's thoughts.

2. Cetasika are inter-related. A good example is dosa (strong hate), which arises as a result of lobha (strong greed); actually lobha TURNS to dosa, they do not arise together. When someone kills another human, that is due to dosa; at the moment of the killing, only dosa was in that person's mind. But that dosa likely arose due to lobha, strong attachment to something at an earlier time.

- And lobha is strong when ditthi is strong. In the above example, one would not have formed such strong lobha if one did not have ditṭhi, and instead would have cultivated the moral cetasika, samm $\bar{a}$ ditṭhi, to some extent (i.e., if one knew the consequences of such a strong attachment that can lead to hate and then killing). Thus when ditthi is removed, lobha gets to weaker strength of räga (attachment to sense pleasures).
- Removal of dittthi also leads to the reduction of dosa (strong hate) to patigha (tendency to get angry or irritable).
- Vicikicch $\bar{a}$ is related to moha; when vicikicchā is removed, moha (morally blind) is reduced to avijiä (ignorance of anicca, dukkha, anatta) level. As discussed in another post, vicikiccha is the tendency to do unfruitful and harmful things because of a "covered mind", i.e., not knowing the true nature.
- Those two points are stated in another way by saying that the four "ditṭhi sahagatha lobha citta" and the "vicikicchā citta" are removed at the Sotāpanna stage (thus 5 of the 12 akusala citta are removed at the Sotāpanna stage). This was discussed in the post, "Why Do People Enjoy Immoral Deeds? Ditthi Is Key."

3. In other posts I have discussed how one's "gathi" are intimately linked to the kinds of cetasika that dominate in one's mind. The "apāyagāmī gathi" or those habits or tendencies of a person that makes the person eligible to born in the ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$ (the lowest four realms) are mainly in several key immoral cetasika: lobha, dosa, ditṭhi, moha, and vicikicchā.

- At the Sotāpanna stage, the cetasaika of ditṭhi and vicikicchā are REMOVED; then lobha is reduced to rāga (which can be separated out as kāma rāga, rūpa rāga, arūpa rāga); dosa is reduced to patigha, and moha reduced to avijj $\bar{a}$.
- At the Sakadāgāmī stage, from those remaining above, kāma rāga and patigha are REDUCED.
- Those two, kāma rāga and patigha, are REMOVED at the Anāgāmī stage.
- It is only at the Arahant stage that the remaining strength of those key immoral cetasika of lobha and moha (i.e., rūpa rāga, arūpa rāga, avijjā) together with all other immoral cetasika are removed.

4. As one sheds these immoral cetasika and thus "immoral gathi," one automatically cultivates "moral gathi" with moral cetasika. We saw above that when ditthi diminishes, samma ditṭhi (which is the same as the pañ̃̄̄̄ or wisdom cetasika) grows.

- In the same way, as vicikicchā is reduced, saddhā (faith) cetasika grows. This is why a Sotāpanna has "unbreakable" faith (saddhā) in Buddha, Dhamma, and Sañgha; vicikicchā has been removed. However, that saddh $\bar{a}$ comes through not via blind faith, but via understanding.
- Still, paying homage to Buddha, Dhamma, Sañgha, via Tiratana vanadana or listening to pirith helps build saddhā.; see, "Buddhist Chanting - Introduction." This is why it is said that one needs to cultivate saddhā and paññā together.
- Another thing to remember is that while alobha (non-greed) and adosa (non-hate) are moral cetasika opposing lobha and dosa, amoha is NOT actually a cetasika. Unlike alobha and adosa, amoha is not cultivated; amoha is merely the absence of moha.
- Instead, what is cultivated is paññ̄a (wisdom) or the samma diṭthi cetasika. And that requires understanding of anicca, dukkha, anatta. This is why pañña (wisdom) has nothing to do with "book knowledge", but is all about comprehending the "true nature of this world of 31 realms". I will have another post on this important point.

5. Another illuminating way to analyze is to look at the removal of the assavas at each stage. The four types of āsavas are: ditthasava (āsava for ditthi), kamasava (āsava for sense pleasures, almost the same as $k \bar{m} a$ rāga), bhavasava ( $\bar{a} s a v a$ for bhava or existence, which is almost the same as rūpa rāga plus arūpa rāga), and avijjasava (āsava for ignorance). Of course "āsavakkhaya" or removal of all āsavas is Nibbāna.

- As we can see (by comparing with \#3 above), ditthasava is removed at the Sotāpanna stage; kamasava is reduced at the Sakadāgāmī stage and removed at the Anāgāmī stage; bhavasava and avijjasava removed at the Arahant stage.
- Thus we can also see that it is the combination of ditthasava and kamasava that give rise to strong greed (lobha) and strong hate (dosa). When one loses ditthasava by comprehending the true nature of this world, lobha and dosa are reduced to kāma rāga and patigha (which constitute kamasava).
- While such different analyses will be helpful for someone who has been studying them, all these different terms could be confusing to those who are new to these terms. But one will get used to these terms with time, and it is important to understand what they mean (not just to memorize) in the long term. With usage, they WILL become familiar.
- In the days of the Buddha, Buddha Dhamma was called "vibhangavādi" or "doctrine that systematically analyzes by parts". Just like medical students learn about the human body by dissecting dead bodies, it is informative to look at the mind by analyzing it in different ways. And all types of analyses are interconsistent.

6. A Sotāpanna, by comprehending anicca, dukkha, anatta to a certain extent, REMOVES ditthi (ie., achieves ditṭhivisuddhi) and cultivates samma ditthhi to a certain level. And when that happens, the strength of the moha cetasika is reduced to just avijja level, and also the vicikicchā cetasika is REMOVED. Simultaneously, lobha is REDUCED to rāga, which then are removed in stages at higher stages of Nibbāna as stated in \#3 above.

- The above paragraph briefly summarizes what happens at the Sotāpanna stage. It may seem simple, but it requires lot of effort to discipline the mind to get to that stage, mostly via learning and contemplating Dhamma.
- One has reduced the strength of attachment to "worldly things" to the extent that one will NOT do certain immoral actions no matter how much wealth or sense pleasure is at stake. One WILL NOT act with vicikicchā: there is no hesitation in trying to decide, one KNOWS such an act will lead to the birth in the ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$. It is not something one has to think about at that moment; it comes out AUTOMATICALLY, because of such "apāyagāmī gathi" have been PERMANENTLY removed.
- Thus by getting to know some properties of key cetasika we can get an idea of how our minds work, and get an idea why different people respond to the same external influences in different ways. It is because their "gathi" or dominant cetasika are different.

7. Now let us take some examples. Ditthi is at the forefront because one's "views" determines what one has gotten used to or one is comfortable with.

- If we take the ditthi (or view) that says if one bathes in a certain river one could wash away one's sins. This does not appear to be a strong ditṭhi, but it is dangerous one: then one can do all sorts of immoral deeds all day along and then take a bath to "wash away" all those sins and thus get rid of any kamma vipāka. Yet, this ditṭhi is something that has been carried from generation to generation in parts of India.
- Many people say, "I don't do immoral things and even help out others, therefore, bad things will not happen to me". That is a ditt thi too, because that person does not realize that he/she most certainly has done innumerable bad things in previous lives. That ditṭhi therefore arises due to not believing in rebirth. The "cause and effect" is a valid argument, but that argument holds only within the broader world view, that this is not the only life we have had.

8. There are several key dittthis that are common in Buddhist countries.

- Many "Buddhists" believe that taking and obeying the eight precepts on Full Moon days is enough to attain Nibbāna. There are old ladies in Sri Lanka who do not miss a single Full Moon day and dutifully take those precepts. But their minds are filled with ignorance and some of them mostly get together and gossip all day.
- While taking those precepts and mindfully disciplining oneself and meditating for a whole day is an excellent way to practice, just nominally taking precepts is not going to do anything to cleanse one's mind.
- Then there is the perception that taking even a glass of wine (or some mild alcoholic beverage) is highly immoral. While it is best to avoid taking any kind of alcohol, drinking a glass of wine or beer is not a "akusala kamma." Of course if one gets addicted or intoxicated, then one could be led to do akusala kamma. Actually, when one gains wisdom via learning Dhamma, the tendency to crave for alcohol or anything else gradually diminishes.
- Rituals are prevalent in most Buddhist countries. People may do all sorts of immoral deeds (gossiping, slandering, using harsh words, fishing, hunting, are a few examples) during the day and at the end of the day, they light a lamp for the Buddha, say a few verses ("gatha"), and believe that is all they need to do.
- All these come under one of the three sanyojana, "silabbata paramasa" (ditthi that says following rituals or set guidelines can lead to Nibbāna), is removed at the Sotāpanna stage.
- But it must be emphasized that most of such procedures CAN BE very effective in calming the mind and building saddh $\bar{a}$ (both of which then help cultivate wisdom by being able to comprehend Dhamma), if done properly while making an effort to cleanse one's mind; see, "Buddhist Chanting - Introduction."

9. We can also see that vicikicch $\bar{a}$ (tendency to do inappropriate/immoral/dangerous deeds) also arises because one is not aware of how kamma/kamma vipāka operate and has not comprehended anicca, dukkha, anatta.

- It is easy for outside influences to change the mind of someone with strong vicikicch $\bar{a}$ to do bad things. Since children in general are unaware of what is right and what is wrong, it is easy to manipulate their minds. This is why making sure children grow up in environments that are conducive to moral behavior is very important.
- Even adults, who are not aware of the consequences of immoral behavior have high levels of vicikicch $\bar{a}$. They tend to only look at the immediate gratifications of an act rather than to have a long-term perspective.
- Learning Dhamma is the only guaranteed way to remove vicikicchā.

10. Some people tend to think that it is better not to even contemplate on bad consequences of bad actions, or to learn WHY bad actions are bound to lead to bad outcomes. The thinking is "as long as I don't think about such depressing things, I will feel fine".

- Just like not knowing that a certain action is unlawful is not a valid argument in a court of law, ignorance of the Nature's laws is not a valid excuse. Sometimes one can get away when a law is broken by telling
more lies and changing the decision of a jury. But in the Nature's court, it is one's mind that makes the decisions and one cannot fool one's own mind.
- This is why ditthhis can be broken only by cleansing one's mind. One cleanses one's mind by first learning about kamma and kamma vipāka first and THEN reading about anicca, dukkha, anatta, and THEN comprehending the true meanings of those words, i.e., by comprehending the true nature of this world; see, "Buddha Dhamma - In a Chart"" and "How to Cultivate the Anicca Saññã."
- One's own mind needs to realize futility of doing immoral deeds, not just because they are bound to bring thous and-fold bad outcomes, but also because there is "no point", "no real benefit" of doing bad things to fulfil one's sense desires or to "own valuable things"; such sense pleasures or valuable things do not last in the long term. But the consequences can linger on for long times.

11. As I pointed out in "Why do People Enjoy Immoral Deeds? - Ditthi is Key," we all have dittthis that have been cultivated in us by the environment that we grew up in, whether it is cultural, social, or religious. And Buddhists are no exception. We all need to critically evaluate such ditthis and sort out which ones are bad for oneself. Buddha has clearly stated which dittthis are bad: "Three Kinds of Ditthi, Eightfold Paths, and Samādhi."

### 13.9 The Origin of Matter - Suddhatṭhaka

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## Introduction

1. Suddhatthaka is not even mentioned in even many Theravāda Texts. It is discussed in "WebLink: PDFfile: Bhikkhu Bodhi-Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma," by Bhikkhu Bodhi (2000); see pp. 246, 253254. However, it does not have a deeper explanation given in this post. The explanation in \#8 and \#9 was given by Waharaka Thero and cannot be found directly even in the Tipitaka. However, it is possible to "make connections" and clarify such issues as long as it is consistent with the Tipitaka. That is discussed in "Interpretation of the Tipitaka - Gandhabba Example."

- Please don't read it, unless you have thought about the basic concepts of "san," gati (pronounces "gathi" as in "theme"), āsava, Paticca Samuppāda, etc. It may not make much sense, and thus it could discourage people from proceeding any further thinking, "this stuff does not make sense."
- On the other hand, for those who understand those concepts, this could help gain more insight.
- The picture will become increasingly apparent as I publish more posts on this issue. Buddha Dhamma's value will also become apparent, which is the best way to cultivate saddh $\bar{a}$ (faith based on understanding)
- This topic is discussed in detail in the "Nāma \& Rūpa to Nāmarūpa" subsection of the "Living Dhamma" section.


## Origin of Matter - Scientific Theory

2. If we accept that all matter has been created somehow, what is the origin of matter?

- Scientists have no clear explanation of this (November 2015). They say they can calculate the universe's evolution from a fraction of a second after the Big Bang, but physics cannot explain what happened before the Big Bang.
- Of course, the "Big Bang Theory" has not yet been fully confirmed, even though most scientists believe it.
- Still, some scientists do not believe everything "popped up" suddenly in the Big Bang. See, for example, "Endless Universe - Beyond the Big Bang," by P. J. Steinhardt and N. Turok (2007).
- By the way, English astronomer Fred Hoyle coined the term "Big Bang" to ridicule the concept. See "WebLink: en.wikipedia.org: Fred Hoyle - Rejection of the Big Bang."


## Buddha Dhamma - Universe Evolves

3. The Buddha discouraged people from investigating the universe in detail. However, he has taught that uncountable "planetary systems" like our Solar system exist in the universe. That model will have living beings in existence somewhere in the 31 realms. This has been discussed in detail in a few suttā, especially the Aggañña Sutta (DN 27). I have written an introductory post: "Buddhism and Evolution - Aggañña Sutta (DN 27)". The following are some key points.
(i) The universe has no traceable beginning, just like life.
(ii) The universe has "clusters or groups" of stars. Our Solar system is one of 10,000 "star systems" (cakkavāla or planetary systems; chakrawāta in Sinhala). There is an infinite number of such cakkavāla in the universe.
(iii) When a star in the vicinity of our Sun blows up in a few billion years, that blast will destroy 10,000 other star systems in the neighborhood. In modern science, such a "star explosion" has a particular name, a supernova.
(iv) Such a cluster of 10,000 world-systems blows up from time to time in the universe. Again, scientists observe such supernovae every year.
(v) Science does not know yet is that those destroyed star systems re-form over billions of years.
4. Whatever the model that science eventually clarifies WILL BE consistent with Buddha Dhamma.

- Thus, the universe did not start with a "Big Bang," as many scientists believe right now. Remember that only 100 or so years ago, scientists thought the universe was in a steady state. Scientific theories change to "fit the existing data."
- Just 400 years ago, "science" believed in the geocentric model of the universe. The Earth was in the middle of the universe, and the stars were embedded in a celestial sphere around it far above. See "WebLink: wikipedia.org: Geocentric model."
- But pure Buddha Dhamma has not changed since Buddha Gotama taught it 2500 years ago; see, "Historical Background."
- We will slowly go through the Aggañña sutta because that needs enough background material. I expect this topic will take us several years and many essays to complete.


## Suddhattthaka - The Smallest Unit of Matter

5. Here we will discuss only the origin of the smallest unit of matter, called a "suddhatthaka." (sometimes written as suddhāshtaka).

- This unit of matter is a billion times smaller than "an atom" in modern science. One time, not long ago, science believed that an atom was the smallest unit of matter. But they are composites of many "elementary particles." Even many of those "elementary particles" are shown to have more structure! There is no end to how smaller a "basic unit of matter" can get, i.e., there is no clear distinction between matter and energy.
- For example, a "Higgs boson" is just a packet of energy. The light was in the energy category; see "Photons Are Particles Not Waves."
- Matter and energy are essentially the same, related by the famous equation, E (energy) $=\mathrm{m}$ (mass) $\mathrm{x}^{2}$, where c is the light speed. Thus any small unit of matter is indistinguishable from a "packet of energy." For example, the light comes in "packets" called photons. Thus photon belongs to matter in this sense.
- Thus, in science, the distinction between "matter" and "energy" is blurred at this fundamental level.

6. However, the Buddha made a clear "demarcation boundary" between matter (rūpa) and kammic energy that "bears things" (dhammā.) Dhammā (or kamma bijalkamma bhava) arise via Paṭicca Samuppāda ("avijjā paccayā sañkhāra" leading to "upādāna paccayā bhavō.) See "What are Rūpa? Dhammā are Rūpa too!"‘

A suddhatthaka is a "packet of energy" and the basic unit of matter. It is much smaller in energy compared to a light photon. A single light photon would be made of a large number of suddhatthaka.

- A suddhaṭthaka, being a sañkhata, is created by the mind. The Buddha said, "Manōpubbangamā Dhammā..", i.e., "everything has a mind as the precursor...".
- However, almost all of the matter around us was created by this "mental process" long ago. That is the story in the Aggañña Sutta: "Buddhism and Evolution - Aggañña Sutta (DN 27)." At present, suddhatthaka are being created by us (via javana citta), but in very minute quantities.
- Anyone with higher abhiñ̃̃̄̄ powers can create significant matter, like a flower or larger entities. Matter (at the level of suddhatthaka) is created by javana citta. And someone with abhiñ̃̄̄ $\bar{a}$ powers can
maintain a citta vīthi with javana citta flowing continuously to generate "significant amounts of matter." See the end of the post, "Citta Vithi - Processing of Sense Inputs."


## What is a Suddhatṭhaka? Roles of Avijjā and Taṇhā

7. Suddhatthaka ("suddha" for "pure" or fundamental" + "attha" or "eight") means a unit of matter consisting of eight fundamental entities (usually translated as the "pure octad," for example, in Bhikkhu Bodhi's book per \#1 above).

- Four of these are the four "mahā bhūta": Pathavi, āpo, tejo, and vāyo. These are the fundamental units of matter, but they cannot be detected by themselves. It may be hard to believe for many at this stage, but those arise due to our "gati" that I have discussed in several posts; see the introductory post: "The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Āsavā)." By the way, the removal of "āsava" and "gati" lead to Nibbāna: "The Way to Nibbāna - Removal of Āsavā." One needs to understand these concepts to grasp the material in this post.
- The mind first creates the four mahā bhūta with four basic "gati" of humans: "thada gatiya" or "ŋ̨ બฬฺக" (in Sinhala) means the "coarseness," corresponding to pathavi; a defiled mind is "hard" and "coarse" and correspond to "pathavi" nature.
- The word appo comes from the tendency to "attach or get attracted to worldly things" ("bandena gatiya"


 in mind in minute quantities that cannot be detected. However, yogis with abhiññ̄ powers can generate large amounts of matter like a flower.

8. Those most fundamental four units (satara mahā bhūta) are supposed to be created by the mind due to avijia or ignorance. We like to have possession of things made out of these units because we do not comprehend the "unfruitful nature" of such impermanent things.

- The craving for material things leads to four more gati due to tanh $\bar{a}$. Due to our tendency to think highly ("varnanā karanava" in Sinhala), another gati of "vanṇa" is created as different manifestations of the four mahā bhūta. Similarly, three more units of gandha, rasa, and oja are created due to tanh $\bar{a}$. Those correspond to our desire to be in touch with them and be "fooled" (gandha), keep them close (rassa), and re-generate them (oja). It will take too much space to explain these in detail, but I hope you get the basic idea.


## Suddhatṭhaka - Eight Components Do Not Arise Individually

9. Therefore, four basic units of pathavi, $\bar{a} p o$, tejo, and $v \bar{a} y o$ arise due to $a v i j j \bar{a}$, and the other four of vanña, gandha, rasa, and oja arise due to tanhā.

- These eight components never arise in isolation and thus are called "avinibbhoga rūpa." They always rise together and all eight are there in any suddhatthaka. Each component's relative "amounts" can vary; thus some entities may be dominated by one of the eight. For example, pathavī is dominant in a stone and $\bar{a} p o$ is dominant in water. Even then, all eight are present to some extent.
- This very fundamental level is called the "bhūta" stage. Bhūta is another name for "ghosts" because of their elusive nature. They can never be detected and only be "seen" by a Buddha. The Buddha explained this to Mahā Brahma, who thought he knew everything about the world: "WebLink: suttacentral: Brahmanimantanika Sutta (Majjhima Nikaya 49)." I have discussed that part of the sutta in \#12 of "Anidassana Viññ̄̄̄na - What It Really Means."
- And a suddhatthaka can never be divided; thus they are called "avinibbhöga rūpa kalapa."


## Critical Role of Gati

10. Thus, "gati" leads to "bhūta," the first phase of rūpa that can be seen (only by Buddha). That is the suddhatthaka stage. That is where mental energy is converted to matter at the fundamental stage. Just keep that in mind as we proceed.

- It may be hard to believe for many at this stage, but those arise due to our "gati" that I have discussed in many posts. See the introductory post: "The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Āsavas)." By the way, the removal of "āsava" and "gati" lead to Nibbāna: "The Way to Nibbāna Removal of Āsavā." One needs to understand these concepts to grasp the material in this post.
- More details in "Gati (Habits/Character) Determine Births - Samsappanīya Sutta" and "Gati, Bhava, and Jāti."


## Stages of Matter - Bhūta, Mahā Bhūta, Dhātu

11. When enormous numbers of suddhatthaka fuse, they get to a more condensed state of "mahā bhūta." The subtle bodies of Brahmā and some gandhabbā are made of mahā bhūta. This level of "solidification" can be compared (in energy) to electromagnetic radiation at the long-wavelength range; thus, we cannot "see" those entities with our eyes.

- Only when vast amounts of mahā bhūta fuse and become even more condensed can we can see them. In this highly condensed state, the matter is called "dhātu." Bodies of devas are made of finer dhātu. That is why we cannot see devas, but Brahmā can see them.
- Thus our bodies are made of denser $d h a \bar{a} u$, which we can see. That is why solid objects are called "pathavi dhātu." Suddhatt thaka in such solid objects predominantly has pathavi. In liquids, things are bound together and flow together because they mostly have $\bar{a} p o d h a \bar{a} u$. Not only fire but also those objects that have an "energetic appearance," have more tejo. And not only the wind but also things prone to move, have more vāyo.
- For details: "Bhūta and Yathābhūta - What Do They Really Mean."


## Other Implications

12. Therefore, we can see that pathavi, āpo, tejo, and vāyo have much deeper meanings than the earth, water, fire, and wind. Why did the ancient Greeks also use the same terms? Hinduism also uses terms like karma (the Sanskrit word for kamma), Nirvana (the Sanskrit word for Nibbāna), ānāpāna, etc. The teachings of the previous Buddha, Buddha Kassapa, got distorted with time to become Vedic teachings. I need to write about that but see \#8 of "Arōgyā Paramā Lābhā.."

- There have been three Buddhas in this mahā kappa (i.e., during the existence of our Solar system) before the Buddha Gotama; that is how those terms came into usage before Buddha Gotama. The previous Buddha's concepts were transmitted down through successive generations, but the true meanings got lost.
- Human history is much longer than tens of thousands of years, as believed by many today. Whole continents can submerge, wiping out entire populations. That is not considered seriously yet, but there is some evidence: see, WebLink: wiki: Submerged continent.
- That is a topic to be discussed later when more evidence becomes available. It will be proven that one region that has not changed since the formation of the Earth is Asia encompassing Sri Lanka, India, and China. Archeologists should focus more on that region rather than in Africa. See, "Ancient teeth found in China challenge modern human migration theory."


## Three Buddhas Before Buddha Gotama in the Present Eon

13. As I mentioned above, there were three Buddhas before Buddha's Gotama. That is how key terms like pathavi, āpo, tejo, vāyo, kamma, and Nibbāna (nirvāna) have been used even before the Buddha Gotama. They had been transmitted through generations, but their true meanings had been lost.

- Losing the true meanings in the Tipitaka happened at least a few times, even during this Buddha Sāsana, within the past 2500 years. The best example is the misinterpretation of san, samisāra, anicca, and anatta during just the past hundreds of years; see, "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Samisāra)" and "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta - Wrong Interpretations."
- But the Buddha Gotama has said that his Buddha Sāsana will last for 5000 years. We are only halfway through. That is why it is making a comeback now. And this time it will have staying power due to the presence of the internet. That is one reason we should all be forever grateful to modern science, much more than all other technological wonders it has brought.

14. Buddha Dhamma is deep but once one gets some traction, it can be an exhilarating experience to "dig deeper."

- August 2019: Series of posts on "Origin of Life."
- July 31, 2020: New series "Buddha Dhamma - A Scientific Approach."


### 13.10 <br> What are Dhamma? - A Deeper Analysis

April 15, 2016; revised November 5, 2017; February 9, 2018

1. This is an advanced topic (yet, hopefully, made easy even for those who are not into Abhidhamma). Please don't hesitate to comment if something is not clear. A simpler version is at: "What are rūpa? Dhamma are rūpa too!."

- In contrast to touching, smelling, and tasting, we do not directly "touch" the external world (matter) with our eyes, ears, or the mind.
- While we experience the "outside world" as it is (or objectively) with our five physical senses, what we interact with our minds are our own "perceptions, feelings, plans, and hopes" for that external world.
- We will get into more details on those two aspects in the future, but in this post, we will look at what "dhamm $\vec{a}$ " are in relation to the mind. That will help us address those other two issues in the future.
- It is to be noted that dhammā are rūpa below the suddhattthaka stage. On the other hand, dhamma as in Buddha Dhamma or Abhidhamma refers to Buddha's teachings.
- As I mentioned in the "Abhidhamma - Introduction," I very much want to make Abhidhamma easy to grasp for anyone. I also want to highlight the fact the Buddha Dhamma is well ahead of science (quantum mechanics) in understanding even our material world; science has not even begun to explore the mind.

2. Existence in this world of 31 realms is maintained via our attachments to "things" in this world. These "things" are rūpa.

- When a mind makes contact with an external rūpa, it may generate very brief sense enjoyments called assāda; see, "Assāda, Ādīnava, Nissarana." Since we perceive these sense contacts to be long-lasting and enjoyable (and ignore the sufferings that we go through to acquire them), we willingly desire such sense pleasures.
- However, any rūpa that arises is subjected to unexpected change (vipariṇāma) and eventual decay and destruction, which is the basis of anicca nature.

3. Another factor that we have not discussed much in detail is that rūpa have different levels of texture or solidity.

- The $r \bar{u} p a$ that we experience in the human realms (and those realms below us) are the densest form called dhātu. The deva realms above us have finer dhātu that we cannot see. In the rūpa lokas, rupi Brahmā have even finer rūpa called mahā bhūta. And in the arūpa loka, there are just traces of bhūta (just the hadaya vatthu) made of the smallest unit of matter called suddhatthaka, and of course much finer gati (or gathi).
- You may want to review the concepts discussed in the following posts: "What Are Rūpa? (Relation to Nibbāna)," "The Origin of Matter - Suddhatthaka."

4. It is conventional knowledge is that we experience the external world with our five physical senses: We see with our eyes, hear with the ears, smell with the nose, taste with the tongue, and touch things with our physical bodies.

- Is that all one experiences? Imagine being in a dark chamber totally isolated from the rest of the world. A good example is a punishment by the military called solitary confinement, especially in the old days. One is kept in a totally isolated dark cell for many hours at a time.
- Does such a person experience the outside world? Of course. $\mathrm{He} /$ she can think about all sorts of things: recall past events, think about the future, recall any place that he has been to, etc.
- In fact, we do this any given day, not only by recalling past experiences, but also by imagining desired future events.

5. Sense contacts other than the five physical senses are due to the sixth sense: the mind. One is totally unaware of the external world only when one is totally unconscious.

- So, what are the rūpa that we experience with our minds? These are dhamma! As stated in the phrase, "manañca pațicca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviññānaim," contacts of dhamma with the mana indriya leads to mano viññāna.

6. The arising of viññāna due to different types of sense inputs is described in abhidhamma (and also in "WebLink: suttacentral: Cha Chakka Sutta (MN 148)") as:
"cakkhuñca pațicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññānàm,"
"sotañca paṭicca sadde ca uppajjati sotaviñ̃āṇamं,"
"ghānañca paṭicca gandhe ca uppajjati ghānaviñ̃̃̄ạaín,"
"jivhañca paṭicca rase ca uppajjati jivhāviññ̄ạnamं,"
"kāyañca paṭicca photṭhabbe ca uppajjati kāyaviñnān̄aí," and
"manañca paṭicca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviññannaì"

- Thus it is clear that mano viññāna arise when dhamma make contact with the mana indriya, just like cakkhu viññāna arise when (vaṇna) rūpa or light make contact with the cakkhu indriya (eyes) or sota viññāna arise when sadda rūpa (sound waves) make contact with the sota indriya (ears).
- Kaya viñ̃ñana result from contacts which are the most coarse (pottabba or touch due to dhātu), and mano viññāna result from the contacts that are extremely fine, dhamma.

7. Thus, we can categorize our six types of contacts with the external world according to the "coarseness" of the contacts.

- The body contacts (touch), taste, and smell are the coarse contacts; they involve direct touching (pottabba), and those involve solid particulates (taste and smell).
- Vision involves light particles (photons) interacting with the physical eye. The light was not even considered a particle until Einstein, Compton and others proved that in the early 1920's.
- In the language of physics, sound involves phonons having even less energy than light photons, i.e., they are "even softer".

8. We can also see that the sensor elements in the body also get less and less coarse in that order. It must be noted that the sensing elements in the ear are not the ear that we see, but a very sensitive area deep inside the ear.

- According to Buddha Dhamma (and confirmed by science), two things respond to each other and last longer when in heavy usage, if they have similar densities. For example, if a steel rod rubs against a wooden rod, the wooden rod will soon wear out. But two steel rods (or two wooden rods) can be rubbing against each for long times.
- Thus going from touch, smell, taste, sight, and hearing, both the external influences - touch, tasty things, smells, light (photons), sound (phonons) - and the sense elements (body, tongue, nose, eyes, ears) become finer in that order.

9. The finest sensing element is the "mana indriya" which is inside the brain. It is likely to be one of the following: thalamus, amygdala, or hippocampus. I have not had enough time to investigate the functions of these sensitive elements of the brain, but according to Buddha Dhamma, the "mana indriya" is inside the brain and is analogous to the eyes or the ears; more details will become clear as we discuss below.

- What come down in the legend as the "third eye" is this "mana indriya." It is supposed to be located behind the forehead.
- The rūpa that come into contact with the mana indriya are finer than a suddhatthaka, and are still in the "gati" stage, but they are on the way to become suddhatthaka. They are not coarse enough to be "seeing" even with abhiññā powers, and do not make contact with other five coarse senses. Thus they are, "anidassanaappattighaì dhammāyatanapariyāpannaï." See, the last verse of "WebLink: suttacentral: 2.2.2. Mātik $\bar{a} "$ in Dhammasañgaṇī of the Tipiṭaka.
- Here, "anidassana" means "cannot be seen" and "appatigha" means "cannot be touched or sensed with even the finest instrument". And, "dhammāyatana pariyāpanna rupan" means "belongs to dhammāyatana".

10. In the post, "The Origin of Matter - Suddhatthaka," we discussed how the smallest material element, a suddhatthaka, is created by the mind with origins in four basic "gati" of humans that arise due to avijjä: "thada gatiya" (in Sinhala) means the "coarseness", corresponding to pathavi; "bandena gatiya" means the "bind together" which leads to liquidity corresponding to $\bar{a} p o$; "thejas gatiya" means the "fiery or energetic", corresponding to tejo; and, "salena gatiya" means the "motion", corresponding to vāyo.

- craving for these material things lead to four more gati due to $\boldsymbol{t a n h} \overline{\boldsymbol{a}}$ : Due to our tendency to think highly ("varnanā karanava" in Sinhala), another gati of "varna" is created as different manifestations of the satara mahā bhūta. Similarly, three more units called gandha, rasa, and oja are created due to tanhh $\bar{a}$ corresponding to our desire to be in touch with them, keep them close (rassa), and to re-generate them. [rassa: [adj.] short; dwarfish; stunted]

11. Before these eight inseparable units solidify into what we call matter, there is the precursor stage of gati: cultivation of gati leads to bhūta, which are in the suddhatthaka stage. Further solidification of bhūta leads to mahā bhūta. The fine rūpa of Brahmā are composed of mahā bhūta.

- The gati stage of rupa - the origins of rūpa - are also called "mano rupa": these are really what we visualize in our minds. We can visualize scenes from the past, and those are mano rūpa. In the process of making gati, we constantly think about associated material things; those are mano rūpa.

12. Mahā bhūta, upon further condensation, become dhātu. The bodies of devas are made of finer dhātu, and our bodies - as well as all material things we see - are composed of denser dhātu.

- Therefore, the origins of all matter is gati! But our gati (of normal humans) actually do not lead to the formation of significant amounts of even suddhatthaka. So, we still have a long way to go before we can explain how these solid objects in our world were formed as described in the Aggañña Sutta.

13. Just like the eye is receiving visual information or the ear the sounds, the "mana indriya" is receiving "dhammā." And dhammā are much finer than light or sound rūpa. In fact, all five physical senses deal with signals transmitted via solidified particles made out of suddhatthaka, but dhamm $\bar{a}$ are just energy, below what we call "matter". Actually, even most physicists do not consider light as matter or "particles"; I will write a post on why light photons are indeed particles according to quantum mechanics.

- As we discussed in the post, "The Origin of Matter - Suddhatthaka," even a single light particle (photon) is made of a very large number of suddhatthaka.
- As we discussed there, a suddhatthaka is made by the mind. Dhammā can be considered the early stages of a suddhatthaka. They are in fact kammic energy packets made by the mind in javana citta, and arise due to our gati. This is really the link between mind and matter!

14. Therefore, all six senses allow our minds to interact with the material world. We actually interact with two worlds: the material world and the mental world or the mano thalaya.

- Different types of rūpa (varna, gandha, rasa, oja, phottthabba) in our physical world (rūpa loka) are built with suddhatthaka. Dhammā or kamma bīja (in the mano loka) are basically "energy packets" not yet solidified to the state of a suddhatt thaka.
- The pañcakkhandha of a living being has "components" from both worlds. The rūpakkhandha are our mental impression of the material world (as mental records); see, "Pañcakkhandha or Five Aggregates -

A Misinterpreted Concept." The other four khandha (vedanā, sañña, sañkhāra, viññāṇa) are our mental impression of the mind world.

- Each and every living being is associated with its own pañcakkhandha., because one makes one's own mental impression. The Buddha said that one cannot define a living being with less that five khandh $\bar{a}$.
- To repeat: One's pancakkhadha is not one's body as is commonly described. It is not even physical. It is all mental: "Pancupādānakkhandha - It is All Mental."

15. The creation of suddhatthaka by the mind in javana citta, starts first by enhancing one's gati. As we will discuss in a future post on the "Asevana Paccaya," the more one does activities related to a given gati, that gati grows. [Āsevana-paccayā: repetition, is one of the 24 conditional relations paccayā.]

- The growing of a gati is really the accumulation of a kamma bija (seed), and that is deposited in the kamma bhava in the mind plane. These are really dhamma that is in "manañca paticca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviññānaṁ."
- And they (dhamma or kamma bija) can come back to one's mind when the mind is in a receptive state for such a gati. Thus it is a self-feeding feedback loop.
- This is an important point to contemplate on. This is why a drunkard gets the urge to drink, or a gambler gets the urge to visit a casino. People who don't have such gati, do not get such urges because they do not have corresponding dhamma repeatedly coming back to impinge on the mana indriya.
- By the way, as discussed in the "Living Dhamma" section, any such "bad gati" can be reduced and eventually eliminated by a two-step method: (i) forcefully stop activities - and conscious thoughts about them - that contribute that gati when one becomes aware DURING such an act OR a conscious thought, (ii) keep learning Buddha Dhamma to comprehend how that process can actually work (as discussed starting with basic fundamentals of Buddha Dhamma in the "Living Dhamma" section); one key aspect here to contemplate on the bad consequences of such actions/thoughts.

16. To emphasize, dhamm $\bar{a}$ arise due to kamma that we commit. The more kamma we do, the corresponding dhamm $\bar{a}$ will grow, and become gati.

- Dhammā means 'to bear"; one bears what one likes and what one engages in.
- When one cultivates "dog gati" that is what one bears. And that is what comes back to one's mind at the cuti-patisandhi moment and can lead to the next bhava, and thus birth ( $j \bar{a} t i$ ) as a dog.

17. However, the creation of a suddhatthaka requires trillions of citta vithi running consecutively. Thus it does not happen significantly by a normal human being. It requires not only $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$, but being able to get into samāpatti. Those with abhiññ̄a powers have the ability to get into samāpatti very quickly.

- When in $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$, citt $\bar{a}$ can still switch back to five physical senses in between. When one is in a $j h \bar{a} n a$, one can hear external sounds, for example.
- However, when one is in a samāpatti, the jhānic cittā can flow unceasingly for long times. Thus, pañcadvāra citta vīthi cannot run in between, and thus, one is totally unaware of the external environment when in samāpatti.

18. Furthermore, when in samāpatti, jhānic citta flow unceasingly and make each new javana citta stronger than the predecessor with the "Āsevana Paccayā." We will discuss this in detail in the future.

- This is how those with abhiññā powers (i.e., who can easily get into samāpatti and have practiced it well) can even make physical objects: One can start off with a picture of a flower in one's mind and then by creating more and more suddhatt haka with each new javana citta, create an actual flower in a very short time!

19. Finally, dhamma in the nāma loka are the same as those viññāna established in the kamma bhava. This is a subtle point; see, "Viññāna Aggregate."

- Dhamma or viññanna are called anidassana, appatigha rūpa (rūpa that cannot be seen or made contact with) and they are just energies lying below the suddhatṭhaka stage; see, "Anidassana Viññāna What It Really Means."
- Kamma bhava is the same as the nāma loka; Dhamma in the nāma loka are the same as viññaṇ̄a that are established in the kamma bhava.; see, "Our Two Worlds: Material and Immaterial."


### 13.10.1 24 conditional relations Paccaya

From Dhamma Wiki

Paccaya: 'condition', is something on which something else, the so-called 'conditioned thing', is dependent, and without which the latter cannot be. Many are the ways in which one thing, or one occurrence, may be the condition for some other thing, or occurrence. In the Patthāna, the last book of the Abhidhamma Pitaka comprising 6 large vols. in the Siamese edition, these 24 modes of conditionality are enumerated and explained, and then applied to all conceivable mental and physical phenomena and occurrences, and thus their conditioned nature is demonstrated.

The first two volumes of the Paṭ̣hāna have been translated into English by the Venerable U Nārada mūla patthāna Sayadaw of Burma, under the title Conditional Relations Published by the Pāli Text Society, London 1969, 1981.

The 24 modes of conditionality are:

1. Root condition: hetu paccayā
2. Object: ārammana
3. Predominance: adhipati
4. Proximity: anantara
5. Contiguity: samanantara
6. Co-nascence: sahajāta
7. Mutuality: añ̃̃amañ̃̃a
8. Support: nissaya
9. Decisive Support: upanissaya
10. Pre-nascene: purejāta
11.Post-nascene: pacchājāta
11. Repitition: āsevana
13.Kamma: kamma
12. Kamma-result: vipāka
15.Nutriment: $\bar{a} h a ̄ r a$
16.Ability: indriya
17.Jhāna: jhān̄a
18.path: magga
13. Associaton: sampayutta
14. Dissociation: vippayutta
21.Presence: atthi
22.Absence: natthi
23.Disappearance: vigata
24.Non-disappearance: avigata

1: Root-condition hetu-paccayā is that condition that resembles the root of a tree. Just as a tree rests on its root, and remains alive only as long as its root is not destroyed, similarly all kammically advantageous and disadvantageous mental states are entirely dependent on the simultaneity and presence of their respective roots, i.e, of greed lobha, hate dosa confusion moha or greedlessness alobha hatelessness adosa unconfusedness amoha For the definition of these 6 roots, see: $\underline{m u} l a$.

The roots are a condition by way of root for the mental phenomena associated with a root, and for the material phenomena produced thereby e.g. for bodily expression; Patth.

2: Object-condition $\bar{a} r a m m a n a-p a c c a y \bar{a}$ is called something which, as object, forms the condition for consciousness and mental phenomena. Thus, the physical object of sight consisting in colour and light 'lightwave', is the necessary condition and the sine qua non for the arising of visual-consciousness cakkhuviññāna etc.; sound 'sound wave' for ear-consciousness sotā-viññāna etc.; further, any object arising in the mind is the condition for mind-consciousness mano-viññāna The mental-object may be anything whatever, material or mental, past, present or future, real or imaginary.

3: Predominance-condition (adhipati-paccaya) is the term for 4 things, on the preponderance and predominance of which are dependent the mental phenomena associated with them, namely: concentrated intention (chanda), energy (viriva), consciousness (citta) and investigation (vimamsā). In one and the same state of consciousness, however, only one of these 4 phenomena can be predominant at a time. "Whenever such phenomena as consciousness and mental concomitants are arising by giving preponderance to one of these 4 things, then this phenomenon is for the other phenomena a condition by way of predominance" (Patth.). Cf. iddhi-pāda.

4-5: Proximity and contiguity or immediacy-condition anantara and samanantara-paccayā - both being identical - refer to any state of consciousness and mental phenomena associated with them, which are the conditions for the immediately following stage in the process of consciousness. For example, in the visual process, visual-consciousness is for the immediately following mindelement - performing the function of receiving the visible object - a condition by way of contiguity; and so is this mind-element for the next following mind-consciousness element, performing the function of investigating the object, etc. Cf. viñ̃̄̄anakicca.

6: Co-nascence condjtion sahajāta-paccayā i.e. condition by way of simultaneous arising, is a phenomenon that for another one forms, a condition in such a way that, simultaneously with its arising, also the other thing must arise. Thus, for instance, in one and the same moment each of the 4 mental groups feeling, perception, mental constructions and consciousness is for the 3 other groups a condition by way of co-nascence or coarising; or again each of the 4 physical elements solid, liquid, heat, motion is such a condition for the other 3 elements. Only at the moment of conception in the mother's womb does materiality physical base of mind serve for the 4 mental groups as a condition by way of conascence.

7: Condition by way of mutuality añ̃̄̄āañña-paccayā All the just mentioned associated and co-nascent mental phenomena, as well as the 4 physical elements, are, of course, at the same time also conditioned by way of mutuality,;just like three sticks propped up one by another.; The 4 mental groups are one for another a condition by way of mutuality. So also are the 4 elements, and also mentality and materiality at the moment of conception.

8: Support-condition nissaya-paccayā This condition refers either to a pre-nascent see: 10 or co-nascent see: 6 phenomenon which is aiding other phenomena in the manner of a foundation or base, just as the trees have the earth as their foundation, or as the oil-painting rests on the canvas. In this way, the 5 sense-organs and the physical base of the mind are for the corresponding 6 kinds of consciousness a prenascent, i.e. previously
arisen, condition by way of support. Further all co-nascent see: 6 phenomena are mutually see: 7 conditioned by each other by way of support.

9: Decisive-support or inducement condition upanissaya-paccayā is threefold, namely a by way of object ārammanūpanissaya-paccayā $b$ by way of proximity anantarūpanissaya $c$ natural decisive support pakatupanissaya These conditions act as strong inducement or cogent reason.
a. Anything past, present or future, material or mental, real or imaginary, may, as object of our thinking, become a decisive support, or strong inducement, to moral, immoral or kammically neutral states of mind. Evil things, by wrong thinking about them, become an inducement to immoral life; by right thinking, an inducement to moral life. But good things may be an inducement not only to similarly good things, but also to bad things, such as self-conceit, vanity, envy, etc.
b. is identical with proximity condition No. 4.
c. Faith, virtue, etc., produced in one's own mind, or the influence of climate, food, etc., on one's body and mind, may act as natural and decisive support-conditions. Faith may be a direct and natural inducement to charity, virtue to mental training, etc.; greed to theft, hate to murder; unsuitable food and climate to ill-health; friends to spiritual progress or deterioration.

10: Pre-nascence-condition purejāta-paccayā refers to something previously arisen, which forms a base for something arising later on. For example, the 5 physical sense-organs and the physical base of mind, having already arisen at the time of birth, form the condition for the consciousness arising later, and for the mental phenomena associated therewith.

11: Post-nascence-condition pacchā-jāta-paccayā refers to consciousness and the phenomena therewith associated, because they are - just as is the feeling of hunger- a necessary condition for the preservation of this already arisen body.

12: Repetition-condition āsevana-paccayā refers to the kammical consciousness, in which each time the preceding impulse moments javana-citta are for all the succeeding ones a condition by way of repetition and frequency, just as in learning by heart, through constant repetition, the later recitation becomes gradually easier and easier.

13: Kamma-condition kamma-paccayā The pre-natal kamma i.e kamma-intentions, kamma-cetanā in a previous birth is the generating condition cause of the 5 sense-organs, the fivefold sense-consciousness, and the other kamma-produced mental and material phenomena in a later birth. - Kammical intention is also a condition by way of kamma for the co-nascent mental phenomena associated therewith, but these phenomena are in no way kamma-results.

14: Kamma-result-condition vipāka-paccayā The kamma-resultant 5 kinds of sense-consciousness are a condition by way of kamma-result for the co-nascent mental and material phenomena.

15: Nutriment-condition āhāra-paccayā For the 4 nutriments, see: $\underline{a} h \bar{a} r a . ~$
16: Ability-condition indriya-paccayā This condition applies to 20 abilities (indriya), leaving out No. 7 and 8 from the 22 abilities. Of these 20 abilities, the 5 physical sense-organs $1-5$, in their capacity as abilities, form a condition only for unmaterial phenomena visual-consciousness etc.; physical vitality 6 and all the remaining abilities, for the co-nascent mental and material phenomena.

17: Jhāna-condition jhāna-paccayā is a name for the 7 so-called jhāna-factors, as these form a condition to the co-nascent mental and material phenomena, to wit:

- (1) thought-conception (vitakka),
- (2) discursive thinking (vicāra),
- (3) interest (pīti),
- (4) joy (sukha),
- (5) sadness (domanassa),
- (6) indifference (upekkhā),
- (7) concentration (samādhi). (For definition s. Pāli terms)
$1,2,3,4,7$ are found in 4 classes of greedy consciousness see: Tab. I. 22-25; 1, 2, 5, 7 in hateful consciousness ib. 30,$31 ; 1,2,6,7$ in the classes of confused consciousness ib. 32,33 .

This condition does not only apply to jhāna alone, but also to the general intensifying 'absorbing' impact of these 7 factors.

18 path-condition magga-paccayā refers to the 12 path-factors, as these are for the kammically advantageous and disadvantageous mental phenomena associated with them, a way of escape from this or that mental constitution, namely: 1 knowledge paññā = sammāditṭhi right understanding, 2 right or wrong thought-conception vitakka 3 right speech sammā-vācā 4 right bodily action sammā-kammanta, 5 right livelihood sammā-ājīva 6 right or wrong energy viriya 7 right or wrong awareness or mindfulness sati 8 right or wrong concentration samādhi 9 wrong views micchādittthi 10 wrong speech micch $\bar{a}$-vāca 11 wrong bodily action micchā-kammanta 12 wrong livelihood micchā- $\bar{j} j \bar{i} v a$ Cf. magga

19: Association-condition sampayutta-paccay $\bar{a}$ refers to the co-nascent see: 6 and mutually see: 7 conditioned 4 mental groups khandha as they aid each other by their being associated, by having a common physical base, a common object, and by their arising and disappearing simultaneously; Patth. Com.

20: Dissociation-condition vippayutta-paccayā refers to such phenomena as aid other phenomena by not baving the same physical base eye, etc. and objects. Thus material phenomena are for mental phenomena, and conversely, a condition by way of dissociation, whether co-nascent or not.

21: Presence-condition atthi-paccayā refers to a phenomenon - being pre-nascent or co-nascent - which through its presence is a condition for other phenomena. This condition applies to the conditions Nos. 6, 7, $8,10,11$.

22: Absence-condition natthi-paccayā refers to consciousness, etc., which has just passed, and which thus forms the necessary condition for the immediately following stage of consciousness by giving it an opportunity to arise. Cf. No. 4.

23: Disappearance-condition vigata-paccayā is identical with No. 22.
24: Non-disappearance-condition avigata-paccayā is identical with No. 21.
These 24 conditions should be known thoroughly for a detailed understanding of that famous formula of the dependent origination (paticcasamuppāda).

Mahā Thera Nyanatiloka. Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines, Buddhist Publication Society, first edition 1952.
See The Significance of Dependent Origination, by Nyanatiloka (WHEEL 140).

### 13.11 Pabhassara Citta, Radiant Mind, and Bhavanga

April 13, 2017; revised January 19, 2018; August 20, 2018; January 7, 2019; February 14, 2021
It is a good idea first to read the posts, "Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)" and "Viññāna What It Really Means."

## A "Thought" Is the Result of Billions of Citta

1. Billions of citta flow in a second, and what we experience is the cumulative effect of billions of citta, which we call a "thought." Let us start at the base state of a citta (loosely translated as a thought, but it is really not). Every citta has 7 universal cetasika (mental factors). Universal cetasika are discussed in, "What is in a Thought? Why Gati are so Important?."

- Those 7 universal cetasika are: Phassa (contact), saññ̄ā (perception), vedanā (feeling), cetanā (intention), ekaggata (one-pointedness), jivitindriya (life faculty), and manasikāra (memory). This is the "baseline" state of a citta, which lasts only a billionth of a second.
- And during that brief time, many other cetasika (good or bad) can be incorporated into a citta. But let us consider the more straightforward case where no other cetasika are included.
- Even such a simple citta is still contaminated or defiled at the end of that brief time. This contamination is manifested in vedanā and sañ̃n̄ cetasika.


## Each Citta Goes Through Nine Stages!

2. Each INDIVIDUAL citta - during its existence for a billionth of a second - undergoes change in 9 stages! Such a fast process cannot be seen by any human other than a Buddha; see, "Citta, Mano, Viññāna - Stages of a Thought."

- At the end of the 9 stages, it has evolved and has become affected by the whole of the viñãānakkhandha (including past viññāṇa).
- The contamination of a citta is manifested in saññ̄a and vedanā; a contaminated citta is called viññạna.
- Vedanā at the base level is "discerning that an event took place" ("veema" + "danaveema" or "尺̊O \& $\mathbb{8}$ ") in Sinhala). Actual "feelings" about the event will be incorporated as the citta evolves in 9 stages, as we will discuss below.


## Even the First Citta Is Contaminated

3. The other critical universal cetasika that evolves in 9 stages is sañña $\bar{a}$. Even though it has become standard to write is as "sa $\tilde{n} \tilde{n} \bar{a}$, " that is not how it is pronounced "sangngă":

## WebLink: Play the word "sañ̃̃a"

- Some do indicate the correct pronunciation by writing as saññā. Even though it does not really matter how one writes it ("sanna" or saññā or "sangnga"), it is critically important to understand what is meant by it; see, "What is Sañ̃ña (Perception)?."
- Saññā provides one's perception about a given event that led to the arising of the citta. For example, if we see an object, the identification of that object proceeds via those 9 stages (and vedan $\bar{a}$ evolves accordingly).
- So, let us briefly go through the 9 stages of the evolution of a citta using sañ̃̃ $\bar{a}$ as the basis.


## Contamination of a Citta Is Due to Anusaya

4. Each citta gets contaminated in those 9 stages due to anusaya that comes to the surface as $\bar{a} s a v a$ (or $\bar{a} s a y a)$, which are also related to one's gathi. There are many posts at the site with details on those entities.

- Those nine stages of contamination during the lifetime of the citta itself (in a billionth of a second) are citta, mano, mānasaì, hadayaì, pandaraì, mano manāyatanaì, mana indriyaì (or
 mano manāyatanaì manindriyà̇ viññānà̇ viñ̃̃ānakkhandho...]
- This rapid contamination of a citta is explained in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Paticcasamuppāda Vibhanga," in Section 2.5.1. Akusalacitta : "Tattha katamaí sañkhāra paccayā viññ̄ạnaì? Yaim
 viññānakkhandho tajjāmanoviññ̄ṇadhātu—idaì vuccati "sañkhārapaccayā viññānà்".
- Those 9 stages are also listed in the original commentary, section 1.3.5.3. Tatiyacatukkaniddesa in WebLink: suttacentral: 1.3. Ānāpānassatikathā or Patisambhidamaggapakarana (or Part I, p. 360 of Buddha Jayanati Tipiṭaka): "..yaì cittaì mano mānasaì hadayà் pandaraìm manomanāyatanaì
 mano manāyatanaí manindriyamं viññānam் viññānakkhandho...] I trust only three commentaries and all three are in the Tipitaka: Patisambhidamagga, Petakopadesa, and Nettippakarana.
- All other commentaries that are in existence today were written much later and are not reliable; see, "Buddhaghosa and Visuddhimagga - Historical Background."
- What we actually experience is vinnanakkhandha. Even after going through the 9 stages it is still called a citta for convenience; see, "Citta, Mano, Viññ̄na - Stages of a Thought" and "Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)."


## Simple Example Explaining the Nine Stages of a Citta

5. Let us consider the example of seeing one's mother. At the initial citta stage, the only perception is that a person is there. In the next step of "mano" (which stands for "calibrating with respect to other persons; "maneema" in Sinhala), it is realized that the person is woman.

- In the third stage of "mānasam̀," "san" comes to the picture and extra information (which is personal) is incorporated; see, "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Samsāra)." Now, one identifies the person as one's mother.
- By the way, we cannot live in this world without at least reaching the "mānasam" stage of a citta. Otherwise, we will not be able to distinguish a given person in a crowd.
- Actual contamination of the citta starts at the next stage of "hadayam,", which means identifying whether that person is "close to one's heart" and then getting attracted or repulsed. In our example, one recognizes the person as "one's mother" and of course corresponding vedana of an attachment arises as well.


## An Arahant's Citta Does Not Contaminate Beyond the 'Mänasan' Stage

6. An Arahant's citta does not evolve beyond the 'mānasam' stage. So, the Buddha was able to identify different people, but he did not form any attachment/dislike based on that identification.

- This is what is stated in the Karaniyamatta Sutta: "..mānasamं bhāvaye aparimāṇamं..." One needs to cultivate "mānasaì" as much as possible ("aparimāna" or "appramāna" or without limit), but not let the citta contaminate beyond that.
- That can be done only via reducing and finally removing one's bad gathi, āsava, and anusaya, as we discuss below.

7. The next step after "hadayam" is "pandaramं," which means to "add more power," i.e., one's mind will look back at past events (yes, within a billionth of a second), recall how loving she was, and "attach more". It is done automatically by the manasikāra cetasika.

- So, the citta gets more and more contaminated as it advances to the viñ $\tilde{n} a n a$ stage. Thus viññạna is actually a citta that is very much contaminated due to one's anusaya, āsava, and gati.
- Finally, it becomes part of the viñ̃̄āṇakkhandha, which includes 11 types of viññāna: past, present, future, near, far, fine (sukuma), coarse (olārika), likes (paneeta), dislikes (appaneeta), internal (ajjatta), and external (bahidda).
- A viññānakkhandha has incorporated not only one's anusaya, āsava, and gathi, but also one's memories and future hopes, etc.

8. Now we can address the issue of a "pabhassara citta." First, what is meant by "pabhassara"?

- The word comes from three sounds at the root: "pa" means again and again, "bha" is related to" bhava"; and "sara" or "chara" means to "sarisareema" in Sinhala or "to participate". Thus a "pabhasara citta" with only one " s " in the word (NOT pabhassara) is a contaminated citta that will lead to sansāric journey or the rebirth process.
- The opposite of "pabha sara" is "pabha assara," where "assara" means "not take part in". It rhymes as "pabhassara."
- This is why I say that Pāli is phonetic language. Meanings come based on sounds. I have given many examples throughout the website.


## Pabhassara Citta Is There Only at the Beginning of Nine Stages

9. Therefore, a "pabhassara citta" is that base state, or the pure state of a citta, BEFORE it goes through the 9 stages of contamination. It has only the 7 universal cetasika.

- Each and every citta of a given person starts as a pabhassara citta but gets contaminated to varying degrees depending on one's personality or one's advancement along the Path.
- Even an Arahant‘s citta is not a pabhassara citta; it will contaminate to the level of "mānasamं," as we discussed above. However, Arahant phala citta, which lasts for only one citta, is a pabhassara citta.
- When an Arahant is in Arahant phala samāpatti, he/she knows that one is alive, but has no awareness of outside events. This is called animitta, appanihita, suññata samādhi. That is different from the nirodha samāpatti, where the flow of citta stops.
- In Buddha Dhamma, defilements are associated with "dark", and pure states are associated with "bright" or "radiant". So, we could call a pabhassara citta a "radiant citta," and a mind that generates AND maintains citta at that state a "radiant mind".
- The only time such radiant or pure citta flow occurs, is when an Arahant is in Arahant phala samāpatti, with the Arahant phala citta flowing continuously.


## Pabhassara Sutta (AN 1.51)

10. This process of contamination of a citta is what stated in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Pabhassara Sutta (AN 1.51)": "Pabhassaramidamं, bhikkhave, cittaì. Tañca kho āgantukehi upakkilesehi upakkilitthaì. Taï assutavā puthujjano yathābhūtain nappajānāti. Tasmā ‘assutavato puthujjanassa cittabhāvanā natthī’ti vadāmī ti."

- First, "Pabhassaramidaim" is "Pabhassara idami." As I keep saying, words are sometimes combined or even a bit changed to rhyme in suttā. So, the first sentence says, "Bhikkus, citta (the first stage) is pabhassara or does not contribute to rebirth process".
 "introduced." What is introduced is "upakilesa" or defilements (that are in one's gathi, anusaya, $\bar{a} s a v a)$. That leads to "upakilitta" or contamination. Again. "kiliti" in Pāli and Sinhala means "dirty".
- The next sentence says, "those puthujjano who do not understand this, cannot comprehend the reality (yathābhūta)". Here puthujjana means an average human who has not been exposed to Buddha Dhamma; i.e., one who does not comprehend Tilakkhaṇa. Thus the last sentence says, "therefore, I do not recommend citta bhāvanā to those who do not comprehend Tilakkhaṇa."


## Anidassana Viññāna Is Not a Pabhassara Citta

11. Another famous quote from the WebLink: suttacentral: Kevatta Sutta (DN 11) in the Digha Nikāya (DN 11), says, "Viññānaí anidassanai் anantaí sabbato pabhai̇..." This could be written as "Viññānamं anidassanam், anantamं, sabbato pabhamं.." in order to break into three components.

- Here, "anidassana" means "cannot be seen". Viññāna is more than a nāma dhammā and has "kammic energy". But it is below the "visible $r \bar{u} p a "$ "; see, "Kamma Viññ̄n̄na - Link Between Mind and Matter."
- And, "ananta" is infinite; viñ̃̃āna dhātu is infinite.
- "sabbato" means "in every way/for all".
- As we discussed above in \#8, "pabbha" means "repeated bhava" (pabhaim comes for that).
- Therefore, the above verse means, "viññāna is unseen, infinite, and leads to the rebirth process for all."
- To emphasize: viññāna is a defiled citta. We all experience viññāna, not pure citta. Even more accurately, we experience viññānakkhandha (viññāna aggregate). However, we loosely call "a thought" a citta.
- One stops the rebirth process by removing one's bad gati, āsava, and anusaya and not letting citta contaminate beyond the "mānasam" stage.

More details at this post: "Anidassana Viññāna - What It Really Means."

## Bhavañga Citta Is Not a Pabhassara Citta

12. Some commentaries say that bhavañga citta are pabhassara citta. That is absolutely incorrect. All living beings have bhavañga citta that depend on one's bhava; see "Bhava and Bhavañga - Simply Explained!."

- Bhavañga comes from "bhava" + "anga," where "anga" is "a part". So, bhavañga means "associated with a given bhava." Bhavañga is obviously different for different bhava.
- An animal also gets into the bhavañga state. Does that mean an animal has a "radiant mind" when it is in the bhavanga state?
- Furthermore, sometimes "anidassana viñ̃̄āna" is also incorrectly explained as the base level of viññāna. Per \#11 above, it is clear that anidassana viññāna just explains that viññāna cannot be "seen."


## 13. In fact, it is not correct to say bhavañga citta. Bhavañga is a "state of mind", no citta vīthi run during bhavañga.

- For example, a living being in the asañ̃na realm does not experience any thoughts. There are absolutely no citta vīthi running during the whole time there. However, the body is maintained by bhavañga that corresponds to that bhava.

No Pabhassara Citta Below Arahant Stage
14. So, the point here is that as long as one has bad gati (or anusaya, $\bar{a} s a v a$, etc., which are all inter-related and can be just called $a v i j j \bar{a}$ ), one's thoughts will be contaminated as they arise.

- Therefore, we cannot control our thoughts as they arise: a citta is contaminated to the viñnāna stage in a billionth of a second, which is unimaginably fast. This is why the Buddha said a citta is the fastest entity in the world (we loosely call "a thought" a citta, even though it is really viñ̃ānạakkhandha that we experience).
- All we can do is to REDUCE avijj $\bar{a}$ (and thus all those related entities of gathi, $\bar{a} s a v a$, anusaya) by learning Dhamma and then practicing Ānāpāna (not breath meditation) and Satipaṭthāna meditation.
- As one proceeds in the Path, one's had gati (and āsava and anusaya) will start decreasing, one's citta will tend to be more "cleaner and brighter."
- Once one gets to a certain level, one can start contemplating on those key concepts like anicca, dukkha, and anatta, i.e., vipassana meditation, and attain magga phala.


## Contamination of a Citta Depends on the Arammaṇa and Gati

15. Not all citta get contaminated at the same level. A citta arises when one of our six sense faculties makes a sense contact, and the level of contamination of the citta depends critically on what that sensory input is.

- Let us take some examples. When we taste delicious food or see an attractive object, greedy thoughts may arise. But we know that we all don't have the same cravings for a given item. Some foods that some people crave can be repulsive to some others. In another example, a given person may be liked by some but disliked by others (think about a famous politician).
- Furthermore, we don't generate defiled thoughts in many cases. Billions of citta flow through our minds as we look at scenery passing by while riding in a car; they are mostly neutral, but still are contaminated to a certain level.
- But the level of contamination will be stronger when one sees an eye-catching object.
- Details at, "Ārammana Plays a Critical Role in a Sensory Event."


## A Newborn Baby Does Not Have a Pabhassara Citta

16. I have seen some people say citta that arise in a baby are pabhassara citta. Anusaya ALWAYS remains with a lifestream regardless of whether it is a baby, animal, Brahma until that lifestream attains the Arahant stage.

- A baby's brain has not developed so it cannot experience the world as we do, and it also cannot express itself. But a baby's citta are also contaminated due to anusaya being there.
- Only when one attains magga phala that a part of one's anusaya (and āsava and samyojana) is removed permanently; see, "Conditions for the Four Stages of Nibbāna."


## How to Attain a Pabhassara Citta

17. As one starts at the Sotāpanna stage of Nibbāna, and advance through Sakadāgāmī, Anāgāmī stages to the Arahant stage, one's avijjā (and thus bad gathi, anusaya, āsava, etc.) decrease permanently.

- Thus a Sotāpanna's thoughts will not be defiled beyond a certain level of contamination. Indeed, a Sotāpanna will not generate strong akusala citta that are capable of leading to rebirth in the apāy $\bar{a}$.
- By the time one gets to the Anāgāmī stage, one has removed all kāmāsava (kāmā āsava), and thus will not be tempted by any sensual object in the kāma loka. Therefore he/she will not be reborn anywhere in the $k \bar{a} m \bar{a}$ loka (four ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$, human realm, and the six deva realms).
- When one gets to the Arahant stage, one has removed all avijjā (and all bad gathi, anusaya, āsava, etc.): One has attained Nibbāna, and thus one will not be reborn anywhere in the 31 realms at death.
- All the above have been discussed in detail in many posts at the site. One can use the site map "Pure Dhamma - Sitemap" or use the "Search" box on top right to look for posts for given keyword(s).


## XIV Historical Background

- Historical Background - Introduction
- Methods of Delivery of Dhamma by the Buddha
- Misconceptions on the Topics the Buddha "Refused to Answer"
- Misinterpretations of Buddha Dhamma
- Preservation of the Dhamma
- Historical Timeline of Edward Conze
- Why is it Critical to Find the Pure Buddha Dhamma?
- Key Problems with Mahāyāna Teachings
- Saddharma Pundarika Sutra (Lotus Sutra) - A Focused Analysis
- What is Sunyata or Sunnata (Emptiness)?
- Incorrect Theravāda Interpretations - Historical Timeline
- Buddhaghosa and Visuddhimagga - Historical Background
- Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga - A Focused Analysis
- Background on the Current Revival of Buddha Dhamma
- Misinterpretation of Anicca and Anatta by Early European Scholars
- Tipitaka Commentaries - Helpful or Misleading?


### 14.1 Historical Background - Introduction

## One of the earliest posts: Revised May 27, 2017

1. Today, we have three main "schools" of "Buddhism" that include the Theravāda Buddhism in Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, and few other South Asian countries, Mahāyāna Buddhism in the form Zen in Japan, China, and several other Asian countries, and Vajryāna Buddhism in Tïbet.

- All these are being practiced in other countries in varying degrees. How the original teachings of the Buddha got branched out over 2500 years is discussed in, "Historical Timeline of Edward Conze."

2. The vast literature in Theravāda Buddhism, which is contained in the Tipitaka (three baskets of Sutta, Vinaya, and Abhidhamma) are mostly self-consistent.

- Considering the vastness of the material in these documents, the consistency is amazing, and gives one confidence that any "contamination" would be small indeed.

3. However, even the Theravāda literature has been contaminated with incorrect interpretations of the Tipitaka.

- The root causes of misinterpretations of key terms are discussed at several posts below in this section, but specifically two major historical events can be pointed out: "Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga - A Focused Analysis" and "Misinterpretation of Anicca and Anatta by Early European Scholars."
- These inconsistencies were first pointed out by my teacher Thero who recently passed away, and my goal with this website is to point out those errors and illustrate that those correct interpretations provide a fully-consistent picture: "Parinibbāna of Waharaka Thero."

4. It is hard for me to fathom how a normal human being, regardless of how intelligent he is, could teach the doctrine in such different ways over forty five years, yet be so consistent in multiple ways (the discourses range from simple one-to-one question answer sessions with individuals to lengthy discourses delivered to audiences of thousands of people, not to mention the complex Abhidhamma material).

- Even with the help of a computer, it is hard for me to keep track of the intricacy of Abhidhamma. The complex workings of the mind has been analyzed in multiple ways, and they are all consistent within the Abhidhamma and also with the Suttā.

5. Teachings of the Buddha, as given in the Theravāda Tipitaka, are confirmed and solidified with each new scientific discovery (in contrast, the mythical aspects introduced in various forms of Mahāyāna Buddhism are facing problems in light of scientific progress).

Buddha Dhamma is like a diamond covered in the dirt of ignorance. The more we find about the world through scientific methods (thus removing more dirt from the diamond), the more of the diamond's luster become apparent. Not too far into the future, Buddha Dhamma will shine brightly and will greatly help the humanity all over the world.
6. It is ironic in a way how the "materialistic science" is helping to clarify and confirm the teachings of the "mind-based" Buddha Dhamma. Yet the humanity is still only enamored with the truly amazing materialistic advances based on scientific discoveries, and is for most part unaware of its primitive stage compared to ultimate knowledge contained in Buddha Dhamma.

- The real breakthrough may come when science will be forced to embrace the mind as yet another fundamental property of nature.
- The discovery of quantum mechanics has clearly laid the foundation for this next breakthrough. It has been more than hundred years since the advent of quantum mechanics, but it is only within the past two to three decades that real progress has been made in this direction. I discuss these developments in detail in the "Dhamma and Science" section.

Next, "Methods of Delivery of Dhamma by the Buddha", .......

### 14.2 Methods of Delivery of Dhamma by the Buddha

1. Buddha Dhamma is undoubtedly the most complex "theory" in the world. It is truly amazing that such a deep philosophical doctrine has survived over 2500 years.

- However, we can be confident that the pure Dhamma still survives, because the three baskets of sutta, vinaya, and abhidhamma were written down in 29 BCE when there were still numerous Arahants were present.
- After about 100-200 CE, people started translating the Tipitaka into Sanskrit and also the Mahāyāna sect started writing their own suttā in Sanskrit; see, "Historical Timeline of Edward Conze."

2. Another important point to remember is that there is no single discourse in which the Buddha has drawn together all the elements of his teaching and assigned them to their appropriate place within some comprehensive system; see, "Sutta Interpretation - Uddesa, Niddesa, Patiniddesa."

- Therefore, the same material was delivered in a variety of different ways over the 45 -year "ministry" of the Buddha. If some mistakes were made in the transmission of one of the sutt $\bar{a}$ or discourses, that would become apparent when compared with the numerous other discourses or the Abhidhamma.

3. The Buddha tailored his discourses to his audience at hand. Thus his teachings that have been transmitted encompass a broad spectrum, ranging from one-to-one conversations with people who had particular questions in mind to long discourses to audiences consisting of groups with wide-ranging mental capabilities.

- If the Buddha realized that it was not fruitful to explain a deep concept to an individual, he remained silent. One example cited is Buddha's silence when a certain wanderer named Vacchagotta asked him whether there was an Atman or äthma (permanent soul) or not. Even though Buddha had clearly explained in Paticca Samuppāda that the concept of a lifestream with changing "gathi," in this case, he remained in silence when Vacchagotta asked him the question twice. Vacchagotta then left.
- After Vacchagotta left, Buddha's personal attendant, Ven. Ānanda, asked him why Buddha did not explain the concept that it is not correct to say "there is no soul" or "there is a soul" to Vacchagotta. The Buddha told Ānanda that he did not think Vacchagotta was mentally capable at that time to understand the concept, and that he did not want to confuse him. See the post, "What Reincarnates? - Concept of a Lifestream" for the correct explanation.
- It turned out that Vacchagotta later became a disciple and even attained Nibbāna through his efforts.

4. Other times, he would enunciate invariable principles that stand at the heart of the teaching: for example, Abhidhamma is a complete description of the working of the mind. The Buddha delivered this Abhidhamma material in summary form to his chief disciple, Ven. Sariputta, and it was Ven. Sariputta and his followers who expanded that summary to the form that we have today in the Tipiṭaka; see, "Abhdhamma - Introduction."

- But in most cases, instead of trying to provide the most thorough and intellectually deep answers, he tried to find the best way to steer people to the truth according to their mental capabilities. Some recent books have misrepresented such isolated one-to-one correspondence as indications that some fundamental issues have not been addressed by the Buddha. They are probably unaware that such questions have been answered in other sutt $\bar{a}$. I will point such instances as they come up in other posts.

Next, "Misconceptions on the Topics the Buddha "Refused to Answer"", .....

### 14.3 Misconceptions on the Topics the Buddha "Refused to Answer"

Revised January 25, 2019; March 26, 2021; re-written October 9, 2022

## The "Unanswered Questions"

1. Some say that the Buddha refused to answer a set of questions; see "WebLink: en.wikipedia.org: The unanswered questions." According to that article and others, the four questions that the Buddha did not answer are:
2. Is the world eternal?
3. Is the world finite?
4. Is the "self" identical to the body?
5. Does Tathāgata (Buddha/Arahant) exist after death?

- Buddha did provide answers to those questions. But the answers depend on what one understands by the words "loko" (the world) and "jīvaim" (life.)


## Buddha's Method of Answering Questions

2. Buddha's main concern at any given instance was to provide an answer that the audience at hand was able to comprehend.

- If the correct answer had befuddled the audience, he remained silent on that question. There are some sutt $\bar{a}$ with such accounts.

3. A good example is when a monk named Mālunkyaputta came to the Buddha and asked several questions regarding the universe and stated that he would leave the order if the Buddha refused to answer them; see "WebLink: suttacentral: The Shorter Discourse to Mālunikyaputta (MN 63)".

The Buddha told Māluñkyaputta, "Suppose Mālunkyaputta, a man is wounded by a poisoned arrow, and the friends and relatives bring him to a surgeon. Suppose the man should then say: "I will not let this arrow be taken out until I know who shot me; whether he is a Ksatriya or a Brahmana or a Vaisya or a Sudra (ie., which caste); what his name and family may be; whether he is tall, short, or of medium stature; whether his complexion is black, brown, or golden; from which village, town, or city he comes. I will not let this arrow be taken out until I know the kind of bow shot me; the kind of bowstring used; the type of arrow; what sort of feather was used on the arrow, and with what kind of material the arrow was". Mālunkyaputta, that man would die without knowing any of these things. Even so, Mālunkyaputta, if anyone says: "I will not follow the holy life under the Blessed One until he answers these questions such as whether the universe is eternal or not," he would die with these questions unanswered by the Blessed One."
4. However, other suttā provided the answers, or they are inherent in the doctrine itself.

- For example, the answer to the fourth question should be evident to anyone who has understood the primary goal of an authentic Buddhist: "to stop the rebirth process"; see "Four Noble Truths - Suffering and Its Elimination."

5. The Buddha seems to have followed four ways of treating questions:
i. Should answer some directly,
ii. others should be answered by way of analyzing them,
iii. counter-questions should answer some others, and
iv. put aside some since they serve no purpose.

- This is stated in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Pañhabyākarana Sutta (AN 4:42)."
- As mentioned in the above section, depending on the audience, he chose the method that he deemed appropriate.


## Answers According to Mundane Meanings

6. Nowadays, the words "loko" and "jivvaí" are taken as "the world out there/cosmos" and "self," as Wikipedia article of \#1 indicates. Here, the short answers are: Yes; No; It is not correct to say there is a "self" or "no-self"; No.

The answers to the first two questions are in several suttā, but mainly in the Aggañ̃̃a Sutta (DN 27). An introduction to that sutta is in "Buddhism and Evolution - Aggañña Sutta (DN 27)".

- As you can see in that post, the Buddha's version sharply contrasts the current scientific understanding. For example, Earth was exclusively populated by humans who had subtle, invisible bodies in the beginning. This is the reverse of the currently adopted "theory of evolution" in science.
- However, as pointed out in that post, Buddha's version had survived previous scientific theories. I have no doubts that further scientific discoveries will confirm Buddha's version; also see "Dhamma and Science - Introduction."

7. Think about the fact that starting with the Greek philosophers at the time of the Buddha (a coincidence), Western science took over 2500 years to reach the current level of understanding of the universe.

- Even two hundred years ago, the scientific understanding was limited to the Solar system and nothing beyond that. Now we know that there are billions of galaxies, each with billions of stars (most of which have planetary systems like our Solar system) and that all this started with the big bang.
- This slow transition took the genius and courage of people like Galileo, who sometimes sacrificed their lives to bring out the truth.
- But the Buddha knew all about the universe and how the mind worked 2500 years ago!

8. Buddha has explained that both theories of a "self" and "no-self" are wrong. That is discussed in detail in many suttā; see, for example, "What Reincarnates? - Concept of a Lifestream" and "Anattā - A Systematic Analysis."

The Buddha's following answer illustrates the urgency with which he asked the followers to "follow the path" diligently instead of wasting valuable time on metaphysical questions.
9. Buddha's perspectives on many issues ranging from the working of the mind to those on the universe, are apparent in his teachings on Abhidhamma (and also in some main sutt $\bar{a}$, such as the Aggañña sutta). Fundamental aspects of the universe (infinite in space and time) are inherent in the doctrine.

- For example, his teachings are based on cause and effect (principle of causality). There can be no effects without prior causes. This is the opposite of the "Creator model," which requires a Creator of the world. The causality principle NECESSARILY requires that there can be no beginning!
- Those principles are embedded in the teachings, but the Buddha avoided giving answers to specific questions, especially from individuals, because it would have confused those people.


## Answers According to "Buddhist Meanings"

10. In most cases, by "loko" (and also "sabba" or "all") the Buddha meant "one's world" and NOT the conventional meaning that scientists use for the "world out there" with innumerable stars and planets.

- One's world is the five aggregates. That is all each "person" has ever experienced. But there is no "person" that "travels the rebirth process." Each existence arises depending on causes and conditions (Paṭicca Samuppāda.)
- The Buddha has given clear answers based on the above in "WebLink: suttacentral: Sassataditthi Sutta (SN 24.9)" and "WebLink: suttacentral: Asassataditthi Sutta (SN 24.10)." The Buddha describes the five aggregates (rūpa, vedanā, sañña, sañkhārā, viññāna) as the "loka."
- The first position ("loka" is eternal) is sassata dittthi and the second position is uccheda diṭthi.
- Note: The translator (of the English versions in the links) incorrectly translated "loko" as "cosmos," the mundane meaning we discussed earlier. Also, he has truncated the five aggregates in the second sutta and the following suttas. The complete versions are there in the Buddha Jayanthi Tipitaka Edition.

11. The following two suttas address the issue of whether "loka" is infinite or not: "WebLink: suttacentral: Antavā Sutta (SN 24.11)" and "WebLink: suttacentral: Anantavā Sutta (SN 24.12)."

- The two suttas following that "WebLink: suttacentral: Taimjīvaintainsarīraim Sutta (SN 24.13)" and "WebLink: suttacentral: Aññamijīvainaññainsarīraim Sutta (SN 24.14)" state that it is not correct to say either life $(j \bar{i} v a)$ is the same as the body (sariva) or not.
- Here, those with uccheda ditthi believe that life ( $j \bar{\imath} v a$ ) is associated with the physical body (sarīra) in this life. When the body dies, that is the end of $j \bar{v} v a$.
- Those with sassata ditṭhi refer to $j \bar{\imath} v a$ as a "lifestream that continues without end" because it has a permanent entity (ātman) associated with it.

12. There are four more suttas, "WebLink: suttacentral: Hotitathāgato Sutta (SN 24.15)" through "WebLink: suttacentral: Nevahotinanahotitathāgato Sutta (SN 24.18)" stating that it is not correct to take those positions on the "status of a Buddha/Arahant" after Parinibbāna. That is because we cannot express anything about Nibbāna in the terminology of 'this world."

- Mahayanists believe that Buddha/Arahants still exist in this world of 31 realms. That is the wrong view of the first sutta in the four suttas.
- The other three wrong views arise because of not understanding the following fact. Once attaining Parinibbāna, the "status" of Buddha/Arahants cannot be expressed with the vocabulary of "this world of 31 realms." We can only say that Buddha/Arahants will not be reborn in this world.


### 14.4 Misinterpretations of Buddha Dhamma

## Revised October 5, 2016

1. It is said that the Buddha advised not to translate the Tipitaka material word-by-word into any other language. Instead, commentaries were written to explain the Pāli material in the Tipiṭaka in condensed form fit for listening, retention, recitation, memorization, and repetition - the five major elements in oral transmission.

- This is a very important point. For example, the Buddha orally delivered the main Suttā over many hours; the Dhamma Cakka Pavattana Sutta was delivered over several days to the five ascetics. For easy transmission, these discourses were SUMMARIZED in Magadhi (and that particular format of "lining up" was termed Pāli); see, "Sutta Interpretation - Uddesa, Niddesa, Patiniddesa."
- Each line, sometimes even a word in a Sutta needs a further explanation; see, "Satipatthāna Sutta Structure" and follow-up posts. Such "explanatory texts" or "commentaries" were originally written in Sinhala and were called "Sinhala Atthakata".
- Commentaries in Sinhala accumulated for centuries and in the fourth or fifth century CE, these commentaries were translated to Pāli (and edited with his own ideas incorporated) by Buddhaghosa. Subsequently, most of the original Sinhala commentaries were lost, and today we only have the edited summaries of Buddhaghos a where he incorporated his own ideas.
- Fortunately, three of the original commentaries ("Sinhala Atthakata") have been preserved in the Tipitaka; see, "Preservation of the Dhamma."

2. Among the commentaries to the Tipitaka, those on the Abhidhamma are dominated by the three commentaries of Buddhaghosa: (i) the atthasalini, "The Expositor", the commentary to the Dhammasangani, (ii) the Sammohavinodani, "The Dispeller of Delusion", the commentary to the Vibhanga, and (iii) the Pancappakarana Atthakatha, the combined commentary to the other five treatises.

- But it must be remembered that Buddhaghosa wrote those commentaries with his own ideas as a former Hindu Brahmin. The original Tipitaka remains unaltered, including those three original commentaries ("Sinhala Atthakata") mentioned above.

3. In addition to writing those commentaries on the Tipitaka while he was in Sri Lanka, Buddhghosa also wrote the Visuddhimagga (The Path of Purification) around 430 CE , which is considered to be an important treatise on Theravāda doctrine. This is wrongly considered to be a comprehensive manual condensing the theoretical and practical teaching of the Buddha, and some consider it to be the most important Theravāda text outside of the Tipitaka Canon of scriptures.

- I will point out many problems with Buddhaghosa's writings - including Visuddhimagga - at this site.
- The most common problems include: misinterpretation of $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p a ̄ n a s a t i ~ b h a ̄ v a n a \bar{a}$ as "breath meditation"; see, " 7 . What is Änapāna?" and "Mahā Satipatthāna Sutta."
- He also incorporated kasiṇa meditations, which are anāriya meditations and are not Ariya meditation techniques. In Ariya (or true Buddhist) meditations, the object of meditation is Nibbāna, not a mundane object like a kasina object.

4. This is critical issue since most current Theravāda institutions teach mainly the works of Buddhaghosa, since those works are supposed to be reliable summaries of the teachings in the Tipitaka. Therefore, it is good to have the works of Buddhaghosa reviewed extensively.

- I will point out the most important misrepresentations on this website, based on what I have learned from my teacher Thero in Sri Lanka. The Dhamma that I present here is, in my opinion, the correct interpretation of the Tipitaka. I hope you will come to that conclusion on careful examination of the material.
- More details can be found in "Incorrect Theravāda Interpretations - Historical Timeline" and other posts in the "Historical Background" section.

5. After Emperor Asoka's reign, no further steps were taken to hold back the inevitable Brahminic influence on Buddhism in India, and Buddhism went through a gradual decline in India (despite or even because of the resurgent philosophical activity led by Nagarjuna, Asanga, Vasubhanudhu, and others around the beginning of the first millennium) and virtually disappeared from India during the first millennium.
6. The Mahāyāna version of Buddhism started with the works of Nagarjuna, who, in all likelihood had best intentions for the promotion of Buddhism (even though he was naive enough to assume that Buddha Dhamma can be refined for the "new ages").

- These refinements became major revisions by the time D. T. Suzuki's books were written in the early 1900 's, and the original teachings were badly distorted. This is the reason why I am so obsessive about making sure that my essays are compatible with the original teachings of the Buddha.

7. All these distortions in both Mahāyāna and Theravāda versions have their origins in various philosophers (such as Nagarjuna and Buddhaghosa) trying to interpret Buddha Dhamma in terms of mundane concepts; see, "Buddha Dhamma: Non-Perceivability and Self-Consistency."

- However, as pointed out in that post, it is easy to point out the inconsistencies with such mundane interpretations by Nagarjuana, Buddhaghosa, and others, especially with the evidence gained by the scientific advances made during the past few hundred years.
- And such scientific evidence and the ones that are yet to be discovered will only confirm the pure Dhamma that stays intact in the Tipitaka to the day, as also pointed out in that post.

Next, "Preservation of Dhamma",

### 14.5 Preservation of the Buddha Dhamma

Revised October 28, 2017; November 11, 2017; January 9, 2019; re-written January 26, 2020; (revised June 19, 2021;) re-written June 25, 2021; revised August 29, 2022

## Tipiṭaka - The Pāli Canon

1. After the passing away of the Buddha, his teachings were handed down verbally from one generation to the next over three to four hundred years. Preservation in the written form took place 2000 years ago.

- Tipitaka was composed into a form suitable for easy verbal transmission, in many cases in SUMMARY form. See, "Sutta Interpretation - Uddesa, Niddesa, Patiniddesa." That is why it survived almost entirely in content over this long period.
- It was written down in Matale, Sri Lanka, at the turn of the first century, 2000 years ago. See "Welcome to Aluvihāra Rock Cave Temple" for information about the location where the Tipiṭaka writing took place.
- The other earliest written Buddhist documents are from Gandhāra in modern northwestern Pakistan; see "The Buddhist Literature of Ancient Gandhāra" by Richard Salomon (2018.) However, those do not provide a complete version of the Tipitaka; see p. 83 of the book.
- All other documents in Chinese, Tỉbetan, etc., date later and are derived from the Pāli Tipiṭaka.


## Initial Oral Transmission

2. The discourses of the Buddha were said to have been delivered in the Māgadhi language. The written form was called Pāli. But Pāli does not have its script, so it was written down with Sinhala script.

- That provides a clear way of sorting out the Mahāyāna literature, written in Sanskrit and never written in Pāli. Mahāyānic philosophers wrote all the Sanskrit suttā in Sanskrit.
- Around the turn of the first millennium, translations of the Tipitaka to Chinese and Tibetan also took place. The original manuscripts in Pāli can be expected to contain most of the original discourses delivered by the Buddha.

3. Today, it is hard to fathom (especially for Westerners) that such accuracy would be possible in verbally transmitted material.

- However, we need to understand the background traditions and the monks' determination over thousands of years that helped preserve most of the original teachings.
- Even today, some people have memorized large sections of the Tipitaka, especially in Myanmar (formerly Burma). In Myanmar, there are special examinations to test memorizations See, "WebLink: myanmarnet.net: Tipitakadhara Sayadaws of Myanmar (Burma) in Five Decades." Also, see "WebLink: dhammadharo: Memorizing the Tipitaka."
- During oral transmission, groups of bhikkhus memorized (overlapping) sections of the Tipitaka. Then during a Sangāyan $\bar{a}$ (Buddhist Council), they all got together and compared each other versions to make sure they were all compatible.


## It Took Three Councils to Finalize the Tipitaka

4. A major reason for the assembly of the First Buddhist Council within three months of the Buddha's Parinibbāna - around 480 BCE - was to organize the vast material.

- Within the next two hundred years, two more Councils were held to recite and verify the teachings and to finalize the Tipiṭaka in three broad categories ("ti" + "piṭaka" or "three baskets"). The second was held about a century after the first one.
- The third was held in 250 BC at Pataliputra under the patronage of King Asoka. The "three baskets" were completed at this Council with the finalization of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka; see \#15 below.
- This completed Tipitaka was written down in 29 BCE at the Fourth Buddhist Council in Matale, Sri Lanka. This was the last Council attended ONLY by Arahants. Thus, we can be assured of its authenticity. Since Pāli does not have its own script, it was written in the Sinhala language.


## The authenticity of the Tipiṭaka

5. Another important point is hidden in the history of the Tipitaka. Even up to the 20th century, the whole Tipitaka was written on specially prepared ola (palm) leaves. They normally deteriorate over 100 years or so and need to be rewritten. Even though that was a very labor-intensive process (about 60 large volumes in the modern printed version of the Tipitaka), it served another important purpose.

- Sinhala language (both spoken and written) changed over the past 2000 years. The need to re-write it every 100 or so years made sure that they took account of the changes in the Sinhala script. Of course, the Pāli language has not changed.
- The following video gives an idea about the preparation process and the tools used to write:

WebLink: youtube: Ola Leaf manuscripts

## Most Suttā Are Condensed Versions of the Discourses

6. A critical point here is that a sutta is a CONDENSED version of discourse in many cases. For example, the Dhamma Cakka Pavattana sutta was delivered to the five ascetics overnight. Imagine how many written pages would be if written verbatim! Yet, it is summarized in a few pages. The same is true for all the important suttā. Otherwise, it would have been impossible to transmit all those thousands of sutt $\bar{a}$.

- The Buddha delivered most of his discourses in the Māghadhi (māghadhi = "maga" + "adhi" or Noble path) language. Tipitaka was written in Pāli with Sinhala script. Pāli is a version of Māghadhi suitable for writing down oral discourses in a summary form suitable for transmission.
- Each Pāli word is packed with a lot of information, and thus commentaries (called "Attha Kath $\vec{a}$ ") were written to expound on the meaning of important Pāli words and to explain the key phrases in the sutt $\bar{a}$.


## Importance of the Commentaries

7. Thus, the Tipiṭaka was meant to be used with the commentaries. Pāli suttā are not supposed to be translated word-by-word. See, "Sutta Interpretation - Uddesa, Niddesa, Patiniddesa."

- Someone burned down most of those Sinhala commentaries during the Anuradhapura era; see, "Incorrect Theravāda Interpretations - Historical Timeline."
- Fortunately, three original commentaries prepared by the main disciples of the Buddha (Ven. Sariputta, Ven. Kaccayana, etc.) during the Buddha's time were included in the Tipiṭaka (in the Khuddhaka Nikāya) and thus survived. The current revival of pure Dhamma by the Theros in Sri Lanka is partially due to their perusal of these three documents (Patisambhidāmagga, Petakopadesa, and Nettippakarana).

8. With the loss of most of the commentaries and the non-prominence of the surviving three commentaries mentioned above, people started translating the Tipitaka word by word. The problem was compounded by the increasing usage of the Sanskrit language beginning around the first century CE.

- For example, "anicca" was translated first to Sanskrit as "anitya," and then the same Sanskrit word "anitya" was ADOPTED as the Sinhala translation for anicca. Similarly, "anatta" was translated to Sanskrit as "anāthma" and again was adopted as the Sinhala word for "anatta." This has prevented millions of people from attaining Nibbāna all these years; see "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta - Wrong Interpretations."
- Another good example is the translation of Pațicca Samuppāda to Sanskrit as Pratītyasamutpāda; see, "Paticca Samuppāda - "Pati+ichcha" + "Sama+uppāda"" and the Wikipedia article, "Pratityasamutpāda."
- It is NOT POSSIBLE to translate some key Pāli words to Sanskrit or English, or any other language without losing their true meaning. This is why I prefer to keep the original words in many cases (e.g., anicca, anatta, taṇh $\bar{a})$ and just explain what it is.


## Buddha Prohibited Translation of the Tipiṭaka to Sanskrit

9. The Buddha foresaw this and warned not to TRANSLATE the Tipiṭaka to Sanskrit. There were two Brahmins by the names of Yamela and Kekuṭa who were experts on the Vedic Texts; they became bhikkhus and asked the Buddha whether they should translate the Pāli suttā to Sanskrit.

- The Buddha admonished them that Sanskrit was a language with musical overtones developed by the high-minded Brahmins. Thus, it was impossible to convey the true meanings of Mäghadhi (Pāli) words in Sanskrit; see, WebLink: tipitaka.fandom.com/wiki: Chulavagga 5.33. He admonished them not to translate his teachings to Sanskrit.
- In the Sutta Central English translation, the Pāli word for Sanskrit (chandasa) is mistranslated as "metrical"; see, "WebLink: suttacentral: 15. Minor matters (Khuddaka)," The relevant Pāli text as, "Tena kho pana samayena yamelakekuṭā nāma...".

10. One grave problem today is that many people try to translate a given sutta word by word to other languages. Thus the Dhamma Cakka Pavattana sutta that we mentioned above is translated into a few pages.

- For a comprehensive translation of that sutta: "Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta."
- That is why most of the existing translations are inadequate at best and erroneous in most cases; see, "Sutta Interpretation - Uddesa, Niddesa, Patiniddesa."


## Buddhaghosa's Commentaries

11. Finally, just before the burning of the Sinhala commentaries, Buddhaghosa translated and edited those commentaries back to Pāli in his Visuddhimagga and other books.

- Even though he had made many errors (like including kasiña meditation and substituting the ānāpānasati bhāvanā with "breath meditation"), he had used the words anicca and anatta in the Pāli version of the Visuddhimagga; see, "Buddhaghosa and Visuddhimagga - Historical Background" and"Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga - A Focused Analysis."
- Thus the incorrect translations of the words "anicca" (as "impermanence") and "anatta" (as "no-self") may have happened more recently; see, "Misinterpretation of Anicca and Anatta by Early European Scholars."
- Now, let us systematically review the timeline of the Tipitaka.


## Timeline - First Buddhist Council

12. That first Buddhist council was held three months after the Parinibbāna at Rājagaha, the capital of Māgadha.

- Shortly after the Buddha passed away, Ven. Mahakassapa, the de facto head of the Sanggha, selected five hundred monks, all Arahants, to meet and compile an authoritative version of the teachings.

13. The Cullavagga, one of the books of the Pāli Vinaya Piṭaka, gives an account of how the authorized texts were compiled at the First Buddhist Council:

- Based on Venerable Upāli's recitation of Vinaya, the Vinaya Piṭaka, disciplinary matters were compiled.
- Venerable Ānanda then recited "the Dhamma" or the Sutta Pitaka, i.e., the discourses, and based on this recitation the Sutta Pitaka, the Compilation of Discourses, was compiled (Venerable Ānanda was supposed to have an amazing memory and had memorized all the Suttā preached by the Buddha).
- The Abhidhamma was rehearsed by all the Arahants present at the Council. Although they recited parts of the Abhidhamma at these earlier Buddhist Councils, it was not until the Third Council that it became finalized to its present form as the third and final Pitaka of the Canon.


## Finalization of Tipiṭaka at the Third Council

14. The Moggaliputta-Tissa Thero compiled the proceedings of the Third Council in the Kathavatthu, which became part of the Tipittaka (Three Baskets). During the Third Council, Arahants compiled the final version of the Tipitaka (as available today). It finalized the Abhidhamma Piṭaka and added several books on the Khuddhaka Nikāya, and the Kathavatthu.

The composition of the Tipitaka is as follows:

1. The Vinaya Pitaka is composed of five books: Major Offenses (Prajika Pāli), Minor Offenses (Pacittiya Pāli), Greater Section (Mahavagga Pāli), Smaller Section (Culavagga Pāli), and Epitome of the Vinaya (Parivara Pāli).
2. The Sutta Pitaka consists of five Nikāyas: Digha Nikāya (Collection of Long Discourses), Majjhima Nikāya (Collection of Middle-Length Courses), Samyutta Nikāya (Collection of Kindred Sayings), Añguttara Nikāya (Collection of Discourses arranged by a number), and Khuddaka Nikāya (Smaller Collection).
3. The Abhidhamma Pitaka consists of the following categories: Dhamma Sañghani (Classification of Dharmas), Vibhanga (The Book of Divisions), Kathavatthu (Points of Controversy), Puggala Paññatti (Description of Individuals), Dhātukatha (Discussion regarding Elements), Yamaka (The Book of the Pairs), and Patṭhāna (The Book of Relations). Venerable Moggaliputta Tissa COMPILED Kathavatthu at the Third Buddhist Council.

- That collection is the Tipiṭaka (Three Baskets) or the Pāli Canon that exists today.


## Abhidhamma Piṭaka Finalized at the Third Council

15. The work on the Abhidhamma Pitaka, started during the time of the Buddha by Ven. Sariputta was not finalized until the Third Council. The Buddha only taught the basic framework to Ven. Sariputta. It was completed over roughly 250 years by the lineage of bhikkhus started with Ven. Sariputta. Of course, Ven. Sariputta was one of the two chief disciples of the Buddha: While Ven. Moggallana excelled in supernatural powers, Ven. Sariputta excelled in Dhamma. He was only second to the Buddha in Dhamma knowledge.

- The minute details on the structure of a citta vīthi (a series of citta) of 17 thought moments, with each citta lasting sub-billionth of a second, can be seen only by a Buddha. The Buddha described only the underlying principles to Ven. Sāriputta. Then Ven. Sāriputta and his group of bhikkhus (and their subsequent lineage) completed the monumental task of making a complete description of Dhamma theory starting with the fundamental entities.
- Bhikkhu Bodhi describes the origins of Abhidhamma in his book, "Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma," (2000); see pp. 9-11.
- As I mentioned, compiling Abhidhamma Pitaka (after the Buddha described it in summary form to Ven. Sāriputta) was not a trivial task. That is why it took 250 years to finalize that work. Anyone with even a little knowledge of Abhidhamma would realize that it must be the work of a Buddha. See the "Abhidhamma" section at puredhamma.net.
- The Abhidhamma Pitaka is fully consistent with the Sutta Pitaka. I would be happy to discuss any perceived inconsistencies.
- However, it is not necessary to learn Abhidhamma to attain magga phala. It is an additional tool for those who like to get into details. It is truly a joyful experience to "see" how phenomena can be explained at a deeper level.


## Writing Down the Tipitaka at the Fourth Council

16. This enlarged Canon, completed at the Third Council, was committed to writing in Sri Lanka in the first century BCE (29 BCE) at the Aluvihara Monastery at the Fourth Buddhist Council. The material in Pāli was written down in the Sinhala language (Pāli does not have its script).

Bhikkhus wrote on palm leaves with styluses, a pointed steel dagger-like instrument, which scratched the letters into the soft leaves. Ink made from berries was rubbed over the whole page and gently removed so that only the indentations retained the color. It is said that Tipitaka was also written down on gold leaves as well. These could be entombed inside stupās; see, the Wikipedia article "Stupa"

## Translation of the Tipitaka to Other Languages

17. It is to be noted that Theravāda Buddhism was brought to Burma and Thailand from Sri Lanka in the first century CE. Over the next two centuries, it diffused into adjoining countries of Laos and Cambodia and survived in its purity in those countries as well to the present day. (In Cambodia, the Khmer Rouge regime in the 1970s massacred most monks, and the Buddha Dhamma is virtually extinct).

- However, the Chinese/Tibetan versions of the Tipitaka seem to have come from India. The Tibetan version seems to have undergone many revisions/additions and, in some cases, is far removed from the original teachings.
- While the Sañgha (with the aid of most of the kings) in Sri Lanka took pride and honor in keeping the teachings intact, Buddhism underwent many changes in India, China, Japan, and Tibet. It then finally disappeared altogether from India around 1200 CE .


### 14.6 Historical Timeline of Edward Conze

## Revised September 8, 2021

Edward Conze was a Mahāyāna scholar and translated the Mahāyāna Prajnaparamita or Perfection of Wisdom sutras from original Sanskrit to English. See, WebLink: WIKI: Edward Conze
(Note that any Sanskrit suttā are Mahāyāna sutrā (sutra is the Sankrit word for sutta ) that were composed by Mahāyāna philosophers like Nagarjuna (who were just intellectuals, and not Arahants) and are NOT original suttā delivered by the Buddha).

Conze was impressed with those Mahāyāna suttā, and in the book, "On Indian Mahāyāna Buddhism" (1968), he analyzed the works of the Mahāyāna/Zen scholar D. T. Suzuki. Even though his bias towards Mahāyāna suttā are clear, I selected his timeline, which clearly shows how Mahāyāna scholars wrote their own suttā and tried later to attribute those to the Buddha.

This historical timeline is discussed in detail by Edward Conze in his book, "A Short History of Buddhism" (1980). According to Conze, the history of Buddhism can be conveniently divided into four periods:

1. The old Buddhism, which largely coincided with what later came to be known as Theravāda
2. Rise of Mahāyāna,
3. Rise of the Tantra (Vajryāna) and Ch'an (Zen),
4. No further divisions.

The first period is roughly 500 years; the second and third periods roughly cover the first thousand years of the current era (CE); the last thousand years can be considered as the fourth period. During this whole period, the Theravāda Dhamma was kept mostly intact. In the following description, it is also clear some of the differences between the original teachings and the Mahāyāna ideology.

In the following I will present this story verbatim as told by Conze (starting at p. 45 of his book):
"......About 100 BCE (roughly 400 years after the Buddha's Parinibbāna) a number of Buddhists in India felt that the existing statements of the doctrine had become stale and useless. In the conviction that Dhamma required ever new re-formulations so as to meet the needs of new ages, new populations and new social circumstances, they set out to produce new literature which ultimately came to be known as Mahāyāna Buddhism. The creation of this literature is one of the most significant outbursts of creative energy known to human history and it was sustained for about four to five centuries. Repetition alone, they believed, cannot sustain a living religion. Unless counterbalanced by constant innovation, it will become fossilized and lose its life-giving qualities, they believed.

So far the Mahayanistic attitude seems quite logical. What is more difficult to understand is that they insisted in presenting the new writings, manifestly composed centuries after the Buddha's Parinibbāna, as the very words of the Buddha himself. They followed the Mahasanghikas in minimizing the importance of the historical Gautama Buddha, whom they replaced by the Buddha who is the embodiment of Dhamma (dharmakaya). In the "Lotus of the Good Law", we are told that the Buddha, far from having reached his enlightenment at Bodhgaya, abides for eons and eons, from eternity to eternity, and that He preaches the Law at all times in countless places and innumerable disguises.
........Not content with this, the Mahayanists tried to link their own writings with the historical Buddha by a number of mythological fictions. They asserted that they had been preached by the Buddha in the course of his life on Earth, that parallel to the (First Buddhist) Council at Rajagaha, which codified the Suttā of the Theravāda, the Mahāyāna suttā had been codified by an assembly of Bodhisattvas on the mythical mountain of Vimalasvabhava; that the texts had been miraculously preserved for five centuries and stored away in the subterranean palaces of the Nagas, or with the king of the Gandharvas, or the king of the Gods. Then, as

Nagarjuna puts it, "five hundred years after the Buddha's Nirvana, when the Good Law, after having gradually declined, was in great danger", these treasures from the past were unearthed, revealed and made known, so as to revivify the doctrine.

What then were the main doctrinal innovations of the Mahāyāna? They can be summarized under five headings:

1. As concerns the goal there is a shift from the Arhat-ideal to the Bodhisattva-ideal;
2. A new way of salvation is worked out, in which compassion ranks equal with wisdom, and which is marked by the gradual advance through six "perfections" (pāramitā);
3. Faith is given a new range by being provided with a new pantheon of deities, or rather of persons more than divine;
4. "Skill in means" (upayakausalya), an entirely new virtue, becomes essential to the saint, and is placed even above wisdom, the highest virtue so far;
5. A coherent ontological doctrine is worked out, dealing with such items as "Emptiness", "Suchness", etc".

We will now consider them one by one.

1. The goal of Arhantship is now relegated to second place. The Mahayanists strive to be a "Bodhisattva". A Bodhisattva is distinguished by three features: (a) In his essential being he is actuated by the desire to win the full enlightenment of a Buddha, (b) He is dominated by two forces, in equal proportion, i.e., by compassion and wisdom. From compassion, he selflessly postpones his entrance into the bliss of Nirvana so as to help suffering creatures, (c) Although intent on ultimate purity, a Bodhisattva remains in touch with ordinary people by having the same passions they have. His passions, however, do not either affect or pollute his mind.
2. A Bodhisattva's compassion is called "great" because it is boundless and makes no distinctions..... This enlightenment does not automatically entail the desire to assist others. Among the enlightened, they distinguish three types, two of them "selfish", one "unselfish". The "selfish" types are Arhants and Pratyekabuddhas, who are said to represent the idea of the Hinayana, of the "inferior vehicle". The "unselfish" ones are the Buddhas, and the pursuit of the unselfish quest for enlightenment on the part of a Bodhisattva is called the "Buddha-vehicle", of the "Great Vehicle" (mahā-yana).

A Bodhisattva must be a patient man. He wants to become a Buddha, but his distance from the transcendental perfection of a supreme Buddha, who both knows and is everything, will obviously be infinite. In one life it could not possibly be traversed. Countless lives would be needed and a Bodhisattva must be prepared to wait for eons and eons before he can reach his goal. Yet, he is separated from the Buddhahood only by one single obstacle, i.e., his belief in a personal self. To get rid of himself is the Bodhisattva's supreme task. By two kinds of measures he tries to remove himself - actively by self-sacrifice and selfless service, cognitively by insight into the objective non-existence of a self. The first is due to compassion, the second to wisdom.

The unity of compassion and wisdom is acted out by the six "perfections", or "pāramit $\vec{a}$ ", the six "methods by which we go to the Beyond". A person turns into a Bodhisattva when he first resolves to win full enlightenment for the benefit of all beings. The six are: the perfections of giving, morality, patience, vigor, meditation, and wisdom".

This ends the quotation from Edward Conze's book. (I have not added or edited anything other than to skip some text in order to make it concise).

## Criticism of Conze's Analysis

I agree with Conze's analysis except for the statement in the very first paragraph: "The creation of this literature is one of the most significant outbursts of creative energy known to human history and it was sustained for about four to five centuries." This literature, even though voluminous, only made a simple theory much more seemingly confusing, and contradictory. We will discuss this in a follow-up post. The only fortunate thing about is that it is written entirely in Sanskrit, and thus is easy to distinguish from the original teachings written in Pāli Tipitaka.

In addition to the "improvements" that were added in India, further material associated with national customs was added when Mahāyāna Buddhism spread to China, Japan, and Tibet (and came to known by different names such Zen, Vajrayāna, etc.).

So, the premise of the Mahāyāna re-formulation of the Buddha Dhamma was to "refine and improve" the Dhamma of the Buddha. This is in sharp contradiction with one of the most fundamental concepts in Dhamma that only a Buddha can discover these laws of nature and BY DEFINITION, it is not possible to improve upon them. They themselves admit that a Buddha appears in the world after a long time, and thus their attempt to change Buddha Dhamma is one of the basic contradictions in Mahāyāna.

- What we need to understand is the basic difference between Buddha Dhamma and any other human endeavor: All other human endeavors involve the cumulative effort of many, whether it is science, philosophy, engineering, etc.; see, "Dhamma and Science - Introduction."

And all those efforts are made within the system, using the knowledge acquired by the experience within the system; see, "Gödel's Incompleteness Theorem." A Buddha transcends the human realm, and discovers the "whole existence" of the 31 realms; see, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma." The Mahayanists took Buddha's world view, (which is not accessible to normal human beings but only to a Buddha,) and then added their own theories that only complicate that "already seemingly esoteric" picture.

- This is why there are so many apparent contradictions in various versions of "Buddhism" today. Adding more "pluff", which is wrong anyway by definition, only distorts the correct picture.
- My goal here is to provide a consistent picture using the accepted scientific methods.

Next, "Background on the Current Revival of Buddha Dhamma",

### 14.7 Why is it Critical to Find the Pure Buddha Dhamma?

## Pre-2016 post; revised July 18, 2022

1. In 2014, I participated in an online discussion group on "Buddhism" for a few days. A couple of things that struck me were:

- There are a lot of people out there who see that there is something valuable in Buddha Dhamma. But there is a lot of confusion because so many conflicting ideas are brought up and discussed without a conclusion.
- Each person seems to have their version their own "theory" of what Buddha Dhamma is. In many forums, instead of having an honest discussion about what ideas are right and what is wrong, many people use the forums for "entertainment." It is their "coffee break" to sit around and show off their "knowledge" and "wisdom." (I must say that I regularly participated in a couple of other discussion groups in 2014 where people seemed to be genuinely interested in having an open exchange of ideas; due to lack of time, I don't participate in such discussions any more).

2. It is a good idea to first decide what the goal of such a forum is. I think the goal should be to find and confirm the core ideas that the Buddha taught 2500 years ago. Let us eliminate all these different labels, Mahāyāna, Theravāda, etc. Since it does not appear to happen any time soon, I have decided to just present what I have found. I call it Buddha Dhamma. And that is what it was called until the term "Buddhism" came into vogue in the 19th century.
3. I have two key points to make:

- We can remove many bad ideas that crept into Dhamma by looking at the historical "evolution" of "Buddhism"; The main problem with the "evolution" of Dhamma is that it is not a germ idea that needs to be nurtured and refined: Buddha Dhamma is the set of ultimate natural laws that a Buddha DISCOVERS. Now, one can be skeptical about that, which is perfectly fine. Confidence in that belief comes from critically examining the evidence, which may come later. But let us make that assumption because that is a key idea in Buddha Dhamma: It is a rare event that a human being can discover the ultimate laws of nature; see "Power of the Human Mind - introduction," and the follow-up posts.
- Modern science can be another useful tool in finding the truth or fallacy of some concepts involved; the "theories" of science are continually being tested and verified by thousand of independent scientists, so even though they are not infallible, they are better than many speculations by individuals. And there is a key difference between finding nature's laws via the scientific method and how a Buddha finds them; see "Dhamma and Science - Introduction."

I will use both these tools in presenting my case.
4. The goal (and the motivation) in finding true Dhamma (or any kind of true salvation for those who believe in any other religion or belief system) is different compared to a philosophical debate. One could "win an argument" in a philosophical debate, especially if "winning" means persuading more people in the audience. One could thus "win a debate," but deep inside, one knows the argument has flaws. It is like winning a court case and freeing a criminal. The criminal (and may be even the lawyer) knows that he/she committed the crime. Even though the consequences will not be paid in prison, they will be paid according to the Dhamma or nature's laws.
5. If we can recover those correct laws that the Buddha taught, we can gain the benefits of knowing them and following them. It is not about winning an argument. It is ALL about finding the truth for oneself. If what Buddha said is true, then this world is much more complex than most people think, and there is much more suffering if one does not use the remaining time in this life wisely.
6. Then there is this naive argument: "All religions work for the good of mankind. Do not criticize any religion or sect within Buddhism." But some of those people also say, "Our sect of Buddhism is the best version because we are so compassionate that we will not attain Enlightenment until EVERYONE is ready". As we
will see below, this oath is against one of the five precepts in Buddha Dhamma, promising not to lie. I will not talk about other religions, but I will point out the flaws in many existing versions of "Buddhism" today because that is the compassionate thing to do.
7. If one is truly compassionate, one should try to find the true Dhamma (because there is only one set of natural laws) and SHARE it with anyone interested. Dhamma is not something that anyone can GIVE to anyone else. Even the Buddha could only teach those who would listen to him. Some people even question the compassion of the Buddha when they hear this story from the Tipitaka:

- A butcher named Cundasukara lived right next door to the Jetavanaramaya, where the Buddha resided for a long time. Some may wonder why the Buddha did not try to "save" Cundasukara by teaching him the right path. Bhikkhus could hear the screams of the pigs being slaughtered and asked the Buddha why he would not try to teach Dhamma to Cundasukara. The Buddha told them that Cundasukara would accrue much more bad kamma if he tried to do that. Killing pigs leads to much bad kamma, but unimaginable bad kamma could be accumulated by having hateful thoughts towards a Buddha: see, "How to Evaluate Weights of Different Kamma." One could accumulate more bad kamma by hurting the feelings of a human being than by killing an animal, and hateful thoughts towards a Buddha can be infinitely worse than hurting a normal human being. Therefore, sometimes true compassion can be hidden.
- In my way of thinking, I would not be acting compassionately if I did not point out these flaws in both Mahāyāna and Theravāda because I have experienced the benefits of the true and pure Dhamma.
- My goal is not to try to "convert" anyone to anything. The Buddha did not try to convert anybody. It is up to each person to make their own decisions because one is responsible for one's future, and no one else is. Most of us are lucky to live in societies where we can make our own decisions.
- As I keep emphasizing, Buddha Dhamma describes the ultimate laws of nature. Anyone with any religious background, or an atheist, can follow Dhamma and should be able to see that it does describe the laws of nature. However, it is critical to find the true Dhamma. The only way to do that is to check for consistency at ALL TIMES and to weed out the bad versions.

8. In the following few posts we will examine the problems in many different versions of Mahāyāna and Theravāda. If you see any flaws in my arguments, please send me a comment. It is possible that I could make a mistake, and if so I will correct them. I hope all those who read these posts will keep an open mind because we all should have the same goal: finding the pure Dhamma that will benefit us all.

Problems with Mahāyāna and Theravāda are discussed in the section "Historical Background."

### 14.8 Key Problems with Mahāyāna Teachings

## Revised September 2, 2019; June 11, 2021; re-written September 28, 2022

## Main Contradictions

1. The following are just three major contradictions of "Mahāyāna Buddhism" with the teachings of the Buddha.
i. Mahāyānists say that each person needs to attain Buddhahood. By "Buddhahood," they mean a "Sammā Sambuddha" like Buddha Gotama. They say even Arahants like Ven. Sāriputta needs to attain the Buddhahood!
ii. "Bodhisatta vow" is even worse. Not only each person needs to become a Sammā Sambuddha, but they need to wait until "everyone" is ready to become a Samm $\bar{a}$ Sambuddha. They have no idea how hard it is to become a Samma $\bar{a}$ Sambuddha.
iii. Those who initiated the Mahāyāna version (a mere 500 years after the Parinibbāna of the Buddha Gotama) declared that the teachings had become "outdated" and needed to be "updated."
iv. Any sentient being can attain the state of a Sammā Sambuddha (all have the "Buddha nature.")

- I discussed (i) and (ii) above in the post "Saddharma Pundarika Sutra (Lotus Sutra) - A Focused Analysis."
- This post will discuss (iii) and (iv) below. But let me first emphasize the problems with (i) and (ii) above.


## Summary of the First Two Contradictions

2. The main problem with (i) and (ii) above is a conflict with a fundamental tenet of Buddha Dhamma. A Buddha comes to this world after a very long time and DISCOVERS the laws of nature; Mahāāanists agree that it takes eons (billions of years) to fulfill the "pāramitās" and to become a Buddha.

- Then they turn around and say that EVERYONE (meaning all sentient beings) must SIMULTANEOUSLY attain the Samm $\bar{a}$ Sambuddha status. Given that there are an uncountable number of sentient beings, that is utterly foolish.
- Furthermore, the Buddha has clearly described the uniqueness of a Sammā Sambuddha ("WebLink: suttacentral: Ekapuggalavagga (AN 1.170-187)") and the difference between a Sammā Sambuddha and an Arahant: "WebLink: suttacentral: Sammāsambuddha Sutta (SN 22.58)."
- Thus, the "gap" between a Sammā Sambuddha and an Arahant is enormous. Similarly, a huge difference exists between an Arahant and an average human (puthujjanika.) [puthujjanika : [adj.] [fr. puthujjana] common, ordinary J. I,360 (of iddhi).]

3. The first thing one is supposed to do in becoming a Mahāyāna Buddhist is to take the "Bodhisattva vow." They say each being should endeavor to become a Buddha, i.e., each person should be a Bodhisattva.

- Those who initiated this idea a long time ago probably did not know that there is an infinite number of sentient beings in this world. Each human body has a vast number of microscopic beings. See, "There are as many creatures on your body as there are people on Earth!!".
- There are 1000 trillion just ants on this Earth: "WebLink: gotreequotes.com: How Many Ants Are There in the World?." Or do they not count other living beings?
- In this eon (basically the lifetime of the Solar system of about 4.5 billion years), there have been four Buddhas. One more Buddha is to appear. That is truly an exception. Before this eon, 30 eons (trillion years!) did not have a single Buddha appearing. So, how long would one wait to become a Buddha, i.e., remain a Bodhisattva? And will all beings (or even the human population today) be able to become Buddhas in the same eon, let alone at the same time? Utterly foolish!


## Teachings of a Sammā Sambuddha Can Be Outdated?

4. Getting to the issue (iii), Mahāyānist forefathers stated Buddha Dhamma needed to be "refined" for the changing times. See "Background on the Current Revival of Buddha Dhamma." How can the ultimate laws of nature discovered by a Buddha be "refined" or "revised"? I hope someone can answer this fundamental question.

- Within 500 years of the passing away of the Buddha, the Indian Mahāyānists started not only refining but incorporating concepts that were alien to Buddha Dhamma.
- If it needed refining after 500 years, how come they have not kept up with the updating process? One would think they would be doing a significant revision these days with so many changes in science and technology.
- What has happened is the opposite: Science and technology are consistent with the original Dhamma. People will gradually realize that those alien concepts in Mahāyāna do not make sense.


## Treating Buddha's Teachings as Philosophy

5. Those who started this revision did not understand the central idea of Nibbāna. They never mention concepts like anicca, dukkha, or anatta. So, they defined those in their terms and then got into a slippery slope in explaining those terms by inventing more concepts. It snowballed, and in the words of Edward Conze, who translated many Mahāyāna texts to English:

- "......About 100 BCE (roughly 400 years after the Buddha's Parinibbāna), many Buddhists in India felt that the existing statements of the doctrine had become stale and useless. They were convinced that Dhamma required new reformulations to meet the needs of new ages, new populations, and new social circumstances. So they set out to produce new literature, which ultimately became known as Mahāyāna Buddhism. The creation of this literature was one of the most significant outbursts of creative energy known to human history and sustained for about four to five centuries. Repetition alone, they believed, cannot sustain a living religion. Unless counterbalanced by constant innovation, it will become fossilized and lose its life-giving qualities, they believed".
- (See "Historical Timeline of Edward Conze").
- For someone who is not familiar with the Buddha's original teachings, those philosophical arguments may look impressive, as they did for Edward Conze. We will examine those concepts in detail in upcoming posts. I have discussed the concept of "emptiness"; see the link below.


## Forefathers of Mahāyāna Were Philosophers, Not Ariyas

6. None of the Mahāyānist "philosophers" such as Nagarjuna, Vasubandhu, and Asanga are documented as Arahant or even a Sotāpanna. They were like the philosophers of today with their "theories about the world." They also had an aversion to the concept of an Arahant.

- The Mahāyāna sutras originated with Nagarjuna, who lived 150-250 CE in India. Thus, the Buddha's original teachings went underground somewhere before 200 CE , within about 700 years of the Buddha's Parinibbāna (passing away).
- Thus those Indian intellectuals like Nagarjuna were just like the philosophers from the time of Socrates. They make all kinds of speculations consistent with the "knowledge" about the "world" at any given time.
- The Buddha did warn of this outcome: He said: "there will be other versions that look like Dhamma and feel like Dhamma. Just like when there are imitations of gold coming to the market, the real gold goes underground" (WebLink: suttacentral: Saddhamma Patirupaka Sutta (SN 16.13). That has been the case for over 1800 years.
- But the truth comes out eventually. That time could well be now. The correct interpretations of anicca, dukkha, and anatta have been hidden for hundreds of years.


## The "Updates" Violate the Core Teachings of the Buddha

7. So, what are these revisions that the Mahāyāna forefathers made?

Edward Conze has listed five doctrinal "innovations" of the Mahāyānists; see "Historical Timeline of Edward Conze." They are:

- As concerns the goal, there is a shiff from the "Arahant-ideal" to the "Bodhisattva-ideal."
- A new way of salvation was worked out: compassion ranked equal with wisdom.
- Faith is given a new range by being provided with a new pantheon of deities.
- "Skill in means" (upāyakausalya), an entirely new virtue, becomes essential to the practitioner. That is placed even above wisdom, the highest virtue in Buddha Dhamma.
- A coherent ontological doctrine was worked out, dealing with such items as "Emptiness," "Suchness," etc.." But it is philosophy; see, "What is Sunyāta (Emptiness)?".

8. We will discuss the critical contradictions of these revisions with the Buddha's original teachings (see i-v below) and go into detail later.
i. The basic idea of Buddha Dhamma is that each human being has a unique mind. But greed, hate, and ignorance defile a mind. Because of that, each person commits immoral acts and subsequently "pays for those actions," suffering is the net result of the cycle of rebirths. One gets out of this cycle of rebirth by purifying one's mind; one who has accomplished this task is an Arahant. No person can purify another person's mind. Nibbāna is not an abstract concept. See the subsection "Nibbāna."
ii. One attains Nibbāna when one purifies the mind of ALL defilements. That is when one has ultimate wisdom or pañña. There is no way to equate compassion with pañña $\bar{a}$. One can be compassionate to the maximum, but that does not mean one has gotten rid of ignorance. Those beings in the Brahma world do not generate any hateful thoughts; they have perfected the four Brahmavihara: mettā, $k a r u n \bar{a}$, mudit $\bar{a}$, and upekkh $\bar{a}$. They don't have a trace of hateful thoughts. Yet, they have ignorance (of the Four Noble Truths) and will one day be reborn in the four lower realms. Therefore, this is also a significant contradiction. See, "Sotāpanna Stage of Nibbāna."
iii. Buddha said life in the human realm is better than any other (except for those reserved for the Anāgāmis.) That is because the easiest to attain Nibbāna is from the human realm. Some beings in higher realms can be helpful to us, and we should share our merits with them. However, a human is not supposed to worship any other being. One must only have faith in the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha. No other living being can help with our goal of attaining Nibbāna.
iv. "Skill in Means," or whatever other term anyone comes up with, runs into the same problem as compassion above in (ii). Such ideas run against the core teachings of the Buddha. Even if one gets rid of greed and hate but still has ignorance, one will get back the greed and hate DUE TO ignorance. One attains Nibbāna by cultivating wisdom.
v. Mahāyāna's descriptions of all these philosophical concepts like emptiness or sunyāta are just a lot of empty words. They have simpler explanations consistent with original teachings; see the links below. The Mahāyānists had to re-invent alternate descriptions for these terms. The original meanings conflicted with their "revisions" discussed in i-iv.

Now, to address the issue (iv) in \#1 above.

## Buddha Versus Sammā Sambuddha

9. Buddha means "to stop bhava" (bhava + uddha.) Only a Sammā Sambuddha can figure out how to stop grasping various types of bhava (kammic energies) that we have accumulated, thus stopping future suffering.

- In principle, it is possible to call an Arahant a Buddha since an Arahant has stopped grasping a new bhava. However, no Arahant could have gotten to the "bhava uddha" status without learning/comprehending the teachings of a Samm $\bar{a}$ Sambuddha.
- But it has become customary to reserve the term "Buddha" as a shortened version of "Samma $\bar{a}$ Sambuddha."
- The term "Buddha nature" is discussed without the above understanding. See "WebLink: en.wikipedia.org: Buddha-nature."


## Summary

10. Those who follow the Mahāyāna version do that for several reasons. (i) They are born into Mahāyāna tradition (just like I was born to Theravada.) (ii) They have had no exposure to other versions of Buddhism. The problems with Mahāyāna versions are not due to their making. But it is time to start changing those features that contradict Buddha's original teachings.

- Teachings of a Sammā Sambuddha like Buddha Gotama cannot be "updated." Buddha Dhamma is "timeless" (akāliko.) Of course, the teachings of a Sammā Sambuddha only last a relatively short time (in the Samssaric scale.) Those "timeless truths" about nature are re-discovered by the next Buddha. All Sammā Sambuddhas re-discover and teach the same Paṭicca Samuppāda.
- There needs to be an open discussion about weeding out the inconsistent material from all sects and recovering the pure Buddha Dhamma for all to benefit.


### 14.9 Saddharma Pundarika Sutra (Lotus Sutra) - A Focused Analysis

Revised August 13, 2019; July 26, 2020; December 3, 20121 (\#3); August 24, 2022; September 27, 2022

Saddharma Pundarika Sutra (Lotus Sutra) is a famous Mahāyāna sutra. It is full of contradictions with the genuine teachings of the Buddha.

## Difference Between a Sutra and Sutta

1. This sutrā, written by several Indian philosophers over hundreds of years, led to the gradual formation of Mahāyāna Buddhism over that period. Note that I am NOT referring to it as a sutta. Suttā are the original teachings of the Buddha delivered in the Mäghadhi language. They were subsequently written down in Pāli and are available in the Tipitaka.

- In contrast, all Mahāyāna sutrās were written after the Parinibbāna (passing away) of the Buddha. Furthermore, they all are in Sanskrit without exception.
- Thus at least we have a clear way of distinguishing the original discourses by the Buddha (sutta) and the Mahāyāna sutrās written by laypeople hundreds of years after the Buddha.
- Even in the Theravāda tradition, the question often arises regarding the interpretation of key concepts. As mentioned in the Tipitaka, this problem was there, even DURING the time of the Buddha.


## How to Verify the Authencity of Buddha Dhamma

2. Once, Mahā Prajapathi Gotami bhikkhuni, Prince Siddhartha's stepmother, approached the Buddha and pointed out that some bhikkhus were teaching incorrect interpretations of the Dhamma. She feared things would get out of hand after the Parinibbāna of the Buddha. "How can the future generations figure out the correct version of Dhamma?" she asked the Buddha.

- The Buddha agreed that it is inevitable that wrong interpretations will always be there but said there is a way to identify the correct version. He always said to look for consistency with the Four Noble Truths, as explained in the sutt $\bar{a}$. The Buddhist principle of Cause and effect is defined in the Paticca Samuppāda. How to live a moral life by getting rid of lobha/rāga (greed), dosa (anger/hate), and mohalavijj $\bar{a}$ (ignorance of the Four Noble Truths) is laid out in the Vinaya.
- These teachings lead to rāgakkhaya, dosakkhaya, and mohakkhaya (getting rid of rāga, dosa, and moha).
- If a version of Dhamma does not lead to rāgakkhaya (reduction of greed), dosakkhaya (reduction of hate), and mohakkhaya (reduction of ignorance), then that version should be discarded. Internal consistency must be there too.


## Three Ways to Attain Nibbāna

3. A bit of background material before we discuss this sutrā. According to the Buddha, there are three ways to attain Nibbāna:

- A Sammā Sambuddha (like Buddha Gotama) discovers the Noble Eightfold Path and achieves Nibbāna through his efforts, AND he can teach the doctrine to others.
- A second way to attain Nibbāna is to learn Dhamma from a Samma Sambuddha or a true disciple of his. That is how an Arahant reaches Nibbāna. An Arahant is also a Sāvaka Buddha. Note that a "Sāvaka Buddha" is different from a "Buddha Sāvaka" (or "Ariya Sāvaka") which identifies any Noble Person above the Sotāpanna Anugāmi stage.
- Then there are pacceka Buddhas who discover the Path by themselves but are not capable of explaining it to other people.
- The three types are in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Nidhikanda Sutta (KN Kp 8)" in the following verse: "Patisambhidā vimokkhā ca, yā ca sāvakapāram̄̄; Paccekabodhi buddhabhūmi, sabbametena labbhati."


## Only One Vehicle to Nibbāna (the "Great Vehicle" or Mahāyāna)?

4. Now, let us discuss how this sutrā paved the way for the Bodhisattva concept in Mahāyāna.

This sutrā starts with the Buddha saying that even though he had taught previously there were three paths to Nibbāna, he now admits that there is only one. When Ven. Ānanda asked why, he said he did not think people were "ready" for this higher doctrine. Instead of three vehicles (or paths) that one can take, there is only one. It is the great vehicle or the Mahāyāna ("mahä" is great, and "yāna" is a vehicle). And this is the path he took by striving for eons as a Bodhisattva to become a Buddha.

- Continuing with this sutrā, now he (the Buddha) was advising everyone to become a Bodhisattva and to attain Buddhahood!
- They have no idea how difficult it is to attain Buddhahood.
- Then he assures all those Arahants present there, including Ven. Sāriputta that they will become Buddhas. That is a complete lack of understanding of the concept of an Arahant. An Arahant will not be reborn; thus, there is no way for an Arahant to become a Buddha.
- Furthermore, the Buddha has clearly described the difference between a Sammā Sambuddha and an Arahant: "WebLink: suttacentral: Sammāsambuddha Sutta (SN 22.58)." The uniqueness of a Sammā Sambuddha is described in a series of short suttas: "WebLink: suttacentral: Ekapuggalavagga (AN 1.170-187)."

Now let us go through a few more "obvious inconsistencies" in the sutrā.

## The Sutrā Opens With a Lie (Musāvāda)

5. Astonishingly, the sutrā opens with, "Thus have I heard...", a big musāvāda (an untruth) Ven. Ānanda is providing the details of the sutr $\bar{a}$.

First, a brief background is in order. Venerable Ānanda, who knew all the suttā by heart, recited them at the First Buddhist Council. Thus any given sutta in the Tipitaka starts with clarification, "Thus have I heard..." to indicate that this was what Venerable Ānanda had heard himself. In trying to give the impression that this sutrā was also one delivered by the Buddha, the authors of the Lotus sutrā attempted to deceive the readers.

- Historians generally accept that the Lotus sutrā was written much later after the passing away (Parinibbāna) of the Buddha Gotama. That is true of all other sutrās written in Sanskrit.
- The oldest parts of the text (Chapters 1-9 and 17) were probably written between 100 BCE and 100 CE, and most of the text was complete by 200 CE . See, for example, WebLink: WIKI: Lotus Sutrā. Thus it was written by several authors over 100 years or more. A translation was made from Sanskrit to Chinese in 255 CE, the earliest historical documentation of its existence.


## Reads Like a Fairytale

6. The middle of the sutrā is devoted to describing the "universal accessibility" of the Buddhahood to anyone. Here it reads like a fairytale with astounding stories of accomplishments. For example, the daughter of the dragon king Sagara astonishes the assembly by performing various supernormal acts and says she can attain the Buddhahood "in an instant."

- However, those sutrā also stress the importance of faith and devotion to get to Enlightenment. There is less emphasis on the need for wisdom. That is blind faith!


## The Bodhisatta Vow

7. A critical problem is the Bodhisatta vow that a Mahāyāna Buddhist agrees in advance to take (see, WebLink: WIKI: Bodhisattva vow). The promise is to wait until "everyone is ready to attain the Buddhahood." It is not clear how or who can determine WHEN everyone is ready.

- Current scientific facts point to the existence of an innumerable number of living beings; see, "There are as many creatures on your body as there are people on Earth!." Therefore, it is a critical question how all these beings can attain Buddhahood simultaneously.
- Furthermore, it seems contradictory that Buddha Gotama and other previous Buddhas did not wait for anyone else.


## Is a Buddha Eternal?

8. The story gets even more fascinating in Chapter 16 (presumably as a different writer of the sutrā comes up with another idea). That is when Buddha Gotama reveals that he is an eternal being. He had attained the Buddhahood an incalculably distant time in the past. Even though he sometimes seems to pass away to nirvāna (Sanskrit word for Nibbāna), he periodically makes appearances in the world.

- This declaration makes the Buddha more like a Creator God who has always been there! And there is no discussion on the issue of whether there was a beginning to this world.
- It seems to me that the philosophers who wrote Mahāyāna sutrās had no idea of the concept of Nibbāna! By the very definition, the whole idea of attaining Nibbāna is to dissociate from this sufferingfilled material world: There are several posts on this website ranging from "Three Kinds of Happiness What is Nirāmisa Sukha?" to "What are Rūpa? - Relation to Nibbāna" on the concept of Nibbāna.
- Then there is the issue of other Buddhas being present at that assembly too. And they all seem to be "at the same level." Thus the question arises as to who was the first Buddha and why those other Buddhas "did not wait until everyone else was ready for the Buddhahood."


## Absence of Key Doctrinal Concepts

9. Most of the sections of the sutrā hyperbolize the value of the single, great vehicle (Mahāyāna) to attain Nibbāna. That is in contrast to the three vehicles of Sammā Sambuddha, Pacceka Buddha, and Arahant; see \#3 above. There is no discussion on the actual distinguishing doctrinal concepts of the single vehicle other than just saying that it has the advantage of "easy accessibility of the Buddhahood." What makes this "single-vehicle" approach different from the original "three-vehicle" approach in terms of details in Dhamma? For example, does it have a new way of describing the Noble Eightfold Path, Patticca Samuppāda, or the Four Noble Truths?

- The sutrā, like many other Sanskrit sutrās, only mentions those critical foundational concepts of Buddha Dhamma in passing. There is no discussion on them, let alone pointing out any difference from the original doctrine. I am amazed that no one even refers to this glaringly obvious point. What sets the "single-vehicle" approach apart from the original "three-vehicle" approach other than the name change?
- But the real problem is that in changing some key concepts. For example, getting rid of the Arahant concept and making the Buddha effectively a Creator God. This sutrā paved the way to distort the Buddha Dhamma for generations.
- In terms of the necessary conditions set forth by the Buddha, does this sutrā clarify how to reduce greed, hate, and ignorance? Can anyone point to such aspects? Besides grandiose descriptions, there is nothing substantial in terms of doctrine, let alone a revised doctrine. All it does is gravely distort foundational concepts like Nibbāna, Buddhahood, and Arahanthood with the concept of a "single-vehicle."


## Numerous Untruths, Inconsistencies, and Exaggerations

10. There are so many untruths, inconsistencies, and exaggerations in this sutrā that I only have space in this essay to point out the gross problems that are vividly displayed. That is why the post is a "focused analysis."

- Here is an English translation of the sutrā available online, so that anyone can peruse through and see the apparent difference between this sutrā and any Pāli sutta that is in the Tipitaka: WebLink: PURIFYMIND: Lotus Sutra
- One could compare this sutrā with the actual Pāli suttā that I started discussing; see "Sutta Interpretation - Uddesa, Niddesa, Patiniddesa," and the posts on the Mahā Satipaṭthāna Sutta below that.
- I must emphasize that one needs to evaluate this sutrā in the context of the profound and self-consistent Buddha Dhamma. One can get a glimpse of this by examining the "Key Dhamma Concepts," "Paticca Samuppāda," and "Abhidhamma" sections on this website, where I have only begun to lay out the teachings, especially in the Abhidhamma section.

11. I would be happy to respond (and correct any legitimate errors in the analysis) if anyone can point out any problems with my analysis. Please send me a comment at lal@puredhamma.net.

- This analysis is consistent with the central theme of this website. To point out problems with both Mahāyāna and Theravāda versions as being practiced today. Several posts criticizing both Mahāyāna and the current versions of Theravāda at "Historical Background."
- It is for the benefit of everyone that we should remove (or at least be aware of) all inconsistencies and untruths. Then the current and future generations will have a version of Buddha Dhamma close to the original version.


## References

"Scripture of the Lotus Blossom of the Fine Dharma (The Lotus Sutrā)," translated by Leon Hurvitz (2009).
"The Lotus Sutrā," translated by Burton Watson (1993).
"Saddharma Pundarika or The Lotus of the True Law," translated by H. Kern (1884). First Dover edition, 1963.

### 14.10 What is Sunyata or Sunnata (Emptiness)?

## Revised (added \#6) December 28, 2015; November 26, 2017; December 16, 2017; July 1, 2022

1. In Mahāyāna Buddhism, there are books written about Suñyāta (actually it is Suññāta in Pāli) or emptiness. Mahāyāna Buddhism tries to make a big deal out of suñyāta because their forefathers (those who started the Mahāyāna tradition) could not understand the concept of Nibbāna. It is unfortunate that many people who are only introduced to Mahāyāna teachings (and are not aware of the original teachings of the Buddha) believe that Nibbāna is an abstract concept.

- However, Nibbāna is a very simple concept if one understands pure Buddha Dhamma; see, "Nibbāna Is it Difficult to Understand?."
- But it can be examined at deeper levels too: "Nibbāna "Exists", but Not in This World."
- See more at "Nibbāna."

2. What is emptiness?

- When entity A is devoid of entity B, then it can be said that entity A is devoid of B, or empty of B. That is the emptiness or suñyāta.
- For example, if we take a water bottle and pour the water out, we say we have an empty bottle. But in reality, there is air in the bottle, so the bottle is empty only with regard to water; it is not empty with regard to air.
- Emptiness is relative. One has to say what it is empty of. There is no absolute "emptiness". It is meaningless to say "this is emptiness", because there may be something there that we are not aware of.
- For example, up until recently, scientists thought deep space is "empty". But now they know that it is full energy. Still, one could say that "deep space is empty of tangible matter" to a good approximation.

3. The Buddha said when the mind becomes empty of greed (ragga), hate (dosa), and ignorance (moha) it becomes empty of those defilements: "ragakkhayo Nibbanan, dosakkhayao Nibbanan, mohakkhayo Nibbanan," and that mind has attained Nibbāna. That is emptiness, suñyāta with respect to defilements, and also with respect to anything material in this world of 31 realms; see below. VERY SIMPLE explanation, even though it is not easy to get there.

- When one attains the Arahant phala, one's mind becomes suñya of rāga, dosa, and moha. But one still has sañ̃̃̄ā (perception), vedan $\bar{a}$ (feelings), etc. and lives like a normal human being until death.
- But his/her mind is devoid of greed, hate, and ignorance so that he/she will not do any immoral act, under any circumstance.
- At the death of an Arahant, "this world of 31 realms" becomes devoid of any trace of that lifestream, except for the Arahant‘s nāma gotta (mano imprints or memory records, for previous lives; see, "Difference Between Dhamma and Sañkhāra (Sankata)"); there is no rebirth. So that is another suñyāta.

4. There is a sutta in Tipitaka that is about suñyatā (emptiness), and was delivered by the Buddha, called the Cula-Suññāta sutta. I actually wrote the original post before I knew about this sutta. When a friend of mine told me about the sutta, I was glad to see that the sutta described emptiness very similar to the way I described it above. This does show that the Dhamma is internally self-consistent.

- Please click the link below for its translation that I extracted from, WebLink: ACCESSTOINSIGHT: Cula-suññata Sutta: The Lesser Discourse on Emptiness. Normally, I come across many English translations that are bad and even erroneous, but fortunately, this translation is fairly good.

The highlighting in the link below is mine, and I have made some comments:
WebLink: Cula-Suññāta Sutta

There is no need to write books on emptiness that are full of meaningless words. The above sutta says it all.
5. In an online discussion forum in 2014, I saw a comment saying that emptiness describes Paticca Samuppāda. This was really a surprise because in Mahāyāna texts it is not explained what Paṭicca Samuppāda is.

- I have not seen the Paṭicca Samuppāda explained in even a remotely sensible way in a Mahāyāna text, Zen, Vajrayana, or any other form. If you know of such a book, please send me a comment giving the name of the book (or any other source), and I would appreciate it.

6. Anything in this world of 31 realms arise due to $a v i j j \bar{a}$ (ignorance of the real nature of that world): This is the step, "bhava paccayā $\bar{j} \bar{t} t i$ " in Pațicca Samuppāda. See the Paticca Samuppāda section for details.

- When $a v i j j \bar{a}$ is dispelled through the removal of greed, hate, and ignorance via comprehending Dhamma, NOTHING in this material world can arise, because it all starts with "avijjā paccayā sañkhāra," ie., via thinking, speaking, and doing things with avijj $\bar{a}$.
- At Arahanthood, even the slightest bondage to anything material in the 31 realms is discarded, and all causes for anything material (which is the cause of suffering at a deeper level) to arise. This is real emptiness or Nibbāna. Also see, "What Are Rūpa? (Relation to Nibbāna)."

7. "Yo paticcasamuppadam passati, so Dhammam passati" or, "One who understands Patticca Samuppāda, understands Dhamma"

- The Mahāyāna sects have moved so far away from the Buddha Dhamma, I cannot fathom why they still call it Buddha's Dhamma.
- It is very easy to get the idea behind Paṭicca Samuppāda because it is in the words; see, "Paticca Samuppāda - "Pati+ichcha"+"Sama+uppada"," and follow-up posts. Buddha Dhamma is all about cause and effects, and that is what is described in Paticca Samuppäda.

8. There is a deeper way to analyze Suñ̃ata. However, one needs to know the meanings of the Three Characteristics of Nature (Tilakkhaṇa or anicca, dukkha, anatta) first. It is not possible to attain Nibbāna without knowing Tilakkhaṇa or the real nature of this world; see, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta."

- One can get to Nibbāna (also called vimokkha) via contemplating on anicca, dukkha, or anatta (of course they are inter-related). Contemplation of anicca leads to animitta vimokkha. Contemplation of dukkha leads to appanihita vimokkha. Contemplation of anatta leads to suññata vimokkha. [vimokkha : (m.) liberation, deliverance; release; emancipation.] [The 3 liberations are: 1. the conditionless (or signless) liberation (animitta-vimokkha), 2. the desireless liberation (apanihitavimokkha), 3. the emptiness (or voidless) liberation (suññatā-vimokkha).]
- However, regardless of the path taken, the end result is the same: one gets to Nibbāna, release (or freedom) from this world.

9. Finally, at the very basic level, Nibbāna means getting rid of greed, hate, and ignorance. That REQUIRES comprehension of anicca, dukkha, anatta, or the real nature of this world.

- Put in a different way, greed, hate, and ignorance need to be removed via Ānāpāna and Satipatṭhāna meditations; see, "Satipatthāna Sutta - Structure." But those meditations need to be done with the comprehension of anicca, dukkha, and anatta.
- More details on the correct versions of those meditations can be found at: "Bhāvanā (Meditation)" and "Maha Satipatthāna Sutta."
Next, "Incorrect Theravāda Interpretations - Historical Timeline",


### 14.11 Incorrect Theravada Interpretations - Historical Timeline

April 29, 2017; revised December 8, 2021

1. Degradation of Theravāda Buddha Dhamma occurred gradually over the past 1500 years. Still, two drastic changes took place during that time: (i) Buddhaghosa's introduction of Hindu meditation techniques 1500 years ago, (ii) misinterpretation of anicca and anatta by the European scholars when they translated both Tipiṭaka and Visuddhimagga to English in the late 1800's.

- In several posts in this section, I will provide evidence for the above (see bullet \#7 below).
- I will discuss the historical timeline in this post, which is critical to the discussion. I have combined two previous posts, "Theravada: Problems with Current Interpretations of Key Concepts" and "Historical Timelines of Buddha Dhamma and Sri Lanka - End of Sinhala Commentaries" (and removed them) to come with this more concise post.
- As I explained in earlier posts in this section, much worse distortions to Buddha Dhamma were branching out of various sects based on Mahāyāna, Zen, and Tibetan (Vajrayāna). It started with the rise of Mahāyāna in India about 500 years after the Buddha. Here we are focusing only on Theravāda Buddha Dhamma.

2. Here we look at the timeline of Theravāda Buddha Dhamma from the beginning, and see whether we can discern when the pure Dhamma started going underground. There are a few historical facts that most people agree on.
( $\mathrm{BCE}=$ Before Current Era, $\mathrm{CE}=$ Current Era $=\mathrm{AD}$ ):

- 563 - 483 BCE: Buddha Gotama
- 377-307 BCE: The city of Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka, was established by King Pandukabhaya. But there is evidence that human colonization in Sri Lanka goes back to at least 30,000 years; see the detailed article on Sri Lanka on Wikipedia : WebLink: Wikipedia: History of Sri Lanka
- 247 BCE: Buddha Dhamma was introduced to the Sinhala Kingdom in Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka by Ven. Mahinda Thero.
- 161-137 BCE: For the first time in history, King Dutugemunu united all of Sri Lanka under one kingdom.
- 29 BCE: Tipitaka (the version recited at the Third Buddhist Council -Dhamma Sangayana around 247 BCE), was written down in Sri Lanka at the Fourth Sangayana, which was the last Sangayana attended by all Arahants. This is the Pāli Tipiṭaka that has survived to this date.
- 100-200 CE: Ven. Maliyadeva, the Last Arahant by some accounts, lived in Sri Lanka : WebLink: Wikipedia: Maliyadeva (However, it is likely that there have been "jāti Sotāpannas" who attained Arahanthood since then but may not be that many).
- 100 BCE: It is likely that Mahāyāna Buddhism originated when the earliest Mahāyāna sūtras to include the very first versions of the Prajñāpāramitā series, along with texts concerning Akșobhya Buddha, probably written in the 1st century BCE in the south of India : WebLink: Wikipedia: Mahāyāna
- 150-250 CE: Life of Nagarjuna; considered the founder of Mahāyāna Buddhism. Nagarjuna's central concept was the "emptiness" (shunyata) of all dhammas. The most influential work is Mulamadhyamakakarika (Fundamental verses on the middle way).

2. It is clear that the Pāli Tipitaka that we have today has the Buddha's original teachings since Arahants wrote it down. However, Buddha Dhamma started to decline within 100-200 after being written down.

- Still, there was no significant impact on Theravāda Buddhism up to the writing of Visuddhimagga by Buddhaghosa around 450 CE.
- The other major work that influenced Theravāda teachings to date was Abhidhammattha Sangaha by Acariya Anuruddha, who was there around the same time as Acariya Buddhaghosa. However, since not
many people are knowledgeable in Abhidhamma, it has not impacted Theravāda to the same extent as Visuddhimagga.
- By this time, a critical had already taken place. The Mahāyāna influence had successfully introduced two new words to the Sinhala language: 2336$)^{\circ} \omega($ aniyta ) and
 words Like sañkhāra and viññāna do not have separate Sinhala words, i.e., the exact words (ఙ هб and Oreeree m) appear in the Sinhala language.
- Another critical development took place much later, in the late 1800s, when early European scholars started translating the Tipitaka to English. That was when the key Pāli terms anicca and anatta were incorrectly translated as impermanence and "no-self." By that time, even in Theravada, anicca, and anatta had been established to be the same as Sanskrit words aniyta and anātma.

3. To first discuss the influence of Buddhaghosa, let us look at the timeline of events that led to his visit to Sri Lanka roughly 950 years after the Parinibbāna of the Buddha. Here is a timeline compiled by Bhikkhu Nyanamoli, taken from his introduction to Ref. 1 (see the references below).

## King Devanampiyatissa (307-276 BCE):

- The arrival of Ven. Mahinda in Anuradhapura and establishing Dhamma in the kingdom of King Devanampiyatissa.
- Mahāvihāra monastery founded by Ven. Mahinda.


## King Vattagamini (104-88 BCE):

- Abhayagiri monastery was founded by the King and became separate from the Mahāvihāra monastery.
- Sensing insecurity, Mahāvihāra monastery writes down Tipiṭaka (away from the royal capital).


## King Bhatikabhaya ( 20 BCE-9 CE):

- Public disputes started to break out between Abhayagiri and Mahāvihāra monasteries.


## King Vasabha ( $66-110$ CE):

- Sinhala commentaries on Tipiṭaka ended being recorded at any time after his reign.


## King Voharika-Tissa (215-237 CE):

- King supports both Mahāvihāra and Abhayagiri monasteries.
- Abhayagiri adopts Vetulya (Mahāyāna?) piṭaka.
- King suppresses Vetulya doctrines.


## King Gothabhaya (254-267 CE):

- King supports Mahāvihāra monastery.
- 60 bhikkkhus in Abhayagiri were banished by King for upholding Vetulya doctrines.
- Indian Bhikkhu Sangamitta supports Abhayagiri monastery.


## King Jettha-Tissa (267-277 CE):

- King favors Mahāvihāra monastery; Sangamitta flees to India.

King Mahasena (277-304 CE):

- King supports Sangamitta, who returns from India.
- Persecution of Mahāvihāra by King; its Bhikkhus are driven from the capital for 9 years.
- Mahāvihāra (with its libraries of seven stories) burnt to the ground.
- Sangamitta assasinated.
- Rebuilding of Mahāvihāra.


## King Sri Meghavanna (304-332 CE):

- King favors Mahāvihāra.
- Sinhala monastery was established at Buddha Gaya in India.


## King Jettha-Tissa II (332-334 CE):

- Dipavamsa composed.
- Some of Buddhadatta Thera's works.


## King Mahanama (412-434 CE):

- Buddhaghosa arrives in Sri Lanka and composes Visuddhimagga and other works.

4. I really recommend reading the Introduction to the English translation of Visuddhimagga by Ven. Nyanamoli (Ref. 1). To quote Ven. Nyanamoli (starting on p. xxvii of Ref. 1):
"...Now by about the end of first century B.C. E. (dates are very vague), with Sanskrit Buddhist literature just launching out upon its long era of magnificence, Sanskrit was on its way to becoming a language of international culture. In Ceylon the Great monastery (Mahāvihāra), already committed by tradition to orthodoxy based on Pāli, had been confirmed in that attitude by the schism of its rival, which now began publicly to study the new ideas from India. ......In the first century C.E., Sanskrit Buddhism ("Hinayana", and perhaps by then Mahāyāna) was growing rapidly and spreading abroad. The Abhayagiri monastery would naturally have been busy studying and advocating some of these weighty developments while the Mahāvihāra has nothing new to offer. .......King Vasabha's reign (66-110 CE) seems to be the last mentioned in the Commentaries as we have them now, from which it may lie dormant, nothing further being added. Perhaps the Mahāvihāra, now living only on its past, was itself getting infected with heresies. ......in King Mahasena's reign (277-304 CE) things came to a head. With the persecution of Mahāvihāra with royal assent and the expulsion of its bhikkhus from the capital, the Abhayagiri monastery enjoyed nine years of triumph. But the ancient institution rallied its supporters in the Southern provinces and the king repented. The bhikkhus returned and the king restored the buildings, which had been stripped to adorn the rival".
"Still, the Mahāvihāra must have foreseen, after this affair, that unless it could successfully compete with the "modern" Sanskrit in the field of international Buddhist culture by cultivating Pāli at home and aboard it could assure its position at home. It was a revolutionary project, involving the displacement of Sinhala by Pāli as the language for the study and discussion of Buddhist teachings, and the founding of a school of Pāli literary composition. .........It is not known what was the first original Pāli composition in this period; but the Dipavamsa (dealing with historical evidence) belongs here (for it ends with Mahasena's reign and is quoted in the Samantapasadika, and quite possibly the Vimuttimagga (dealing with practice), was another early attempt by the Mahāvihāra in this period (4th century) to reassert its supremacy through original Pāli literary composition".
5. Here is another account of the destruction of the original Mahāvihāra during the reign of King Mahasena (277-304 CE) from Ref. 2 (p. 46): "..the Mahā-Vihāra, the Brazen Palace, and all such religious edifices, built by generosity of devout kings and pious noblemen for the use of the orthodox Sangha, were razed to the ground. Some three hundred and sixty-four colleges and great temples were uprooted and destroyed, says an ancient chronicle (Nikāya-Sangraha, p.14), ..."
6. Thus it is clear that the historical tradition of compiling Sinhala commentaries (on Tipiṭaka) was abandoned somewhere in the 4th century or even before that, and many of the original Sinhala Atthakatha could have been burnt when the original Mahāvihāra was burned. A concerted effort was initiated by the Mahāvihāra to compile literature in the Pāli language to counter the onslaught by Sanskrit

Mahāyāna literature in India that was benefiting the Abhayagiri monastery. The appearance of Buddhaghosa on the scene in the early fifth century accelerated this effort to compile Pāli literature.

- More details can be found in the Mahavamsa, the Pāli historical account of the history of Sri Lanka compiled in the 5th century (Ref. 3).
- However, most accounts in the Mahāvamsa - especially regarding the history of Sri Lanka are not correct. I will write a post on this issue later.
- However, since Mahāvainsa was written around the time of Buddhaghosa, it is possible that accounts about Buddhaghosa may be correct.

7. In the next two posts, "Buddhaghosa and Visuddhimagga - Historical Background" and "Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga - A Focused Analysis," I will discuss the events leading to Buddhaghosa's writing of Visuddhimagga, and how it introduced the first major contamination of Buddha Dhamma by incorporating Hindu vedic meditations - breath meditation and kasiṇa meditation.

The second major contamination - which has been even more damaging - was the incorrect translation of anicca and anatta as impermanence and "no-self". This is discussed in the last two posts: "Background on the Current Revival of Buddha Dhamma" and "Misinterpretation of Anicca and Anatta by Early European Scholars."

## References

1. The Path of Purification (Visuddhimagga), by Bhadantacariya Buddhaghosa (translated by Bhikkhu Nyanamoli), BPS Edition, 1999. The Introduction (by Bhikkhu Nyanamoli) provides the historical background.
2. Pāli Literature of Ceylon, by G. P. Malasekara (Bharatiya Kala Prakashan, Delhi, 1928), 2010 edition.
3. WebLink: THE MAHAVAMSA - The Great Chronicle of Lanka, by Wilhelm Geiger (1912).
 2002; fourth printing 2013).

Next, "Buddhaghosa and Visuddhimagga - Historical Background."

### 14.12 Buddhaghosa and Visuddhimagga - Historical Background

April 8, 2017; Revised April 29, 2017; August 28, 2022

1. Ācariya Buddhaghosa has strongly influenced Theravāda Buddhism for the past 1500 years. Before examining his commentaries - especially the Visuddhimagga (Path of Purification) -, we will discuss some significant events before his time and why he came to Sri Lanka to compose those commentaries. [äcariya: [m.] teacher.]

- The historical time-lines up to the arrival of Buddhaghosa in Sri Lanka are given in the previous post in this section: "Incorrect Theravāda Interpretations - Historical Timeline."
- I have used material from the three references below to create this post.

2. First, we note that only Arahants participated in the first four Buddhist Councils (Sangāyanā), and the fourth one was held at the Aluvihāra Monastery (a rock temple) near present-day Mātale in the Central Province of Sri Lanka in 29 BCE; see, "Preservation of the Dhamma."

- The Tipitaka was written down fully (as it exists today) for the first time in this fourth Sangāyanā in Pāli with Sinhala script (Pāli does not have its alphabet).
- So, it is important to keep three things in mind: (i) Genuine Dhamma existed in 29 BCE with Arahants also completing the Abhidhamma Pitaka, (ii) What we have in the Tipitaka today is this version, and therefore we can have confidence that the true teachings of the Buddha are in the Tipitaka, (iii) Tipitaka was written down in Pāli with Sinhala alphabet.

3. Secondly, many parts of the Tipitaka are in a condensed form, as discussed in "Sutta Interpretation Uddesa, Niddesa, Patiniddesa." Today, there is a tendency to translate Tipiṭaka suttā word-by-word, which has led to significant confusion and many contradictions, as discussed in that post.

- Starting at the time of the Buddha, commentaries were composed to expand and explain the key concepts in a condensed form designed for easy oral transmission. We must remember that the Tipiṭaka was not written down for around 500 years after the Parinibbāna of the Buddha. During that whole time, it survived only because it was in a designed form for ease of remembering; thus, many details were omitted.
- For example, Buddha's first discourse, "WebLink: suttacentral: Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta (SN 56.11)," took many hours to deliver, but the sutta was condensed to just a few pages of verse. It is impossible to condense all that information in a sutta for mostly oral transmission that was available at the time. In those early days, Bhikkhus explained the details when they delivered desanā or discourses to the public.
- Therefore, in addition to the Tipitaka being orally transmitted through generations, the details were also orally transmitted. However, when Buddha Dhamma started declining around 100-200 CE, those details stopped being transmitted (there were not enough Ariya $\bar{a}$, or those who attained magga phala, to pass down correct explanations). Of course, the easy-to-memorize verses of the Tipitaka were faithfully transmitted.
- That last bullet explains a key problem that we have today. Even though the Tipitaka remains intact, there have not been many Ariy $\bar{a}$ within the past hundreds of years to explain the key concepts in the Tipiṭaka; but thanks to late Waharaka Thero, that has changed; see, "Parinibbāna of Waharaka Thero."

4. Even though a few commentaries were composed in the time of the Buddha in Pāli (we have three in the Tipitaka; see below), most of them were written later on in Sinhala (especially after the time of Ven. Mahinda) when written language became more common.

- Up to the time of Buddhaghosa (after about 700 years from the time of Ven. Mahinda), there would have accumulated a vast number of such commentaries called Sinhala Atthakathā, which means "accounts of
the truth" (attha $+k a t h \bar{a})$. However, most of those were likely destroyed when the Mahavihara was burned before Buddhaghosa arrived in Sri Lanka; see below.
- Buddhaghosa's task was to translate those from Sinhala to Pāli. Instead, he just made a few of his commentaries - especially the Visuddhimagga - where he incorporated his Vedic concepts in them; see below.

5. As given in the timeline in the post mentioned in \#1, an important event occurred before the arrival of Buddhaghosa in Sri Lanka, which led to the possible destruction of many original commentaries; this was the establishment of the Abhayagiri Vihara in Anuradhapura around 100 BCE. This led to the degrading of Buddha Dhamma in Sri Lanka, which was then accelerated by the writing of the Visuddhismagga, as we discuss below.

- Over several decades, Abhayagiri Vihara became a rival to the Mahavihara, which had been the center of religious activity since Ven. Mahinda (King Devanampiyatissa).
- The arrival of a body of monks from Pallarama in India, who belonged to the Vajjiputta Nikāya, apparently started this schism between the two Vihara (p. 29, Ref. 3). This sect descended from those who were expelled from the Theravāda by Ven. Moggaliputta Tissa Thero at the Third Sangāyanā.

6. Later, during the reign of King Voharaka Tissa (215-237CE), Abhayagiri Vihara adopted the Vaitulya Piṭaka. It is no coincidence that by this time, Mahāyāna had become dominant in India.

- When the Mahavihara raised objections to this new development, King Voharaka Tissa appointed minister Kapila to investigate and, on his recommendation, ordered all Vaitulya books to be burnt.
- A key point to remember is that "Literary activity in Ceylon (Sri Lanka) declined and, it seems, fell into virtual abeyance between 150 CE and 350 CE , as will appear below" (Ref. 1, p. xxiii).

7. During King Gothabhaya's reign (254-267 CE), the Vaitulyan heresy raised its head again, and the King took action. He not only burnt their books but branded 60 of their leaders and expelled them.

- Those expelled settled down at Kavira in South India. While they were there, a recruit by the name of Sangamitta joined them.
- One day, while bathing, Sangamitta saw the branding on the backs of the others and learned what had happened in Sri Lanka. He vowed to take revenge.

8. Sangamitta went to Sri Lanka and won the confidence of King Gothabhaya, who appointed Sangamitta to tutor his two sons.

- When King Gothabhaya died, his elder son Jettha Tissa became King, but he was not that attached to Sangamitta, so Sangamitta returned to India. When Jettha Tissa died 14 years later, the younger brother, Mahasena, became King.

9. Mahasena was very much attached to Sangamitta, and Sangamitta decided to return to Sri Lanka, realizing that his time to take revenge had come.

- On Sangamitta's advice, King Mahasena started a process of damaging the Mahavihara and the Buddha Dhamma in Sri Lanka. He prohibited providing alms to Mahavihara, and bhikkhus at Mahavihara migrated to other parts of the country over time.
- By this time, Buddhism in Sri Lanka was in decline due to other factors, including the rise of Mahāyāna in India. Arahants were scarce on the Island; if there were some, they would have been in remote regions.

10. For nine years, Sangamitta lived in glory, plundering the properties of Mahavihara and eventually burning down the seven story building with its libraries (p. 47 of Ref. 3). People became angry with what happened to Mahavihara, and a rebellion was started by a minister of the King named Meghavaranabhaya.

- However, before a battle took place, the minister was able to meet the King and explain why he needed to make amends to the Mahavihara to appease the populace. The King apologized and rebuilt the Mahavihara.
- However, people were quite angry at Sangamitta, who was killed on the orders of a queen of the King, probably without the knowledge of the King.

11. The damage had been done. It is also said that when the King rebuilt the Mahavihara, it was mostly those at the Abhayagiri who took residence at the restored Mahavihara. Therefore, when Buddhaghosa visited the Mahavihara, the bhikkhus there could have been those originally belonging to the Abhayagiri sect.

- Furthermore, It is possible that many of the original Sinhala Atthakath $\bar{a}$ were destroyed when the Mahavihara was burned to the ground. Even though copies of the Tipitaka were at many different locations scattered throughout the country, it is not known how many of the Atthakathā had copies.
- In any case, none of those original Sinhala commentaries exist today.
- Mahāyāna was taking root in India and possibly contributed to the degrading of Theravāda in Sri Lanka as well. Sanskrit became the "language of the pundits" (with many new Sanskrit sutras written by Nagarjuna, Vasudeva, etc), and Pāli was losing the battle; see, "Incorrect Theravāda Interpretations Historical Timeline."

12. By the time Buddhaghosa arrived in Sri Lanka (during the reign of King Mahanama between 412-434 CE), some of those Atthakath $\bar{a}$ might have still been there.

- Ven. Nyanamoli says (p. xviii of Ref. 1), "..There are references in these works (by Buddhaghosa) to "Ancients (Porana) or "Former Teachers (Pubbacariya)" as well as to several Sinhalese Commentaries additional to the three referred to in the quotation given earlier. The fact is that a complete body of commentary had been built up during the nine centuries or so that separate Bhandantacariya Buddhaghosa from the Buddha.." and "..This body of material - one may guess that its volume was enormous - Bhandantacariya Buddhaghosa set himself to edit and render into Pāli (the Tipiṭaka itself had been left in the original Pāli).."
- By the way, "Porāna" is a Sinhala word (now Purāna), meaning ancient.
- The detailed explanations in those Atthakath $\bar{a}$ were held in high esteem among the remaining Buddhists in India. As we see below, this is where Buddhaghosa came into the picture.
- So, it appears that even though some of the Sinhala Atthakathā were burned with the destruction of the Mahavihara, some had survived in other locations and brought back to the rebuilt Mahavihara.

13. Buddhaghosa was born into a vedic brahmin family who lived close to the Bodhi Tree in India. He mastered the three Vedas and was a well-known vedic scholar. He was converted to Buddhism by a Bhikkhu Revata who lived in that region in India.

- Law (p. 6 of Ref. 2) writes that Ven. Revata told Buddhaghosa, "..The Sinhalese Atthakatha are genuine. They were composed in the Sinhala language by the inspired and profoundly wise Mahinda, who had previously consulted the discourse of the Buddha, authenticated at the three convocations (Sangāyanā), and the dissertations and arguments of Sāriputto and others, and they are extant among the Sinhalese. Repairing thither, and studying the same, translate (them) according to the rules of the grammar of the Maghadhas (Pāli). It will be an act conducive to the welfare of the whole world". Malalasekara (p. 66 of Ref 3) gives a very similar account of that request.
- Ven. Nyanamoli also gives a detailed account of how Ven. Revata recruited Buddhaghosa for the project on pp. xxxiv-xxv (Introduction) of Ref. 1. Also see pp. 31-39 of Ref. 2 and pp. 64-69 of Ref. 3.

14. The important position assigned in the Theravāda tradition to the work of Buddhaghosa is evident from the following quote from Ref. 1 (p. xli):

- "..The doctrines (Dhamma) of the Theravāda Pāli tradition can be conveniently traced in three main layers. (1) The first of these contains the main books of the Pāli Sutta Pittaka. (2) The Abhidhamma Piṭaka, notably the closely related books, the Dhammasangayani, Vibhanga Paṭthāna. (3). The system the author of the Visuddhimagga completed, or found completed, and he set himself to edit and translate back into Pāli ..."
- Even today, many Theravādins use the Visuddhimagga and don't bother to consult the Tipiṭaka.

15. Sinhala tradition assigns the arrival of Buddhaghosa in Sri Lanka 965 years after the Parinibbāna of the Buddha, according to Malalasekara (p. 66). This is consistent with the above timeline.

- Upon arriving at the Mahavihara in Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka, Buddhaghosa requested those Atthakath $\bar{a}$ from the authorities. They were initially reluctant, but after verifying that he was a scholar, they gave him access to the books (Refs. 1-3).
- Law (p. 8 of Ref 2) says, "..Taking up his residence in the secluded Ganthakaro viharo at Anuradhapura, he translated, according to the rules of the Maghdhas, which is the root of all languages, the whole of the Sinhalese Atthakathā (into Pāli)".

16. This assertion that Buddhaghosa "translated Sinhalese Atthakathā into Pāli" is incorrect.

- He incorporated many of his vedic concepts (breath meditation, kasiṇa meditation, etc) and made his commentaries, as I will discuss in the next post.
- The obvious inconsistencies of the Visuddhimagga with the Tipitaka and the remaining three original Pāli commentaries (still in the Tipiṭaka) are discussed in "Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga - A Focused Analysis."

17. Law makes the following interesting statement (p. 38 of Ref. 2): "..Buddhaghosa’s task of translating was finished in three months. Having observed the Pavarana, he informed the congregation's chief of completing his task. The Samgharaja praised him much and set fire to all the works written by Mahinda in Sinhalese..." We can make two observations:

- If the work was completed in three months, as Law says, Buddhaghosa did not even have time to go through the whole of the Sinhalese Atthakathā, even if only a part of it was left.
- It is hard to believe that the chief Bhikkhu set fire to the original books. However, ALL those Sinhalese Atthakath $\bar{a}$ were indeed lost after the Buddhaghosa.

18. In the next post in this section, "Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga - A Focused Analysis," I discuss why Visuddhimagga does not represent Buddha Dhamma.

- However, as we discussed above, all of the Sinhala Atthakath $\bar{a}$ were lost soon after the publication of Visuddhimagga, and Visuddhimagga became the sole source for explaining Tipitaka material.
- It became customary just to use the Visuddhimagga and not even consult the Tipitaka until recent times, especially until the "discovery of Buddhism" by the Europeans who started translating the Tipitaka and Buddhaghosa's works. See the details in the "Historical Background" section.

19. Furthermore, When Europeans started translating the Tipitaka (starting with Rhys Davis and others), they translated suttia word-by-word to English, a practice that continues today.

- However, It is not a good idea to translate Pāli sutt $\bar{a}$ word-by-word, and those early commentaries were critically important to expand on the Tipitaka material. This is discussed in "Sutta Interpretation = Uddesa, Niddesa, Patiniddesa."
- In addition, those early European scholars made a huge mistake by incorrectly translating the Pāli words anicca and anatta as impermanent and "not-self"; see, "Misinterpretation of Anicca and Anatta by Early European Scholars."
- This is why the work of the late Waharaka Thero is so important. He was able to "re-discover" the meanings of the key Pāli words by perusing the remaining three original Pāli commentaries of Patisambhidamagga, Petakopadesa, and Nettippakarana; see "Preservation of the Dhamma."


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Next, "Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga - A Focused Analysis", ..

### 14.13 Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga - A Focused Analysis

April 29, 2017; revised March 16, 2021; major revision September 3, 2021

## Two Major Distortions to Buddha Dhamma

1. The first distortion occurred about 1500 years ago with the introduction of "breath meditation" as the Buddhist Anāpānasati meditation by Buddhaghosa in his commentary Visuddhimagga.

- The second significant distortion took place more recently by European scholars by an honest mistake. They were unable to distinguish between Sanskrit-based Mahayana Buddhism and Pali-based Theravada Buddha Dhamma. That led to to the mistranslation of anicca as impermanence and anatta as "no-self."
- We will discuss the background to the first issue in this post.
- An introduction to the second issue is in the post, "Misinterpretation of Anicca and Anatta by Early European Scholars."


## Historical Background on Buddhaghosa

2. In the previous post in this series, "Buddhaghosa and Visuddhimagga - Historical Background," we discussed why Buddhaghosa traveled to Sri Lanka. Here is a summary of that post:

- Many parts of the Tipitaka are in condensed form. Starting from the Buddha's time, commentaries were written to expand and explain the key concepts in the Tipitaka.
- Most of those commentaries - at least from the time of Ven. Mahinda — was written in the Sinhala language by Ven. Mahinda himself and many Sinhalese Arahants for over 950 years up to the time of Buddhaghosa. These were called Sinhala Atthakathā (true accounts).
- A certain bhikkhu by the name of Ven. Revata in India recruited Bhuddhaghosa to travel to Sri Lanka and translate those Sinhala Atthakathā to Pāli (see Refs. 2-4 (Ref. 2, Ref. 3, and Ref. 4) below).
- In this post, I will point out that instead of translating those Sinhala Atthakathā, Buddhaghosa incorporated his own vedic ideas into his commentaries in Pāli, especially describing Ānāpānasati as breath meditation.


## Demise of Sinhala Atthakath $\bar{a}$ (Original Commentaries in Sinhala)

3. Those Sinhalese Atthakathā disappeared from existence not long after Buddhghosa completed his work (most of them were likely burnt with the Mahavihara well before Buddhaghosa's time). Regardless of what happened to those original Atthakathā, Theravāda tradition accepted Visuddhimagga to represent those original Atthakathā as well as the Tipitaka. To date Visuddhimagga is regarded in high esteem.

- When he edited those Sinhala Atthakathā and composed the Visuddhimagga, Buddhaghosa, a scholar in Vedic literature, incorporated Hindu Vedic concepts to the Visuddhimagga.
- In particular, he replaced real Buddhist $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p a \overline{n a}$ Bhāvanā with breath meditation and also introduced Hindu kasiña meditation.
- Buddhaghosa also disregarded the importance of the Tilakkhaṇa (anicca, dukkha, anatta), but I will show evidence that he never distorted their meanings. That happened only when the Europeans translated the Tipitaka and the Visuddhimagga to English; see, "Misinterpretation of Anicca and Anatta by Early European Scholars."
- He also reportedly wrote other commentaries on Tipitaka, but they are not widely used.
- I guess that Buddhaghosa did not consult the Sinhala Atthakathā even for the Visuddhimagga. Certainly, Visuddhimagga is not compatible with the remaining original three commentaries and the Tipiṭaka regarding meditation techniques.


## Final Buddhist Council Attended by Arahants

4. As I discussed in the post, "Buddhaghosa and Visuddhimagga - Historical Background," pure Dhamma existed until the fourth Buddhist Council (Sangāyanā) held in 29 BCE in Matale, Sri Lanka.

- By the time Buddhaghosa arrived in Sri Lanka roughly 450 years later, drastic changes had taken place (with the Buddhist center of Anuradhapura Mahā Vihara burnt down once) and a Mahayanist sect the landscape for a while; see the above post among other things.
- So, the degradation of Theravāda Buddha Dhamma occurred gradually over two thousand years. Still, two drastic changes took place during that time: (i) Buddhaghosa's introduction of Hindu meditation techniques in the fifth century, (ii) misinterpretation of anicca and anatta by the European scholars when they translated both Tipitaka and Visuddhimagga to English in the late 1800s.
- Even though there was a resurgence of Buddha Dhamma since the late 1800s due to those Europeans' efforts like Rhys Davids, Eugene Burnouf, and Thomas Huxley, unfortunately, it was this "distorted Dhamma" was what spread throughout the world in the past 200 years.


## Three Original Commentaries in Pāli

5. Even though those old Sinhala commentaries were lost, three commentaries composed in Pāli (Pațisambhidāmagga, Petakopadesa, and Nettippakarana) at the time of the Buddha remained intact with the Tipitaka; see, "Preservation of the Dhamma."

- After Buddhaghosa composed Visuddhimagga, Theravādins almost exclusively used Visuddhimagga instead of the Tipitaka, and those original Pāli commentaries were totally neglected.
- With the help of those three original Pāli commentaries, Waharaka Thero was able to "re-discover" the Buddha's original teachings over the past 25 years or so. Unfortunately, Wahraka Thero attained Parinibbāna recently; see, "Parinibbāna of Waharaka Thero."
- After the "re-discovery" of the Buddha's true teachings by Waharaka Thero over the past 25 years or so, it became clear that several key misinterpretations crept into Buddha Dhamma over the past two thousand years. But the actual timeline of contamination was not clear.
- For example, it was not clear whether Buddhaghosa himself was responsible for anicca and anatta's misinterpretations. In this post, I will show that Buddhaghosa was not responsible for that part. In the post, "Misinterpretation of Anicca and Anatta by Early European Scholars," I presented evidence that it was done by the European pioneers when they assumed that the Pāli words anicca and anatta were derived from anitya and anathma in Sanskrit.


## Buddhaghosa Not Responsible for Misinterpretation of Anicca and Anatta

6. First, I will show evidence that Buddhaghosa did not distort the meanings of the words anicca and anatta, even though he did not realize the importance of the Tilakkhana.

- We need to remember that Buddhaghosa was supposed to take material from Sinhala Atthakathä and compose his own commentary, Visuddhimagga, in Pāli. One can purchase that original Pāli version, Ref. 1 below, from Amazon.
- When comparing the Pāli and English texts below, I will be using Ref. 2.

7. On p. 271 of the Pāli Visuddhimagga (Ref. 1), for example, it says, "Catutthacatukke pana aniccānupassi ettha tava aniccata veditabbaì. Aniccata veditabba. Aniccānupassanā veditabba. Aniccānupassi veditabbo."

- This is translated in the book by Bhikkhu Nyanamoli (p. 282, vol. I) as, "But in the fourth tetrad, as to contemplating impermanence, here; firstly, the impermanent should be understood, and impermanence, and the contemplation of impermanence, and one contemplating impermanence."
- So, in this case, Buddhaghosa used the correct Pāli words, anicca. Still, Bhikkhu Nyanamoli incorrectly translated it as "impermanence" following the European pioneers' misinterpretation before him, as we discussed above.

8. Buddhaghosa's original Pāli version also states the relations among the three characteristics, as I discussed in the post, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta - Wrong Interpretations." On p. 617 of Ref. 1, "Yadaniccamं tam dukkham̉"ti (SN 3.15) vacanato pana tadeva khandhapancakaì dukkhai். Kasmā? Abhiṇhpatipīlana, abhinhapatipīlanā kāro dukkhalakkhaṇam.". AND
"Yaì dukkhaim tadanattā"ti (SN 3.15) vacanato pana tadeva khandhapancakaì anattā. Kasmā? Avasavattanato, avasavattanā kāro anattalakkhaṇam.".

- This really means, "dukkha arises (based on attachments to things of) anicca nature, therefore (such attachments are of) anatta nature," as I explained in my post too.


## Incorrect Translation by Bhikkhu Nynamoli

9. However, Bhikkhu Nynamoli, following the incorrect interpretation by the early European pioneers in the 1800's, translates those two verses as (p. 663 of Ref. 2): "Those same five aggregates are painful because of the words, 'What is impermanent is painful' (S. iii,22). Why? Because of continuous oppression. The mode of being continuously oppressed is the characteristic of pain.", AND
'Those same five aggregates are not-self because of the words, 'What is painful is not-self' (S. iii,22). Why? Because there is no exercising of power over them. The mode of insusceptibility to the exercise of power is the characteristic of not-self."
10. Thus, it is obvious that it was not the Buddhaghosa who interpreted anicca as impermanent and anatta as not-self, but those early Europeans in the late 1800s. As explained in those previous posts, subsequent scholars from Sri Lanka and other Asian countries propagated those two incorrect interpretations.

- For example, early Sinhala scholars like Malalasekara, Jayathilaka, and Kalupahana, learned Buddhism (and received Doctoral degrees in Buddhism!) from those European pioneers at universities in the United Kingdom.
- One needs to contemplate on how the authority of those early Europeans on Buddha Dhamma. As explained in those other posts, they merely translated the Tipitaka word-by-word (using perceived etymologies to Sanskrit).
- We must realize that translating Tipitaka is not the same as translating any other book from one language to another. One has to have a deep background in Buddha Dhamma to do that.
- The key mistake made by Rhys Davids, Bernouf, and others, was to assume that Pāli anicca and anatta are the same as Sanskrit anitya (which does mean impermanence) and anathma (which does mean no-self).


## Buddhaghosa Introduced Breath Meditation as Ānāpānasati

11. Now we turn to the issue of Biddhaghosa introducing Hindu Vedic meditation techniques to Buddha Dhamma in his Visuddhimagga.

Here is a key passage from Buddhaghosa's original Pāli Visuddhimagga (p. 254 [p. 274] of Ref. 1): "Tattha dīghaì vā assasantoti dīghaì vā assāsaì pavattayanto, assāsoti bahi nikkhamanavāto, passāsoti anto pavisanavātoti vinayaṭthakathāyaì vuttam. Suttantaṭ! hakathāsu pana uppatipātiyā āgataì. Tattha sabbesampi gabbhaseyyakānai் mātukucchito nikkhamanakāle pathamaì
abbhantara vāto bahinikkhamati, pacchā bāhiravāto sukhumarajaì gahetvā abbhantaraì pavisanto tālumं āhacca nibbāyati, evamं tāva assāsapassāsā veditabbā. "

Bhikkhu Nyanamoli CORRECTLY translates this passage to English as follows (p. 265 of Ref. 2): "Herein, breathing in long (assasanto) is producing a long in-breath. 'assāsa is the wind issuing out; pass $\bar{a} s a$ is the wind entering in' is said in the Vinaya Commentary. But in the Suttanta Commentaries, it is given in the opposite sense. Herein, when an infant comes out from the mother's womb, first the wind from within goes out, and subsequently, the wind from without enters in with fine dust strikes the palate and is extinguished [with the infant's sneezing]. This, firstly, is how assāsa and passāsa should be understood".

- So, above is concrete evidence that Buddhaghosa himself referred to $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p a \overline{n a s a t i}$ as breath meditation. He specifically talked about inhaling and exhaling air.
- However, actual Buddhist $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p a ̄ n a ~ B h a ̄ v a n a \bar{a}$ is not breath meditation; see, " 7 . What is Ānapāna?."


## Buddhist Meditations Do Not Use Kasiṇa Objects

12. The second problem that Buddhaghosa introduced in his Visuddhimagga was to present mundane kasiña meditation as a viable path to Nibbāna. He gives detailed explanations on making kasiṇa objects in chapters 4 and 5 in Ref. 1.

- For example, he goes to minute details describing how to make an "earth kasina" starting on. 118 [p 124] of Ref. 1: "..Nīlapītalohitodātasambhedavasena hi cattāro paṭhavikasinadosā, tasmā nīlādivaṇnaim mattikaí agahetvā gañgāvahe mattikāsadisāya aruṇavaṇnāya mattikāya kasiṇä் kātabbaí,...".
- Bhikkhu Nyanamoli translates (p. 123 of Ref. 2): "..Now the four fruits of the earth kasina are due to the intrusion of blue, yellow, red, or white. So instead of using clay of such colors, he should make the kasina of clay like that in the stream of Ganga, which is the color of the dawn..."
- In the same way, Buddhaghosa goes into great detail to describe how to make other types of kasiña objects.

13. The critical point is that true Buddhist kasiña meditation does not involve any physical kasiña objects. If anyone can find a reference in the Tipitaka where it is described how to make a physical kasina object, I would appreciate receiving that reference.

- The Buddha describe the true Buddhist kasiña meditation to Ven. Rahula in the WebLink: suttacentral: Mahā Rahulovada Sutta (MN 62) (Majjhima Nikāya, MN 62). It was explained to him as a part of $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p \bar{a} n a s a t i ~ B h a ̄ v a n a \bar{a}$, which can be done in many ways, but here by contemplating on internal body parts made of cattāro mahā bhūta and realizing that external objects are also made with the same cattāro mahā bhūta. Furthermore, that means nothing can be considered in one's body as. "me, myself, etc.."
"..Ekāmantaiं nisinno kho āyasmā rāhulo bhagavantam etadavoca: "kathaiं bhāvitā nu kho, bhante, ānāpānassati, kathaí bahulīkatā mahapphalā hoti mahānisamisā"ti? "Yaí kiñci, rāhula, ajjhattaì paccattaì kakkhalaì kharigataì upādinnaì, seyyathidai்-kesā lomā nakhā dantā taco
 antaì antaguṇaì udariyaì karīsam̀, yaì vā panaññampi kiñci ajjhattaì paccattaì kakkhalà̀ kharigataì upādinnai்- ayaì vuccati, rāhula, ajjhattikā pathavīdhātu. Ya ceva kho pana ajjhattikā pathavīdhātu yā ca bāhirā pathavīdhātu, pathavīdhāturevesā. Taim 'netaim mama, nesohamasmi, na meso attā'ti- evametaín yathābhūtaì sammappañ̃̄āya datthabbam். Evametaì yathābhūtaì sammappaññāya disvā pathavīdhātuyā nibbindati, pathavīdhātuyā cittaì virājeti.".
- The other three, $\bar{a} p o$, tejo, vāyo are discussed in the same way there. One does not need to make kasina objects for true Buddhist kasina meditation, and as I said there is nowhere in the Tipitaka that discusses preparing kasina objects.


## The Second Issue of Misinterpretation of Anicca and Anatta

14. In the next post, "Misinterpretation of Anicca and Anatta by Early European Scholars," we will wrap up this section on "Historical Background." With that post, I would have summarized the historical background from the Buddha's time to the present day. This is probably the only section that can be said to be "finished," even though I may edit the posts in this section as needed.

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Next, "Background on the Current Revival of Buddha Dhamma."

### 14.14 Background on the Current Revival of Buddhism (Buddha Dhamma)

Revised April 29, 2017; January 27, 2020

## Critical Role of the British Civil Servants

1. Ironically, the current revival of Buddhism (Buddha Dhamma) is also due to the same reason that led to the decline in Buddha Dhamma in most Buddhist countries for hundreds of years. That decline was in the latter part of the second Millennium, i.e., the colonization of Asia by the Western powers starting with the Portuguese and ending with the British.

- The civil servants of the British East India Company came across ancient Buddhist literature in various Asian countries in the 1800s. Some of them realized the importance of these documents and started deciphering the documents themselves (e.g. Thomas W. Rhys Davids, 1843-1922.) They became motivated and learned Pāli and Sanskrit languages.
- Others sent documents universities in Europe. There, mostly French and English philosophers (e.g., Eugene Burnouf, 1801-1852) studied them and translated them to French and English.
- A thorough account of the efforts by the British civil servants in India, Sri Lanka, and other Asian countries in uncovering the "lost knowledge" has been given by Charles Allen in his excellent book, "The Search for the Buddha" (2003). It also covers restoration of historical Buddhist sites in India.


## Early European Scholars

2. These Westerners realized that there was something profound in this ancient doctrine which exposed them for the first time to a religion that was not based on a Creator.

- Thomas Huxley captured the essence this new religion brilliantly as follows (Thomas H. Huxley, Evolution and Ethics and Other Essays, 1894, pp. 68-69): "A system which knows of no God in the Western sense; which denies a soul to man; which counts the belief in immortality a blunder and the hope of it a sin; which refuses any efficacy to prayer and sacrifice; which bids men look to nothing but their own efforts for salvation; which, in its original purity, knew nothing of vows and obedience, abhorred intolerance, and never sought the aid of the secular arm; yet spread over a considerable moiety of the Old World with marvelous rapidity, and is still, with whatever base admixture of foreign superstitions, the dominant creed of a large fraction of mankind".
- It is amazing that even at that early stage, when there must have been some confusion about the mythical aspects of especially the Tibetan and Zen Buddhist practices, Huxley was able to express the essence of Buddha Dhamma.

3. Based on their interest in the documents from Asia on Buddhism and Hinduism, Madame Helena Petrovna Blavatsky and Colonel Henry Steel Olcott founded the Theosophical Society in New York City in 1875. They subsequently traveled to India and Sri Lanka and became Buddhists.

- Olcott published "A Buddhist Catechism" in 1881. This book together with the "Light of Asia" by Edwin Arnold in 1871 (which went through 100 printings), led to much interest in Europe and America about Buddhism. Colonel Olcott opened several Buddhism-oriented schools in Sri Lanka in order to revive the religion. I was fortunate to be able to attend one of those schools.
- These efforts were subsequently augmented by a number of Sri Lankan intellectuals such as Anagarika Dharmapala, G. P. Malasekara, K. N. Jayatilleke, Narada Thera, Walpola Rahula Thera, David Kalupahana, and also by several more Westerners who were impressed by the Buddhist teachings to a point that they came to Sri Lanka, became monks, and wrote many excellent treatises on Theravāda Buddhism; these include Nyanatiloka Thera, Nyanyaponika Thera, and Bhikkhu Bodhi.


## A surge of Zen Buddhism

4. Even though those early publications by Rhys Davids, Arnold, and Olcott in the late 1800s were mainly on the Theravāda Buddhism, beginning in the early part of the 1900s, Zen Buddhism became an object of fascination in the West and continues to be a significant presence in the West.

- In contrast to the earlier introduction of(Theravāda) Buddhism to the West by Westerners, Zen made its way into the Western consciousness via the efforts of an elite group of Japanese intellectuals - most notably D. T. Suzuki. Suzuki, who came to America in 1897, wrote several books including "An Introduction to Zen Buddhism"; this book emphasized the transcendent and mystical nature of Zen.

5. Here is an excerpt from the above book by Suzuki, which clearly states the belief of the Mahāyāna thinkers that the original teachings of the Buddha are "primitive" and Mahāyāna provided the needed improvements (p. 1, footnote 1):

- ".to be accurate, the fundamental ideas of the Mahāyāna expounded in the Prajnaparamita group of Buddhist literature, the earliest of which must have it appeared at the latest within 300 years off the Buddha's death. The germs are no doubt in the writings belonging to the so-called primitive Buddhism. Only their development, that is, a conscious grasp of them as most essential in the teachings of the founder, could not be effected without his followers' actually living the teachings for some time through the variously changing conditions of life. Thus enriched in experience and matured in reflection, the Indian Buddhists came to have the Mahāyāna form of Buddhism as distinguished from its primitive or original form. In India two Mahāyāna schools are known the Madhyamika, of Nagarjuna and the Vijnaptimatra or Yogacara of Asanga and Vasubandhu. More schools developed in China: the Tendai, the Kegon, the Jodo, the Zen, etc. In Japan, we have besides these the Hokke, the Shingon, the Shin, the Ji, etc. All of these schools or sects belong to the Mahāyāna wing of Buddhism". (Highlighting is mine).


## Problems with Mahāyāna Teachings

6. This is in sharp contrast with the basic presumption in Buddha Dhamma that only a Buddha can discover the laws of nature and those teachings CANNOT be improved upon:

I have discussed key problems with Mahāyāna teachings in "Saddharma Pundarika Sutra (Lotus Sutra) - A Focused Analysis" and "What is Suñyāta or Suñ̃̃āta (Emptiness)?."

- There is only ONE set of natural laws and those were discovered by the Buddha. As one goes through the content in this website, I hope one would be able to see that statement is justified. Also see, "Dhamma and Science - Introduction"


## Role of Dalai Lāma

7. More recently, Tibetan Buddhism (Vajrayāna) has gained prominence in the West. This is no doubt the result of the publicity of the Chinese invasion of Tibet in 1953 and the incredible personal charisma of the Dalai Lāma.

- It is unfortunate that the Dalai Lāma has to state that, 'My confidence in venturing into science lies in my basic belief that as in science so in Buddhism, understanding the nature of reality is pursued by means of critical investigation: if scientific analysis were conclusively to demonstrate certain claims in Buddhism to be false, then we must accept the findings of science and abandon those claims."(highlighting mine) - cited from "The Universe in a Single Atom: The Convergence of Science and Spirituality" (2005).

8. Both the Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna sects are now realizing that some concepts in those forms of "Buddhism" have to change with the new findings of science. The fundamental teachings of the Buddha as stated in the Theravāda Dhamma, in contrast, remain unchallenged because no such "improvements" were incorporated to "keep up with the times and cultures".

- The Pāli Tipitaka has remained the same since it was written down 2000 years ago. The reality is that science is only now beginning to confirm many things that the Buddha stated 2500 years ago; see, "Dhamma and Science - Introduction" and the subsequent links.
- Regrettably, the translated and edited versions of the Tipitaka, especially those by Acariya Buddhaghosa, have many misinterpretations.


## Scientists' Role in Recent Years

9. Beginning at the end of the twentieth century, there is a renewed interest in "Buddhism" in the West, based on several books by Western scientists.

- It seems to have started with the publication of "The Tao of Physics" by physicist Fritjof Capra (1975). In the book he describes how, one day quietly sitting by the ocean, he realized that there may be a connection between the subtleties of quantum mechanics and Eastern "mysticism," in which he included "Hinduism, Buddhism, Chinese Thought, Taoism, and Zen." It appears that he was trying to make a connection between the world of matter described by quantum mechanics and the "mind" that is predominant in "Eastern mysticism." Even by the time of the 5th edition (2010), he had not realized that Zen was a branch of Buddhism, and had not been exposed to any Theravāda literature. However, the connection he was trying to establish apparently made an impact on the Western audience and this trend will hopefully continue and be directed in the right direction.
- There are others who have contributed to the recent interest in "Buddhism" in the West: "The Art of Happiness" and other books by Dalai Lāma, "The Embodies Mind" by Francisco Varela et al., "Confession of a Buddhist Atheist" and other books by Stephen Batchelor, are some examples.
- However, most these books have incorrect interpretations of Buddha Dhamma because they are heavily influenced by Mahāyāna Buddhism, which has totally veered away from the original teachings of the Buddha, as I have discussed in this section, "Historical Background."


## Sorting Out the True Teachings of the Buddha

10. The books that I mentioned at the beginning of the essay and several other books by Ven. Ledi Sayadaw, Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi, Ven. Walpola Rahula, and others (see the References below), are providing the much needed material on Theravāda Buddhism to the Western audience, even though they themselves use some incorrect interpretations due to two main "contamination problems".

- One happened 1500 years ago when Buddhaghosa distorted $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p a ̄ n a ~ B h a ̄ v a n a ̄ ~ a s ~ " b r e a t h ~ m e d i t a t i o n " ~$ and also introduced Hindu kasina meditation to Buddha Dhamma in his commentary, Visuddhimagga.
- The other problem of misinterpreting anicca and anatta as impermanence and "no-self" was done by those early European scholars who translated Tipitaka to English; see, "Why is Correct Interpretation of Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta so Important?." These incorrect interpretations were adopted by the whole world since the late 1800s.
- Therefore, all Buddhist literature published in all languages since the late 1800s have both these problems. This is a critical point, see, "Misinterpretation of Anicca and Anatta by Early European Scholars."
- We need to resort to the Pāli Tipiṭaka that still contains the original teachings of the Buddha, and it is the goal of this website to systematically present those original teachings of the Buddha.


## References

1. "Light of Asia" by Edwin Arnold (1871),
2. "A Buddhist Catechism", by H. S. Olcott (1881).
3. "Evolution and Ethics and Other Essays", by T. H. Huxley(1894).
4. "An Introduction to Zen Buddhism" by D. T. Suzuki (1964).
5. "What the Buddha Taught" by Walpola Rahula (1974),
6. "The Tao of Physics" by Fritjof Capra (1975).
7. "A Short History of Buddhism" by Edward Conze (1980).
8. "A History of Buddhist Philosophy" by David J. Kalupahana (1992).
9. "The Manuals of Dhamma", by Ledi Sayadaw (1999).
10. "The Search for the Buddha", by C. Allen (2003).
11. "The Universe in a Single Atom: The Convergence of Science and Spirituality" by Dalai Lāma (2005).
12. "In the Buddha's Words" by Bhikkhu Bodhi (2005).

Next, "Misinterpretation of Anicca and Anatta by Early European Scholars", $\qquad$

### 14.15 Misinterpretation of Anicca and Anatta by Early European Scholars

April 29, 2017;revised next day (\#12); revised August 14, 2018; February 3, 2020; critical revision on July 14, 2021; major revision September 6, 2021; major revision February 24, 2022

## Introduction

## 1. Degradation of Theravāda Buddha Dhamma occurred gradually over the past 1500 years, but two drastic distortions took place during that time:

i. Key Pāli words anicca and anatta had been mistranslated to give the meanings of the Sanskrit words "anitya" and "anātma" in the Asian Buddhist countries even before the Buddhaghosa's time of 1500 years ago. That happened due to Mahāyāna's influence on Theravāda Buddhism. Those changes have taken root with the influence of the early European scholars and the printing press in the late 1800s.
ii. Buddhaghosa's introduction of Hindu meditation techniques in his Commentary to the Tipitaka, Visuddhimagga, 1500 years ago.
2. To understand the current situation, one needs to understand the historical background in this section, "Historical Background," but at least the posts starting with "Incorrect Theravāda Interpretations - Historical Timeline. "

- As I explained in earlier posts in this section, worse distortions to Buddha Dhamma occurred via branching out of various sects based on Mahāyāna, Zen, and Tibetan (Vajrayāna). It started with the rise of Mahāyāna in India about 500 years after the Buddha, i.e., about 2000 years ago.
- Degradation of Theravāda Buddha Dhamma occurred gradually over the past 2000 years. Two drastic changes took place during that time: (i) misinterpretation of anicca and anatta as "anitya" and "anātma" due to Mahāyāna's influence, and (ii) Buddhaghosa's introduction of Hindu meditation techniques 1500 years ago.
- The subsequent adoption of that by the European scholars when they translated BOTH Tipitaka and Visuddhimagga to English in the late 1800s made those widespread.


## Background for This Discussion

3. To set up the context for the present discussion, we also need to know the following facts:

- Pāli is a "phonetic language" (sounds give meanings in most cases, especially for keywords). It comes from Mägadhi (Maga Adhi or Noble Path) language that the Buddha spoke. Attempts to develop Pāli grammar took place about 1000 years ago.
- Furthermore, Pāli does not have its alphabet. The original Tipiṭaka, written 2000 years ago, is in Sinhala script. Details at "Historical Background."

4. The root problem of writing a given Pāli word in English must have been a critical issue to address for those English, German, and French scholars who took on the daunting task of translating the Tipitaka in the late 1800 s.

- Now there are two separate key issues: First, the "Tipitaka English" convention was adopted in the 1800s to preserve the Pāli sounds and keep the text short. See, "Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars - Part 1" Thus the Pāli word ""ண९'ઝ"' is written as "atta" instead of "aththa" as one would write in "Standard English." This was a good step.
- The second issue is even more important: The translation of key Pāli words to English. In this particular case, they translated the word "atta" ("2mi'z,") as "self." That translation is incorrect, but it was also a logical step at that time as I briefly explained above.
- Now let us see why those early translators like Rhys Davids, Eugene Burnouf, and Edward Muller chose that meaning.


## Tipiṭaka Had Not Been Translated Until Recently

5. Going back to our main discussion. Tipitaka was not TRANSLATED to the Sinhala language until 2005. It had remained in the Pāli language (written with Sinhala script) since first written down in 29 BCE ( 2000 years ago). The practice of translating the suttas in the Tipitaka WORD-BY-WORD to other languages probably started with the Europeans, as we discuss below.

- Before being written down 2000 years ago, the Tipitaka was transmitted orally for over 500 years. It is composed in a special, condensed way to make it easier to recite and remember.
- It is not POSSIBLE to just translate the Tipiṭaka word-by-word. That is discussed in detail in "Sutta Interpretation - Uddēsa, Niddēsa, Patiniddēsa."
- Instead of translating the Tipiṭaka to Sinhala, Arahants in Sri Lanka (including Ven. Mahinda) wrote Sinhala commentaries (called Sinhala Atthakath $\bar{a}$ ) explaining the key concepts in the Tipitaka. During oral discourses, bhikkhus explained those concepts in detail.
- But all those Sinhala Atthakathā were lost, and we only have commentaries written after about 500 CE (including Visuddgimagga), and they have many errors. See, "Buddhaghosa and Visuddhimagga Historical Background." Note that Buddhaghosa wrote Visuddhimagga in Pāli. As I pointed out in the previous post, "Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga - A Focused Analysis,"

6. Buddhaghosa did use the words anicca and anatta in Visuddhimagga because the words "anitya" and "anātma" are NOT there in Pāli. But even those days, it is likely that the Sinhala texts used "anitya" ( $\& 838)^{\circ} c$ c)
 today, while the Pāli Tipiṭaka has the words anicca and anatta, the side-by-side Sinhala translation has


- Thus, when bhikkhu Nynamoli translated Visuddhimagga to English he also used the words

- In my earlier versions of this post, I had written that European scholars mistranslated anicca and anatta because they assumed that those were the same as Sanskrit's words anitya and anātma. But even Theraväda Buddhists had already made that transition by that time.


## Confusion With Pāli and Sanskrit Texts

7. Those Europeans first came across Sanskrit vedic texts in India. Later on, they found the Pāli texts in Sri Lanka, Burma, and other countries. That time sequence is very important to note.

- By the time of the arrival of English, Buddhism in India had totally vanished. There were no Pāli texts in India except those inscribed on the "WebLink: en.wikipedia.org: Pillars of Ashoka, "the stone columns made by Emperor Ashoka about 300 years after the Parinibbāna of the Buddha.
- Another important point is that Pāli was never a widely-used language in India. It appeared in India briefly while Buddhism flourished for a few centuries encompassing Emperor Ashoka's reign.


## The Book "The Search of the Buddha" by Charles Allen

8. To get an idea of how those European pioneers struggled to interpret the inscriptions on Ashoka pillars and later translate the Tipitaka itself, I highly recommend the book "The Search of the Buddha" by Charles Allen (2003). His family had been in India for generations serving in the British governments, and he was born in India.

- The book has a lot of information and pictures of many historical sites in India before their restoration. It is truly fascinating to read about the efforts of those who dedicated their lives to the effort of uncovering Buddha Dhamma. Even though not shown in that book, historical sites in Sri Lanka and other Buddhist countries were also dilapidated.
- The following video is in the Sinhala language. It provides an account of the restoration of Ruwanvalisāya, one of the largest stupās in Sri Lanka. That project took over 50 years and was completed with assistance from the British Governor in Sri Lanka at that time. You can see the status of Buddhist temples and stupās in the 1800s before their restoration:
WebLink: suttacentral: History of Ruwanwelisaya Naranvita Sumanasara Thero
- In all those Asian countries (Sri Lanka, India, Burma, Thailand, etc.) Buddhism itself was in much worse shape than today. Those European scholars were really responsible for the current revival of Buddhism.

9. Those European pioneers thought Sanskrit and Pāli were very much related. They are related, but not in a useful way. Sanskrit adapted many Pāli terms but made them "sound sophisticated." But the true meanings were not as apparent.

- For example, pabhassara in Pāli Pāli became prabhāsvara in Sanskrit. While a knowledgeable person can discern the meaning of pabhassara from its Pāli roots (see, "Pabhassara Citta, Radiant Mind, and Bhavanga'), that is not true for the Sanskrit word prabhāsvara.
- Another example is Pațicca Samuppāda (see, "Paticca Samuppāda - "Pati+ichcha"+"Sama+uppāda"), which was adapted to Sanskrit as "Pratittyasamutpāda," which does not convey any meaning.


## Status of Buddhism in the 1800s

10. To complete the historical background relevant to this discussion, let me emphasize Buddhism's 'time evolution" starting in the 1700s.

- The invasions by the Portuguese, Dutch, and finally the British spanned over 4 centuries starting in 1498; see "WebLink: en.wikipedia.org: Portuguese presence in Asia." This led to a drastic decline of Buddha Dhamma in all Asian countries. However, that trend finally changed with the insight of some British civil servants in the 1800s. This is why I recommend the book by Charles Allen in \#8 above.
- Due to the efforts of those civil servants and several scholars in European countries, a coordinated effort was undertaken to collect and interpret the vast historical documents found in the Asian countries. Those included not only Tipiṭaka documents but Mahāyāna and Vedic documents too. However, even Theravāda bhikkhus had already made the mistake of mistranslating anicca and anatta to be the same as Sanskrit anitya and anātma by that time.
- There were no true Buddhist scholars with deep insight at that time. We can get an idea about the status of Buddhism in Asian countries at that time by the status of Buddhist temples in the video of \#8 above.


## Academic Credentials Not Enough to Teach Buddha Dhamma

11. Those European scholars truly did their best to interpret the vast collection of historical documents. Those efforts are well-documented in Charles Allen's book. Professor Rhys Davids was among those scholars, and most current interpretations are based on his work.

- Following the original translations by Rhys Davids, Eugene Burnouf, and others, contemporary Sinhala scholars like Malalasekara (a doctoral student of Rhys Davids) "learned" Buddhism from the Europeans and thus started using wrong interpretations.
- Other Sinhala scholars like Kalupahana and Jayathilake also learned "Buddhism" at universities in the United Kingdom (received Doctoral degrees on Buddhism) and wrote books in English and Sinhala.
- Of course, scholars in other Buddhist countries did the same in their languages, and the incorrect interpretations spread throughout the world.
- So, I hope I have provided enough information to contemplate why the opinions of "scholars" are likely to be wrong due to reasons beyond their control. Again, I admire and appreciate what Rhys Davids, Burnouf, Muller, and others did those days, and it was not their intention to distort Buddha Dhamma. It is not the fault of current scholars either.
- Just to emphasize: Buddha Dhamma needs to be learned from a true disciple of the Buddlha who has attained at least the Sotāpanna stage. Academic credentials mean NOTHING as far as teaching Buddha Dhamma is concerned. With all due respect to those European scholars, they DID NOT understand the key message of the Buddha. That message is that the rebirth process is filled with suffering, and the goal of a true Buddhist is to stop the rebirth process and attain Nibbāna. See, "Basic Framework of Buddha Dhamma."


## Tipiṭaka was written on Ola Leaves

12. It is also important to note that mass printing was not available until recent years and became common only in the 1800 s ; see, "WebLink: newworldencyclopedia.org: Printing press. "

- In the early days, Tipitaka was written on specially prepared leaves and needed to be re-written by hand every 100-200 years before they degraded. So, we must be gratefil to the bhikkhus in Sri Lanka who did this dutifully over almost 2000 years. That served another important purpose. That process automatically took into account any changes to the Sinhala script over those two thousand years! See, "Preservation of the Buddha Dhamma."
- Thus mass production of books became possible only with the new rotary printing presses in the middle of the 1800 s . By the time those key concepts had been mistranslated, printing had become widespread.
- WebLink: en.wikipedia.org: The Pāli Text Society was founded in 1881 by Rhys Davids and started printing those translations. So, it was unfortunate that those "distorted English translations" spread throughout the world.
- Luckily, we still have the original Pāli Tipitaka and three original commentaries.
- With the help of those three original Pāli commentaries, Waharaka Thero was able to "re-discover" the Buddha's original teachings over the past 25 years or so. Unfortunately, Waharaka Thero attained Parinibbāna recently; see, "Parinibbāna of Waharaka Thero."


## The Buddha prohibited the translation of Tipiṭaka to Sanskrit

13. The Buddha had foreseen the problems of a direct translation of the Tipitaka. He warned not to TRANSLATE the Tipitaka to ANY LANGUAGE, and particularly to Sanskrit. There were two Brahmins by the names of Yamela and Kekuṭa who were experts on the Vedic Texts. They became bhikkhus and asked the Buddha whether they should translate the Pāli suttā to Sanskrit.

- The Buddha admonished them that Sanskrit was a language with musical overtones developed by the high-minded Brahmins. Thus, it was impossible to convey the true meanings of Maghadhi (Pāli) words in Sanskrit; see WebLink: tipitaka.fandom.com: Chulavagga 5.33.
- In the Sutta Central English translation, the Pāli word for Sanskrit (Chandasa) is mistranslated as "metrical"; see, "WebLink: suttacentral: 15. Minor matters (Khuddaka)," which is the translation of "WebLink: suttacentral: 1. Khuddakavatthu." The relevant Pāli text is located close to the end, and starts as, "Tena kho pana samayena yamelakekuṭā nāma...".


## Role of the Commentaries To Tipitaka

14. Therefore, the Tipitaka was not translated even to the Sinhala language for 2000 years in Sri Lanka. Instead, commentaries were written in Sinhala to expand and explain the Tipitaka.

- Unfortunately, ALL those have been lost except for three commentaries in Pāli included in the Tipitaka. See, "Buddhaghosa and Visuddhimagga - Historical Background."
- With the above explanation, we can understand why those standards established in the late 1800 s actually distorted Buddha Dhamma. Of course, it was not intentional.


## Pāli Is a Unique Language

15. I cannot emphasize enough that Pāli is unlike any other modern language. Some meanings even come from how one pronounces words. Again to emphasize:

- Pāli does not have its own alphabet. Tipiṭaka was written in Pāli with Sinhala script.
- As the Buddha himself admonished, Sanskrit words cannot convey the meaning of Pāli words. That is because many Pāli words have been "Sanskritized," and that leads to much confusion. For example, there is no corresponding word for anatta in Sanskrit. But the Sanskrit word "anātma" is regularly used as the translation of "anatta." Anatta does not mean "no-self," but "anātma" does have that meaning, as mentioned above.
- While a Pāli-English dictionary could be useful in some cases, there are cases where they give wrong interpretations (anicca, anatta, pabha, etc.); see, "Pāli Dictionaries - Are They Reliable?."


## "San" Is a Unique Word in Pāli

16. A key Päli word, the meaning of which has been hidden for thousands of years, is "san" (pronounced like son). See the section on "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Samsāra)."
17. In the Dhammapada verse,
"Aneka jāti sansāraì Aneka-jāti-samisāraì sandhāvissaì anibbisam்
sandā vissan anibbisan
gahakaram gavesan to
dukkhā jāti punappunam"
Gaha-kāraì gavesanto dukkhā jāti punappunaì
Gaha-kāraka dittho 'si puna geham na kāhasi
Sabbā te phāsukā bhaggā gaha-kūṭam visañkhataṃ
Visañkhāra-gataṃ cittaṃ taṇhānaṃ khayam-ajjhagā
For many lifetimes in the round of birth, Wandering on endlessly,
For the builder of this house I searched - How painful is repeated birth.
House-builder you've been seen, Another home you will not build, All your rafters have been snapped, Dismantled is your ridge-pole;
The non-constructing mind Has come to craving's end.

- There are four places above where "san" comes in. This verse captures the intense joy felt by the Buddha at the moment of attainment of Buddhahood.
- The word "san" appears very frequently in the Tipitaka. But it is often masked by the fact that in many places, it rhymes as "samं" in many word combinations as in "samisāra, "sampādeta, "Samma"; see, "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansara (or Samsara)."


## Critical Role of the Printing Press in Widespread Circulation of the Incorrect Interpretations

18. The printing press became widely available only after the rotary press was invented in 1843: "WebLink: newworldencyclopedia.org: Printing press. " As pointed out above, Rhys Davids started publishing the English translations of the Tipitaka in 1881. That led to the widespread circulation of the incorrect interpretations of those Early European scholars!

- Up to that time, the printed version of the Pāli Tipitaka was on specially prepared ola (palm) leaves; see, "Preservation of the Dhamma." This was a laborious process, as detailed in that post. Fortunately,
bhikkhus kept re-writing the Tipitaka material roughly every hundred years when the "old version" started degrading.
- The key point is that there were only versions of the original Tipitaka. It was not in wide circulation until the printing press was invented, just in time for the incorrect interpretations to be widely circulated. Rhys Davids started publishing the English translations of the Tipitaka in 1881.
- This is why there is no record of the correct interpretations of keywords like anicca and anatta in Sinhala. Those interpretations were in the original Sinhala commentaries (Sinhala Atthakath $\bar{a}$.) It is safe to assume that the same holds in other Asian countries.
- The invention of the printing press was a key factor in spreading the incorrect interpretations that early European scholars came up with (unintentionally)!

Also see, "Tipitaka Commentaries - Helpful or Misleading?".

### 14.16 Tipitaka Commentaries - Helpful or Misleading?

## December 6, 2017

1. I recently came across the following essay on Tipitaka commentaries: "WebLink: accesstoinsight.org: Beyond the Tipitaka : A Field Guide to Post-canonical Pāli Literature". It describes the importance of such commentaries in clarifying key concepts in the Tipitaka. I will present evidence to the contrary. In fact, such commentaries have introduced contradictory explanations.

- Over the years, I have also seen heated discussions on key concepts of Buddha Dhamma like anicca, anatta, and anidassana viññāṇa, on internet discussion boards.
- I often wonder about the immense amounts of time people waste on discussing the meaning of key Pāli words in Tipiṭaka suttā. They go back and forth between different interpretations without reaching a conclusion. I hardly see any issue resolved fully in such discussions. Same topic is discussed year after year without much progress.
- One key factor contributing to this confusion is those commentaries themselves; they are not consistent with Buddha's original teachings in the Tipitaka. The other key factor is the incorrect translation of key Pāli words. Both these issues are discussed below.

2. I hope this post would be helpful in thinking about a new approach to finding the "correct teachings of the Buddha". By discarding sources of incorrect interpretations once and for all, one could save a lot of time and really focus on making progress.

- When I seriously started studying different versions of Buddhism several years ago, this was the strategy that I used to eliminate "corrupt" or "contaminated" versions. I eliminated Mahāyāna, Vajrayana (Tibetan), and Zen versions first. After I came across desanās of Waharaka Thero, I was able to eliminate Visuddhimagga and other relatively recent commentaries. These steps are discussed in detail below.
- Then I was left out with just the Tipitaka and its three ancient, original commentaries, which were composed during the time of the Buddha; see below. A consistent picture that is crystal clear has emerged for me.
- I hope others can follow the same procedure. If everything can be understood within that framework, what is the need for more sources? As the principle of philosophy "WebLink: wiki: Occam's razor" (or Ockham's razor) says, simplest explanation without any inconsistencies is the best explanation.

3. My key assertion is that the Tipitaka, together with the three original commentaries of Patisambhidamagga, Petakopadesa, and Nettippakarana are sufficient to clarify the original teachings of the Buddha.

- This was made possible by my Noble teacher Waharaka Thero, who was able to discern the true meanings of key Pāli words with the help of those three original commentaries; see, "Parinibbāna of Waharaka Thero."
- At this website I present this self-consistent picture that came out of the efforts of Waharaka Thero.
- Note that I am not asking anyone to take what I present at this website as the correct version. It is up to each person to look at the evidence and decide. As far as I can see, everything at this site is consistent with the Tipitaka and is also self-consistent. I encourage all to point out any inconsistencies, because my goal is $100 \%$ consistency.
- Self-consistency, i.e., making sure that there are no contradictions is the scientific procedure used also by modern scientists to evaluate the validity of a scientific theory.

4. There is no need to consult any commentary other than the three original ones mentioned above. In fact, I have explained at length why the other key commentaries used today provide inaccurate and inconsistent explanations; see, "Historical Background."

The above mentioned essay (in \#1) is a good example of some misconceptions on the importance and validity of Tipitaka commentaries. When I say "commentaries" from now on below, they do not include the original three commentaries included with the Tipiṭaka.

- In the following, the statements within quotation marks and highlighted in red are from the above essay, and are accompanied by my comments pointing out the flaws in those statements.

5. "The Tipitaka (Pāli canon) assumed its final form at the Third Buddhist Council (ca. 250 BCE) and was first committed to writing sometime in the $1^{\text {st }}$ c. BCE. Shortly thereafter Buddhist scholar-monks in Sri Lanka and southern India began to amass a body of secondary literature: commentaries on the Tipitaka itself..."

- Not true. The original three commentaries mentioned in \#3 above (Patisambhidamagga, Petakopadesa, and Nettippakarana) were compiled during the time of the Buddha, and those still are in the Tipitaka itself:
- Those three original commentaries are in Pāli, but there were many others written in Sinhala language, and all of those have been lost, as discussed below.

6. 'Most of these texts were written in Sinhala, the language of Sri Lanka, but because Pāli — not Sinhala was the lingua franca of Theravāda, few Buddhist scholars outside Sri Lanka could study them. It wasn't until the $5^{\text {th }} \mathrm{c}$. CE, when the Indian monk Buddhaghosa began the laborious task of collating the ancient Sinhala commentaries and translating them into Pāli, that these books first became accessible to non-Sinhala speakers around the Buddhist world".

- This statement refers to those early Sinhala commentaries that have since been lost.
- It is correct that Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga - as well as other commentaries such as Vimuttimagga - were written in Pāli by Indian scholars.
- It is also important to note that incorrect translations of those Pāli words led to more problems when those were translated to English; see \#7 below.

7. "These commentaries (Atthakatha) offer meticulously detailed explanations and analyses - phrase-byphrase and word-by-word - of the corresponding passages in the Tipitaka."

- First of all, Atthakatha (a Sinhala word meaning "true accounts") were the ancient commentaries on Tipitaka written in Sinhala. They ALL have been lost; see, "Preservation of the Dhamma."
- So, it is misleading to refer to those as the commentaries in question. In contrast, the commentaries in circulation today are NOT those ancient Atthakatha, but more recent ones like Visuddhimagga.
- Buddhaghosa's mission was to translate the material in Sinhala Atthakatha to Pāli so that those bhikkhus in India could read them. Unfortunately, he incorporated many Vedic concepts; see, "Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga - A Focused Analysis."
- Further problems were introduced when Visuddhimagga was translated to English in recent times. Today, both the original Pāli version of Visuddhimagga and its recent English translation are available on Amazon; see Refs. 1 and 2 below.

8. "Almost everything we know today about the early years of Buddhism comes to us from these postcanonical books".

- This is completely false. In fact, those post canonical commentaries (such as Visuddhimagga) have "muddied the waters" than help.; see, "Buddhaghosa and Visuddhimagga - Historical Background" and "Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga - A Focused Analysis."
- What I am saying is to examine the evidence presented in those posts. If one agrees, then one can just remove Visuddhimagga as a reliable source. That itself will solve half the problem.
- The second problem is the incorrect translation of key Pali words in those commentaries as well as in Tipitaka suttā; see, "Misinterpretation of Anicca and Anatta by Early European Scholars."
- As I have presented evidence throughout this website, the Tipiṭaka and the three original commentaries are enough to guide us.

9. 'First, the chronicles and commentaries provide a vital thread of temporal continuity that links us, via the persons and historical events of the intervening centuries, to the Tipitaka's world of ancient India. A Tipitaka without this accompanying historical thread would forever be an isolated anachronism to us, its message lost in clouds of myth and fable, its pages left to gather dust in museum display cases alongside ancient Egyptian mummies..."

- There are no myths or fables in the Tipitaka. I would challenge anyone to show any evidence from the Tipitaka. This is an irresponsible and egregious statement.

10. "Second, almost everything we know today about the early years of Buddhism comes to us from these post-canonical books.."

- There is nothing in these commentaries that provide any significant information about the time of the Buddha. They may provide information about the time at which they were written. For example, Visuddhimagga was written about 800 years after the Buddha.

11. "One might reasonably wonder: how can a collection of texts written a thousand years after the Buddha's death possibly represent his teachings reliably? How can we be sure they aren't simply derivative works, colored by a host of irrelevant cultural accretions? First of all, although many of these texts were indeed first written in Pāli a thousand years after the Buddha, most Sinhala versions upon which they were based were written much earlier, having themselves been passed down via an ancient and reliable oral tradition..."

- This is the point I am making. We do know that, for example, Buddhaghosa distorted Buddhist meditation techniques, Ānäpāna meditation was misinterpreted as breath meditation and Hindu kasiña meditations were also incorporated,
- For details, see, "Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga - A Focused Analysis" and "Is Ānāpānasati Breath Meditation?."

12. "But what of the credentials of the commentators themselves: can their words be trusted? In addition to living a monastic life immersed in Dhamma, the compilers of the commentaries possessed unimpeachable literary credentials: intimate acquaintance with the Tipitaka, mastery of the Pāli and Sinhala languages, and expert skill in the art of careful scholarship. We have no reason to doubt either their abilities or the sincerity of their intentions".

- This is also a critical issue. As I discussed in those posts mentioned above, Buddhaghosa was a Vedic Brahmin and he distorted Ānāpāna to breath meditation and incorporated kasiṇa meditations into Visuddhimagga; no such kasina meditations are to be found anywhere in the Tipiṭaka.
- Like so many late commentators, Buddhaghosa was just another philosopher like Nagarjuna. By the way, Nagarjuna was also a commentator, and his work led to the rising of Mahāyāna version of Buddhism.
- I have discussed the drawbacks in Mahāyāna; see, for example, "Key Problems with Mahāyāna Teachings" and "Saddharma Pundarika Sutra (Lotus Sutra) - A Focused Analysis."
- Same kind of arguments can be applied to Tibetan Buddhism (Vajrayāna) and Chinese Zen Buddhism; all these are off-shoots of the original teachings in the Tipitaka; see, "Historical Background." In fact, it is well-worth the time to read this section before coming to any conclusions.

13. "And what of their first-hand understanding of Dhamma: if the commentators were scholars first and foremost, would they have had sufficient meditative experience to write with authority on the subject of meditation? This is more problematic".

- This is the only statement that I agree with. They were just "scholars" and philosophers, who had not made any progress in actual practice.
- This is true today as well. Many "scholars" have written books on Buddha Dhamma without having any significant progress in following the Noble Path. In fact, many are not even nominally Buddhists; some are "secular Buddhists" who do not believe in rebirth or Nibbāna; see, "Buddhism without Rebirth and Nibbāna?."
- I am not trying to put them down. They do serve a meritorious purpose in teaching how to live a moral life. However, those books/journal papers/websites cannot be used to clarify deeper teachings in the Tipitaka.

14. A key point missing in the current discussion is that it is not possible to comprehend the key concepts like anicca and anatta without at least attaining the Sotāpanna stage of Nibbäna. However, these days, people tend to gauge the qualifications by checking only whether a given person is an "academic scholar".

- Just like only a practicing physician can truly understand and diagnose a patient, not one who has just studied medical text books.
- Only an Ariya (a Noble person) - who has practiced the true teachings and at least attained the Sotāpanna stage of Nibbāna - can comprehend deep concepts like anicca, anatta, viññāna, and saññā. One cannot fully understand such deep concepts by just studying or reading about them. For example, see, "What is Saññā (Perception)?""

15. The most referred to commentaries (these days) are Buddhaghosa's WebLink: wiki: Visuddhimagga and Upatissa's WebLink: wiki: Vimuttimagga (to a much less extent). The original Päli text for the latter was long believed to have been lost; for centuries, discussions about the text therefore relied on a $5^{\text {th }} \mathrm{c}$. Chinese edition.

- As we have established, those later commentaries - including Visuddhimagga and Vimuttimagga were written in Pāli.

16. Therefore, those late commentaries lead to confusion in two ways:

- One is the erroneous interpretations by the commentators themselves, as discussed above.
- The other is incorrect translations - initially done by early European scholars - in translating key Pāli terms incorrectly; see, for example, "Misinterpretation of Anicca and Anatta by Early European Scholars." This has made the situation even worse.

These are two critical points to consider by those who are tempted to refer to those late commentaries. I cannot emphasize the importance of those two points enough.
17. Then there are those who quote from Chinese $\overline{A g a m a}$. Even though those original Chinese documents COULD BE authentic, my point is that they were also derived from the Tipitaka and thus serve no purpose as additional resources.

- They could be valuable for those who are proficient in Chinese but cannot read Pāli, Sinhala, or English.

18. Finally, to re-emphasize my main point: The Tipitaka - together with the three original commentaries included in it - are sufficient to clarify the original teachings of the Buddha. The goal of this website is to have such a consistent clarification of Buddha's teachings in English at one place.

- Using just the Tipitaka, I have also pointed out some current misinterpretations in Theravāda Buddhism, mainly due to the influence of Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga; see, "Incorrect Theravāda Interpretations - Historical Timeline" and posts referred there.
- There still could be some minor inconsistencies at the website, and I am appreciative of those readers who have pointed out some of them that have led to improvements. But I have high confidence in the correctness of key concepts.
- Please do not hesitate to comment on any inconsistency with the Tipitaka or within the website. However, for the reasons that I have detailed, please do not quote from any other sources.


## References

1. Visuddhimagga (The Path of Purification - Pāli Edition), by Bhadantacariya Buddhaghosa (Theravāda Tipiṭaka Press, 2010).
2. The Path of Purification (Visuddhimagga), by Bhadantacariya Buddhaghosa and translated by Bhikkhu Nyanamoli (BPS Edition, 1999). The Introduction (by Bhikkhu Nyanamoli) provides a historical background.

## xv Buddhist Chanting

o "Buddhist Chanting - Introduction"

- "Namaskaraya - Homage to the Buddha"
o "Supreme Qualities of Buddha, Dhamma, Sañgha"
o "The Five Precepts - Panca Sila"
o "Sutta Chanting (with Pāli Text)"
o "Sadhu - Symbolizes Purified Hadaya Vatthu (Mind)"


### 15.1 Buddhist Chanting - Introduction

## Revised February 11, 2021

1. This section on Chanting helps cultivates saddh $\bar{a}$ (faith) in the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sañgha. Which also helps calm the mind and grasp more profound concepts. For those who believe that there is no value in these "ritual-like" procedures, it may be a good idea to read the post, "Panca Indriya and Panca Bala- Five Faculties and Five Powers."

- If done with understanding, these are not rituals as in "silabbata paramasa".
- Therefore, as I keep adding items to this section, I will try to provide the deep meanings behind these "seemingly ritualistic" chantings.
- In addition to the deeper meanings, there are subtle benefits in listening to chantings, especially those by Ariyā or Noble Persons. This is why I decided to add the sound recordings by the Venerable Thero.

2. The Buddha said that the mind takes precedence over everything else. Our thoughts control our speech and bodily actions. And these thoughts get their moral power from wisdom (paññ̄ $\bar{a}$ ) and the joyful state ( $p \bar{i} t i$ or "preethi") of the mind.

- One can make a given meritorious deed much more powerful by doing it with joy and understanding. The most potent kusala citta is done with "joy and understanding" (a somanassa-sahagata, ñānasampayutta citta); see, "Javana of a Citta - Root of Mental Power."
- Recent scientific studies are beginning to illustrate the power of the focused mind. See, for example, "The Biology of Belief' by Bruce H. Lipton (2008) and "Biocentrism" by Robert Lanza (2009).
- Thus chanting done with understanding can have benefits, especially for those who have a dominant "saddhā indriya" or have a high degree of faith in the Buddha or Buddha Dhamma.

3. However, one should not force anything on the mind. If chanting is not something that appeals to someone, then it should not be forced. Different people start off with different tendencies (i.e., they have a dominant faculty or power, see, "Panca Indriya and Panca Bala- Five Faculties and Five Powers"). Out of sati, saddh $\bar{a}$, viriya, samādhi, and pañña , the dominant one should be the focus. As one cultivates the Path, the other four will also grow.

- This is also related to the concept of how one's character (gathi) and habits change as one follows the Path. Then one's tendencies, associations, etc., will also gradually change; see, "The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Āsavas)."
- Thus one may want to concentrate just on the topics on the site that are appealing to oneself. Once in a while, one can take a look at other sections and see whether their opinions on those sections have changed or not.
- The main thing is to stay on the path of least resistance and the topics that can be easily comprehended.

3. A useful resource is "WebLink: buddhistelibrary.org: Vandanā: The Album of Pāli Devotional Chanting \& Hymns. "

Next, "Namaskaraya - Homage to the Buddha",

### 15.2 Namaskaraya - Homage to the Buddha

1. In the Theravāda tradition, it is customary to pay homage to the Buddha (Namaskāraya; pronounced "namaskāraya), recite the Three Refuges (Tisarana, where "ti" is three and "sarana" means refuge or protection; pronounced "Thisarana") and undertake to observe the five precepts (Panca Silla; pronounced "pancha seela") on visiting a place of worship or before starting a meditation session.

- Some people just do the Namaskāraya if they do not have time to recite the Tisarana (Refuge in Buddha, Dhamma, Sañgha) or the Panca Sila (five precepts; sometimes eight or ten precepts).

2. One can recite the following stanza three times by oneself or at more formal occasions (e.g., visiting a temple) a Buddhist monk administers them.
"Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammā sambuddhassa"

- A brief translation is, "I pay homage to the fully Enlightened One who found the truth about the existence and became free of all defilements".
- Another conventional translation is, "I pay homage to the Blessed One, the Exalted One, the fully Enlightened One".
- The deeper meaning is discussed below.

3. Both interpretations are important. For someone starting out, without much knowledge of Dhamma (but still sees the value in Dhamma) and thus wishes to pay respects to the Buddha, the conventional meaning itself is the dominant.

- But the Buddha himself said that the best way to pay homage to him is to learn Dhamma and to follow the Path. That is the more deeper meaning of the Namaskäraya. But they also have the reverence for the Buddha himself. As the knowledge in Dhamma grows, the second interpretation becomes clear, while not losing the first.

4. Here is a recital of the Namaskāraya by a Venerable Thero (volume adjustment on the right). It is normally recited three times:

WebLink: Listen to verse of: Namaskāraya

You can download the file below by clicking "DOWNLOAD". You can play it there or right-click on the screen and choose "save as.." to save to your computer.
Download
More audio files are at: "Sutta Chanting (with Pali Text)."

## Namaskāraya - What Does it Really Mean?

"Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammā sambuddhassa"

1. Most Pāli verses have two (or more) meanings: one is the conventional ("padaparama") meaning, and the other is the deeper meaning that helps understand the deeper idea behind the verse. Unfortunately, most times it is the conventional idea that that is brought out when translating even whole sutt $\bar{a}$.

- In the case of suttā, a sutta that was delivered over an hour (sometimes many hours, like the Dhamma chakka pavattana sutta) is normally translated word-to-word in a few pages; see, "Sutta Interpretations."
- As I explained in the post, "Preservation of the Dhamma", most existing sutta translations are incomplete at best, and erroneous most of the time.
- Even the conventional meaning can be useful in some cases, like in namaskāraya, Tisarana, and the five precepts. For those who do not have a deeper understanding, the deeper meanings may not serve the
purpose of bringing "joy to the heart" or "citta pasāda" (pronounced "citta pasāda"); for a deeper discussion on citta pasāda, see, "Javana of a Citta - The Root of Mental Power."
- Thus for those who are new to the deeper meanings in Dhamma, the conventional interpretations may be a good start. As knowledge in Dhamma grows, the second interpretation becomes clear without losing the first, i.e., reverence to the person himself can also only grow as one learns how valuable his Dhamma is.

2. What we have here is a short phrase that can be correctly translated in a short essay. Let us see what is really meant by this verse.

- "Namo" means incline as in accepting something with this reverence because of its value; "tassa" means "to this" or "because of this". This is why we bend our heads to signify this.
- "bhaga" is to separate and "vata" is the usually translated as body, but it has more wider meaning to anything in this world. The Buddha, in trying to show that uselessness of clinging to one's body, advised to separate the body into 32 parts and see that there is nothing substantial in any of the parts. Even though we highly value our bodies, it will decay with old age, and will eventually give us only sicknesses and ailments. And it will last only about 100 years.
- In the wider sense, anything in this world can be divided into parts and be shown that there is nothing substantial in them.
- Once we see that it is unfruitful to cling our bodies (and anythings in general), we lose the craving ("raha" in Pāli or Sinhala) and become "arahant"(from "a" + "raha"). The word Arahant also comes from this meaning, i.e., someone who has given up craving for worldly things, by comprehending the true nature.
- As we saw in the post, "What is "San?" - the Meaning of Samisāra", "san" means accumulating worldly things. " $m a$ " means become free of doing that. Thus "samm $\vec{a}$ " (san+ma) means "stop accumulating worldly stuff that will only cause suffering in the end".
- The accumulation of worldly things lead to preparation of future births or "bhava".Sambuddhassa (san $+b h u+u d d a s s a$ ) means "remove from the root the causes for preparing bhava via accumulating san", i.e., become free of the rebirth process or to work towards Nibbāna.

3. Now we can see the whole verse:
"By analyzing my body and other worldly things with wisdom, I have come to understand the unfruitfulness of clinging to such things, and I incline to rout out the rebirth process (i.e., existence in the 31 realms) and attain Nibbāna".

- Here incline means one keeps "bent on attaining that goal". With deeper understanding of Dhamma one's resolve will be strengthened. As with most things in Buddha Dhamma, it is always about one's mind.
- The resolve has to come through understanding. There is no one watching, and no one else monitoring the progress; it is one's own mind that is doing all that.

4. Finally, the word namaskāraya (nama+as+kāraya, where "nama" is one's name, "as" pronounced like "us" means remove, and "kāraya" means doing) conveys the idea that one is making a resolve to get rid of the attachment one has for one's worldly things. It is a condensed version of the verse.

- Of course the conventional meaning of "namaskāraya" is "paying homage".


### 15.3 Supreme Qualities of Buddha, Dhamma, Sangha

May 28, 2016 ; revised October 1, 2018; April 26,2020; August 27, 2022

## Introduction

1. It is traditional to start a meditation session with an homage to the Buddha (Namaskāraya):

- Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa
- Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa
- Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa
and then recite the supreme qualities of the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sañgha.
Here is a recital of the Namaskāraya by the Venerable Thero (you need to adjust the volume control on your computer). It is normally recited three times: WebLink: mp3 audio: Namaskāraya - Homage to the Buddha
- The meaning of the above phrase is described in "Namāskaraya - Homage to the Buddha."


## The 24 Supreme Qualities

2. There are nine, six, and nine supreme qualities attributed to the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha respectively.

- These are listed and discussed in several suttā in the Dīgha Nikāya of the Tipitaka.
- For example, see "10. Dhammādāsadhammapariyāya" section of the "Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta (DN 16)."
- The Buddha tells Ven. Ananda that when one becomes a Sotāpanna, one would begin to understand these qualities and will have "unbreakable faith" in the Buddha, Dhamma, Sangha (Tiratana, or Three Jewels.)

3. The 24 supreme qualities are called "suvisi guṇa," where suvisi means 24 and guṇa are the qualities. There are two main ways to interpret and utilize these 24 qualities.

- Chanting of these qualities can provide a calming effect on the mind and is normally done before a formal meditation session; see "Tisarana Vandanā and Its Effects on One's Gati."
- The meaning of the word "vandana"" is "va" + "andha" + "na", where "va" is for "vaya" or destroy, "andha" is for blind, and "n $\bar{a} "$ is for "ny $\bar{a} y a "$ or the procedure for getting rid of moral blindness and attaining Nibbāna. The path to attaining Nibbāna is encoded in the Tiratana vandanā. We will discuss this in detail in a future post.
- Also, this chanting is alternatively called Tiratana vandan $\bar{a}$ (where Tiratana means the Three Jewels) OR Tisarana vandanā (where Tisarana means "guidance from the Three Jewels"). It is imperative to recite them correctly.
Here is a recording of the Tiratana Vandanā by the Venerable Thero (You need to control the volume level on your computer):

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WebLink:Listen to the verses of Tiratana Vandana
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- The recital should break at places where there is a coma to state each quality separately and should not break in the middle (e.g., no breaks in anuttaro purisadamma sārathi); see below.

4. These qualities can only be partially understood and never fully grasped. If a person with a mathematics Ph.D. teaches addition/subtraction to a first-grade student, that student cannot fully appreciate the capabilities
or qualifications of the teacher. When the same student grows up and learns higher mathematics later from the same teacher at a university, he can appreciate the teacher's capabilities more.

- In the same way, the qualities of the Three Jewels can be appreciated only with more learning of Dhamma. When I first wrote the original post on this subject more than a year ago, my understanding was much less than now. In the meantime, I have understood more and also experienced the power of the recital of these qualities.


## Supreme Qualities of the Buddha

5. Correct Recital: itipi so bhagavā arahain sammāsambuddho vijjācaraṇasampanno sugato lokavidū anuttaro purisadammasārathi satthā devamanussānaì buddho bhagavā'ti.

- It is imperative to break the phrase "itipi so" into two words; "so" means "him."
- Most people recite it as a single word "itipiso" and that gives not only an incorrect but a derogatory meaning: "piso" is for "pisācha" or a "lowly being like a preta."
- "itipi so Bhagava" means "because of (the following qualities) he (Buddha) is."

6. There are nine qualities of the Buddha stated in the above verse. Each quality is impossible for a human being to describe fully.

- As one learns more and more Dhamma, one truly begins to understand the value of a Buddha. It is said that an Anāgāmī can better understand the qualities of a Buddha than a Sotāpanna, and an Arahant even better.

7. Here is the list of the nine qualities:

- Arahaím - " $A$ " + "rahaí" or not a trace of defilement (attachment for sense pleasures) left.
- Sammāsambuddho - - "San" + "mā" + "sambhava" + "uddha", or who discovered the way to dissociate from this suffering-filled world by removing "san"; see, "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Samsāra)."
- Vijjacharanasampanno - "Vijja" (science or knowledge) + "carana" + "san" + "panno" or perfectly knowledgeable about how the world arises (out of "san").
- Sugato - Ultimate in "su" + "gati" or "good qualities."
- Lokavidü - "Loka" + "vidu," or having the ability to examine and explain any of the three worlds that encompass everything: world of mental formations (Sankharaloka), the world of beings (Sattaloka), the world of things (Okasaloka).
- Anuttaro purisadammasārathi - "Purisa" here is not a gender: purisa dhamma is the highest qualities; "anuttara" means unmatched. [purisadammasārathi : the modesty of the man. damma :[adj.] tamed or trained. sārathi :[m.] a charioteer; a coachman; a driver.]
- Satthā devamanussanan - Teacher of celestial and human beings.
- Buddho - Perfectly Enlightened, uprooted all "bhava" (bhava uddha).
- Bhagavā or Bhagavath - "Bha" + "ga" + "vatha" - Able to examine a living being's origin in many different ways. Here "Bha" is bhava or existence, and "ga" means connection or relationship, and "vatha" is the form of any being.

8. The above is, of course, not the only meaning. Since each word describes the infinite qualities of the Buddha, there are other meanings. Thus it is best not to get hang-up on the translations above.

- It is best to get an idea of these qualities and ALWAYS recite them in Pāli. As one's understanding grows, one will realize the meanings better.
- Pāli is a phonetic language. Meanings come via sounds. Thus what is imperative is to be able to recite the Pāli phrase above to the best of one's ability. I provided the recordings at the end of the post, where my teacher Thero recites them as they should be.


## Supreme Qualities of the Dhamma

9. There are six supreme qualities of Dhamma:
"Svākkhāto bhagavatā dhammo sandiṭthiko akāliko ehipassiko opaneyyiko paccattaim veditabbo viññūhīti"

First, Bhagavathā Dhammo is the Dhamma taught by the Buddha.

- Svākkātho - leads to the removal of sansāric suffering via getting out of the 31 realms. Here "svakkata" ("sva" for "self" and "akkata" or "akrutha" or "akriya" means putting out of action) means getting rid of the concept of a "me" (asmai māna). It is not about whether a "self" exists; it is rather to realize that nothing in this world is worth being considered "mine."
- Sandiṭthika - It allows one to comprehend "san" ("san" + "dițthi"), the key reason for the existence in this world; see, "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Samsāra)."
- Akaliko - This Dhamma does not change over time; it is the same Dhamma that is delivered by all Buddhas (" $a$ " + " $k \bar{a} l i k a$ "). Another meaning is that it leads to the removal of darkness (due to $a v i j j \bar{a}$ ); here, "kalu" means "black" or "darkness." [kālika :[adj.] temporal = relating to time.]
- Ehipassiko - "Ehi" + "passika" or defilements can be removed ("passika") when each $\bar{a} r a m m a n a$ comes to the mind ("Ehi"). One does not wait to remove defilements in a formal meditation session. Rather, one takes care of that at each instant when an immoral thought comes to the mind (with Ānāpāna or Satipaṭthāna). See "Is Ānāpānasati Breath Meditation?." [ehi :[imper. of eti] come, come here.]
- Opanayiko - "Opa" + "naiko," where "Opa" means "upata" or "origins" and "nyāya" means the principle or nature. Thus, one can comprehend how each existence (bhava and $j \bar{a} t i$ ) arises.
- Paccattam vedittabbo vinnuhi- "paccaya" can be understood by looking at the origins (veda or vedic): vedittabbo. "Vinnu" means the hidden can be seen (like something hidden in a vessel by piercing it). Anything in this world arises due to Paṭicca Samuppāda. Thus, Dhamma allows one to "see-through" how this whole world, together with all the suffering, arises.


## Supreme Qualities of the Sangha

10. Here it must be noted that Sañgha is not bhikkhus. Sañgha means the Nobles or Ariyā, those who have attained one of the magga phala. (Sañgha means one who has removed "san," i.e., "san" + "gha").
"Suppațipanno bhagavato sāvakasañgho, ujuppaṭipanno bhagavato sāvakasañgho, ñāyappațipanno bhagavato sāvakasañgho, sāmīcippaṭipanno bhagavato sāvakasañgho yadidaỉ cattāri purisayugāni aṭtha purisapuggalā, esa bhagavato sāvakasañgho āhuneyyo pāhuneyyo dakkhiṇeyyo añjalikaran̄̄yo anuttarain puñ̃̃akkhettain lokassā'ti.
11. Bhagavato savakasangho means Noble disciples of the Buddha. The first four phrases describe four Noble qualities: Suppatipanno, ujuppațipanno, ñāyappatipanno, and sāmīcippatipanno.

- Pațipanno means "having such quality": "Su" means goodness and morality; "uju" means straightforward and not crooked in character; "nāya" means $\tilde{n} \bar{a} n a$ or wise; "sāmici" means pleasant to associate. Thus, it is easy to understand what those phrases mean. But as with all these qualities, it is not possible to describe them fully in words.

12. "Yadidamं cattāri purisayugāni atṭha purisapuggalä" means thus described eight types of persons (atṭha purisapuggalā) of four Noble (purisa) lineages. Eight types come when each stage is divided into two: e.g., Arahant magga and Arahant phala.
13. Then, starting with "esa bhagavato sāvakasañgho" (i.e., those Noble disciples of the Buddha), five more qualities are stated: āhuneyyo pāhuneyyo dakkhineyyo añjalikaraṇī̀o anuttaraì puññakkhettaì lokassa.

- In those words, "neyyo" means niyama dhamma or core principle of nature; also called "nyāma." Then "āhu" means "grasped," "pāhu" means "inseparable" or "fused together", "dakkhi" means "see." Thus those disciples have seen the core principles of nature (paticcca samuppāda), have grasped them, and will not be separated from them ever.
- Because of that, they can dissolve and remove the causes (food) that fuel the sansāric journey: anjalikaraneeyo. Here "an" means "āhāra" or causes, "jali" is water (dissolve), and karan̄īyo means "do." Another meaning of "an" is "horn" with sharp tips (as in a bull), which can hurt others; here, añjalikaraṇìyo means dissolving them (by cultivating Metta) so that they cannot hurt others.
- Anuttaram puñnakkhettaim: anuttara is unmatched, puñna is meritorious, and khetta is for a field. Thus, these disciples are like fertile fields, that can provide unlimited resources to others (just like a wellcultivated field can provide food for many).

Here is a recital of the Namaskaraya by the Venerable Thero (you need to adjust volume control on your computer). It is normally recited three times:

## WebLink: Listen to the verses of Namaskaraya recital

Here is a recording of the Tiratana vandana by the Venerable Thero (You need to control the volume level on your computer)

## WebLink: Listen to the verses of Tiratana Vandana

Pāli text (click to open the pdf file):

## WebLink: PDF File: Tiratana Vandana

More audio files are at: "Sutta Chanting (with Pali Text)."

## 15.4 <br> The Five Precepts - Pañca Sila

## Revised February 12, 2020

1. The five precepts (pañca sīla; pronounced "pancha seela") are normally recited after paying homage to the Buddha (Namaskāraya), and then taking the refuge (Tisarana), i.e., one says nine times that one takes the refuge in the Buddha, Dhamma, and the Sangha. In the following they are combined, as customary; see the previous post for pronunciations and details.

- Even for a Buddhist, it is not necessary to recite the precepts.
- It is important to keep in mind that JUST BY RECITING PRECEPTS does not do anything to purify the mind. The Buddha said, "Yaim samādānaí taiं vataí, Sai்varatṭena sīlaí," or "reciting precepts is a ritual ("vata"), moral behavior is attained by seeing and controlling 'san'."
- However, it is good to recite Namaskāraya, Tisarana, and the precepts, to attain citta pasāda or calmness and joy of mind, especially before a formal meditation session. If one does it WITH UNDERSTANDING and RESOLVE, it can bring benefits.
- Furthermore, reciting precepts and suttā is preferred by those with developed saddhā (faith) indriya; see, "Pañca Indriya and Pañca Bala - Five Faculties and Five Powers." For those who lack saddhā indriya, this may be something they want to consider doing.

2. It is important to realize that the five precepts have deep meanings, and thus should not be taken lightly; see, "The Five Precepts - What the Buddha Meant by Them." The true meaning of the five precepts are discussed there.

- Only an Arahant is capable of strictly keeping those precepts (abstaining from all ten defilements or dasa akusala); thus one needs to recite with the intention of doing one's best to keep the precepts. Otherwise, we will be lying from the outset.

Here a Venerable Thero is reciting the Namaskāraya, Tisarana, and the five precepts with the audience repeating them (volume adjustment on the right):

## WebLink: Listen to verse of: Pansil

Here is a pdf file with the text and translation:

## WebLink: PDF File: Pañca Sila (click to open)

3. To emphasize, these English translations are the conventional ("padaparama") or mundane ones and the real meanings are discussed in "The Five Precepts - What the Buddha Meant by Them." Also, while reciting, one needs to keep in mind that one is promising to do one's best to keep the precepts.

### 15.5 Sutta Chanting (with Pali Text)

Revised August 14, 2016: Added more suttā at the end.
Following are recordings of three popular suttā by a Venerable Thero and the corresponding Pāli texts. At some point, I will make English translations. Most existing translations provide only the mundane ("padaparama") meanings.

Please note that a few sutt $\bar{a}$ are translated and discussed in the section "Sutta Interpretations."

## 1. Karaniya Metta Sutta (volume adjustment on the right):

You can use the below link to open the file. You can play it there or right-click on the screen and choose "save as..." to save to your computer.

## WebLink: Listen to verse of: Karaniya Metta Sutta

Pāli text (click to open):

## WebLink: PDF File: Karaniya Metta Sutta

## 2. Ratana Sutta (volume adjustment on the right):

WebLink: Listen to verse of: Ratana Sutta
Pāli text (click to open):
WebLink: PDF File: Ratana Sutta

## 3. Mahā Mangala Sutta (volume adjustment on the right):

## WebLink: Listen to verse of: Mahā Mangala Sutta

Pāli text (click to open):

## WebLink: PDF File: Mahā Mangala Sutta

4. Here is a recording of $\mathbf{7 5}$ minutes of pirith (Sutta chanting) including the Dhamma Cakka Pavattana Sutta.

## WebLink: 75 minutes of pirith (Sutta chanting)

5. Following are more popular suttā. Once a given sutta is open, you can play it or download from there.

## WebLink: Dammacakkappavattana Sutta

WebLink: Sachchavibhanga Sutta
WebLink: Girimananda Sutta
WebLink: Bojijanga Piritha (Mahā Moggalana)
WebLink: Bojjanga Piritha (Mahā Kassapa)
WebLink: Khandha Sutta (Piritha)
WebLink: Mora Sutta
WebLink: Mettanisansa Sutta
WebLink: Vasala Sutta
WebLink: Atanatiya Sutta

WebLink: Alavaka Sutta

### 15.6 Sādhu - Symbolizes Purified Hadaya Vatthu (Mind)

## Revised February 21, 2019

1. It is customary to say "Sādhu! Sādhu! Sādhu!" before and after reciting precepts, a meditation session, chanting sutta, or a meritorious act (by oneself or another). Since anything is done for a purpose in Buddha Dhamma, it is good to understand why it is done.

- Sādhu comes from "sa" and "hadaya" or a purified heart (not the physical heart, but the hadaya vatthu where thoughts arise).

2. It is important to realize that our minds are associated with the hadaya vatthu, which is in the manomaya $k \overline{a y a}$ and is aligned close to the physical heart; see, "Ghost in the Machine - Synonym for the Manomaya Kāya?" This is why in a traumatic or joyful event we feel it in the heart, and not in the brain. Brain is like a computer, and when it is overworked, it causes headaches. But our feelings of love, hate etc. are felt close to the physical heart, in the hadaya vatthu.

## How is one's heart (and mind) purified?

- "Kāyena sanvaro sādhu, sādhu vācaya sanvaro; manasā sanvaro sādhu, sādhu sabbatta sanvaro"
- "The heart is purified via moral discipline; one needs to act, speak, and think morally"

Thus when a meritorious deed is done by oneself or another, it is customary to say, "sādhu". It reinforces the "goodness" of the deed and one makes a determination to do more; the lightness of the heart can be felt if one does it with understanding.
3. Our hearts are darkened with greed, hate, and ignorance of Tilakkhana. As we purify the mind, the darkness fades away and the "white light emerges"; it is like lighting a lamp gets rid of the darkness. Heart becomes joyful.

We get rid of greed, hate, and ignorance via staying away from the ten defilements:

- When we abstain from killing, stealing, and inappropriate conduct (including but not limited to sexual conduct), we are cultivating moral discipline through bodily acts.
- Abstinence from lying, vain talk, gossiping, and hateful speech leads to moral discipline through speech.
- When we forcefully control our bodily acts and speech, the mind will gradually calm down because we thus reduce abhijjā [abhijjhā] (strong greed) and vyāpāda (strong hate). Then we can cultivate samm $\bar{a}$ ditṭhi via comprehending the Tilakkhaṇa; this leads to reduction of micch $\bar{a}$ dittthi too (abhijja $\bar{a}$ [abhijjh $\bar{a}$ ], vy $\bar{a} p \bar{a} d a$, and micchā diṭthi are the three akusala kamma done with the mind). This is the step-by-step procedure that is discussed in the Bhāvanā (meditation) section.

4. Thus we can see that by saying "sādhu" mindfully, what we are doing is to make a firm determination to get rid of the ten defilements (dasa akusala) and thus to purify the mind and heart. Or, we are agreeing with a good deed done by someone else, and share the merits of that deed.
5. Now, what is the significance of putting the open hands together when saying "Sadhu!"?

- The gesture that we make by opening the hands fully, putting them together, and bringing them close to the heart or top of head also signify this determination. "With all my heart I make a commitment", or "this commitment stands above everything else", or "I agree wholeheartedly".

The strengthening of the fingers versus making a fist embody two basic characteristics of human nature.

- One makes a fist when hitting someone in anger. Also, someone caught doing a misdeed has clenched hands in addition to a bent posture (you have seen pictures of criminals being hauled off to jail in such timid postures).
- In contrast, open hands indicate "I have not aggressive intentions" as when putting up hands indicating one has no desire to fight. Furthermore, as you may have noticed, people when say "Sādhu!" normally have their backs straight too, especially if they are doing with a joyful mind.

6. As mentioned above, one can make a given meritorious deed much more powerful by doing it with joy and knowledge; such thoughts should be there during that act and also when saying "Sādhu!" at the beginning and end. The most potent kusala citta are done with "joy and understanding" ("a somanassasahagata, ñāṇa-sampayutta citta"; see, "Javana of a Citta - Root of Mental Power".

## xvi Dhammapada

- "Manopubbangamā Dhammā.."
o "Sabba Pāpassa Akaranan...."
o "Appamado Amata Padam...."
- "Najajja Vasalo Hoti......"
- "Arogya Parama Labha.."
- "Anicca vata Sankhara...."
- "Attā Hi Attano Nātho"


### 16.1 Manopubbangamā Dhammā..

May 5, 2018; revised August 22, 2019; November 17, 2019; September 15, 2020; August 29, 2022 (added \#6)
Mano pubbañgammā dhammā, mano setṭhā manomayā; manasā ce paduṭthena, bhāsati vā karoti vā; tato naì dukkhamanveti, cakkaì va vahato padaì.

Mano pubbañgammā dhammā, mano setṭhā manomayā; manasā ce pasannena, bhāsati vā karoti vā; tato nà̀ sukhamanveti, chāy $\bar{a} v a$ anapāyinī.

## (Dhammapada verses 1 and 2)

1. These two verses encompass the critical idea in Buddha Dhamma: That mind is at the forefront. This whole world is made of the mind and has the mind as the basis for everything.

- Mano is, of course, the mind. Dhammā (plural, not Buddha Dhamma) are the energies the mind generates (via javana power.) Dhammā means "to bear," meaning "everything arises due to Dhammā."
- Those dhammā then give rise to everything (all phenomena) in this world - whether living or inert.
- Pubbañgama (pubba + añga) means what comes first. The first line (in both verses) says the mind creates all dhamm $\bar{a}$ that give rise to everything in this world. The second line says, everything is prepared (sett $\bar{a}$ ) and manifests in mind (manomay $\bar{a}$ ).
- The mind creates those Dhammā with thoughts (sañkhāra.) That requires a lengthy explanation that can go to profound levels: "Buddha Dhamma - A Scientific Approach" and "Worldview of the Buddha."

2. Depending on whether one speaks (bhāsati) and acts (karoti) with a defiled (padutta) or a pleasant (pasanna) mind, those dhamm $\bar{a}$ that are generated by the mind lead to (tato nam) suffering (dukkhamanveti), or happiness (sukhamanveti).

- In the case of a defiled mind (acting with lobha, dosa, moha), suffering will follow just as a wheel of a cart follows the footsteps of the ox pulling it (cakkamva vahato padam).
- In the case of a pleasant, moral mind (acting with alobha, adosa, amoha), happiness will follow one just as one's shadow follows oneself (chāyāva anapāyani).

3. These two verses can be interpreted mundanely, as outlined in \#2 above. Any given task with an undefiled mind will always lead to a pleasant and joyous state of mind.

- There is a more in-depth interpretation. Thoughts, speech, and actions done with a defiled mind (lobha, dosa, moha) can lead to births in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$ and, thus, to a high degree of suffering. Those done with a pleasant mind (alobha, adosa, amoha) will lead to births in the "good realms," and will eventually lead to Nibbāna, the end of all suffering.
- The first several subsections of the "Origin of Life," discuss viewpoints about the origin of life. That extensively discusses religious and scientific viewpoints and the Buddha's worldview.

4. Now we can loosely translate the two verses as follows:

- All phenomena have the mind as their forerunner; they all are mind-made. If one speaks or acts with an evil mind (i.e., engages in dasa akusala), then suffering (dukha) will follow just as the wheels of a cart follow the footsteps of the ox pulling the cart.
- All phenomena have the mind as their forerunner; they all are mind-made. If one speaks or acts with a purified mind (i.e., engages in dasa kusala and puñ̃a kamma), happiness (sukha) follows one like one's own shadow. That is the source of "nirāmisa sukha," which eventually leads to Nibbāna.

5. I found a youtube video with the Pāli recital; it may take a minute to download. The two verses start respectively at 0.30 and 2.18 minutes:

WebLink: Youtube: Dhammapada - Yamaka Vaggo - Part 01

### 16.2 Sabba Pāpassa Akaraṇaṃ....

## Revised June 6, 2020; October 28, 2020

"Sabba pāpassa akaraṇaim, kusalassa upasampadā; Sacitta pariyo dapanam், età் Buddhānasāsanà்"
(Dhammapada verse 183)
Let us see what is meant by the verse:

- $S a b b a=$ all; $p \bar{a} p a s s a=$ immoral deeds/speech/thoughts; akarana $=(a+$ karana $)=$ do not engaged in
- kusalassa $=$ moral deeds/speech/thoughts; upasampad $\bar{a}=u p a+$ san + pad $\bar{a}=$ sort out "san" and embrace kusala; see, "What is "San?"
- sacitta $=$ sa + citta $=$ one's own thoughts; pariyo dapanam $=$ pari $+y o+$ dapanam $=$ control at the onset (where "dapana" means control and "yo" means origin and "pari" means around)
- Buddha āna = All Buddhas' niyama or principle. Another meaning is Buddha + anusāsana $=$ Buddha's advice or his "doctrine."

Note: The process of "cleansing the mind" is what this website is about. See, "Sila, Samādhi, Pannā to Pannā, Silla, Samādhi" and "Living Dhamma."

Therefore, we can summarize as follows:
"Discard all that is immoral, what should not be done
Take in what is moral by sorting out "san."
Do this by controlling one's own thoughts (mind)
This is the doctrine of the Buddhas."
Here is a recording of the verse recited by a Venerable Thero; it keeps repeating several times:

## WebLink: Listen to verse of: Sabba pāpassa akaranam

When you click the "DOWNLOAD" button, it will open the file in a new window. Right-click on the screen and choose, "Save as.." to save the file to your computer.

WebLink: PureDhamma: DOWNLOAD the recording of "Sabba-Pāpassa-Akaranami"
Next, "Appamado Amata Padam....", .........

### 16.3 Appamādo Amata Padam....

Appamādo amata padam
pamādo maccuno padam
appamattā na meeyanthi
ye pamattā yathā matā.
(Dhammapada verse Verse 21, Samavati Vatthu)

- Appamāda is "doing without delay" and pamāda is being delayed.
- Mata (pronounced "matha") is death, and amata is deathless, another word for Nibbāna. Maccuno (pronounced "machchuno") is also death, so is meeyanthi.
- Pada means "word" (most of these words are also Sinhala words).
- Appamatt $\bar{a}$ is one who is not delayed, pamatta is one who is delayed.
- Yathā is "true status".


## Now we can extract the MEANING of the verse as:

Hastening is a "deathless word"<br>Delay is a "death sentence"<br>One who makes haste attains the deathless status<br>One who negligent is like already dead

1. Thus someone who is delayed in seeking Nibbāna (either due to not knowing Buddha Dhamma or just procrastinates in following the Path) is like a dead person even while living. He/she will be facing innumerable deaths in the future.

- But someone who strives and attains Nibbāna has already reached the "deathless state". Because after attaining Nibbāna, all future deaths are stopped: No more future rebirths and thus no more deaths.
- One actually attains the "deathless state" when one becomes one of the 8 Noble Persons (attha purisa puggala). This is because once one becomes an Ariya (Nobel Person), one will never lose it, and will never be born in an apāya. Thus one can be said to "born" as an Ariya, when one becomes a Sotāpanna Anugāmi; see,"Sotāpanna Anugāmi - No More Births in the Apāyā."

2. There are two reasons for the urgency:
a. The time of death is unpredictable. Even a young, healthy person may die via an accident or other unforeseeable cause.
b. As we get old, our brains start to degrade and thus our minds will not be able to grasp the Dhamma.
3. Many Buddhists that I know say they want to "enjoy life while young" and then start focusing on Nibbāna at old age long after retirement. But one may not reach the old age, and even if did, the mind may not be able to grasp the deep message of the Buddha.

- Most people come to the conclusion of postponing practice, because they think attaining Nibbāna (or the Sotāpanna stage) is a mere act of following some rituals that can be done at any time. This would be a big mistake. The Sotāpanna stage is reached via comprehending the true nature of this world, anicca, dukkha, anatta, and that needs a sharp mind and a lot of contemplation.

4. The Buddha was once traveling with some bhikkhus and they saw an old beggar couple. The Buddha told the bhikkhus that the man's name was Mahādana (meaning rich), and he was indeed a very rich person, and the woman was his wife; they both were of "tihetuka birth", i.e., they were born due to a very potent good kamma (done with all three good roots of non-greed, non-hate, and wisdom) from a previous life.

- Thus, the Buddha said, if they started on the Path when they were very young, the man could have become an Arahant and the woman an Anāgām $\overline{\text {; }}$; if they started when they were young (20's), they could have become Anāgāmī/Sakadāgāmī, and if they started on the Path in the middle age they could have attained Sakadāgāmī/Sotāpanna stages. Instead, they lived a very lavish life, wasted their wealth, and became beggars. Now they were too old to comprehend anything.
- It is unfortunate to see many people today postponing the practice to their "old age". It is a good idea to start early and at least keep a slow pace.
- There are four factors that contribute to the capability of attaining Nibbāna: $\overline{A y} u$ (age), vanṇa (lively), sukha (comfort), bala (ability.) These are due to past puñña kamma. See \#13 of "Kanha (Dark) and Sukka (Bright) Kamma and Kammakkhaya."
- Some people may have sufficient vaṇna and bala even at a very old age. Thus a normal person cannot look at a given old person and say, "this person seems too old to attain Nibbāna". Only a Buddha can determine whether a person is too old to grasp the Dhamma. Yet, in general, as one becomes older the brain gets weaker.

5. Here is a recording of the verse recited by a Venerable Thero:

## WebLink: Listen to verse of : Appamado

Next, "Najajja Vasalo Hoti..", .......

### 16.4 Na Jacca Vasalo Hoti......

## Revised May 2, 2020

"Na jaccā vasalo hoti, na jaccā hoti brāhmano<br>Kammanā vasalo hoti, kammanā hoti brāhmano" (Vasala Sutta, Sutta Nipāta 1.7)

When I started writing this post, I erroneously assumed that the above verse is from Dhammapada. But it turned out that it is actually from the Vasala sutta. (It is the last verse of the Sutta.) However, I decided to put the post in the Dhammapada section. It is a succinct verse providing insight into the core message of the Buddha.

Let us look at the meaning of different key terms:

- "Ja" means birth and "jacca" means "by birth" or "related to birth".
- "Vasala" (or "vasalaya" in Sinhala)is a derogatory term identifying someone as an "unworthy" person. Not merely "useless" but "someone not to be associated with", as if the person has a communicable disease. Even today, there are such "untouchables" in India even though their conditions have improved since 1995: WebLink: WIKI: Dalit.
- In those days, a Brahmin was supposed to be the opposite of a vasalaya, having the highest social rank. Of the 31 realms of existence, Brahma $\bar{a}$ live the highest 20 realms. They have the highest level of mental states (greedy or hateful thoughts normally do not arise in them.) Thus a Brahmin (who lives like a Brahma) is supposed to be of the highest moral values.
- Kamma is of course action, and kammunā means according to one's actions.


## So, the meaning of the verse is clear:

'It is not the birth that makes a noble person or an ignoble person, but it is one's actions (the way one lives one's life) that determines whether one is a noble person or an ignoble person".

- Here one could substitute a Noble Person with a Brahmin and ignoble person with an untouchable, AND that does not come about by birth but by one's moral values.


## We can make the following deductions using Buddha Dhamma:

- One is determined to be a Noble Person not by birth but by one's character.
- One change from being an ignoble person to a noble person and even a Noble Person (Ariya) by changing one's character (gathi). There are several posts on how to change habits; use the "Search" box on right to find the posts (just search for "habit" or "gathi"). This search box is a good resource to find relevant posts using a keyword.
- Sometimes a noble person can change to an ignoble person too, but a Noble Person (Ariya) never (even in future lives) changes to an ignoble person.
- Some people are very high-minded because of their birth, wealth, beauty, fame, among many other possibilities. But we need to be always aware of the fact that we have been born much worse than even the poorest human. We all have been born animals and worse. There is no reason to be high-minded for a span of 100 years in a rebirth process that has no beginning!
- Contemplating on the "bigger world view" with the 31 realms (with four realms of much suffering) can make one humble, and be compassionate; see, "Implications of the Rebirth Process in Daily Life and Society." During the hard-to-comprehend time scale of saimsāra, we have been born in almost all of the 31 realms, good and bad.
- Also, we need to remember that even a lowly worm may have a potent kamma seed that could make it in its next life a king. (Even though chances are extremely low.) See, "How to Evaluate Weights of

Different Kamma‘), and if we do not act with wisdom we could have a rebirth worse than a worm. Actually, high-mindedness (uddhacca; pronounced uddachcha) can make one be born in a lower realm. Next, "Arogya Parama Labha", .......

## Ārogya Paramā Lābhā..

Revised September 27, 2017; revised January 30, 2019; April 18, 2020; June 28, 2020; June 14, 2022

$\bar{A} r o g y a ~ p a r a m a ̄ ~ l a ̄ b h a ̄ ~$<br>Santutthiparamaì dhanaì vissāsa paramā ñāti<br>Nibbānaì paramaì sukhaì

(Dhammapada verse 204)
Here is a recital by the Venerable Thero:
WebLink: Listen to Venerable Thero recital

1. As with many Dhammapada verses (and sutta interpretations), the conventional (or "padaparama") interpretation is the one that is widely known, which goes as: "Health is the ultimate profit, happiness is the ultimate wealth, a trusted friend is the best relative, Nibbāna is the ultimate bliss".

- The deeper meaning remains hidden for many. In some hospitals in Sri Lanka, the verse, "Ārogya Param $\bar{a} L \bar{a} b h \bar{a} "$ is displayed in big letters to emphasize the benefits of being healthy.
- While it is good to abide by those conventional meanings while we live this life, we should also try to grasp the deeper meanings to embark on the Noble Eightfold Path; see, "Buddha Dhamma in Chart"" and "What is Unique in Buddha Dhamma."

2. First "parama" means "ultimate" or "prominent". By the way, the word "padaparama" above means the interpretation that makes the "conventional meaning of a word prominent"; "pada" is "word". Now let us look at the other words in the verse.
3. "Roga" means "disease", so ārogya means not subject to disease. The bodies of all beings below the Deva lok $\bar{a}$ (human and below) are subject to disease. We cannot remove the possibility of disease until we remove causes for us to be reborn in the human realm or the lowest four realms, i.e., attain the Sakadāgām $\bar{\imath}$ stage of Nibbāna. [ārogya : [nt.] health.]

- "Lābha" is "profit". The ultimate profit (better than any amount of wealth) of "disease-free" status is attained at the Sakadāgāmī stage of Nibbāna.

4. "Santutṭhi" comes from "san" + "tuṭthi." Here "tuțthi" is "joy" and santuṭthi is the joy achieved by removing "san." Santutthi and the more common Sinhala word "santhosa" means happy. When one removes "san," one gains the nirāmisa sukha of Nibbāna or "cooling down".

- "Dhanaím" means "wealth"; the Sinhala word is "dhanaya." Thus ultimate wealth is achieved by getting rid of "san" or defilements of greed, hate, and ignorance; see, "What is "San"?".

5. "Vissāsa" comes from "vis" + "āsā", where "āsā" means "āsava" or cravings. Thus it means getting rid of cravings that make one bound to the sainsāra (round of rebirths).

- "Ñāti" means "relative." Thus ultimate relative or refuge is reached via giving up the cravings for worldly things.

6. The last one, Nibbanaim paramaim sukham, or "Nibbāna is the ultimate bliss" is the only one that has the same meaning as the conventional or "padaparama" version in \#1 above.

- Therefore, when one embarks on the Sotāpanna magga, one should be able to understand the correct version.

7. Buddha dhamma has no language, cultural, or social barriers. But the Buddha advised never to translate Tipiṭaka to any language, particularly to Sanskrit, because the meanings of certain words can get distorted; see, "Preservation of the Dhamma."

- It is ironic that this is exactly what has happened during the past 1500 years or so, at least since Buddhaghosa wrote Visuddhimagga, probably even earlier. The most damaging is the replacement of the Pāli words anicca and anatta with the Sanskrit words anitya and anātma. The latter is likely to have happened more recently. See, "Misinterpretation of Anicca and Anatta by Early European Scholars."
- On the other hand, the Buddha also advised that what really matters is to get the "meaning of a given word or phrase across". He said to use the words and phrases (and examples) appropriate for a given locale to convey the MEANINGS of these key Pāli words. While we should keep the Tipiṭaka intact in Pāli, we should interpret its content in a way that is most conducive to getting the ideas across depending on the audience.
- The correct way to interpret the Tipitaka material is outlined in "Sutta Interpretation - Uddesa, Niddesa, Patiniddesa."

8. It is interesting to note that this verse was a popular one among the Vedic Brahmins of the day of the Buddha. In the WebLink: suttacentral: Māgandhiya sutta (MN 75), it is described how Māgandhiya brahmin tells the Buddha that his teacher also taught him the same verse. When the Buddha asked him to explain the meaning that his teacher taught him, Māgandhiya gave the same interpretation that was given in \#1 above.

- The Buddha told Māgandhiya that this gāthā (verse) came to the Vedic literature from the previous Buddha (Buddha Kassapa,) whose Buddha Sāsana had since disappeared: "Pubbakehesā, māgandiya, arahantehi sammāsambuddhehi gāthā bhāsitā."
- It is important to note that there had been three Buddhas before Buddha Gotama in this mahā kappa, and there will be another, Maithree Buddha, in the future after the present Buddha Sāsana disappears in about 2500 years.
- This is why only "conventional meanings" of pure Dhamma survive when Ariyā (Noble Persons) who can correctly interpret the deep meanings in the sutt $\bar{a}$ and verses like this are absent for a long time in this world. Either a Noble Person or a Buddha has to be born to bring back the true meanings.
- This is exactly what has happened during the past hundreds of years, where true meanings of many keywords like anicca, dukkha, anatta, Paṭicca Samuppāda, and Ānāpānasati Bhāvanā, have been not known. See, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta - Wrong Interpretations."

9. For those who like to dig deeper into Tipitaka, the "WebLink: suttacentral: Santuttha Sutta (SN 16.1)" clearly illustrates that "santuttha" is with one who lives a simple life, with minimal cravings, as Ven. Kassapa did: "..Santuṭthāyaì, bhikkhave, kassapo itarītarena cīvarena, itarītaracīvarasantutthiyā ca vannnavādī; na ca cīvarahetu anesanamं appatirūpaì āpajjati; aladdhā ca cīvaraì na paritassati; laddhā ca cīvaraí agadhito amucchito anajjhāpanno ādīnavadassāvī nissaraṇapañño paribhuñjati.."

- The WebLink: suttacentral: English and WebLink: suttacentral: Sinhala translations at the Sutta Central site are correct, for this sutta.


### 16.6 Anicca vata Sañkhārā...

Revised August 16, 2019; February 25, 2020; June 8, 2020; December 21, 2020

Aniccā vata sañkhārā<br>Uppāda vaya dhammino<br>Uuppajjitvā nirujjhanti<br>Tesam̀ vūpa samo sukho<br>(Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta)

This verse is not in the Dhammapada, but it is a very common verse. In Sri Lanka (and possibly in other Buddhist countries), it is displayed at funerals to emphasize the "fleeting nature" of life. It has a deep meaning and explains why we face sorrow inevitably (because death is inevitable). We generate our future rebirths via our own (abhi)sañkhāra! We need to stop creating abhisañkhāra (with lobha, dosa, moha) to attain the Nibbānic bliss.

- This verse was uttered by Sakka, the King of the Devas, just after the Parinibbāna (passing away) of the Buddha. It is in the Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta (DN 16) and also in a short sutta: "WebLink: suttacentral: Parinibbāna Sutta (SN 6.15)."

A common and incorrect translation is:

- All things are impermanent
- They arise and pass away
- Having arisen they come to an end
- Their coming to peace is bliss


## Let us examine the correct interpretation of the verse.

1. Anicca is, of course "cannot be maintained to our satisfaction." It is NOT just impermanence, because even permanent things (relative to our lifetime) cannot be maintained to our satisfaction; see, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta - Wrong Interpretations."

Vata (pronounced as "vatha") here means "surely" or "indeed."
(There are other meaning for "vata": In the verse, "yaim samādānaí taí vataí. Sanvaratṭena sīlamं," or "reciting precepts is a ritual, moral behavior, or sila, is attained by controlling "san." Thus, there "vata" means ritual. Another meaning is "action." One needs to pick the right meaning for the given situation).

We think, speak, and take actions based on our mano, vacī, and kāya sañkhāra. They are all thoughts (we cannot even lift a finger without an associated thinking). Those sañkhāra lead to viññāna via "sañkhāra paccayā viññāna" in Pațicca Samuppāda. Strong viññāna produced via "abhisañkhāra" (or strong sañkhāra) lead to future rebirths. But all births end up in death. See, "Sañkhāra - What It Really Means" and "Sañkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka."

- Thus the first line implies that any rebirth (which inevitably arises due to our abhisañkhāra cannot be maintained to our satisfaction. Any birth ends up in death and suffering.

2. Uppāda means to arise, and vaya means that arising can be stopped.

- But we can stop those things that lead to suffering to come into existence by stopping sañkhāra from arising. That is vaya. That is the ultimate message embedded in Buddha Dhamma. Dhammino (or dhammathā) means the 'Nature's way."
- Thus the second line says, "those sañkhāra are types of dhammā that can be stopped from arising," i.e., they are "vaya dhammā." That is also stated in another famous verse, "vaya dhamma $\operatorname{san} k \mathrm{n} h \bar{a} r \bar{a}$."
- The Buddha attained Parinibbāna (i.e., end of rebirth) because he was able to figure out how to stop sañkhāra from arising (via removal of avijjā.)

3. Uppajjitvā means that which comes to existence (due to sañkhāra.) Those things that come to existence in this world lead to suffering.

- Nirujja means those things will thus not arise anymore (by stopping sañkhāra from arising.)

4. Te means "those," and thus "tesam" ("te" + "san") means those (three) "san" or lobha, dosa, moha; see, "What is "San"?."
$v \bar{u} p a$ sama means "remove and get to samādhi." In the Pațisambhida Magga Pakaraṇa (Jhāna Vibhañga section) on p. 55, it explains that, "vitakkavicārānaiं vūpasamä" means "getting rid of vitakka and vicāra and attaining savitakka, savicāra." See, "Vitakka, Vicāra, Savitakka, Savicāra, and Avitakka, Avicāra." Sukha is happiness.

- Thus the fourth line says, "by removing lobha, dosa, moha (three bad "san"s) from our minds; we can reach (the ultimate) happiness or Nibbāna."

Here is a recording of the verse by the Venerable Thero (repeated three times; note the volume control on the right):

## WebLink: Listen to verse of: Anichchavatha sankara

- This verse is a very good kammaṭthāna (meditation subject) for cultivating the "anicca sañ̃̄ā." One could recite the verse and contemplate its meaning. Think about all those loved ones who passed away and led to much suffering. And one's death is also inevitable.
- We have been through this process in perpetuity, being distressed as loved ones are lost and also thinking about one's own demise, at every birth.
- But there is a way to stop this suffering, by following the Path and stopping sañkhāra from arising.
- Thus, instead of getting depressed about the inevitability of death, one WILL start feeling better if one can really cultivate the "anicca sañña"; see, "How to Cultivate the Anicca Saññā."
- This kammaṭthāna will also cultivate the "udayavaya ñāna" or "the knowledge about arising and stopping the arising of a sañkhata." See, "Udayavaya Ñāna."


### 16.7 Attā Hi Attano Nātho

March 4, 2017; revised November 13, 2018; October 25, 2019; February 15, 2021; July 14, 2022

"Attā hi attano nātho<br>ko hi nātho paro siyā<br>attanā hi sudantena<br>nāthaì labhati dullabhaì"

(Dhammapada verse 160)

1. This is an important verse where the word "atta/atta" (pronounced "aththa"/"aththā") is used with two very different meanings in two places within the same verse.

- In the conventional sense, "att $\vec{a} "$ means "a person".
- The other meaning of "att $\overrightarrow{\boldsymbol{a}}$ " is "one's soul." The Buddha denied the existence of a soul.
- Depending on the context, one needs to pick the correct meaning. There is no negation for "att $\overrightarrow{\boldsymbol{a}}$ " with those two meanings.
- On the other hand, "atta" (without the long "a") means "fruitful." The opposite of that is "anatta" or "unfruitful."

2. When one attains the true "atta" state (Nibbāna), one has become "nātha" or "sanātha" or "found refuge or salvation". As long as one remains in the 31 realms (this world), one is "anātha" (which is the opposite of "sanātha") or "helpless". See, "WebLink: suttacentral: Pathama Nātha Sutta (AN 10.17)."

- "Attano nātho" means "the refuge is within oneself." Thus, "Attā hi attano nātho" means "one's refuge is within oneself."
- "paro siyā" means "outside oneself." Thus "ko hi nātho paro siyā" means "how can one find refuge outside oneself"?
- "Sudda" means "clean." Thus, "attanā hi sudantena" means (by cleansing one's own (mind)"
- Labhati means get, dullabhaim means rare, and as we saw above "nātha" is attaining Nibbāna. So, nāthanmं labhati dullabhaì means "it is not easy to get to salvation (Nibbāna)".

Therefore, we can translate the verse as follows:
"One is one's own refuge
how can another be a refuge to one?
(one reaches salvation) by purifying one's own mind
getting to the refuge (Nibbāna) is rare"
Here is a recording of the verse recited by me (I could not find a recording by Venerable Waharaka Thero):

## WebLink: Play Dhammapada verse 160

A detailed discussion on "atta/att $\bar{a} "$ " is given in the posts, "Pāli Dictionaries - Are They Reliable?" and "Anatta - the Opposite of Which Atta?"

October 25, 2019: Att $\bar{a}$ is used as "a person" in many of the verses in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Attavagga" of the Dhammapada.

## XVII Sutta Interpretations

- "Sutta Interpretation - Uddesa, Niddesa, Patiniddesa"
- "Pāli Dictionaries - Are They Reliable?"
- "Nikāya in the Sutta Pitaka"
- "Sutta Learning Sequence for the Present Day"
- "Mahā Satipatthāna Sutta"
- "Satipatthāna Sutta - Structure"
- "Satipatthāna - Introduction"
- "Kāyānupassanā - Section on Postures (Iriyapathapabba)"
- "Kāyānupassanā - The Section on Habits (Sampajanapabba)"
- "Prerequisites for the Satipatthāna Bhāvanā""
- "What is "Kaya" in Kāyānupassanā?"
- "Mahā Cattārisaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty)"
- "Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta"
- "Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta Interpretation - Uddesa, Niddesa, Patiniddesa"
- "Essence of Buddhism - In the First Sutta"
- "Majiima Patipada - Way to Relinquish Attachments to this World"
- "Tiparivattaya and Twelve Types of Ñāna (Knowledge)"
- "Relinquishing Defilements via Three Rounds and Four Stages"
o "Anguttara Nikāya - Suttā on Key Concepts"
- "Dasa Akusala/Dasa Kusala - Basis of Buddha Dhamma"
- "Dasa Akusala/Dasa Kusala - Basis of Buddha Dhamma - 2"
o "Na Cetanākaranīya Sutta"
- "Pathama Mettā Sutta"
- "Kukkuravatika Sutta (Majihima Nikāya 57) - Kammakkhaya"
o "Buddhism and Evolution - Aggañña Sutta (DN 27)"
- "Tapussa Sutta (AN 9.41) - Akuppā Cetovimutti"
- "Yamaka Sutta (SN 22.85) - Arahanthood Is Not Annihilation but End of Suffering"
- "Three Types of "Bodies" - Potthapāda Sutta (DN 9)"


## 17. 1 Sutta Interpretation - Uddesa, Niddesa, Paṭiniddesa

Revised April 10, 2017; August 28, 2018; January 7, 2019; December 8, 2020; revised April 15, 2021, with the new title. revised March 1, 2022
[Old Title: Sutta Interpretation - Uddesa, Niddesa, Paṭiniddesa; New Title: Sutta Interpretation Uddesa, Niddesa, Paṭiniddes a]

## Dhamma Concepts Explained at Three Levels

1. Explanation of dhamma concepts in the Tipitaka comes under three categories: "uddesa, niddesa, patiiniddesa." A fundamental concept is first stated ("uddesa" or "utterance"). "Niddesa" is a "brief explanation". Finally, "patiniddesa" is explaining in detail with examples to clarify complex or "knotty" points.
[uddesa: [ff. uddisati] -- 1. pointing out, setting forth, proposition, exposition, indication, programme M. III, 223 (u. uddiṭtha), 239; S. IV, 299; SnA 422. -- 2. explanation S. V, 110 sq. ; sa-uddesa (adj.) with (the necessary) expln., point by point, in detail, D. I, 13, 81; III, 111; A. III, 418; It. 99; Nd2 6171. -3. samaṇuddesa one marked as a Samaṇa, a novice (cp. sāmaṇera) D. I, 151; M. III, 128; A. IV, 343 ; uddesa-bhatta special or specified food Vin. I, $58=96$, cp. II. 175, propounding, recitation, repetition.
niddesa: : m ] description; analytic explanation.]

- For example, "ye dhammā hetuppabbavā.Tesaṃ hetuṃ tathāgato āha;

Tesañca yo nirodho, Evaṃvādì mahāsamaṇo" is the uddesa version.

- In English, the uddesa version is:
"Of those phenomena which arise from causes. Those causes have been taught by the Tathāgata (Buddha),
And their cessation too - thus proclaims the Great Ascetic."
- The fundamental characteristics of "this world" just stated that everything arises due to causes. But that explanation is not enough to understand the embedded deep concepts. Assaji (who later became Ven. Sāriputta) attained the Sotāpanna stage by hearing that uddesa version.

2. However, that word-for-word translation is NOT enough to convey the teachings of the Buddha to an average person.

- The next level of explanation is the "niddesa" version. A teacher needs to explain that "dhamma"" here refers to the kammic energies created by the three root causes (hetu): lobha, dosa, moha. Cessation of avijj $\bar{a}$ (ignorance of the Four Nobel Truths) leads to eliminating those root causes and thus to Nibbāna.
- Clarification of each term in Paṭicca Samuppāda (avijjā, sañkhāra, viññāna, nāmarupa, " leading to "upādāna, bhava, jāti, and suffering), requires long explanations with examples. That is the patiniddesa explanation.

3. Some sections of the Tipitaka have explicit uddesa and niddesa versions. However, that is mainly in the Original commentaries that explain certain concepts in SOME detail.

- See, for example, "WebLink: suttacentral.net: Vimokkhakathā"


## Direct Translation of the Niddesa Version can be Dangerous!

4. Word-for-word translation of some suttas (in the niddesa form) can lead to utter confusion.

- I have explained that problem in "Distortion of Pāli Keywords in Paticca Samuppāda."
- As pointed out there, the translation of "avijjā nirodhā.. viññāña nirodho" as "when ignorance ceases,. . consciousness ceases" is insane. Did the Buddha lose consciousness upon attaining Enlightenment? Would an Arahant lose consciousness upon attaining Arahanthood? That is the danger of direct word-for-word translations! That is just one example.
- This problem is so serious that I have started new series of posts to explain in detail this problem: "Word-for-Word Translation of the Tipitaka."


## Many Suttā Are in Uddesa or Niddesa Versions

5. Most sutt $\bar{a}$ are in $u d d e s a$ or niddesa versions (Dīgha Nik $\bar{a} y a$ is an exception, even though some verses do have deeper meanings). They require detailed explanations. Translating word-by-word is not appropriate in many instances.

- For example, "anicca, dukkha, anatta" are only in the niddesa version in Dhamma Cakka Pavattana Sutta and Anatta Lakkhana Sutta. [SN 56.11 Rolling Forth the Wheel of Dhamma Dhammacakkappavattanasutta, SN 22.59 The Characteristic of Anatta - Anattalakkhanasutta]
- However, each sutta took many hours to deliver. It was impossible to condense all that information in a sutta for mostly oral transmission that was available at the time. Each sutta is condensed (most likely by the Buddha himself; see below).
- Thus the material in each sutta as written in the Tipitaka is in CONDENSED form in most cases. They are in the "uddesa/niddesa" version. They are version. They are in a format suitable for oral transmission.


## Paṭiniddesa (Detailed Explanation) in Commentaries

6. During the Buddha's time, other bhikkhus explained each sutta in detail to audiences when they delivered discourses. That is the "patiniddesa" version. Especially after the Buddha's Parinibbāna, many Arahants started writing "Attakath $\vec{a}$ " or commentaries on essential sutt $\bar{a}$. But a few were composed during the time of the Buddha. Of course, these were also composed in a way suitable for oral transmission and thus, do not have lengthy explanations.

- Three original early commentaries remain preserved in the Tipiṭaka: Pațisambidhā Magga Prakarana, Nettipparakana, and Petakopadesa. Of these, the Patisambidhā Magga Prakarana consists of the analyses by Ven. Säriputta, one of the chief disciples of the Buddha, and the Nettipparakana by Ven. Maha Kaccāyana. Thus we are lucky to have these three original commentaries still with us.
- These three books contain "niddesa/paținiddesa" versions of many of many essential suttā, which describe the keywords/phrases in a given sutta. All other such excellent commentaries are lost; see "Incorrect Theravāda Interpretations - Historical Timeline" and "Buddhaghosa and Visuddhimagga Historical Background."


## Most People Today Need Paṭiniddesa (Detailed Explanation)

7. During the time of the Buddha, some could comprehend just the uddesa version. For example, Upatissa and Kolita (who became Ven. Sariputta and Ven. Moggalana later) became Sotāpannas upon hearing the verse, "ye Dhamma hetupabbhavā.....". They had done much in their past lives and needed "just a little push" to understand. They are called ugghațitañ̃na or "persons with high wisdom."

- And many could understand the niddesa version. Those were vipañcitañña and needed a bit more explanation to grasp the concepts. WebLink: suttacentral: Ugghatitaññ̄u Sutta (AN 4.133) discusses the four categories of persons - ugghatitañña, vipañcitañña, neyya, and padaparama.
- However, most people today are in the lower category of neyya and padaparama. They need detailed explanations (i.e., patiniddesa) to grasp a concept. They also belong to two groups. Those with tihetuka patisandhi (optimum births) can attain magga phala in this life. But those with dvihetuka
patisandhi (inferior births) cannot achieve magga phala, but they can accrue merits to attain magga phala in future lives. Of course, there is no way for anyone to figure out (except for a Buddha) whether one has a tihetuka or dvihetuka pațisandhi.
- It is essential to realize that those who are either ugghatitañña or vipañcitañña had been neyya persons with dvihetuka patisandhi in previous lives. They had strived to gain more wisdom and now are benefitting in this life. Thus there is no point worrying about whether one is a tihetuka or dvihetuka.


## Erroneous Commentaries Are Harmful

8. There are many erroneous commentaries today. The best example is the Visuddhimagga of Buddhaghosa. It was written around 400 CE (where CE is "Current Era" or AD) when the "pure Dhamma" was already lost, and the conventional meanings were commonplace, just as now.

- The "pure Dhamma" has been lost for an extended period from about 200 CE up to now. See "Incorrect Theravāda Interpretations - Historical Timeline." But the original suttā survived because people at least used and preserved them even if they used the "conventional" or "mundane" ("padaparama" in Pāli) meanings.
- Thus we can see why people have been translating suttā "word for word" and just getting the conventional meanings. Profound verses in suttā need detailed explanations.


## Special Role of Jāti Sotāpannas With Paṭisambhidā Nāana

9. From time to time, jāti Sotāpannas are born. They had attained the Sotāpanna stage in a previous life, possibly when Buddha was alive. They likely have had births in the deva loka for long times and are reborn humans now. Some of them have the unique capability to interpret the keywords/phrases in the sutt $\bar{a}$. This specialized knowledge is "Patisambhida $\tilde{N} \tilde{\text { anna." }}$

- At least one time previously, a Thero brought out the real meanings with the Paṭisambhidā Ñāṇa. But this is not the time to discuss that.
- Waharaka Thero brought out these deeper meanings in recent years. See, "Parinibbāna of Waharaka Thero."


## Tipiṭaka Was Compiled for Faithful Oral Transmission

10. The Buddha knew that Buddha Dhamma would be going through periods of decline where bhikkhus capable of interpreting deep suttā would not be present. Thus sutta were composed so that only the "conventional" meaning is apparent. That was necessary to preserve the suttā, especially before writing became commonplace.

- It is important to remember that Ven. Ānanda had memorized all the suttā that he then recited at the First Buddhist Council, just three months after Buddha's Parinibbāna.
- Ven. Ānanda was Buddha's personal assistant over the last few decades of the Buddha's life. I believe that the Buddha condensed each sutta and Ven. Ānanda memorized each of them. The Buddha synthesized each sutta in a "double meaning" way for them to survive the "dark periods."
- Then, at the first Buddhist Council, all the suttā were recited and were sorted into various categories (Nikāy $\bar{a} s$ ). That is my theory, and I believe it will be proven to be accurate in the future.


## Deeper Meanings May Stay Hidden for Long Times

11. There are times when jāti Sotāpannas with the Patisambhidā Ñāna are not born for long times. During such times, people use conventional interpretations. And that served the purpose of keeping the sutta intact, especially before written texts became common.

- A perfect example is the $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p \bar{a} n a s a t i ~ S u t t a ~(s o m e ~ o f ~ w h i c h ~ a r e ~ a l s o ~ p a r t ~ o f ~ t h e ~ S a t i p a t ̦ t h a ̄ n a ~ S u t t a) . ~$ As we discussed in "7. What is Ānāpāna?" the conventional meaning is to tie up "āna" with breath inhaling and "āpāna" with breath exhaling.
- That was consistent with the breath meditation that has been there in the world at any time. Many yogis practiced it at the time of the Buddha. He learned those methods from such yogis before attaining the Buddhahood.

12. The following are the key points from the above discussion that I wish to emphasize:

- The suttā seem to convey "conventional" meanings while keeping the "deep meanings" embedded in them.
- Those "deep meanings" bring out the uniqueness of Buddha Dhamma.
- Word-to-word translation of suttā does not convey the message of the Buddha. Examples are critical Pāli words like anicca and anatta.
- The surviving three original commentaries in the Tipitaka can verify the deep meanings of the keywords/phrases.


## Misinterpretation of Dhamma Concepts Is an Offense

13. It is an offense to misinterpret sutt $\bar{a}$ (and dhamma concepts in general.) That is in several sutta $\bar{a}$ in the WebLink: suttacentral: Bālavagga of Añguttara Nikāya 2.

- For example, WebLink: suttacentral.net: AN 2.25 is a short sutta that says: "Dveme, bhikkhave, tathāgataì nābbhācikkhanti. Katame dve? Yo ca neyyatthaì suttantaì neyyattho suttantoti dīpeti, yo ca nītatthaì suttantaì nītattho suttantoti dīpeti. Ime kho, bhikkhave, dve tathāgataim nābbhācikkhantī" $t i$.
- Translation (to provide the idea): "Monks, these two people slander the Tathāgata. Which two? One who briefly a deep discourse when it needs a detailed explanation. The other explains a discourse in detail whose meaning is already clear. These are two who slander the Tathāgata." ["WebLink: suttacentral: A Meaning to be Inferred (AN 2.25)'] [Tathägata : the 'Perfect One', lit. the one who has 'thus gone', or 'thus come', is an epithet of the Buddha used by him when speaking of himself.]
- Two perfect examples of the first type of slander say that the words anicca and anatta are fully explained by "impermanence" and "no-self." Those two concepts require detailed explanations.


## Checking for Inter-Consistency Among the Three Piṭakas Is the Key

14. The Buddha advised to resolve any issues by consulting the three Piṭaka: Sutta, Vinaya, and Abhidhamma.

- For example, a concept in the Sutta Pitaka, for instance, must be consistent with other places in the Sutta Pittaka. It must also be compatible with explanations in the Abhidhamma Pitaka and the Vinaya Pitaka.
- But in the end, I will show how the lines in the sutta tally with this description. As the Buddha emphasized, what matters is to get the IDEA across and not to memorize the Pāli suttā. (Memorization is needed only for transmission purposes).


## Good Resource for Pāli Tipiṭaka

15. A helpful resource for finding Pāli Tipiṭaka (and translations in several languages) is suttacentral.net.

- Once you open a sutta, click on the left-most drop-down to choose one of several languages. That is a valuable resource; consider donating if you find it useful. Note: I am not associated with them in any way.
- However, those translations are frequently incorrect for critical Pāli words, as is the case on many websites. But at least one can see the correct Pāli version.

Next, "Pāli Dictionaries - Are They Reliable?"

### 17.2 Pāli Dictionaries - Are They Reliable?

March 4, 2017; Revised March 5, 2017; Revision March 7, 2017; May 17, 2018; October 27, 2018; August 20, 2019; June, 2020

I have received several emails pointing out that my interpretations of certain words are not compatible with those in Pāli dictionaries. I hope I can explain why one must be careful in using a Pāli dictionary if one's goal is to grasp the true teachings of the Buddha. Of course, I learned this from my Noble teacher, late Waharaka Thero.

1. In Pāli a word can have different meanings depending on the context. Furthermore, sometimes, grammar rules are bypassed.

- Many of the problems with an incorrect interpretation of the Tipitaka arise mainly because of those two misconceptions.
- Pāli does not have its alphabet. It was a spoken language. The Pāli Canon (Tipiṭaka) was first written using the Sinhala alphabet around 5 BCE (two thousand years ago); see, "Historical Background."

2. Even in English language, words can have different meanings depending on the context. Following are some examples for three words:

- Right: You were right./Make a right turn at the light.
- Rose: My favorite flower is a rose./He quickly rose from his seat.
- Type: He can type over 100 words per minute. /That dress is not her type.


## (Read more at "WebLink: grammar.yourdictionary.com: Words with Multiple Meanings").

- In Pāli language, there are many keywords with different meanings. In many cases, there is a conventional meaning and a deeper meaning, as mentioned above: "Sutta Interpretation - Uddesa, Niddesa, Patiniddesa."

3. Pāli is a phonetic language. The Tipiṭaka was transmitted for many hundreds of years faithfully, because verses were formulated for easy memorization. Grammar rules bypassed in some cases. That is clear in the verses, "Buddhaì Saranaì gacchāmi," "Dhammaì Saranaì gacchāmi," etc. [In Pāli, if the verb is "gacchāmi" with the ending "..mi" it is for the $\mathbf{1}^{\text {st }}$ person singular "I", and if the word is "gacchāma" with the ending "..ma" it is for the $1^{\text {st }}$ person plural "We" and similarly for $2^{\text {nd }}$ person ( $\boldsymbol{s i}$, tha $\boldsymbol{-}$ you, you all), and $3^{\text {rd }}$ person ( $\boldsymbol{t i}, \boldsymbol{n t i} \boldsymbol{- h e}$, they).]

- There is no subject in the above verse. The first of course means, "I take the refuge in the Buddha," but "I" is missing in "Buddham Saranam gacchāmi." It is just understood.
- If you look at sutt $\bar{a}$, there is no clear grammatical structure. It is the sound that gives the meaning, and most verses have "double meanings": There is a simple meaning, but deeper meanings may be hidden. I have discussed this to some extent in the post, "Sutta Interpretation - Uddesa, Niddesa, Patiniddesa."
- Some key Pāli words discussed in the post: "Introduction to Citta, Vedanā, Saññā, Sañkhāra, and Viññāna."

4. Let us start with the word "atta" (pronounced "aththa" or "aththā" depending on where used). This word can have many meanings depending on the context.

- In the conventional sense, "att $\overline{\boldsymbol{a}}$ " means "a person." It is used with this meaning in some contexts; see below.
- The deeper meaning of "atta" is "in full control" or "the essence" or "the truth that is timeless." Just like the word "anicca," it is not possible to translate to English. One has to get the idea by learning how it is used in various situations. The opposite of "atta" is anatta. That means "helpless" in case of a living being. or "useless" in case of an inert thing.
- At least, in this case, one could see the difference in meaning by the way they are pronounced: att $\overline{\boldsymbol{a}}$ versus atta.
- Both these meanings appear in the Dhammapada verse (gāthā), "Attā Hi Attano Nātho" that I am posting concurrently.

5. We can take more examples to illustrate the application of "atta" with those two very different meanings.

- In "atta kilamatānu yoga" atta is used in the conventional sense, to describe "procedures that cause suffering in a person."
- The word sutta comes from "su" and "atta": a sutta can make someone moral and ethical. So, here also atta is used in the conventional sense.
- The phrase "anattan asārakattena" means "(anything in this world) is anatta because it is devoid of any good or any usefulness." Something is atta only if it is the ultimate truth or has timeless value. Here, of course, the deeper meaning is used. [asāraka :(adj.) $[\boldsymbol{a}+\boldsymbol{s} \boldsymbol{a} r a k a]$ unessential, worthless, sapless, rotten.]

6. Paramattha comes from "parama" + "attha," where "parama" means "at the highest level" and "attha" means "the truth that is timeless", the deeper meaning.

- This word has been translated to Sinhala as "artha" to indicate "meaning" in Sinhala. So, the Pāli word paramattha has been translated to Sinhala as "paramārtha" or "ultimate meaning."
- Therefore, the four types of $\tilde{n} a ̄ n a$ (pronounced "gnāna") involved in the Patisambidha Ñāna are, "attha, dhamma, nirutti, patibhāna." These days, they appear in Sinhala as, "artha, dharma, nirukthi, patibhāna."
- I will write a separate post to discuss those four terms in the Pațisambidhā $\tilde{N} a ̄ n a$. A person qualified to explain Buddha Dhamma to others is supposed to have the Pattisambidhā Ñāna. Otherwise, one could mislead others by providing incorrect explanations. Of course, no one but a Buddha can provide entirely error-free answers. It does not make much sense to learn Dhamma from someone who is not at least a Sotāpanna (i.e., an Ariya).

7. Of course the most problematic misuse of "atta" as "a person" or "a self" is in Tilakkhanna, the Three Characteristics of Nature. There, anatta is commonly translated just as "no-self." One correct expression is "no-unchanging self".

- We need to realize that "atta" is always "truth" and "att $\vec{a}$ " could be "person" in the conventional sense. So, the opposite of "atta" is ALWAYS "anatta" (pronounced "anatththa"), which is NEVER pronounced "|anattā|," i.e., "anaththa."
- That — together with translating anicca as "impermanence" - had kept Nibbāna hidden for a thousand years: see, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta."

8. That is why a dictionary can't provide fixed meaning for the word "atta," as well as for anatta, nicca, anicca, and many other words.

- Many words are supposed to have both conventional and deeper meanings. Only someone who has the pațisambhidā $\tilde{n} \bar{a} n a$ can correctly explain the meaning of a verse in the Tipiṭaka regardless of where the word appears.
- Therefore, in most current English literature on Buddha Dhamma, some explanations are correct, but many are not. That is because of the tendency to use a fixed meaning for a keywords without paying attention to contex.

9. Another such key word is "pati," which is pronounced also as "pati", not as "pathi". I have received emails saying that Pāli dictionaries say "paṭi" means "against".

- Paṭi is also a Sinhala word that is being used to this day. It means "bonds" or "ties," just as in Pāli.
- If "pați" means "against," how would that be compatible with many other words with "pați"? For example, "pattisamved $\vec{\imath}$ " or "pațisanvedi" ("pați+ "san" + "vedi") means vedanā due to bonds with "san" becoming apparent. Paṭinissagga means "getting rid of bonds". Paṭiniddesa means "detailed instructions on sorting out knotty or difficult points," etc. The latter is explained in detail at "Sutta Interpretation - Uddesa, Niddesa, Patiniddesa."

10. One could get a better idea of a keyword by looking at its application in various situations. The word pațisambhidā in pațisambhida $\tilde{n} \bar{a} n a$ is a good example.

- Pațisambhidā comes from paṭi + san + bidhā. "San" is, of course, a keyword; see, "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Samsāra)," and bidhā means to separate or to break apart; "bindeema" is the Sinhala word.
- So, pattisambhidā $\tilde{n} \bar{a} n a$ is the knowledge to be able to sort out the meaning of a word by breaking it down to locate "san," i.e., connection to defilement.
- And that interpretation must be consistent with "attha, dhamma, nirutti, patibhāna" as will discuss in a future post. By the way, patibhāna means the ability to describe in detail with examples. Nirutti means finding the origins of keywords, i.e., how compound words are put together using critical words like pati and atta or attha.

11. Other examples come in the gathā to pay tribute to the Sangha: "supaṭipanno bhagavatho savaka sangho, Ujupatipanno...."

- Here the "bonding" is to "good things." Supatipanno means "bound to moral things," Ujupatipanno means "bound to be straightforward," Näyapatipanno means "bound with wisdom," and Sämichipatipanno means "good to associate with."
- Another is "patisandhi," which comes from "pati" + "sandhi," where sandhi (which is also a Sinhala word) means "to join." At the cuti-patisandhi moment, one's mental body (gandhabba) dies (cuti, pronounced "chuthi") and one grasps a new existence. So, this joining of two adjacent lives is called patisandhi.
- Note that cuti pronounced as "chuthi." See, ""Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars - Part 1" and ""Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars - Part 2."
- Of course, the most important is "pati" in Paticca Samuppāda; see, "Paticca Samuppāda "Pati+ichcha"+"Sama+uppāda."

12. Here is a table showing the conventional and deeper meanings of some key Pāli words. Some meanings given in dictionaries are wrong, and they are in bold. Whether to use the correct conventional meaning or the deeper meaning depends on the context (where the word is used); a good example is, "Attā Hi Attano Nātho."

|  | Conventional | Deeper Meaning |
| :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Atta | Person, self | In control, has essence or ultimate truth |
| Anatta | no-self (incorrect) | helpless, no essence and devoid of value |
| Ānāpāna | in and out breathing | take in moral, discard immoral (in the mind) |
| Majjima | middle | majji + ma (avoid intoxication of mind) |
| Icca | like | like |
| Nicca | permanent (incorrect) | can be maintained to liking |
| Anicca | impermanent (incorrect) | cannot be maintained to liking |
| Pati | against (incorrect) | bind |


|  | Conventional | Deeper Meaning |
| :--- | :---: | :---: |
| Sammā | (i) good <br> (ii) friend (incorrect) | san + mā; removal of "san" |

13. Also see, "Why is it Necessary to Learn Key Pāli Words?."

- Mostly the deeper meanings of Pāli words can be found at: "Pāli Glossary - (A-K)" and "Pāli Glossary -(L-Z)."
- Again, one must pay attention to make sure that the meaning found in a dictionary is compatible with the context.


### 17.3 Nikāya in the Sutta Pitaka

## January 7, 2016

1. The Tipiṭaka or the Pāli Canon of Buddha Dhamma (Buddhism) consists of three major sections or "baskets" called "piṭaka" (Tipiṭaka is three piṭaka). They are Sutta piṭaka, Vinaya piṭaka, and the Abhidhamma pitaka.

- The Sutta pitaka consists of five sections called "nikāya." The Wikipedia is wrong to say that nikāya means "volume" in Pāli (and also what is meant by the five types of nikāya); see, WebLink: Wiki: Nikāya
- Nikāya comes from "ni" + "kāya" where kāya means our volitions and actions initiated via the six sense inputs, like in "k $\bar{a} y \bar{a} n u p a s s a n \bar{a} "$ where one is mindful of how to respond to those sense inputs. Here, "ni" means to cease (nikmeema in Sinhala means to be freed) and thus nikāya means "path to Nibbāna". At Nibbāna, one has stopped all kāya.

2. All suttā (note that plural of sutta is suttā) are in those five nikāyas (Dīgha, Majjhima, Sainyutta, Anguttara, and Kuddaka), based on the five types of people. All humans are in five general types based on their sansäric habits and capabilities. They are also called "indriya types": saddha, viriya, sati, samādhi, pañ̃̄̄̄. (Note that "indriya" here is different from the sense types such as cakkhu indriya, etc., as discussed in \#6 and \#7 below).

- Dīgha Nikāya is mainly for those with predominant saddha indriya who need detailed explanations. These are long (dı̄gha, pronounced "dheega," which means long in Pāli and Sinhala). For example, the Mahā Satipatṭhāna Sutta in the Dīgha Nikāya provides detailed instructions on how to be mindful and practice $\bar{a} n \bar{a} p \bar{n} n a$.
- Suttā in the Kuddaka Nikāya ("ku" + "uddaka" where "ku" is keles or defilements and "udda" means to remove) are short and concise. They provide brief instructions for those with high wisdom (pañ̃̄̄̄an indriya).
- Majjhima Nikāya has "middle length" suttā that provide instructions at a level in between those in the Dīgha Nikāya and the Kuddaka Nikāya. It is more suitable for those with dominant viriya indriya. Note here that Majjhima means "middle," but Majjhimā - as in Majjhimā patipadā - has a deeper meaning of "abstaining from getting intoxicated"; see, "Majjhima Patipada - Way to Relinquish Attachments to this World."

3. The suttā in the Saminutta Nikāya are focused on explaining "san", which is a critical word in the foundation of Buddha Dhamma; see, "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Samsāra)."

- Here Samyutta comes from "san" + "yutta" where yutta (pronounced "yuththa") menas "consists of." It natural to pronounce as "Samyutta" than "sanyutta." This is true of many combined words with "san" (like sainsāra, Samm $\bar{a}=$ "san" + " $m \vec{a}$ ").
- Suttā in the Samyutta Nikāya are said to be more suitable for those with dominant sati indriya.

4. Suttā in the Ańguttara Nikāya are said to be more suitable for those with dominant samādhi indriya.

- Ang guttara comes from "anga" + "uttara" where "anga" means parts or components and "uttara" means "predominant or principle." Therefore, the suttā in the Anguttara Nikāya are focused on fundamental principles and are also relatively short. These sutt $\bar{a}$ are more suitable for people who can quickly get to $s a m a \bar{d} h i$.
- These categories help explain why Dīgha and Majjhima Nikāya suttā are the ones that are mostly in use today. Most people today fall into the categories of those with the saddha and viriya indriya dominant.

5. It is also important to point out a different usage of the term "nikāya." Among the Theravāda nations of Southeast Asia and Sri Lanka, bhikkhus (and the temples they reside in) belong to several different groups or nikāya.

- For example, in Sri Lanka different temples belong to three types of nikāyas: Siam, Ramanya, and Amarapura.
- They are all Theravāda and there is no real difference among them as far as the doctrine is concerned. When one visits a temple, it is not possible to say to which nikāya it belongs.

6. The word indriya comes in two contexts. "Indriya" means "dominant" in some contexts. Here, the six types of dominant sense faculties are indriya: cakkhu, sota, jivhā, ghāna, kāya, and mano.

- Modern science deals with only five physical senses of eyes, ears, tongue, nose, and body.
- Scientists believe that our brains randomly produces our thought. That will be proven to be incorrect in the future.
- Mana indriya - located in the brain - is the sixth and most important one according to Buddha Dhamma. It detects dhammā from the "nāma loka"; see, "Our Two Worlds: Material and Immaterial" and "What are Dhamma? - A Deeper Analysis."
- Rūpa are eleven types, but are split into two main categories (olārika or dense and sukhuma or fine). Those above the suddhatthaka level belong to the material world or "bhauthika loka." Those below the suddhatthaka level (dhammā) belong to the mental world or "nāma loka." The five physical senses detect those rūpa above the suddhaṭthaka level. The mana indriya detects those below the suddhatthaka level (dhammā). see, "Our Two Worlds: Material and Immaterial."

7. The other use of indriya is with categorizing people by their dominant characteristics and capabilities (gati). For some people, it is easy to grasp Dhamma concepts. That is because they have cultivated the Path in their previous lives, and thus have higher wisdom (pañ̃̄̄ $\bar{a}$ ).

- Some others have also cultivated the Path mainly via just following precepts, but have high confidence in Buddha Dhamma. They are said to have their saddha indriya dominant.
- Some have the sati indriya dominant; they can focus on a given concept better than others.
- We all are familiar with some people who have the viriya indriya dominant; they are the "never give up" type, who seem to have inexhaustible energy levels.
- Some others have meditated and possibly got into $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$ in previous lives and have the samādhi indriya dominant.

8. Finally, there is an excellent website that has the full and complete Sutta Pitaka with all Pāli suttā:WebLink: Sutta Central

- That site also has the complete Vinaya and Abhidhamma Piṭaka as well (in Pāli).
- Sutta Central also has Sanskrit sutras, which are, of course, Mahāyāna.
- The Chinese Agama suttā are also at this site (in Chinese). As I understand, they are very close to Theravāda suttā. Those translations to Chinese from Theravāda happened before the appearance of Mahāyāna sutras. I would appreciate feedback from persons who are proficient in both Chinese and English, as to whether my understanding is correct.

Next, "Sutta Learning Sequence for the Present Day",..

### 17.4 Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta

"Satipatthāna Sutta - Structure"
"Satipatthāna - Introduction"
"Kāyānupassanā - Section on Postures (Iriyapathapabba)"
"Kāyānupassanā - The Section on Habits (Sampajanapabba)"
"Prerequisites for the Satipatthāna Bhāvanā"
"What is "Kaya" in Kāyānupassanā?"

### 17.4.1 Satipatṭhāna Sutta - Structure

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## Introduction

This post is the most important post on the Mahā Satipatthana Sutta. It sets the foundation. This is where $99 \%$ of people should get started.

1. Several websites provide the Pāli version of the sutta and its English translation. I believe that they all are incorrect translations, and as I proceed, I will explain why.

- Here is a website that provides Pāli and English translations of the sutta side-by-side: WebLink: tipitaka.org: Mahāsatipatthāna Sutta (Pāli-English)
- It is not the fault of those who took their time with good intentions to write those posts. That is how this sutta and others have been interpreted for more than a thousand years.
- I will not follow the sutta sequentially, but you will be able to follow the relevant sections. Eventually, I hope to cover most of the sutta.


## Three Levels of Explanations

2. As I explained in "Sutta Interpretation - Uddesa, Niddesa, Patiniddesa," there are three ways of presenting Dhamma: uddesa, niddesa, and patiniddesa.

- Mahā Satipatṭhāna Sutta is in the niddesa version (i.e., provides an outline,) but has the uddesa (very brief) version at the very beginning. See the above link in \#1 which provides the complete sutta in Pāli and English.
- In the main body of the sutta, the concepts are outlined. Those key concepts are supposed to be described in detail, with examples, in verbal discourses (i.e., a desan $\bar{a}$.) That is what I will be doing in these series of posts, i.e., describe the concepts in detail.
- Note that some suttas are in the uddesa version and require explanation in the niddesa and patiniddesa versions. Word-by-word translations of such suttas can lead to much confusion. See, "Distortion of Pāli Keywords in Paticca Samuppāda."


## Uddesa Version - Brief Summary

3. The uddesa (or uddeso) starts with, "Ekāyano ayaín, bhikkhave, maggo sattānaì visuddhiyā, sokaparidevanaì samatikkamāya, dukkhadomanassanai் atthangamāya, nāyassa adhigamāya, nibbānassa sacchikiriyāya, yadidaì cattāro satipat!thānā"

- Translation: "This is a guaranteed way, for the purification of beings, for the overcoming of sorrow and lamentation, for the extinguishing of suffering and grief, the Noble way for gaining wisdom, for the realization of nibbāna. That is to say, the fourfold establishing of moral mindset".
- It is a "guaranteed way" to Nibbāna because it comes first in the " 37 Factors of Enlightenment" required to get to Nibbāna.


## Two Key Points

4. The main difference from the translation (conventional interpretation) given in the link in \#1 above are the two phrases highlighted above:

- The translation of "nāyassa adhigamāya" and "satipathāna": "Nāya" (Sanskrit "nyāya") means "underlying principle." It is grasped with "ñāna" or wisdom, and "adhigama" is "adhi"+"gama" or "higher way". Translating Satipatt!hāna as "moral mindset" is not too bad, but I will discuss "satipatṭhāna" in the next post.
- So, the essence of that verse is that the method described in the Satipatthāna sutta provides a guaranteed way to attain Nibbāna, via purification of the being, i.e., via cleansing one's mind.


## "Four Stations" of Mindfulness

5. The next phrase is, "Katame cattāro? Idha, bhikkhave, bhikkhu kāye kāyānupassi viharati ātāp $\bar{\imath}$ sampajāno, satimā vineyya loke abhijjhā domanassam். Vedanāsu vedanānupassi viharati àtāpi sampajāno, satimā vineyya loke abhijjhā domanassam். Citte cittānupassī viharati ātāpi sampajāno, satimā vineyya loke abhijjhā domanassam̀. Dhammesu dhammānupassī viharati ātāpi sampajāno, satima vineyya loke abhijjhā domanassaì" "

- Of course, "Katame cattāro?" is, "Which four? (cattaro pronounced, "chaththaro"). Pāli words are NOT spelled according to "Standard English." See, ""Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars - Part 1" and "Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars Part 2."
- And then it lists the four: kayanupassana, vedananupassana, cittanupassana, and dhammanupassana. Notice that the phrase, "ātāpi sampajāno, satima vineyya loke abhijjhā domanassaì" appears after each of the four.
- This indicates the critical importance of this phrase. This is the beginning of the purification process, by laying out the foundation; see, "Satipatthāna Sutta - Relevance to Suffering in This Life." One HAS TO go through this process to reach the Sotāpanna stage.


## A Key Phrase Relevant to All Four

6. The "WebLink: suttacentral: Lakkhanahāravibhañga (Ne 8)" of the Tipitaka Commentary Nettipakarana explains the meaning of the verse, "kāye kāyānupassī viharāhi ātāpī sampajāno satima
 Pāli/Sinhala languages.)

To quote: "Tasmātiha tvaì bhikkhu kāye kāyānupassī viharāhi ātāp̄̄ sampajāno satimā vineyya loke abhijjhādomanassaì". "Ātāp̄̄"ti vīriyindriyaì, "sampajāno"ti pañ̃̃indriyain, "satimā"ti satindriyam, "vineyya loke abhijjhādomanassan"ti samādhindriyami,."

Translated: " $\bar{A} t \bar{a} p \bar{\imath}$, sampajāno, satimā, and vineyya loke abhijjhādomanassan" are, respectively, "Viriya indriya, pañ̃̃ā indriya, sati indriya, and samādhi indriya."

- Note that those are four of the five indriya that are required for the cultivation of the Noble Eightfold Path.
- One would already have the "unshakeable faith" (saddhā indriya) when one gets on the Noble Path.

7. That all-important common phrase, "ātāp̄̄ sampajānō, satima $\operatorname{vineyya~lōke~abhijjhā~dōmanassam,~"~is~}$ common to all four "stations of mindfulness."

- Sampajana comes from "san" + "pajana" or sorting out "san" the things that make a mind stressful; see, "What is "San"?." The worst forms of "san" are the ones that we instinctively know to be immoral. They include killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, and getting intoxicated. [pajānana $\overline{\boldsymbol{a}}$ : [f.] knowledge; understanding; discernment.]
- Sampajana is closely related to "sampādeta" as in the Buddha's last words: "..appamadena sampadeta" or "..make haste and sort out san." Here sampadeta is "san"+"padeta" or again sort out "san".
- When one has done "sampādeta" one becomes "sampajanno": One knows what is right and what is wrong automatically; it has become a habit.
- This critical verse is discussed in the following desanā from the post, "WebLink: Audio Desana: Episode 3 - Satipatthāna Sutta - Relevance to Suffering in This Life" (you may need to control the volume at your computer):
Episode 3 - Maha Satipatthāna Sutta - Relevance to Suffering in This Life


## Ātāpī Sampajāno

8. Therefore, "ātāp̄̄ sampajāno" means "make effort to acting with paññ̄ă." That involves getting rid of 'san' or "immoral tendencies". They also go by the names "kilesa" and "asobhana cetasika"; see, "What Are Kilesa (Mental Impurities)? - Connection to Cetasika."

- When one starts making progress, one could start to avoid tendencies for extreme sense pleasures as well.
- Note that "tāpa" (pronounced "thāpa") means heat; when we get really stressed we feel a "fire" in the heart. When it gets really bad, people say, "I could feel my heartburn" when a piece of especially poignant news comes through. Thus, "āt $\bar{a} p i$ " is to remove that "fire" from the heart and the stress from the mind and calm the mind. This is the "cooling down", "niveema", "nivana" or early stages of Nibbāna. When one makes the effort (viriya) the result is that "cooling down."


## Satimā Vineyya Loke Abhijjhā Domanassain

9. Then we have, "satima vineyya loke abhijjhā domanassam." This is a highly condensed statement about how to remove $a b h i j j h \bar{a}$ and domanassa by being mindful of one's actions at ALL TIME.

- The root cause of all suffering is extreme greed or "abhijjā [abhijjhā]" (which comes from "abhi" + "icch $\vec{a}$ " or strong craving or attachment). When one does not get what one desires, one gets depressed. That is domanassa. It is important to see that one acts with hate with a domanassa mindset because one is upset, deflated, and angry.
- Thus "sati mā vineyya loke abhijjhā domanassaì" means establishing a moral mindset and moral conduct in order to be free from the debt-ridden world and to be relieved from abhijj $\bar{a}$ [abhijjh $\bar{a}$ ] and domanassa. This is the key to "cooling down"; see, "Living Dhamma" for details.
- Both Satipaț̣hāna and $\bar{A} n a \overline{p a} n a s a t i ~ B h a ̄ v a n a \bar{a}$ describe how to achieve that. The "WebLink: suttacentral: Indrivabhāvanā Sutta (MN 152)" also describes the basic idea of the maintenance of one's sense faculties by being mindful of one's actions at ALL TIMES.


## A Key Idea Behind the Sutta

10. Thus the verse, "ātāpi sampajāno, satimā vineyya loke abhijjhā domanassamं," means "making effort to act with wisdom by being mindful (sati); that will lead to gradual reduction of kilesa or defilements and by removing extreme greed (abhijj $\bar{a}$ [abhijjhā]) that leads to a depressed mind (domanassa) through discipline (vineyya)".

- In the first stage, one needs to focus on abstaining from immoral activities or dasa akusala.
- Therefore, the phrase, "ātāpi sampajāno, satima vineyya loke abhijjhā domanassam"" is the key to both Satipaṭthāna and $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p a ̄ n a ~ B h a ̄ v a n a \bar{a}$.
- The rest of the Satipatthāna sutta is on the details of how to go about achieving these goals.


## The "Cooling Down"

11. This "cooling down" happens in four ways. They are kāyānupassanā, vedanānupassanā, cittānupassanā, and dhammānupassanā.

- These are somewhat sequential, in the sense that one needs to start with taking care of major sources of abhijjā [abhijjhā] and domanassa with kāyānupassanā. This is basically the same as sila or moral conduct. One needs to be aware that one's actions and speech need to be moral, i.e., to abstain from dasa akusala as much as possible.
- Once one achieves that to a certain extent, moral conduct will follow. One will "feel" when one is about to do something wrong. That means one will become "sensitized." But initially, it takes an effort to pause and think of the consequences.
- With the mind clear of the worst hindrances, then it will be easier to learn Dhamma with dhammānupassanā, be easier not to REACT to feelings (vedanānupassanā) but to take time and evaluate consequences, and automatically be aware of immoral thoughts that come to the mind (cittānupassanā).
- Thus it is a gradual process. Each advance helps with gaining confidence in one's actions, helps not to just react to feelings, and helps to think with a clear head, which in turn helps with the understanding process.


## Comprehension of Tilakkhaṇa Will Accelerate Progress

12. The process of comprehension of Tilakkhana (anicca, dukkha, anatta) starts with kāyānupassana but all four can be cultivated simultaneously. The Buddha stated that if one makes an all-out effort, Arahanthood can be attained in seven days. If one makes less commitment, either Arahant or at least the Anāgāmi stage is attained within seven years according to the Buddha.

- Getting started on this process is described in detail in the section, "Living Dhamma."
- Another deeper approach is discussed in, "Origin of Life."


## Connection to Dasa Akusala

13. Finally, kāyānupassanā basically tackles dasa akusala done with actions and speech (moving body parts), as we will see in the next section. The harder part comes with those done directly by the mind, especially micchā ditṭhi or wrong views.

- There are two levels of micchā ditṭhi. First, the 10 types of micch $\bar{a}$ ditṭhi removed via the mundane Path. Removal of the deeper wrong views comes with the grasping of anicca, dukkha, and anatta.
- Thus we can see the critical role of the pañ̃̃ā indriya (wisdom). One can start on all four types of anupassana . However, when one becomes good in k $\bar{a} y \bar{a} n u p a s s a n \bar{a}$, the other three types of anupassanā cultivate to some extent too.
- The key is to get started with kāyānupassanā and make the effort (viriya). Then wisdom (pañ̃̄̄̄) will grow together with mindfulness (sati), and one will automatically get into the other three anupassan $\bar{a}$ with increasing levels of samādhi.

Next, "Satipatthāna - Introduction", $\qquad$

### 17.4.2 Satipatṭhāna - Introduction

## Revised January 26, 2019; June 6, 2022

You may want to read the post: "Satipatthāna Sutta - Structure," which explains the basic layout of this long sutta. You can read it before or after reading this post.

1. First we need to figure out what "sati" means. Bear with me as I use some key Pāli words because it is important to understand them correctly. Things will become clear as we proceed below. Again, first, try to read the post through without clicking on links, and then come back and read any relevant other posts as needed.

- Sati is a "good" mental factor (sobhana cetasika). Therefore, "sati" arises only in moral thoughts (kusala citta), and DOES NOT arise in akusala citta. As discussed in "Cetasika (Mental Factors)", "good cetasika" do not arise in akusala citta (similarly, "bad cetasika" do not arise in kusala citta).
- There is no "asati" cetasika. Therefore, the word "asati" is NEVER used as the opposite of this "sati", which is a "good cetasika."

2. However, there is another "mundane" meaning for "sati", which is "attention" or "mindfulness". Therefore, one must be able to figure out which meaning is to be used in a given context (depending on the subject matter).

- If one is not paying attention to the task at hand, then one is acting with "asati", without being mindful of what one is doing or contemplating.
- That way one can clearly see the two different meanings of "sati".
- Of course, in Satipaṭthāna, one is being mindful, but one MUST also know the deeper meaning too, in order to figure out what to be mindful about.

3. We can clarify the mundane meaning with the following examples: A suicide bomber has to pay close attention to wiring up the bomb; otherwise, he can detonate it accidentally. A professional thief making plans for a grand robbery in minute detail needs to pay total attention to it too, in order to make sure he does not get caught.

- The deeper meaning of "sati" is NOT involved in either case. The suicide bomber or the thief would not have that "sati", the good mental factor.
- More details on this "sati" can be found in the post: "Imasmim Sati Idam Hoti - What Does It Really Mean?".

4. When a person stops and contemplates whether an action one is about to take has moral or immoral consequences, and carries out only those actions that have moral consequences, then that person is acting with "sati", the "good mental factor".

- That is the "sati" in the MINDSET of a person engaged in Satipatthāna. Of course, he will be paying attention to catch any immoral thoughts that may arise in his mind.
- Therefore, a person engaged in Satipaṭthāna will be using both types of "sati".
- Now let us see what is meant by patthāna in Satipaṭthāna.

5. Patthāna can mean establishment, preparation, or "to mold". Therefore, "satipatṭhāna" means the establishment of "sati", or training the mind to act with "sati" as described above.

- This training process comes in four steps, and that is why it is also called "Catāro Satipatṭhāna" where 'Catāro" means four. Even though the four steps are interrelated, there is a sequence. The four steps are kāyānupassanā, vedanānupassanāa, cittānupassanā, and dhammānupassanā.
- The meaning of "anupassana"" is described in point \#4 of " $\underline{\text {. What do all these Different Meditation }}$ Techniques Mean?" in the Meditation section.

6. Buddha Dhamma is all about cleansing the mind; that is the key to real and lasting tranquility of the mind. A defiled mind generates defiled thoughts (citta). Defiled thoughts lead to defiled speech (with a time lag) and defiled actions (with an even longer time lag).

- The sequence of cleansing the mind is backward: First control bodily actions, then (or simultaneously) to control speech, and controlling thoughts (as they arise) is harder. This is important to understand, so let us look into the reasons.

7. As discussed in the Abhidhamma section, thoughts (citta) arise very fast; there are well over billions of cittā per second but of course we "experience" only "bundles of citta" accumulating for at least about 0.05 seconds. Even then it is not possible to control thoughts by sheer will power.

- But our thoughts are dictated by our character and habits ("gati"). And, these character qualities (gati) can be changed with a concerted effort by controlling one's speech and actions. We have discussed "gati" in many posts spread over different sections.

8. This is why kāyānupassanā comes first in Satipatṭhāna. We first discipline ourselves by making sure we speak only moral words and do only moral actions. Both speech and actions arise from thoughts, but they come with a "time lag". We first think that "this person has done something bad to me", and then we start saying something bad to the person. But there is enough of a 'time lag' to stop saying it.

- We tend to take "bodily actions" with even longer delay than for speech. So, unless one is in a rage, there is enough time to catch oneself and stop any bad actions. Actually, when we get good at it and control both speech and actions, such instances of acting with rage will diminish with time and will go away. This is because the more we act with "sati", the more that we give up bad "gati" and cultivate good "gati".

9. Thus Kāyānupassanā basically means "catching ourselves before we say or do something wrong".

- To put it in another way, what we need to accomplish with kāyānupassanā is to be aware of our speech and actions AT ALL TIMES. By now it must be clear why satipatṭhāna cannot be restricted to a "formal sitting down meditation session".
- We say or do things in response to what we see, hear, smell, taste, touch, or think. The speech or actions have time delays from the time we get the "input" from outside or even if generated by the mind itself. Even if we start saying something bad, we can catch ourselves and stop (and apologize if we hurt someone's feelings). Even if get up to hit someone, we can realize the bad consequences of such an action and immediately stop. That is how one starts.

10. With practice, one's gati will change, and such awkward instances will occur less and less. There are many posts on "gati" at the site, and there are some in the meditation section under, " 9 . Key to Ānāpānasati - How to Change Habits and Character (Gati)". Satipatṭhāna is basically a methodical way of doing $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p \bar{a} n a s a t i$. A scientific view is discussed in, "How Habits are Formed and Broken - A Scientific View".
11. Therefore, it is easy to see that k $\bar{a} y \bar{a} n u p a s s a n \bar{a}$ is the first and most important part of the Catāro Satipaṭthāna.

- When $k \bar{a} y \bar{a} n u p a s s a n a ̄$ is practiced, one's "gati" will gradually change and one will start to calm down. And one will not REACT to feelings on an impulsive basis, and thus it will be easier to practice the next stage of "vedanānupassana", i.e., "think about how to respond when certain feelings arise".
- When both those are practiced, "gati" will change to an extent that even initial thoughts will have "less venom", and thus it will be easier to practice "cittānupassanä" or "think morally" automatically.
- Finally, it will be easier to get into samādhi and to contemplate anicca, dukkha, anatta (or any other Dhamma concept), which is "dhammānupassana $\bar{a}$ ".

12. Thus one starts with k $\bar{a} y \bar{a} n u p a s s a n \bar{a}$ first and then moves on to other three "anupassan $\bar{a}$ ". When one completes all four one completes the process and will have "samm $\bar{a}$ sati" in full, which leads to "samm $\bar{a}$ samādhi" in full, i.e., Arahanthood.

- Of course, that is normally accomplished in four stages, the first of which is the Sotāpanna stage.
- Just like it is not possible to attend middle school without attending primary school, or to take college courses without passing high school, one needs to go through the four steps methodically. One needs to control one's actions and speech first. That is what "kāyānupassana"" is about. We will discuss that in detail in the next post.
- This does not mean that one should not do the other three while doing kāyānupassanā; it just means there is "not much benefit" in doing the other three unless one is actively engaged in stopping the "BIG EIGHT" done with speech and body; see, " 2 . The Basics in Meditation."
- And one does not stop doing kāyānupassanā, ever. It is not something to be done forcefully, it will become a habit. When one sees the benefits, one would want to advance. One just keeps incorporating the other three gradually and soon enough will be doing all four. But k $\bar{a} y \bar{a} n u p a s s a n \bar{a}$ is the FOUNDATION.


## Next, "Kāyānupassanā - The Section on Postures (Iriyapathapabba)",

### 17.4.3 Kāyānupassanā - Section on Postures (Iriyāpathapabba)

1. Let us first clarify what kāyānupassanā means. There are two interchangeably used meanings for "k $\bar{a} y a$ ": one is the body, the other is whatever is involved in "kriya" or "actions". In kāyānupassanā the latter is more general. This section on postures is based on body postures, but is still concerned with all "actions" done via all six senses. This will become clear as we proceed below.

- It is normally written as "kāyānupassana"", and is ALWAYS pronounced as "kāyanupassana".
- In interacting with the world, we see visuals ( $r \bar{u} p a$ ) with eyes, hear sounds with ears, smell odors with nose, taste with the tongue, touch (pottabba) with body, and think about concepts (dhamma) with the mind.
- Thus there are six internal "kāya", and six external "k $\bar{a} y a "$ involved in experiencing the world. Thus we are concerned with both the internal sense faculties (ajjhatta, pronounced "ajjhaththa") and the six external entities (bahiddha), while we are in any of the four main postures of sitting, standing, walking, or lying down.

2. When one starts on the Path, one does not need to believe in anything that the Buddha (or anybody else) said about the true nature of the world. One can start with a simple goal of "getting some peace of mind" or "get some relief from the day-to-day stresses of this world", i.e., get to the "ātāpi" stage.

- One can keep an open mind on whether there is rebirth or not, whether the concept of kamma is correct or not (of course one should not rule out those either; that would be "niyata micchā dittthi" and one WILL NOT be able to make any progress); see, "How do we Decide which View is Wrong View (Ditthi)?."

3. The Buddha said that the mind is burdened by greed, hate, and ignorance. It is not easy to see "the truth" (i.e., to remove ignorance) because the mind is normally "covered" by strong versions of greed and hate called "kāmachanda" (one becomes blind by greed) and "vyāpāda" (one keeps going downward with intense hate); you can do keyword searches to find related posts.

- And these two, kāmachanda and vyāpāda are the main culprits for making a mind stressful, and for causing "inside fires". Thus by forcibly removing any thoughts of extreme greed and hate as they come to the mind, one can get relief in real time. One does not have to wait for "effects of kamma to materialize". Such benefits will be there too, but one WILL be able to experience more immediate benefits.
- This is the beginning of "cooling down" or experiencing nirāmisa sukha, as explained in the post, "Three Kinds of Happiness".

4. As explained in the previous post, "Satipatthāna - Introduction", we start by disciplining our actions through speech and bodily actions, because they have a "time lag" and there is enough time to stop them willfully.

- We can start with the conventional five precepts. Without that basic discipline, one CANNOT get any kind of long-lasting peace of mind, no matter how much time one spends in meditation.
- If one is engaged in any of these five (intentional killing of living beings, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, and using alcohol excessively or using drugs), and can abstain from them one should be able to experience the benefits of that in the near term.

5. After that one can tackle the BIG EIGHT (killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, gossiping, slandering, harsh speech, and getting "drunk" with not only drugs or alcohol, but also with wealth, fame, power, etc); see, " 2 . The Basics in Meditation".
6. The $k \bar{a} y \bar{a} n u p a s s a n a \bar{a}$ of the satipatthāna consists of six sections or "pabba":

Anapānāpabba (section on "ānāpāna"),
Iriyāpathapabba (section on postures),
Sampajānapabba (section on habits),
Patikulamanasikārapabba (section on contemplation of body parts),
Dhatumanasikāra (section on contemplation of elements), and
Navasivathikapabba (section on contemplation of the decay of a body).

- We have already discussed ānāpāna in several posts, starting with "7. What is Ānāpāna?."


## 7. The "Iriyāpathapabba" section of the Kāyānupassanā in the Satipatṭhāna sutta is all about how to abstain from committing an immoral act AT ANY TIME.

- We have four postures or"iriya": sitting, standing, walking, and in the sleeping position (laying flat).
- In any posture, we need to be vigilant on what we are about to do or speak. This is the beginning of "satipatṭhāna", being "morally mindful" at all times.
- When a thought comes to mind to say something or to do something (whether sitting, standing, walking, or lying down), we need to get into the habit of contemplating their consequences.

8. For example, we may be walking on the street and see someone, whom we do not like, coming our way. If we get the tendency to say something bad, we have enough time to contemplate the bad consequences and stop saying those words.

- We may be lying in bed and getting bored, and may decide to go and see a friend to do some "gossiping" for fun. We have time to think about it and see whether we can use that time more productively.
- Sometimes we get "nasty e-mails"; someone pointing out an allegedly bad deed that we have done. We get that immediate "tāpa" or "heating up" in our heart because we get so perturbed by that false accusation. We tend to fire up an equally nasty e-mail back to that person. But we need to take time and
contemplate a better action. Give that person the benefit of the doubt; may be he/she did not do it to aggravate us, or truly was misled. Of course, there are people who do such things purposely to aggravate, but even then it is better to ignore it, rather than letting it develop into a worse situation. Learning to keep away from such troublemakers is a habit that we learn to develop. By responding in kind, it will not help quenching the "fires".

9. We need to constantly ask ourselves "why am I going to do this? Why am I going to say this?". If the outcome of that action could hurt us or someone else, we need to think about a different way, or totally abandon it.

- It is sad to see that many people waste their time "walking mindfully" one step at a time, just concentrating on taking each step, or "lifting their arm mindfully" This is the "iriyāpathapabba" that is being practiced in most places. How can that procedure lead to a long-lasting peace of mind? Of course, just like doing breath meditation, it can make a person calm for the time being; that is the ONLY benefit.
- And it is not enough to do this in a formal session. This needs to become a habit (a keyword search can be done to find more on habits; developing habits is the key to change those all important "gati"). Buddha Dhamma is all about purifying the mind.

10. If one can do this for a week or so, one should be able to see a change in oneself; a sense of tranquility, a "peace of mind". Of course some of you may be there already. We will discuss how to take the next step in the next post.

- When one is at this stage, it will be easier to get into samādhi, even if one is just doing the "breath meditation". A moral mind is easy to be calmed. Many people do horrible acts on the spur-of-themoment because they do not have this mindset or habit. Also see, "Possible Outcomes of Meditation Samādhi, Jhāna, Magga Phala."
Next, "Kāyānupassanā - The Section on Habits (Sampajānapabba)", .........


### 17.4.4 Kāyānupassanā - The Section on Habits (Sampajānapabba)

## Revised February 8, 2019

This is really an extension of the section on postures (Iriyāpathapabba) discussed in the previous post ("Kāyānupassanā - Section on Postures (Iriyāpathapabba)", going into finer postures and activities. The key point is ultimately to become "sensitized" to each and every action that we take thus leading to the formation of "good habits", i.e., to become a "sampajānno".

1. One cannot start on this section until one has acquired discipline with the "bigger activities". For example, if one is killing animals for fun, then there is no point in worrying about kicking a dog.

- As one gets some practice with abstaining from major offenses, one will become "sensitized", i.e., one will start seeing minor offenses that one is about to make.

2. The relevant paragraph on the Sampajānapabba in the WebLink: suttacentral: Mahā Satipatthāna Sutta (DN 22) reads::
"Puna ca param, bhikkhave, bhikkhu abhikkante patikkante sampajānakāri hoti, ālokite vilokite sampajānakāri hoti, saminjite pasārite sampajānakāri hoti, sanghātipattacivaradhārane sampajānakāri hoti, asite pite khāyite sāyite sampajānakāri hoti, uccārapassāvakamme sampajānakāri hoti, gate thite nisinne sutte jāgarite bhāsite tunhibhāve sampajānakāri hoti".

Here is the mundane translation ("WebLink: tipitaka.org: The Great Discourse on the Establishing of Awareness"), which is word by word:

- "Again, monks, a monk, while going forward or backward, he does so with constant thorough understanding of impermanence; whether he is looking straight ahead or looking sideways, he does so
with constant thorough understanding of impermanence; while he is bending or stretching, he does so with constant thorough understanding of impermanence; whether wearing his robes or carrying his bowl, he does so with constant thorough understanding of impermanence; whether he is eating, drinking, chewing or savoring, he does so with constant thorough understanding of impermanence; while attending to the calls of nature, he does so with constant thorough understanding of impermanence; whether he is walking, standing, sitting, sleeping or waking, speaking or in silence, he does so with constant thorough understanding of impermanence".

3. Thus many possible "finer posture and actions" can be seen in the above direct translation, which are correct. The point is to be "morally mindful" in each and every such action, and not just to do those acts like a robot just in a formal setting as most people do.

- I am not sure where "impermanence" came from, apparently as the translation of the word, "sampajānkāri". But as was explained in the post, "Satipatthāna Sutta - Structure", sampajāno means knowing right from wrong ("san") via enhanced wisdom.
- Thus sampajānkāri means doing something the right way, and sampajānkāri hoti means developing a habit to do that.

4. When one goes into finer details on "being morally mindful" of one's actions, one is not just concerned with killing, stealing, etc. One is also concerned about general welfare, that one should act with civility and be courteous to others: one should be wearing proper clothes appropriate for the occasion, when eating one should not be making inappropriate noises, while walking in a crowded street one should be mindful of the others and not throw one's refuse on the roadside, etc.

- As I pointed out in the post, "Sutta Interpretation - Uddesa, Niddesa, Patiniddesa", a sutta gives instructions in the "niddesa" or as a brief description. It needs to be EXPLAINED rather than doing a direct translation. Any sutta was originally delivered over a number of hours, and then summarized in a special way to make it brief and suitable for oral transmission.

5. A case in point is the direct translation of "..uccārapassāvakamme sampajānakārī hoti", as "while attending to the calls of nature (going to the bathroom), he does so with constant thorough understanding of impermanence!" (from the conventional translation in \#2 above).

- What is meant there is to act with decency and not to relieve oneself in an inappropriate place. In all those cases, sampajānakārī hoti means acting with diligence and prudence.

6. There are many other aspects too. For example, if one is about to take a nap in the middle of the day, one should be asking oneself why one needs to take nap. Unless one had engaged in some strenuous activity and really needs to get some rest, it is not a good habit to take unnecessary naps. Then it could become a habit, a bad one.

- We should also develop good habits. While walking on the street, it is good to help out those who need help, and to be courteous to others. A small thing like not spitting in a public place or just dropping trash anywhere one pleases can cause discomfort (and health problems) for others.
- Of course with each minor act we should also make sure it does not pan out to immoral activities. A good example is drinking too much. Drinking alcohol is not an akusala kamma per se (and there is nothing wrong with taking a drink in a social setting), but there is danger in getting intoxicated.
- An intoxicated mind can be very dangerous; one could lose any sense of decency, and may get into situations that are immoral and offensive. Both drinking and smoking can be harmful to oneself and also to others.

7. As one develops good habits and gets rid of bad ones, one becomes more and more "sensitized" and catch even minor mistakes. This is what is meant by "patisamvedi" ("pati" + "san" "vedi"), i.e., becoming aware of "getting attached to a wrong mindset".

- At the same time, one will start seeing a big improvement in one's "inside fires", but one also becomes less prone to be aggravated or offended, and one becomes more forgiving to others.
- There are many posts at the site on habits, and how they can lead to sansāric habits and āsavas; developing good habits and getting rid of bad habits is key to "cooling down" in the short term as well as in the long term.
- Parents, teachers, and friends play key roles in a child's life, because a child's mind can be influenced by others in a good or bad ways, and can lead to lifelong habits. If the foundation is set right, then it will be easier for one to become a "sampajānno", one who is capable of "keeping fires under control".

8. This is what was meant by being a "sampajānno", and being able to "quench fires", i.e., "ātāpi sampajāno", which was a key phrase in the uddesa (brief description) of the Satipatthāna sutta; see, "Satipatthāna Sutta - Structure."

Next, "Prerequisites for the Satipatthāna Bhāvanā", .........

### 17.4.5 Prerequisites for the Satipatthāna Bhāvanā

As you may have noticed, I am not going to follow the sutta in the formal order. I would like to present it in a way that is conducive to the present day. However, at the end it will become clear that everything in the sutta has been discussed.

1. From the previous two posts it is clear that this meditation is not just to be practiced in a formal session, even though formal sessions can and should be done. In particular, Dhammānupassana needs to be done in formal sessions, which we will discuss shortly. With that in mind let us look at how the sutta begins (after the uddesa or the "brief description" section, to which we will get back later):
"Kathaì ca pana, bhikkhave, bhikkhu kāye kāyanupassi viharati?

- Here and many other other places, " $c a$ " is pronounced "cha".
- Here "viharati" means 'to live". Thus what it says is, "Bhikkhus, what is meant by living with kayanupassana of the body (kaye kayanupassana)?".
- This should make it very clear that the bhāvanā is not just to be practised in a formal session; one has to "live it".

2. Now let us look at the next phrase that describes how to prepare for the $b h \bar{a} v a n \bar{a}$ :
"Idha, bhikkhave, bhikkhu arañña gato vā rukkhamūla gato vā suññāāara gato vā nisidati pallankaì ābhujitvā, ujum kāyaì panidhāya, parimukhaì satim upaṭthapetvā".

- The conventional translation is something like, "Here a monk, having gone into the forest, or to the foot of a tree, or to an empty room, sits down cross-legged, keeps his body upright and fixes his awareness in the area around the mouth".
- Of course, this is a good thing to do if one is going to do a formal session, except that one should focus the awareness not "around the mouth" but on the object of contemplation as we will discuss later.

3. I pointed out in the introduction how the sutta (like most other suttā) was apparently designed to convey the above "conventional" meaning while keeping the deeper meaning hidden; see, "Sutta Interpretation Uddesa, Niddesa, Patiniddesa". This is a good example of how this was accomplished. Let us describe the above sentence in detail. However, I may not be able to go into such details for the rest of the sutta, because it will take up too much space.

Continuing with the interpretation of the phrase in \#2, "gato va" means "get in to" or in the deeper sense, "get into the mindset".

- Arañña is a forest (or forest monastery). But the hidden meaning comes from "rana" which means "battle" and thus "arañña" means staying away from battles. Thus, "arañña gato v $\vec{a}$ " means "get into a calm mindset leaving behind the everyday battles". In the conventional interpretation is says, "having gone into the forest".
- "rukkha" is "tree" and " $m \bar{u} l a$ " is the "root"; even though the top of a tree sways back and forth with the wind, the tree trunk close to the root is very stable. Thus "rukkhamūla gato va" means getting to a stable mindset. In the conventional interpretation is says, "having gone to the foot of a tree".

4. Next, "suññāgāra" is an empty building or room. The deeper meaning is that the mind should be empty of greed, hate, and ignorance. One should dispel any such thoughts that comes to the mind.

- Now comes, "nisidati pallañkaì ābhujitvā", which is translated as, "sits down cross-legged". The key word here is, "anka" or literally "number"; in Pāli or Sinhala, "reduce the number" or "palla+anka" means not giving importance. Thus "nisidati pallankaì ābhujitva" means, "being modest" and getting rid of any sense of "superiority".
- And, "ujuím kāyaím paṇidhāya" is translated, "keeps his body upright". In the deeper meaning, it is about being "straightforward" or forthright and honest.
- The post, "Kāyānupassanā - Section on Postures (Iriyāpathapabba)," describes how one needs to conduct satipattāna in all four postures (sitting, standing, walking, lying down), AND in numerous subpostures; Therefore, the idea of "keeping the physical body upright" during satipatthāna is a falsehood.

5. Finally, "parimukham satim upatthapetv $\bar{a}$ " is the KEY to Satipatṭhāna: It is translated literally as "fixes his awareness in the area around the mouth". What is actually meant is to keep the mind on the main object (called "mukkha nimitt $\vec{a} "$ ), i.e., "Nibbāna" or "cooling down". "Pari" here means "complete" or "full".

- Therefore, "parimukhai் satim upaṭthapetvā" means maintaining one's focus on the main goal or Nibbāna.
- Thus what is described in that sentence is the required mindset for the meditator, whether he/she is going to be "meditating" in any one of the four postures described in the previous post, not just in a sitting down formal meditation session.

6. Thus the "preparation instructions" in that opening phrase can now be stated something like, "get into a calm and stable mindset that is devoid of greed, hate, and ignorance; keep a modest attitude without any sense of superiority; be forthright and honest, and keep the mind on the main object of cooling down".

- Such a state of mind needs to be cultivated for all times. That is the key to cooling down on a long-term basis.
- Of course the conventional interpretation can also be used for sitting down, formal, sessions without "fixing awareness in the area around the mouth". One ALWAYS focuses on cooling down, and becoming an "ātāpi sampajanno"; see, "Satipatthh̄̄na Sutta - Structure," and "Kāyānupassanā - The Section on Habits (Sampajānapabba)."
- Thus the idea is for one to become a "firefighter" ("ātāp̄̄ sampajāno"), who is always on the lookout not for actual fires, but for those mental events that CAN LEAD TO mental fires in the future. These are basically any immoral acts, speech, or thoughts.

7. There are five sections or "pabba" in the k $\bar{a} y \bar{a} n u p a s s a n \bar{a}$. The reason that I described the Iriyāpathapabba ("section on postures") and the Sampajānapabba ("section on habits") in the previous posts was to emphasize the point that this bhāvanā cannot be restricted to a formal session. One could say, "How can I be meditating the whole day?". This question arises only because of the misconceptions we have on what meditation or "bh $\bar{a} v a n \bar{a}$ " is.

- The Buddha said, "bhavanaya bahuleekathaya", or "bhāvanā is what one does all the time". It is about getting into the habit of developing good habits and getting rid of bad habits. [bahulīkata: [pp. of bahulikaroti] took up seriously; increased. (adj.), practised frequently.]
- One can just make it a "formal session" in order to get into deeper levels of samādhi or jhānā.

8. Buddha Dhamma is not a religion in the sense of providing "salvation" by following certain rules or procedures. The Buddha said the only way to achieve long-lasting happiness is to purify the mind. It starts with avoiding the worst immoral acts of killing, stealing, etc. When one sees the benefits of that one can go a step further and include gossiping, slandering, etc. and so on.

- The more one purifies one's mind, the true nature of this world will become increasingly clear. One cannot read about it in one essay or even many essays. One has to put it into action. Even though it is good to read about anicca, dukkha, anatta, it is not possible to "get it" until one purifies one's mind to a certain extent AND experiences the "cooling down" that results from a purified mind; this will be discussed in the Dhammānupassana.

9. Satipatṭhāna sutta describes a very methodical way of following the Path prescribed by the Buddha. Initially, one does not even have to worry about whether rebirth is valid or whether there are 31 realms of existence. One just focuses on realizing that there are "internal fires" (ātāpi) that we are not even aware of, see "Satipatthāna Sutta - Structure."

- As one purifies the mind, one can clearly see and FEEL these fires and how they start. When one clears up the "big fires" one is able to see and feel smaller ones; one becomes more "sensitized". And then one tackles those smaller fires. It is a gradual, step-by-step process. That is why it is called the Path. The higher one climbs on the Path, the more one can "see" and get rid of, and more happier one becomes.

Next, "What is "Kāya" in Kāyānupassanā?",

### 17.4.6 What is "Kāya" in Kāyānupassanā?

## Revised May 20, 2018; February 17, 2019

1. There are two meanings to "k $\bar{a} y a$ ": one is "kāya" for the body, and the other "k $\bar{a} y a$ " means "collections" or "aggregates" of anything: rūpa, vedanā, saññā, sañkhāra, or viññ̄̄na.

- "Sabba" means all. Therefore, "sabba kāya" is the same as "pañcakkhandha" ; see, "Five Aggregates - Introduction," and follow-up posts.
- In the Satipațthāna Sutta, one contemplates on the five aggregates via four categories (kāyānupassanā, vedanānupassanā, cittānupassanā, and dhammānupassanā).
- Kāyānupassanā deals mostly with bodily actions (i.e., regarding kāya). But "kāya" + "anupassanä" rhymes as "kāyānupassanā"; see, "Satipatthāna - Introduction."

2. We experience pictures, sounds, smells, tastes, touch (which are all different types of $r \bar{u} p a$ ), and dhamm $\bar{a}$ (things which we think about).

- Note that dhammā are different from dhamma (without the long "a" at the end) in Buddha Dhamma; the latter dhamma refers to "teachings of the Buddha".
- Even though "rupa" is commonly used to describe "material objects" (which are really "vanna rūpa" or "rūpa rūpa"), rūpa includes sounds (sadda rūpa), smells (gandha rūpa), tastes (rasa rūpa), and touch (photthabba rūpa).
- I will just use the term "rūpa" to include sounds, smells, tastes, and touch as well as pictures for the rest of the post.
- Dhammā are a type of rūpa too; but they are below the suddhatthaka stage and "cannot be seen or touched" : "anidassanai், appatighaì, dhammāyatana pariyāpanna rupaï"; see, "What are rūpa? - Dhammā are rūpa too!."

3. Something is a picture or a visual object only when one is seeing it. A moment later it is only a memory, and it is now a "memory of an old picture". If we visualize a house that we are building, that is also a picture in the memory plane, an "envisioned future picture".

- In the WebLink: suttacentral: Anatta Lakkha Sutta (SN 22.59), "all rūpa" are described as 11 categories: "Tasmātiha, bhikkhave, yaì kiñci rūpaì atītānāgatapaccuppannaì ajjhattaì vā
 rūpaì..". They are past, present, future, near, far, likable, distasteful, fine (not strong), coarse (strong), internal, and external; see also, "Five Aggregates - Introduction."
- For example, feelings (vedana $\bar{a}$ khandha can be any in the 11 categories. Here, near and far means recent or way back in the past. Internal is one's own and external is feelings of the others; one needs to be aware of other's feelings in the sense that "if I do this, it could cause a feeling of grief to so and so", as an example.

4. It is good to contemplate on these concepts and have a good idea of how different representations mean the same things: Pañcakkhandha is the same as "sabba kāya", both include "everything in this world". Please send me a comment if this is not clear. Many people think "k $\bar{a} y \bar{a} n u p a s s a n \bar{a} "$ is just about one's body, and that is not correct.

- But we don't think about the "whole world" out there either. We think about a tiny fraction of that "world out there". AND we get attached to ( $\tanh \bar{a})$ even a smaller fraction.
- Thus even though pañcakkhandha (five aggregates)is unimaginably large, the fraction of pañcakkhandha that we interact with or think about is very small. And we form attachments (via greed or hate) to even smaller fraction, and this is the pañcupādānakkhandha, the aggregates that we attach to with greed and hate (and ignorance). Upādāna means "drawn to", and that is what one grasps willingly because one thinks there is happiness in them.

5. For example, we all know about the zillions of stars out there, or about the other planets in our Solar system; but do not generate any greed or hate about them. We only attach to some of the pictures, sounds, smells, tastes, and touch that we interact with daily, which is indeed a tiny, tiny fraction of the "world out there". The biggest component of our "pañcupādānakkhandha" is the dhamma aggregate, the things we think about. Let us discuss this a bit more.

- Thus here we are concerned with only a tiny fraction of "sabba kāya": Only those that lead to greed, hate, or ignorance. This is the same as pañcaupädānakkhandha, which is a tiny fraction of pañcakkhandha.

6. When we contemplate on this a bit more, we realize that most of the pictures, sounds, smells, tastes, and touch we think about belonging to the dhammä category; see \#2 above..

- A long series of thoughts may start with an "old picture" that is in our memory (say an old friend), and then we start generating more thoughts about that person, and then we get into something altogether different: We may think about the nice neighborhood that person is living in and then start thinking about building a house there. Thus we may end up thinking (generating sañkhāra) about something totally different. Thus it now belongs to the dhammā category.
- Later, we need to focus on such thoughts and dhamma in the "cittānupassana $\vec{a}$ " and "dhammānupassanā". What we need to do in "kāyānupassanā" is to mainly control our speech and actions first. This way we will be able to slowly change our habits (gathi) and start controlling our "automatic actions" that we used to do almost on impulse.

7. We already discussed how we need to be "morally mindful" while we are in any of the four main postures (Iriyapathapabba), and also in any of "sub-postures" or basically any movement (sampajānapabba).

- For example, we see a likable picture (a person or an item) we need to immediately think about whether it is appropriate to take the action that automatically comes to our mind with our old habits. We may be waiting at the airport for the next flight and see a bar; instead of going there and have a drink, it may be more productive to get on to the internet and read something useful. It is more productive to take a nap if one is really tired.
- In another example, someone may come to you and accuse you of doing something wrong. Instead of just retaliating, it may be a good idea to calm down and listen to that person first to see whether you have indeed done something unknowingly to aggravate that person.

8. As we discussed in the post, "4. What do all these Different Meditation Techniques Mean?," Anupassan $\bar{a}$ means "discard according to the principles learned" ("anu" means according to and "passana" means to get rid of). We need to logically think of what would happen if a certain action is taken. If that seems to lead to a "bad ending" we need to discard it.

- Thus "kāyānupassanä" in the iriyāpatapabba and the sampajānapabba means to contemplate on the moral consequences of an act one is about to do and abstain from doing it if it seems to have bad consequences.

9. Now, there are three sections in the $k \bar{a} y \bar{a} n u p a s s a n \bar{a}$ where one specifically contemplates on the physical body. These are patikulamanasikara pabba, dhatumanasikāra pabba, and navasivathika pabba. These sections involve just contemplating on the nature of our physical bodies.

- In the patikulamanasikara pabba the 32 parts of the body are discussed. Those body parts are not very appealing when separated from each other. It is amazing how our bad perception of hair in the dinner plate is so different from the admiration we have for the hair that is attached to our head. The hair in the plate could be one of our own, but still, we do not like it.
- The nail on the finger is something we admire, take care and sometimes paint too. But as soon as it is cut, it becomes something not appealing.

10. What we form a liking for is the "whole complete package" with all 32 parts that are in "good condition". We get distraught when hair starts greying, or the skin starts sagging. A beautiful person may become ugly in an instant if the face becomes disfigured due to some mishap.

The reality is that all the above IS GOING TO HAPPEN to us in the future. As long as there is birth, there is decay and death.
11. The section $(p a b b a)$ on dhatumanasikāra pabba is to contemplate on the fact that all our bodies are composed of just four entities. They are pathavi (solidness), āpo (liquid-ness/tendency to bind together), tejo (heat or warmth), vāyo (wind). Out of the six dhātu, ākāsa (space) is there too, but viññāna (consciousness) does not belong to the physical body.

- Those four things make all bodies - whether beautiful or ugly. There is nothing special.

12. The third section (pabba) of the physical body, navasivathika pabba, is to contemplate on what happens to a dead body over the course of many months if left out on the ground to decay. (That was commonly done at the time of the Buddha).

- Again, whether it is a body of a homeless person or an emperor, the same decay process will take place. Eventually, all body parts will be absorbed to the ground or released to the air.

13. All three of those sections are to help us lose attachments to our physical bodies. The purpose is NOT to get distraught but to develop the wisdom to realize that it is common to us all and will happen.

- A major component of our suffering arises when we eventually realize that we cannot maintain things to our satisfaction. Most people do not like to think about this inevitability. They just want to "whatever it takes" to maintain a beautiful body. The more one does that, the more one will be depressed later.
- Instead what we should do is try to maintain a healthy body by eating well and sticking to a good exercise program. It is not "eye catching aspect" that matters more. One should be more concerned with the health of the body.
- Eating healthy foods and exercising regularly (see, ""Spark" by John Ratey") will keep the body and the mind in good condition, so that we will have enough time to at least get to the Sotāpanna stage of Nỉbā̄a.

14. It is important to remember that in all these "anupassanā," we need to contemplate on the Three Characteristics of nature (anicca, dukkha, anatta) when we contemplate on the unfruitfulness in attaching to "things and concepts".

- Also, it is important to examine the potentially "bad outcomes" of immoral and unwise actions. We should also think about the wisdom of our stressful attempts to try to maintain our body appearances. (Especially using artificial techniques like botox). The sooner we realize this, the less stressful it will be.

15. Finally, in those three sections on the body, patikulamanasikara pabba, dhatumanasikāra pabba, and navasivathika pabba, we need to contemplate on not only our own body (this is what ajjhatta means in these three sections), but also on the bodies of others (this is what bahiddh $\bar{a}$ means in these three sections).

- We can not only contemplate on other humans (famous, poor, rich, young, old, etc), but also on animals. It does not matter who or what it is, we all will eventually become dust. But, for many, this realization comes only after going through much effort in vain to keep the body "beautiful" via artificial means; then it could be too late.
- Therefore, ajjhatta and bahiddh $\bar{a}$ means somewhat different things in these three sections compared to other sections.


### 17.5 Mahā Cattārīsaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty)

Revised April 3, 2016; Re-revised May 6, 2017; November 27,2017; December 17, 2017;
February 26, 2018; October 23, 2021; December 21, 2021; August 20, 2022
The WebLink: suttacentral: Mahācattārīsaka Sutta (MN 117) discusses two eightfold paths: A mundane path that leads to rebirth in the "good realms" (at or above the human realm) and the Noble Eightfold Path that leads to Nibbāna.

1. All sutt $\bar{a}$, in one way or another describe the Path to Nibbāna; there are many ways to analyze the Path.

- In this sutta, the emphasis is on the twenty "good factors," ten leading to "good rebirths' and ten leading to Nibbāna (Cooling Down of the mind). The negative twenty factors direct one away from Nibbāna (trapped in the four lowest realms or $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$ ).

2. The Path to Nibbāna is sīla (virtue), samādhi (moral concentration), and pañña (wisdom).

- Without some wisdom one will not even start thinking about the Path. No matter how much they listen to or read about the Buddha's message, some people cannot see any benefit from it. Such people have no samisāric habit ("gati") built up from past lives, and their minds are covered; this is the strong form of avijjā called moha.
- Therefore, without some level of wisdom (or pañña, not "book knowledge"), it is not possible to "see the Path." When we talk about "seeing the Path," it is not "seeing with the eyes"; it is "seeing with wisdom."
- The correct order is to start with Sīla, Samādhi, and Pañ̃̃̄̄ in the mundane Eightfold Path. That helps one understand the Tilakkhaṇa (anicca, dukkha, and anatta.)
- Then with that higher level of pañ̃ñ̄ one can start on the Noble or Lokuttara Eightfold Path. Thus, now the order is Pañ̃̃̄̄, Sīla, Samādhi. That leads to Sammā Nān̄a and Sammā Vimutti (Arahantship). These are the ten factors for Nibbāna. This is discussed in "Sila, Samādhi, Paññā to Paññā, Sila, Samādhi."

3. There are four kinds of "seeing" that are progressively attained in the following order: strong micchā ditthi and engaging in pāpa kamma (people like serial killers), moral people with some types of micchā ditthi (most people today belong to this category), after getting rid of 10 types of micch $\bar{a}$ ditṭhi, and transcendental Sammā Diṭ̣hi (comprehending anicca, dukkha, anatta or vision for attaining Nibbāna).

When the mind is covered with defilements (when one has moha), one is likely to believe in all or some of the ten types of micchā ditṭhi:

1. no benefits in giving. [natthi dinnamं]
2. no benefits in fulfilling one's responsibilities. [natthi yitt haì]
3. respecting and making offerings to those with higher virtues has no merits. [natthi hutaì]
4. kamma or deeds do not have good and bad vipāka. [natthi sukatadukkaṭānaỉ kammānaì phalaì vipāko]
5. this world does not exist. [natthi ayam loko]
6. para loka or the world of gandhabba does not exist. [natthi paro loko]
7. mother is not a special person. [natthi māt $\bar{a}$ ]
8. father is not a special person. [natthi pit $\bar{a}$ ]
9. no instantaneous (opapātik $\bar{a}$ ) births in other realms. [natthi sattā opapātik $\bar{a}$ ]
10. there are no samana brahmana (basically Ariy $\bar{a}$ or yogis) who have cultivated their minds to be free of defilements and thus can can see other realms and previous births. [natthi loke
samaṇabrāhmaṇā sammaggatā sammāpaṭipannā ye imañca lokaì parañca lokamं sayaì abhiññā sacchikatvā pavedentī]
[WebLink: suttacentral: AN 3.117. Vipattisampadāsutta - Distress and Attainment Sutta '(1) natthi dinnaì, (2) natthi yiṭthamं, (3) natthi hutaì, (4) natthi sukatadukkaṭānaì, kammānaì phalaì vipāko, (5) natthi ayam loko, (6) natthi paro loko, (7) natthi mātā, (8) natthi pitā, (9) natthi sattā opapātikā, (10) natthi loke samaṇabrāhmaṇā sammaggatā sammāpaṭipannā ye imañca lokaì parañca lokam̀ sayaì abhiññā sacchikatvā pavedent $\vec{\imath}$ ]

See "Micchā Ditthi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage," and "Hidden World of the Gandhabba: Netherworld (Paraloka)" for a discussion on para loka.
4. The ten wrong actions contributing to one's downfall (akusala kamma) RESULT FROM the above ten wrong views.

- One is not likely to see the consequences of immoral thoughts and intentions (micchā sañkappa) in 3 categories: sensual lust ( $k \bar{a} m a c c h a n d a$ ), ill-will (vyāpāda), violence (himsā).
- Thus one will utter four types of micchā vācā or wrong speech: lying (musāvāda), slandering (pisuṇāvāc $\bar{a}$ ), harsh speech (pharusāvācā), and empty speech (samphappalāpa).
- And one will engage in 3 types of immoral bodily actions (micchā kammanta): killing living beings (pānātipāt $\bar{a}$ ), taking the not-given (adinnādānā), sexual misconduct, and other extreme sensual activities (kāmesu micchācārā).

5. The more one does those ten defiled actions by the mind, speech, and body, the stronger one's conviction of the ten types of micchā ditṭhi will become. Thus one will be trapped in a downward Path.

- Thus one will be engaged in immoral livelihoods (micch $\bar{a} \bar{a} j \bar{v} v a$ ), make an effort in such activities (micchā vāyāma), build-up that mindset (micchā sati), and solidify that kind of mindset (micch $\bar{a}$ samādhi).
- Those in turn will strengthen micchā dițthi, micchā sañkappa, micchā vācā, micchā kammanta.
- And so it continues, pushing one in a downward spiral.

6. Therefore, those two sets of ten factors will lead one in the wrong way towards unimaginable suffering in future lives, and it will be tough to break away from them.

- Sometimes acts of occasional kindness or charity could open one's mind to the truth. That is probably the reason for the order: sīla, samādhi, pañ̃̃̄ . Even an occasional act of virtue (sïla) can get one oriented in the right direction.

7. As one removes more and more types of micchā diṭthi, one will start gaining Sammā Ditṭhi, which means not having those ten types of micchā ditt thi.

- With the ten types of micchā ditthi removed, one starts comprehending the correct interpretations of anicca, dukkha, and anatta. Of course, it will not help if anicca is interpreted as just "impermanence" and anatta as "no-self."
- It is just like taking medicine to cure a disease. If one is taking the wrong medication, no matter how long one takes it, that will not help.

8. So, the sutta explains that there are two types of Sammā Diṭthi: mundane (lokiya) and deeper insight (lokuttara).

Initially, one sees the perils of micchā ditthi (and associated immoral acts), and starts turning to mundane Sammā Dițthi: One sees that things happen for a reason, and one could get into bad situations and bad births by doing immoral acts. One is motivated to do moral deeds and to seek good rebirths. Now one does not have moha but just avijj $\bar{a}$.

- Thus one starts thinking moral thoughts (Sammā Sañkappa) and abstains from immoral speech and deeds (Sammā Vācā and Sammā Kammanta).
- Thus one will be engaged in moral livelihoods (Sammā $\bar{A} j \bar{\imath} v a$ ), make an effort in such activities (Samm $\bar{a}$ $V \bar{a} y \bar{a} m a$ ), build up that mindset (sammā sati), and solidify that kind of mindset (Sammā Samādhi).
- These eight factors constitute the mundane Eightfold Path. One will be making progress towards "good rebirths."

9. It is essential to realize that one on the mundane Eightfold Path will willfully abstain from the strong versions of dasa akusala. That would become automatic with comprehension of Tilakkhaṇa in the Noble Eightfold Path.

- See the "WebLink: suttacentral: Mahā Cattārīsaka Sutta (MN 117)."
- Even though the English translation there is not that good, this fact is apparent in the English translation in the above link.

10. Then, some of those on the mundane Eightfold Path will start seeing the unique message of the Buddha, which says that one can NEVER find permanent happiness in this world (lokiya). [lokiya : [adj.] worldly; mundane.]

- Even if one makes sure to avoid the four lower realms (apāyā) in the next birth by following the mundane Eightfold Path, one will not be assured of anything in the births after that. Because we have no idea under what circumstances we will be born in the next life, even if it is human.
- Of course, one needs to know the correct version of Tilakkhana.

11. As long as one has not attained the Sotāpanna stage of Nibbāna, it is inevitable that one is likely to be born in the ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$ in the future.

- Thus, as long as we are born anywhere in these 31 realms, it will eventually lead to $d u k k h a$ (suffering).
- Thus it is unfruitful to strive for such mundane happiness as a human, deva, or Brahma. In the long run, none of those births will provide permanent happiness. We cannot maintain anything to our satisfaction in the long run anywhere. That is the concept of anicca.
- The concept of anatta is that there is no place in the whole wider world of 31 realms where one could find refuge.

12. The realization of these three characteristics (anicca, dukkha, and anatta) of this world (loka) is the point at which one grasps the lokuttara Sammā Diṭthi.

- Then one starts thinking moral thoughts (Sammā Sänkappa) on how to remove suffering FOREVER. One is not interested in merely seeking "good rebirths" because one realizes the futility of such efforts in the long term. This is lokuttara sammā sañkappa.
- One stops uttering immoral speech (and gets to Sammā Vācā) and abstains from immoral deeds (to Sammā Kammanta) because one realizes that there is NO POINT in doing those things, not just because they lead to bad births. They are now lokuttara Sammā Vācā and lokuttara Sammā Kammanta.
 Sammā Samādhi.
- These eight factors constitute the lokuttara Noble Eightfold Path that will take one progressively to stages of "higher cooling down" or Nibbāna starting with the Sotāpanna stage and ending in the Arahant stage.
- Avijjā is gradually dispelled starting at the Sotāpanna stage and completely removed at the Arahant stage; simultaneously, wisdom (pañña) grows and becomes complete at the Arahant stage.

13. The uniqueness of Buddha Dhamma lies in the lokuttara Noble Eightfold Path. Other religions focus on "how to live a moral life," which is more like the mundane Eightfold Path.

- Buddha Dhamma says living a moral life is not enough to attain permanent happiness (because life in the heavens or Deva loka is not endless according to Buddha Dhamma). Ultimately, it requires relinquishing all desires for worldly things.
- But the mindset to seek Nibbāna via "relinquishing all desires for worldly things" is not even possible until one makes progress on the mundane Noble Eightfold Path. The mind needs to be purified to some extent to comprehend Tilakkhana.
- Throughout most of the recent past, the genuine lokuttara Noble Eightfold Path had been hidden together with the world's true nature as described by the real meanings of anicca, dukkha, and anatta; most people have been practicing the mundane Eightfold Path. It is easy for most people to connect with the mundane Eightfold Path simply because it is mundane, i.e., an average human is already comfortable with such concepts.
- But as the Buddha said, his Dhamma "had never been heard before...", as he emphasized in the Dhammacakkappavattana sutta: "pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu ...."

14. In summary, the forty factors exist because there are four pathways, each with ten outcomes. (i) Two types of wrong paths (one with ten types of micchā ditthi and another with strong micchā ditthi with immoral behavior,) (ii) Two types of "good paths" (one after getting rid of ten types of micchā ditṭhi and the next with starting to comprehend anicca, dukkha, anatta).

- The ten outcomes in the Noble Path are: Sammā Ditṭhi, Sammā Sañkappa, Sammā Vācā, Sammā Kammanta, Sammā Ājīva, Sammā Vāyāma, Sammā Sati, Sammā Samādhi, Sammā Ñāna, and Sammā Vimutti (Arahantship).
- Towards the end of the Buddha says, "Iti kho, bhikkhave, atthañgasamannāgato sekkho, dasañgasamannāgato arahā hoti.." Translated: "Thus, bhikkhus, the path of the disciple in higher training (Sotāpanna, Sakadāgāmi, Anāgāmi) possesses eight factors, and the Arahant possesses ten factors, and the Arahant possesses ten factors."
- The other three paths have corresponding ten outcomes, leading to good or bad results, but provide no permanent solution (of course, the bad ones lead to unimaginable suffering).

15. The Pāli version of the sutta - as well as translations in several languages - is available at: WebLink: suttacentral: Mahā Cattārīsaka Sutta.

- However, those translations are not complete, as mentioned above. In particular, they do not discuss the distinction between the two types of Sammā Ditṭhi, etc., and the two types of eightfold paths there. That is because the translators don't understand the importance of the correct interpretation of Tilakkhaṇa.

16. Finally, another way to analyze this step-by-step process is at: "Micchā Ditthi, Gandhabba, and

Sotāpanna Stage."

### 17.5.1 Mahācattārīsaka Sutta

## Majjhima Nikāya 117

## Mahācattārīsakasutta

Evamं me sutamं - ekam̉ samayam̉ bhagavā sāvatthiyamं viharati jetavane anāthapiṇ̣ikassa ārāme. Tatra kho bhagavā bhikkhū āmantesi: "bhikkhavo"ti. "Bhadante"ti te bhikkhū bhagavato paccassosum. Bhagavā etadavoca: "ariyam̀ vo, bhikkhave, sammāsamādhim desessāmi saupanisamं saparikkhāram. Tam̀ suṇātha, sādhukam manasi karotha, bhāsissāmı̈’ti. "Evam, bhante"ti kho te bhikkhū bhagavato paccassosum. Bhagavā etadavoca:
"Katamo ca, bhikkhave, ariyo sammāsamādhi saupaniso saparikkhāro? Seyyathidamं- sammādiṭ̣hi, sammāsañkappo, sammāvācā, sammākammanto, sammāājīvo, sammāvāyāmo, sammāsati; yā kho, bhikkhave, imehi sattahañgehi cittassa ekaggatā parikkhatā-ayam vuccati, bhikkhave, ariyo sammāsamādhi saupaniso itipi, saparikkhāro itipi. Tatra, bhikkhave, sammādiṭ̣̣hi pubbañgamā hoti. Kathañca, bhikkhave,
 -sāssa hoti sammādiṭthi.

Katamā ca, bhikkhave, micchāditṭhi? 'Natthi dinnam, natthi yiṭ̣ham̉, natthi hutamं, natthi sukatadukkaṭānam kammānaṁ phalamं vipāko, natthi ayamं loko, natthi paro loko, natthi mātā, natthi pitā, natthi sattā opapātikā, natthi loke samaṇabrāhmaṇā sammaggatā sammāpaṭipannā ye imañca lokam̉ parañca lokam sayam abhiññ̄ sacchikatvā pavedentū̀ti-ayam, bhikkhave, micchāditṭhi.

Katamā ca, bhikkhave, sammāditṭhi? Sammāditṭhimpaham, bhikkhave, dvāyam vadāmi-atthi, bhikkhave, sammādiṭṭhi sāsavā puñ̃abhāgiyā upadhivepakkā; atthi, bhikkhave, sammādiṭ̣hi ariyā anāsavā lokuttarā maggangā. Katamā ca, bhikkhave, sammādiṭ̣hi sāsavā puññabhāgiyā upadhivepakkā? ‘Atthi dinnaṁ, atthi yitṭham, atthi hutam, atthi sukatadukkaṭ̄namं kammānam phalamं vipāko, atthi ayam loko, atthi paro loko, atthi mātā, atthi pitā, atthi sattā opapātikā, atthi loke samaṇabrāhmaṇā sammaggatā sammāpaṭipannā ye imañca lokamं parañca lokam̉ sayam abhiññ̄a sacchikatvā pavedentīti-ayam, bhikkhave, sammādiṭ̣hi sāsavā puñ̃abhāgiyā upadhivepakkā.

Katamā ca, bhikkhave, sammādiṭ̣̣hi ariyā anāsavā lokuttarā maggañgā? Yā kho, bhikkhave, ariyacittassa anāsavacittassa ariyamaggasamañgino ariyamaggam bhāvayato paññā paññindriyam paññābalam dhammavicayasambojjhañgo sammādiṭ̣hi maggañgam - ayam vuccati, bhikkhave, sammādiṭ̣hi ariyā anāsavā lokuttarā maggañgā. So micchādiṭ̣hiyā pahānāya vāyamati, sammādiṭ̣hiyā, upasampadāya, svāssa hoti sammāvāyāmo. So sato micchādiṭ̣him pajahati, sato sammāditṭhimं upasampajja viharati, sāssa hoti sammāsati. Itiyime tayo dhammā sammādiṭ̣him anuparidhāvanti anuparivattanti, seyyathidamं-sammādiṭ̣hi, sammāvāyāmo, sammāsati.

Tatra, bhikkhave, sammādiṭ̣hi pubbañgamā hoti. Kathañca, bhikkhave, sammādiṭ̣hi pubbañgamā hoti?? Micchāsañkappamं 'micchāsaṅkappo’ti pajānāti, sammāsañkappam̉ 'sammāsañkappo'ti pajānāti, sāssa hoti sammādiṭ̣hi.

Katamo ca, bhikkhave, micchāsañkappo? Kāmasañkappo, byāpādasaṅkappo, vihimsāsañkappo-ayam, bhikkhave, micchāsañkappo.

Katamo ca, bhikkhave, sammāsañkappo? Sammāsañkappampaham, bhikkhave, dvāyam vadāmi-atthi, bhikkhave, sammāsañkappo sāsavo puññabhāgiyo upadhivepakko; atthi, bhikkhave, sammāsaṅkappo ariyo anāsavo lokuttaro maggango. Katamo ca, bhikkhave, sammāsañkappo sāsavo puññabhāgiyo upadhivepakko? Nekkhammasañkappo, abyāpādasañkappo, avihimsāsaṅkappo: 'ayaṁ, bhikkhave, sammāsañkappo sāsavo puññabhāgiyo upadhivepakko'.

Katamo ca, bhikkhave, sammāsañkappo ariyo anāsavo lokuttaro maggañgo? Yo kho, bhikkhave, ariyacittassa anāsavacittassa ariyamaggasamañgino ariyamaggam bhāvayato takko vitakko sañkappo appanā byappanā cetaso abhiniropanā vacīsañkhāro-ayam, bhikkhave, sammāsañkappo ariyo anāsavo lokuttaro maggañgo. So micchāsañkappassa pahānāya vāyamati, sammāsañkappassa upasampadāya, svāssa hoti sammāvāyāmo. So sato micchāsañkappamं pajahati, sato sammāsaṅkappam upasampajja viharati; sāssa hoti sammāsati. Itiyime tayo dhammā sammāsañkappamं anuparidhāvanti anuparivattanti, seyyathidamंsammādiṭthi, sammāvāyāmo, sammāsati.

Tatra, bhikkhave, sammādiṭ̣hi pubbañgamā hoti. Kathañca, bhikkhave, sammādiṭ̣hi pubbañgamā hotị? Micchāvācamं 'micchāvācā’ti pajānāti, sammāvācam 'sammāvācā’ti pajānāti; sāssa hoti sammādiṭthi. Katamā ca, bhikkhave, micchāvācā? Musāvādo, pisuṇā vācā, pharusā vācā, samphappalāpo-ayam, bhikkhave, micchāvācā. Katamā ca, bhikkhave, sammāvācā? Sammāvācampaham, bhikkhave, dvāyam vadāmi-atthi, bhikkhave, sammāvācā sāsavā puññabhāgiyā upadhivepakkā; atthi, bhikkhave, sammāvācā ariyā anāsavā
lokuttarā maggangā. Katamā ca, bhikkhave, sammāvācā sāsavā puññabhāgiyā upadhivepakkā? Musāvādā veramaṇī, pisuṇāya vācāya veramaṇī, pharusāya vācāya veramaṇ̄̄, samphappalāpā veramaṇī-ayam, bhikkhave, sammāvācā sāsavā puññabhāgiyā upadhivepakkā. Katamā ca, bhikkhave, sammāvācā ariyā anāsavā lokuttarā maggañgā? Yā kho, bhikkhave, ariyacittassa anāsavacittassa ariyamaggasamangino ariyamaggamं bhāvayato catūhi vacīduccaritehi ārati virati paṭivirati veramaṇ̄̄-ayam, bhikkhave, sammāvācā ariyā anāsavā lokuttarā maggañgā. So micchāvācāya pahānāya vāyamati, sammāvācāya upasampadāya; svāssa hoti sammāvāyāmo. So sato micchāvācam pajahati, sato sammāvācam upasampajja viharati; sāssa hoti sammāsati. Itiyime tayo dhammā sammāvācam anuparidhāvanti anuparivattanti, seyyathidamंsammāditṭhi, sammā̄āyāmo, sammāsati.

Tatra, bhikkhave, sammādiṭ̣hi pubbañgamā hoti. Kathañca, bhikkhave, sammādiṭthi pubbañgamā hotì? Micchākammantamं 'micchākammanto’ti pajānāti, sammākammantam̉ ‘sammākammanto'ti pajānāti; sāssa hoti sammādiṭ̣hi. Katamo ca, bhikkhave, micchākammanto? Pān̄ātipāto, adinnādānam̉, kāmesumicchācāro -ayam̀, bhikkhave, micchākammanto. Katamo ca, bhikkhave, sammākammanto? Sammākammantampahaḿ, bhikkhave, dvāyam vadāmi-atthi, bhikkhave, sammākammanto sāsavo puññabhāgiyo upadhivepakko; atthi, bhikkhave, sammākammanto ariyo anāsavo lokuttaro maggango. Katamo ca, bhikkhave, sammākammanto sāsavo puññabhāgiyo upadhivepakko? Pāṇātipātā veramaṇī, adinnādānā veramaṇī, kāmesumicchācārā veramaṇ̄-ayami, bhikkhave, sammākammanto sāsavo puññabhāgiyo upadhivepakko. Katamo ca, bhikkhave, sammākammanto ariyo anāsavo lokuttaro maggañgo? Yā kho, bhikkhave, ariyacittassa anāsavacittassa ariyamaggasamañgino ariyamaggam் bhāvayato tihi kāyaduccaritehi ārati virati paṭivirati veramaṇ-ayam, bhikkhave, sammākammanto ariyo anāsavo lokuttaro maggañgo. So micchākammantassa pahānāya vāyamati, sammākammantassa upasampadāya; svāssa hoti sammāvāyāmo. So sato micchākammantam̀ pajahati, sato sammākammantam upasampajja viharati; sāssa hoti sammāsati. Itiyime tayo dhammā sammākammantam anuparidhāvanti anuparivattanti, seyyathidam-sammādiṭ̣hi, sammāvāyāmo, sammāsati.

Tatra, bhikkhave, sammādiṭthi pubbañgamā hoti. Kathañca, bhikkhave, sammādiṭ̣hi pubbañgamā hoti? Micchāājīvam 'micchāājī̄vo’ti pajānāti, sammāājīvamं 'sammāājī̄vo'ti pajānāti; sāssa hoti sammādiṭ̣hi. Katamo ca, bhikkhave, micchāājī̀vo? Kuhanā, lapanā, nemittikatā, nippesikatā, lābhena lābham nijigīsanatā -ayam, bhikkhave, micchāājī̀vo. Katamo ca, bhikkhave, sammāājīvo? Sammāājīvampahami, bhikkhave, dvāyam vadāmi-atthi, bhikkhave, sammāājī̀vo sāsavo puññabhāgiyo upadhivepakko; atthi, bhikkhave, sammāājī̀vo ariyo anāsavo lokuttaro maggañgo. Katamo ca, bhikkhave, sammāājī̀o sāsavo puññabhāgiyo upadhivepakko? Idha, bhikkhave, ariyasāvako micchāājīvam pahāya sammāājīvena jīvikamं kappeti-ayam, bhikkhave, sammāājīvo sāsavo puññabhāgiyo upadhivepakko. Katamo ca, bhikkhave, sammāājī̄vo ariyo anāsavo lokuttaro maggango? Yā kho, bhikkhave, ariyacittassa anāsavacittassa ariyamaggasamañgino ariyamaggamं bhāvayato micchāājīvā ārati virati paṭivirati veramaṇ̄-ayam, bhikkhave, sammāājīvo ariyo anāsavo lokuttaro maggango. So micchāājīvassa pahānāya vāyamati, sammāājīvassa upasampadāya; svāssa hoti sammāvāyāmo. So sato micchāājīvam pajahati, sato sammāājīvam upasampajja viharati; sāssa hoti sammāsati. Itiyime tayo dhammā sammāājī̄vam anuparidhāvanti anuparivattanti, seyyathidamं-sammādiṭ̣hi, sammāvāyāmo, sammāsati.

Tatra, bhikkhave, sammādiṭ̣hi pubbañgamā hoti. Kathañca, bhikkhave, sammādiṭṭhi pubbañgamā hoti? Sammāditṭhissa, bhikkhave, sammāsaṅkappo pahoti, sammāsaṅkappassa sammāvācā pahoti, sammāvācassa sammākammanto pahoti, sammākammantassa sammāājīvo pahoti, sammāāj̄̄̄vassa sammāvāyāmo pahoti, sammāvāyāmassa sammāsati pahoti, sammāsatissa sammāsamādhi pahoti, sammāsamādhissa sammāñāṇam pahoti, sammāñāṇassa sammāvimutti pahoti. Iti kho, bhikkhave, atṭhañgasamannāgato sekkho, dasañgasamannāgato arahā hoti. Tatrapi sammāñāṇena aneke pāpakā akusalā dhammā vigatā bhāvanāpāripūrim gacchanti.

Tatra, bhikkhave, sammādiṭ̣hi pubbañgamā hoti. Kathañca, bhikkhave, sammādiṭṭhi pubbañgamā hoti? Sammādiṭ̣hissa, bhikkhave, micchādiṭ̣hi nijjiṇṇā hoti. Ye ca micchādiṭṭhipaccayā aneke pāpakā akusalā dhammā sambhavanti te cassa nijjiṇṇā honti. Sammāditṭhipaccayā aneke kusalā dhammā bhāvanāpāripūrim gacchanti. Sammāsañkappassa, bhikkhave, micchāsañkappo nijjinṇo hoti ... pe ... sammāvācassa,
bhikkhave, micchāvācā nijjiṇnā hoti ... sammākammantassa, bhikkhave, micchākammanto nijjịṇo hoti ... sammāājīvassa, bhikkhave, micchāāj̄̄̄vo nijjiṇ̣o hoti ... sammāvāyāmassa, bhikkhave, micchāvāyāmo nijjiṇno hoti ... sammāsatissa, bhikkhave, micchāsati nijjị̣nā hoti ... sammāsamādhissa, bhikkhave, micchāsamādhi nijjinṇo hoti ... sammāñāṇassa, bhikkhave, micchāñānam nijjinṇam hoti ... sammāvimuttassa, bhikkhave, micchāvimutti nijjiịṇā hoti. Ye ca micchāvimuttipaccayā aneke pāpakā akusalā dhammā sambhavanti te cassa nijjiiṇ̣ā honti. Sammāvimuttipaccayā ca aneke kusalā dhammā bhāvanāpāripūrim gacchanti.

Iti kho, bhikkhave, visati kusalapakkhā, vīsati akusalapakkhā-mahācattārīsako dhammapariyāyo pavattito appaṭivattiyo samaṇena vā brāhmaṇena vā devena vā mārena vā brahmunā vā kenaci vā lokasmim.

Yo hi koci, bhikkhave, samaṇo vā brāhmaṇo vā imam mahācattārīsakam̉ dhammapariyāyam garahitabbam paṭikkositabbam̉ maññeyya tassa diṭ̣heva dhamme dasasahadhammikā vādānuvādā gārayham ṭhānam
 pāsamısā; sammāsañkappañce bhavam garahati, ye ca micchāsañkappā samaṇabrāhmaṇā te bhoto pujjā, te bhoto pāsam̀sā; sammāvācañce bhavamं garahati ... pe ... sammākammantañce bhavaṁ garahati ... sammāājī̀vañce bhavam garahati ... sammāvāyāmañce bhavam garahati ... sammāsatiñce bhavaḿ garahati ... sammāsamādhiñce bhavam் garahati ... sammãñāṇañce bhavaṁ garahati ... sammāvimuttiñce bhavam garahati, ye ca micchāvimuttī samanabrāhmaṇā te bhoto pujjā, te bhoto pāsamssā. Yo koci, bhikkhave, samaṇo vā brāhmaṇo vā imam் mahācattārīsakam் dhammapariyāyam garahitabbam paṭikkositabbam maññeyya tassa diṭ̣heva dhamme ime dasasahadhammikā vādānuvādā gārayham ṭhānamं āgacchanti. Yepi te, bhikkhave, ahesum̉ okkalā vassabhañ̃ñ ahetuvādā akiriyavādā natthikavādā tepi mahācattārīsakam dhammapariyāyaṁ na garahitabbam் nappaṭikkositabbaṁ amañ̃imisu. Taṁ kissa hetu? Nindābyārosaupārambhabhayā" "ti.

Idamavoca bhagavā. Attamanā te bhikkhū bhagavato bhāsitam abhinandunti.
Mahācattārīsakasuttam niṭ̣hitam̀ sattamam.

## Majjhima Nikāya 117

## The Great Forty

Thus have I heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was living at Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇ̣ika's Park. There he addressed the bhikkhus thus: "Bhikkhus."-"Venerable sir," they replied. The Blessed One said this:
"Bhikkhus, I shall teach you noble right concentration with its supports and its requisites. Listen and attend closely to what I shall say."-"Yes, venerable sir," the bhikkhus replied. The Blessed One said this:
"What, bhikkhus, is noble right concentration with its supports and its requisites, that is, right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, and right mindfulness? Unification of mind equipped with these seven factors is called noble right concentration with its supports and its requisites.

## View

'Therein, bhikkhus, right view comes first. And how does right view come first? One understands wrong view as wrong view and right view as right view: this is one's right view.
"And what, bhikkhus, is wrong view? 'There is nothing given, nothing offered, nothing sacrificed; no fruit or result of good and bad actions; no this world, no other world; no mother, no father; no beings who are reborn spontaneously; no good and virtuous recluses and brahmins in the world who have realised for themselves by direct knowledge and declare this world and the other world.' This is wrong view.
"And what, bhikkhus, is right view? Right view, I say, is twofold: there is right view that is affected by taints, partaking of merit, ripening in the acquisitions; and there is right view that is noble, taintless, supramundane, a factor of the path.
"And what, bhikkhus, is right view that is affected by the taints, partaking of merit, ripening in the acquisitions? 'There is what is given and what is offered and what is sacrificed; there is fruit and result of good and bad actions; there is this world and the other world; there is mother and father; there are beings who are reborn spontaneously; there are in the world good and virtuous recluses and brahmins who have realised for themselves by direct knowledge and declare this world and the other world.' This is right view affected by taints, partaking of merit, ripening in the acquisitions.
"And what, bhikkhus, is right view that is noble, taintless, supramundane, a factor of the path? The wisdom, the faculty of wisdom, the power of wisdom, the investigation-of-states enlightenment factor, the path factor of right view in one whose mind is noble, whose mind is taintless, who possesses the noble path and is developing the noble path: this is right view that is noble, taintless, supramundane, a factor of the path.
"One makes an effort to abandon wrong view and to enter upon right view: this is one's right effort. Mindfully one abandons wrong view, mindfully one enters upon and abides in right view: this is one's right mindfulness. Thus these three states run and circle around right view, that is, right view, right effort, and right mindfulness.

## Intention

'Therein, bhikkhus, right view comes first. And how does right view come first? One understands wrong intention as wrong intention and right intention as right intention: this is one's right view.
"And what, bhikkhus, is wrong intention? The intention of sensual desire, the intention of ill will, and the intention of cruelty: this is wrong intention.
"And what, bhikkhus, is right intention? Right intention, I say, is twofold: there is right intention that is affected by taints, partaking of merit, ripening in the acquisitions, and there is right intention that is noble, taintless, supramundane, a factor of the path.
"And what, bhikkhus, is right intention that is affected by taints, partaking of merit, ripening in the acquisitions? The intention of renunciation, the intention of non-ill will, and the intention of non-cruelty: this is right intention that is affected by taints...ripening in the acquisitions.
"And what, bhikkhus, is right intention that is noble, taintless, supramundane, a factor of the path? The thinking, thought, intention, mental absorption, mental fixity, directing of mind, verbal formation in one whose mind is noble, whose mind is taintless, who possesses the noble path and is developing the noble path: this is right intention that is noble...a factor of the path.
"One makes an effort to abandon wrong intention and to enter upon right intention: this is one's right effort. Mindfully one abandons wrong intention, mindfully one enters upon and abides in right intention: this is one's right mindfuilness. Thus these three states run and circle around right intention, that is, right view, right effort, and right mindfulness.

## Speech

'Therein, bhikkhus, right view comes first. And how does right view come first? One understands wrong speech as wrong speech and right speech as right speech: this is one's right view.
"And what, bhikkhus, is wrong speech? False speech, malicious speech, harsh speech, and gossip: this is wrong speech.
"And what, bhikkhus, is right speech? Right speech, I say, is twofold: there is right speech that is affected by taints, partaking of merit, ripening in the acquisitions; and there is right speech that is noble, taintless, supramundane, a factor of the path.
"And what, bhikkhus, is right speech that is affected by taints, partaking of merit, ripening in the acquisitions? Abstinence from false speech, abstinence from malicious speech, abstinence from harsh speech, abstinence from gossip: this is right speech that is affected by taints...ripening in the acquisitions.
"And what, bhikkhus, is right speech that is noble, taintless, supramundane, a factor of the path? The desisting from the four kinds of verbal misconduct, the abstaining, refraining, abstinence from them in one whose mind is noble, whose mind is taintless, who possesses the noble path and is developing the noble path: this is right speech that is noble...a factor of the path.
"One makes an effort to abandon wrong speech and to enter upon right speech: this is one's right effort. Mindfully one abandons wrong speech, mindfully one enters upon and abides in right speech: this is one's right mindfulness. Thus these three states run and circle around right speech, that is, right view, right effort, and right mindfulness.

## Action

'Therein, bhikkhus, right view comes first. And how does right view come first? One understands wrong action as wrong action and right action as right action: this is one's right view.
"And what, bhikkhus, is wrong action? Killing living beings, taking what is not given, and misconduct in sensual pleasures: this is wrong action.
"And what, bhikkhus, is right action? Right action, I say, is twofold: there is right action that is affected by taints, partaking of merit, ripening in the acquisitions; and there is right action that is noble, taintless, supramundane, a factor of the path.
"And what, bhikkhus, is right action that is affected by taints, partaking of merit, ripening in the acquisitions? Abstinence from killing living beings, abstinence from taking what is not given, abstinence from misconduct in sensual pleasures: this is right action that is affected by taints. . .ripening in the acquisitions.
"And what, bhikkhus, is right action that is noble, taintless, supramundane, a factor of the path? The desisting from the three kinds of bodily misconduct, the abstaining, refraining, abstinence from them in one whose mind is noble, whose mind is taintless, who possesses the noble path and is developing the noble path: this is right action that is noble...a factor of the path.
"One makes an effort to abandon wrong action and to enter upon right action: this is one's right effort. Mindfully one abandons wrong action, mindfully one enters upon and dwells in right action: this is one's right mindfulness. Thus these three states run and circle around right action, that is, right view, right effort, and right mindfulness.

## Livelihood

"Therein, bhikkhus, right view comes first. And how does right view come first? One understands wrong livelihood as wrong livelihood and right livelihood as right livelihood: this is one's right view.
"And what, bhikkhus, is wrong livelihood? Scheming, talking, hinting, belittling, pursuing gain with gain: this is wrong livelihood.
"And what, bhikkhus, is right livelihood? Right livelihood, I say, is twofold: there is right livelihood that is affected by taints, partaking of merit, ripening in the acquisitions; and there is right livelihood that is noble, taintless, supramundane, a factor of the path.
"And what, bhikkhus, is right livelihood that is affected by taints, partaking of merit, ripening in the acquisitions? Here, bhikkhus, a noble disciple abandons wrong livelihood and gains his living by right livelihood: this is right livelihood that is affected by taints...ripening in the acquisitions.
"And what, bhikkhus, is right livelihood that is noble, taintless, supramundane, a factor of the path? The desisting from wrong livelihood, the abstaining, refraining, abstinence from it in one whose mind is noble, whose mind is taintless, who possesses the noble path and is developing the noble path: this is right livelihood that is noble...a factor of the path.
"One makes an effort to abandon wrong livelihood and to enter upon right livelihood: this is one's right effort. Mindfully one abandons wrong livelihood, mindfully one enters upon and dwells in right livelihood: this is one's right mindfuiness. Thus these three states run and circle around right livelihood, that is, right view, right effort, and right mindfulness.

## The Great Forty

'Therein, bhikkhus, right view comes first. And how does right view come first? In one of right view, right intention comes into being; in one of right intention, right speech comes into being; in one of right speech, right action comes into being; in one of right action, right livelihood comes into being; in one of right livelihood, right effort comes into being; in one of right effort, right mindfulness comes into being; in one of right mindfulness, right concentration comes into being; in one of right concentration, right knowledge comes into being; in one of right knowledge, right deliverance comes into being. Thus, bhikkhus, the path of the disciple in higher training possesses eight factors, the arahant possesses ten factors.
'Therein, bhikkhus, right view comes first. And how does right view come first? In one of right view, wrong view is abolished, and the many evil unwholesome states that originate with wrong view as condition are also abolished, and the many wholesome states that originate with right view as condition come to fulfilment by development.
"In one of right intention, wrong intention is abolished, and the many evil unwholesome states that originate with wrong intention as condition are also abolished, and the many wholesome states that originate with right intention as condition come to fulfilment by development.
"In one of right speech, wrong speech is abolished...In one of right action, wrong action is abolished...In one of right livelihood, wrong livelihood is abolished ...In one of right effort, wrong effort is abolished...In one of right mindfulness, wrong mindfulness is abolished...In one of right concentration, wrong concentration is abolished...In one of right knowledge, wrong knowledge is abolished...In one of right deliverance, wrong deliverance is abolished, and the many evil unwholesome states that originate with wrong deliverance as condition are also abolished, and the many wholesome states that originate with right deliverance as condition come to fulfilment by development.
'Thus, bhikkhus, there are twenty factors on the side of the wholesome, and twenty factors on the side of the unwholesome. This Dhamma discourse on the Great Forty has been set rolling and cannot be stopped by any recluse or brahmin or god or Māra or Brahmā or anyone in the world.
'Bhikkhus, if any recluse or brahmin thinks that this Dhamma discourse on the Great Forty should be censured and rejected, then there are ten legitimate deductions from his assertions that would provide grounds for censuring him here and now. If that worthy one censures right view, then he would honour and praise those recluses and brahmins who are of wrong view. If that worthy one censures right intention, then he would honour and praise those recluses and brahmins who are of wrong intention. If that worthy one censures right speech... right action...right livelihood...right effort...right mindfulness...right concentration...right
knowledge...right deliverance, then he would honour and praise those recluses and brahmins who are of wrong deliverance. If any recluse or brahmin thinks that this Dhamma discourse on the Great Forty should be censured and rejected, then these are ten legitimate deductions from his assertions that would provide grounds for censuring him here and now.
'Bhikkhus, even those teachers from Okkala, Vassa and Bhañña, who held the doctrine of non-causality, the doctrine of non-doing, and the doctrine of nihilism, would not think that this Dhamma discourse on the Great Forty should be censured and rejected. Why is that? For fear of blame, attack, and confutation."

That is what the Blessed One said. The bhikkhus were satisfied and delighted in the Blessed One's words.

### 17.6 Sutta Learning Sequence for the Present Day

November 30, 2016; revised October 29, 2019

## Introduction

1. In this critical post, I point out that it is better to study sutta $\bar{a}$ in the order that is the reverse of the time sequence of sutta delivery by the Buddha.

- As I discussed in the post, "Animisa Locana Bodhi Poojā - A Prelude to Acts of Gratitude," the Buddha spent the first few years of his ministry "paying back" those those who had helped him attain the Buddhahood through numerous previous lives.
- Those ranged from the five ascetics (to whom the Buddha delivered the first desanā) to King Suddhodana (his father, he went to see in the fifth year after attaining the Buddhahood). They and others in between had fulfilled most of the requirements to achieve the Arahanthood in previous lives. They were "ready" to attain the Arahantship and were able to comprehend the Tilakkhaṇa (anicca, dukkha, anatta) reasonably quickly.


## Comprehending Tilakkhaṇa Is Not Easy

2. Grasping the Tilakkhana is not easy for a normal human being. It takes many, many lives. In a given Buddha Säsana (ministry), those who have fulfilled most of the requirements in previous lives attain Arahanthood first, without much effort. For example, the two chief disciples, Ven. Sariputta and Ven. Moggallana reached the Sotāpanna stage just by listening to a single verse and then attained the Arahanthood within two weeks.

- Therefore, those discourses delivered in the first several years were "deep." They could only be comprehended by those who had made progress on the path in previous lives.
- The first desanā, Dhammacappavattana Sutta, was a summary of the "Buddhist doctrine" to put in terms of modern terminology. The second desanā was on the anatta nature of the world, Anatta Lakkhana Sutta. The "fire sermon" (Adittapariyaya Sutta) was on the "burning nature" of this world of 31 realms. The word "burning" inplies to "tāpa" or "heat in the mind." This word "tāpa" was discussed later in the Mahā Satipatṭhāna Sutta; see, "Satipatthāna Sutta - Relevance to Suffering in This Life."
- A large number of people (who were ready) attained magga phala within the first few years of the Buddha Sāsana. In the latter years it took longer and longer for people to attain magga phala. In the latter years, the Buddha delivered more and more discourses that were "less deep" and easier to grasp for those who were "less prepared".
- For example, Mahā Cattarisika Sutta and Mahā Satipatthāna Sutta (which were delivered later) provide detailed accounts of the process, starting with basic concepts. However, those basic concepts have not discussed adequately. In some cases, translations are incorrect.
- Many suttā clarify even more fundamental aspects.

3. All those "deep desanās" delivered early by the Buddha require detailed explanations. Just word-byword translations cannot explain the deeper meanings. That is why the meanings of the Tilakkhaṇa remain hidden.

- Furthermore, understanding Tilakkhaña requires some fundamental - and essential - material covered in later sutt $\bar{a}$ by the Buddha.
- I plan to discuss more of the "less deep" sutt $\bar{a}$ in this section in the future. I realized this point only recently while writing posts in the new "Living Dhamma" section.

Four Categories of People, Based on Their Capabilities
4. As pointed out by Buddha, there are three types of people who can comprehend Tilakkhana, categorized according to their "inherent capabilities". That has nothing to do with "book knowledge", but has everything to do with one's ingrained capabilities accumulated over many, many lives.

- The first category is ugghatitañ̃na or "persons with high wisdom"; they could grasp concepts very easily. Then some belong to the vipañcitañ̃̃a category, and they needed a bit more explanation to understand the concepts. The third category is neyya; they need detailed explanations (i.e., patiniddesa) to grasp a concept. People in the last group of "padaparama" are unable to comprehend Dhamma.
[ugghaṭitañ̃u : "one who already during a given explanation comes to penetrate the truth" (Pug.). This is one of four types of persons classified according to their ability of acquiring insight, mentioned in A. IV, 133. Cf. also vipañcitañnu, neyya, pada-parama. See The Requisites of Enlightenment, by Ledi Sayadaw (WHEEL 171/174). vipañcitañnu : "one who realizes the truth after explanation." Thus is called one who realizes the truth only after detailed explanation of that which already had been said to him in a concise form. Cf. ugghatitañ̃̃u. neyya : "requiring guidance," is said of a person "who through advice and questioning, through wise consideration, and through frequenting noble-minded friends, having intercourse with them, associating with them, gradually comes to penetrate the truth" (Pug. 162). Cf. ugghatitañ̃̄̄̄. pada-parama : "one for whom the words are the utmost attainment." "Whoever, though having learned much, speaking much, knowing many things by heart, and discoursing much, has not penetrated the truth, such a man is called by that name" (Pug. 163).]
- These categories are listed in the WebLink: suttacentral: Ugghatitañ̃ñ̄ Sutta (AN 4.133) and discussed in, "Sutta Interpretation - Uddesa, Niddesa, Patiniddesa."
- These days - 2600 years into the Buddha Sāsana of the Gotama Buddha - most people are in the third category of neyya. Therefore, it makes more sense for most people today to start at a more fundamental level and proceed to higher levels.
- Trying to comprehend those "deep" sutt $\bar{a}$ - without first grasping the material in the sutt $\bar{a}$ that were delivered later in his life by the Buddha - is like trying to pass the university entrance examination without having a good primary and high school education.


## "Living Dhamma" Section

5. The "Living Dhamma" section was started to provide a systematic way to proceed to higher levels starting at a fundamental level. I highly recommend to everyone to start there.

- If one is confident of the material in early posts in that section, they can proceed quickly to higher levels (later posts). Furthermore, if someone runs into difficulty at a recent post, one needs to go back to earlier posts and clarify those points.
- The Buddha had a unique ability to "see" the capability of each person. Therefore, he was able to deliver a discourse tailored to each individual. No one today has that capability, despite false claims by some. Thus, each person needs to realize one's abilities and deficiencies and strive accordingly.


## Need to Discuss Simper $S u t t \bar{a}$ in the Tipitaka

6. There are hundreds of sutt $\bar{a}$ in the Tipitaka that discuss key concepts at a basic level. It is quite unfortunate that even the Theravadins have set aside the Tipitaka and are using the Visuddhimagga of the Buddhaghosa as the "base."

- With the current revival of pure Dhamma in Sri Lanka - initiated by Venerable Waharaka Abhayaratanalankara Thero - the value of the Tipitaka is becoming clear.

7. In the "Sutta Interpretations" section, I plan to discuss some of those long-forgotten suttā to explain key Pāli terms. I will briefly mention some of those suttā below.

- The Nibbāna Sutta in the Samiyutta Nikāya clearly describes Nibbāna as, ".ragakkhayo, dosakkhayo, mohakkhayo, idam vuccathi Nibbananti."
- One does not need to examine deep concepts like sunyata initially. However, even though those deeper meanings become clear upon grasping the basic ideas. See, "What is Sunyata or Sunnata (Emptiness)?"
- That is why I emphasized this at the beginning of the Meditation section: "1. Introduction to Buddhist Meditation." One can actually experience the "cooling down" as one gets rid of greed, hate, and ignorance (of the true nature of the world) from one's mind.


## More Key Pāli Words

8. Another keyword is anicca, incorrectly translated as "impermanence". It is very easy to see from the WebLink: suttacentral: Icca Sutta (SN 1.96) (in the Samyutta Nikāya), that icchā or the opposite of anicca has nothing do with "permanence". The Sutta states,
"..Icchāya bajjhati loko, icchā vinayāya muccati

## Icchāya vippahānena, sabbaì chindati bandhanan" ti."

- That means the following, "The world is bound by icch $\bar{a}$ (cravings), and one needs to get rid of icch $\bar{a}$ to become disentangled; one becomes free of all entanglements by realizing anicca nature." Of course, one removes cravings by comprehending anicca nature, i.e., that it is not possible to maintain things to one's liking.
- Icch $\bar{a}$ (pronounced ichchā) is a perception in one's mind.

9. The Dasakammapatha Sutta, clearly states how people with similar gati tend to associate with each other and thus make those gati stronger.

- That is why one needs to dissociated from those who have bad gati and try to make associations with people with "good gati"; see, "The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Āsavas)" and, at a deeper level in " 9 . Key to Ānāpānasati - How to Change Habits and Character (Gati)."

10. In the Ginjakavasatha sutta (Saimyutta Nikāya), Buddha tells Ven. Ānanda that one can determine for oneself whether one has attained the Sotāpanna stage. Furthermore, one can declare that if one so desires.

- The deeper meaning of the five precepts discussed in the Sikkapada vibhanaga in the Vibhangapakaranaya-2. The deeper meaning of the fifth precept, "surameraya majjapama dattana veramani..." is described as discussed in the post, "The Five Precepts - What the Buddha Meant by Them."


## Many Key Words Are Based on "San"

11. The Cūlahatthipadopama Sutta (in the Majjima Nikāya) explains many words associated with "san". Some of these "san" words are discussed in the section on "San." More words in the post, "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Samisāra)."

- Ven. Mahinda Thero explained that sutta to King Denampiyathissa when they first met.
- Cūla is for "small". Hatthi is an elephant. Padopama comes from "pada" + "upamā," or "from an example or simile". The simile is about a person who came to the wrong conclusion about the size of an elephant, based on the size of the footprint on the ground left by that elephant.
- That sutta explains how people come to wrong conclusions about a given keyword by just taking in the "conventional" interpretation (for example, taking anicca to mean "impermanence," whereas the actual meaning of anicca much more in-depth).
- I hope to discuss those and other "long-forgotten" and misinterpreted suttā that help us understand basic concepts first. Then it would be easier to tackle those deeper suttā that were delivered very early.


### 17.7 Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta

Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta Interpretation - Uddesa, Niddesa, Patiniddesa
Essence of Buddhism - In the First Sutta
Majjima Patipada - Way to Relinquish Attachments to this World
Tiparivattaya and Twelve Types of Ñāna (Knowledge)
Relinquishing Defilements via Three Rounds and Four Stages

### 17.7.1 Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta - Introduction

January 16, 2016; revised February 20, 2020

## Introduction

Please download and print the pdf of the sutta (or open in another window) for reference. You may need to click the link on the new page again:

## Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta Text

1. I have divided the sutta to 13 sections, and I will go through some parts in this essay. There are more posts on other section of the sutta. As explained in the "Sutta Interpretation - Uddesa, Niddesa, Patiniddesa" post, a sutta gives only a short summary of the original desana $\bar{a}$. It needs detailed explainations.

- It may be helpful to listen to the chanting of the sutta by the venerable Thero, as it gives the correct pronunciations, and also how to chant it without "too much dragging" as done commonly (which will diminish its effects).
- I could not get my normal audio player to work, so the new player below just has a play button. There is no volume control, so you need to adjust volume on your end.
WebLink: Listen to the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta

2. Sutta chanting can be much more effective if one recites it the right way AND also understand the meaning at least to some extent.

- It is possible that even a single sutta can provide Dhamma knowledge that one needs to attain magga phala. However, it must be analyzed correctly in detail (patineddesa version); see, "Sutta Interpretation - Uddesa, Niddesa, Patiniddesa." Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta is especially important since it lays out the "blueprint" of Buddha Dhamma.


## The Framework of Buddha Dhamma

3. Of course, this was the first sutta delivered by the Buddha, to the five ascetics Koṇ̣añña, Bhaddiya, Vappa, Mahānāma, and Assaji. Thus, it has the framework or the foundation of Buddha Dhamma.

- The name of the sutta comes from the combination of three terms: Dhamma, Cakka, and Pavattana. Dhamma here means the Buddha Dhamma or the true nature of existence. Cakka means "seeing" or "to see". Pavattana means to "set in motion" AND to "maintain".
- Therefore, the sutta describes the way to "see" the true nature of existence with wisdom, not with the physical eye. Only a Buddha can discover the true nature, but an average human can comprehend it, once explained.
- As in many Pāli terms, the word "dhammacakkappavattana" comes from the combination of three above words, with an additional "p" just before pavattana. As we discussed before, pañcakkhandha is the combination of pañca with khandha with an additional " k " in tying up the two words.
- Sometimes the sutta is also called the Dhamma Cakka Pavattana Sutta.


## Opening the "Dhamma Eye" to the World

4. Let us address a common mistranslation of the name of the sutta. The most common is "Setting the Wheel of Dhamma in Motion". Here cakka (pronounced "chakka"), is translated as "wheel". But the name of the sutta becomes quite apparent when one looks at section 9 .

- In section 9 (see the text), dhammacakkhun udapādi means "eye to see the Dhamma was born" for the ascetic Kondanna (āyasmato Kondaññassa). There is no way to associate a "wheel" here.
- Note that the main summary of the sutta ends with section 8 . The following sections provide the following information. One is that the ascetic Konḍañña attained the Sotäpanna stage. The second is a description of various types of dev $\bar{a}$ and $\operatorname{brahm} \bar{a}$ who attended the delivery of the sutta; see \#6 below. A large number of them attained various stages of Nibbāna.


## Four Stages of Nibbāna

5. This sutta lays out the basic structure of Buddha Dhamma. Then it explains how one attains release from this world of 31 realms via successively attaining four stages of Nibbāna. That happens by getting through "three rounds" of bondages (tiparivaṭa) to this world: "ti" means "three", "vatta" means "vataya" in Sinhala or "circle" in English.

- In section 8, it says, "..imesu catūsu ariyasaccesu evaí tiparivattam dvādasākāraí yathābhutaím $\tilde{n} a ̈ n a d a s s a n a \dot{m} . . . "$ Here "catusu" means "four" and "ariyasaccesu" of course, means the "Noble Truths." By comprehending the Four Noble Truths, one can overcome the three rounds of bondage and fulfill the 12 factors ("dvādasākāramं.") Those 12 factors will be discussed in "Tiparivattaya and Twelve Types of Ñāna (Knowledge)."


## Three "Rounds" or "circular Walls" to Overcome

6. "Tiparivatṭ" means the three rounds of bondage. The first is to be released from the apāy $\bar{a}$ (four lowest realms), via the Sotāpanna stage, by removing the wrong views about existence in the 31 realms.

- In the second round, one overcomes the kāma loka (realms 5 through 11, which include the human realm and 6 Deva realms). That happens via two stages. A Sakadāgāmī will not be reborn with bodies subjected to diseases. Thus, there will be no more rebirths for a Sakadāgāmī in the five lowest realms (apāyā and the human realms). Then, at the Anāgāmī stage, k $\bar{a} m a$ rāga and patigha go away and one is released from births anywhere in the kāma loka.
- In the third round, any linkage to anywhere in the 31 realms is removed. The mind becomes free of attachment to any trace of matter, and the Arahant stage is attained. See, "What Are Rūpa? (Relation to Nibbāna)."


## The 31 Realms of Existence

6. Section 11 is long and takes a significant part of the sutta. That section names the 6 deva realms and 15 out of 16 rupi Brahma realms. Most of this section has been truncated in many published versions of the sutta. However, this section is important for a couple of reasons.

- First, it clearly shows that the Buddha indeed described a "wider world" than experienced by us, consisting of 31 realms; see, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma" and " 31 Realms of Existence."
- Second, it says that beings from many those realms were present when the Buddha delivered the desana $\bar{a}$ overnight (over many hours) to the five ascetics. Starting from the 6 deva realms, it lists 15 rupi brahma realms (except the asañña realms, where beings have only a physical body and thus cannot even listen to a desana $\bar{a}$. It is said that numerous $\operatorname{Dev} \bar{a}$ and Brahmā attained various stages of Nibbāna.
- Section 11 starts with "Bhummānaì devānai் saddaim sutvā Cātummahārājikā devā sadda manussāvesumं..." Here "bhummanaì devanaì" means "bhummatta Deva." They are part of the Catummaharajika Deva realm, but are located at the Earth's surface with humans (even though we cannot see them). They first became aware of the desana $\bar{a}$ and notified their higher-lying main realm. Section 11 lists how the news progressively propagated to higher-lying realms and eventually Deva from all those 21 realms came to listen to the desana."
- As you can see those realms match the names listed in the following post on the web (note that all of them are referred to as devas in the sutta, regardless of whether they belong to the 6 Deva realms or the rūpi Brahma realms): "31 Realms of Existence."
- Of course, only 5 humans (the five ascetics) were present. Any being in the lowest four realms cannot comprehend Dhamma. Also, the Brahmā in the 4 arūpi realms do not have ears to listen to. Thus section 11 lists 21 realms. Not listed are the four lowest realms, the asañña realm, and the four arūpi Brahma realms. They appear in many other sutta $\bar{a}$.


## The Sutta Provides Only a Summary

7. As I mentioned above, the sutta gives only a brief outline of the desana $\bar{a}$. It was delivered over many hours, and the sutta is just an outline of that delivery.

- The sutta starts off with the customary "Evaim me sutam" (thus I heard) uttered by Ven. Ānanda at the Dhamma Sangayana where these sutt $\bar{a}$ were categorized into sections in the Tipiṭaka.
- Section 1 is about the two extremes to be avoided: kāmasukhallikānuyogo (excess sense pleasures) and attakilamathānuyogo (engage in useless activities that make one go through hardships).
- Note that both extremes are labeled "anattasanhito." This means anyone who follows those two extremes are unaware of the "anatta" nature. Thus they have sañ̃̄̄̄, or perceptions, that will LEAD TO "anatta" or being helpless in the rebirth process.
- And they both are "dukkho" and "anariyo": they will be subjected to suffering and thus they are not Ariyā or Noble Ones.
- In addition, the extreme of kāmasukhallikānuyogo is also labeled hino, gammo, pothujjaniko. Here, "hino" means lowly; gammo means "uneducated" or "crass". "Pothu" means bark or the outer shell of a tree trunk (which is of no value,) and "janika" means to produce. Thus a "pothujjaniko" means a person who is engaged in useless and unproductive activities. The Buddha often used the term pothujjaniko (or pothujjano) to described a person who value and crave sense pleasures.


## The Middle Path

8. Most people are in the kāmasukhallikānuyogo mode, even if not in extreme. In fact, one gets closer to "middle" as one progressively become a Sotāpanna anugāmi, Sotāpanna, Sakadāgāmī, Anāgāmī. Then the "true middle" found only at Arahanthood.

- Thus majjhimā patipadā has a deeper meaning than just "middle path". One has to realize the dangers of "getting drunk" ("majji" or intoxicated with sense pleasures). Here, "m $\vec{a}$ " there means "getting release from", just like in "sammä" means "san" + "ma""; see, "What is 'San?' Meaning of Sansāra (or Samisāra)."
- This is why the kämasukhallikānuyogo mode has the additional "labels" of hino, gammo, pothujjaniko. Anyone "intoxicated" with sensory pleasures is a hino, gammo, pothujjaniko. Thats mindset can be changed only by comprehending the "..Dhamma that has never been known to the
world.." or "..pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu..." That phrase is repeated many times in sections 4 through 7 for a reason.
- This is the reason why one cannot comprehend this Dhamma in a conventional way. One has to realize the true nature of the world: anicca, dukkha, anatta; see, "Buddha Dhamma - In a Chart."
More posts on the sutta at, "Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta."


### 17.7.1. Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta Text

Evamim me sutam:
Ekamं samayam் Bhagavā Bārāṇasiyam viharati Isipatane Migadāye. Tatra kho Bhagavā pancavaggiye bhikkhū āmantesi-

1. Dve me', bhikkhave, antā pabbajitena na sevitabbā :

Katame dve:
i. Yo cāyam̀ kāmesu kāmasukhallikānuyogo —hīno, gammo, pothujjaniko, anariyo. anatthas anhito
ii. Yo cāyam̉ attakilamathānuyogo -dukkho, anariyo anatthas anhito ,
ete te, bhikkhave, ubho ante anupagamma majjhimā paṭipadā Tathāgatena abhisambuddhā cakkhukaraṇī, ñāṇakaraṇī, upasamāya, abhiññāya, sambodhāya, nibbānāya sanvaṭati.
2. Katama ca sā, bhikkhave, majjhimā paṭipadā Tathāgatena
abhisambuddhā-cakkhukaraṇī n̄ānakaraṇ̄̄, upasamāya, abhiññāya, sambodhāya, nibbānāya sanvaṭ̣ati?

Ayam'eva ariyo atṭhañgiko maggo -seyyathidan:- Sammā diṭ̣hi, sammā sañkappo, sammā vācā, sammā kammanto, sammā àjīvo, sammā vāyāmo, sammā sati, sammā samādhi.

Ayan kho sā, bhikkhave, majjhimā paṭipadā Tathāgatena
abhisambuddhā-cakkhukaraṇī, ñāṇakaraṇī, upasamāya, abhiññāya, sambodhāya, nibbānāya sanvaṭati.
3. Idan kho pana, bhikkhave, dukkhan ariya saccan: - Jāti'pi dukkhā, jarā’pi dukkhā, vyādhi'pi dukkho, maraṇam'pi dukkhan, appiyehi sampayogo dukkho, piyehi vippayogo dukkho, yamp'icchan na labhati tam'pi dukkhan, sañkhittena pañcupadānakkhandhā dukkhā.

Idan kho pana, bhikkhave, dukkhasamudayan ariya saccan: Yāyan taṇhā ponobhavikā nandirāgasahagatā tatratatrābhinandin̄̄-seyyathidan:- kāmataṇhā, bhavataṇhā, vibhavataṇhā.

Idan kho pana, bhikkhave, dukkhanirodhan ariya saccan: Yo tassā yeva taṇhāya asesavirāganirodho, chāgo, paṭinissaggo, mutti, anālayo.

Idan kho pana, bhikkhave, dukkhanirodhagāmin̄̄ paṭipadā ariya saccan: - Ayameva ariyo atṭhañgiko maggo-seyyathidan:-sammā diṭthi, sammā sañkappo, sammā vācā, sammā kammanto, sammā ājīivo, sammā vāyāmo, sammā sati, sammā samādhi.
4. (i) Idan dukkhan ariyas accan'ti me, bhikkhave, pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhun udapādi, ñāṇan udapādi, paññ̄ā udapādi, vijjā udapādi, āloko udapādi. (ii) Tan kho pan'idan dukkhan ariyasaccan pariññe yyan'ti me, bhikkhave, pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhun udapādi, ñāṇan udapādi, paññā, udapādi, vijjā udapādi, āloko udapādi.
(iii) Tan kho pan'idaṁ dukkhan ariyasaccan pariññātan'ti me, bhikkhave, pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhun udapādi, ñāṇan udapādi, paññā udapādi, vijijā udapādi, āloko udapādi.
5. (i) Idan dukkhasamudayan ariyas accan'ti me, bhikkhave, pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhun udapādi, ñāṇan udapādi, paññā udapādi, vijjā udapādi, āloko udapādi.
(ii) Tan kho pan'idan dukkhasamudayan ariya saccan pahātabbban'ti me, bhikkhave, pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhun udapādi, ñāṇan udapādi, paññā udapādi, vijjā udapādi, āloko udapādi.
(iii) Tan kho pan'idam, dukkhasamudayan ariyasaccan pahīnan'ti me, bhikkhave, pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhun udapādi, ñāṇan udapādi, paññā udapādi, vijjā udapādi, āloko udapādi.
6. (i) Idam̉ dukkhanirodhan ariyas accan'ti me, bhikkhave, pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhun udapādi, ñāṇan udapādi, paññā udapādi, vijjā udapādi, āloko udapādi.
(ii) Tan kho pan'idan dukkhanirodhan ariyasaccan sacchikātabban'ti me, bhikkhave, pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhun udapādi, ñāṇan udapādi, paññā udapādi, vijjā udapādi, āloko udapādi.
(iii) Tan kho pan'idan dukkhanirodhan ariyasaccan sacchikatan'ti me, bhikkhave, pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhun udapādi, ñāṇan udapādi, paññā udapādi, vijjā udapādi, āloko udapādi.
7. (i) Idaḿ dukkha nirodhagāmini paṭipadā ariyasaccan'ti me, bhikkhave, p ubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhun udapādi, ñāṇan udapādi, paññā udapādi, vijjā udapādi, āloko udapādi.
(ii) Tan kho pan'idan dukkha nirodhagāminī paṭipāda ariya saccan bhāvetabban'ti me, bhikkhave, pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhun udapādi, ñāṇan udapādi, paññā udapādi, vijjā udapādi, āloko udapādi.
(iii) Tan kho pan'idan, dukkha nirodhagāminī paṭipadā ariyasaccam bhāvitan'ti me, bhikkhave, pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhun udapādi, ñāṇan udapādi, paññā udapādi, vijjā udapādi, āloko udapādi.

## 8. Yāvakīvañca

me, bhikkhave, imesu chatūsu ariyasaccesu evaḿ tiparivațtan dvādasākāran yathābhutan ñ̄ạṇadassanan na suvisuddham ahosi, neva tāv'āhan, bhikkhave, sadevake loke samārake sabrahmake sassamaṇabrāhmaṇiyā pajāya sadevamanussāya anuttaran sammā sambodhin abhisambuddho paccaññāsin.

Yato ca kho me, bhikkhave, imesu chatūsu ariyasaccesu evam tiparivațtan dvādasākāran yathābhūtan ñāṇadassanan suvisuddhan ahosi, ath'āham, bhikkhave, sadevake loke samārake sabrāhmaniyā pajāya sadevamanussāya anuttaran sammā sambodhin abhisambuddho paccaññāsin.

Nāṇañ ca pana me dassanan udapādi, akuppā me chetovimutti a yamantimā jāti, natthi' dāni punabbhavo'ti.

Ida ma vo ca Bhagavā. Attamanā pañcavaggiyā bhikkhū Bhagavato bhāsitam abhinandun'ti.
9. Imasmiñca pana veyyākaraṇasmin bhaññamāne āyasmato Koṇ̣̣aññassa virajan vitamalan dhammacakkhun udapādi -yan kiñci samudayadhamman sabban tan nirodhadhamman'ti.
10. Pavattite ca pana Bhagavatā dhammacakke bhummā devā sadda manussāvesun:

Etan Bhagavatā Bārāṇasiyan Isipatane Migadāye anuttaran dhammacakkan pavattitan appativattiyan samaṇena vā brāhmaṇena vā devena vā mārena vā brahmunā vā kenaci vā lokasmin'ti.
11. Bhummānan devānan saddam sutvā Cātummahārājikā devā sadda manussāvesun. Etaḿ Bhagavatā Bārānasiyam Isipatane Migadāye anuttaran dhammacakkan pavattitan appativattiyan samaṇena vā brāhmaṇena vā devena vā mārena vā brahmunā vā kenaci vā lokasmin'ti.

Cātummahārājikānan devānan saddam sutvā Tāvatinsā devā sadda manussāvesun Etan Bhagavatā Bārānasiyan Isipatane Migadāye anuttaran dhammacakkan pavattitan
appativattiyan samaṇena vā brāhmaṇena vā devena vā mārena vā brahmunā vā kenaci vā lokasmin'ti.

Tāvatinsānan devānan saddam sutvā Yāmā devā sadda manussāvesun
Etan Bhagavatā Bārānasiyan Isipatane Migadāye anuttaran dhammacakkan pavattitan appativattiyan samaṇena vā brāhmaṇena vā devena vā mārena vā brahmunā vā kenaci vā lokasmin'ti.

Yamanan devanan saddam sutva Tusitā devā sadda manussāvesun.
Etan Bhagavatā Bārānasiyan Isipatane Migadāye anuttaran dhammacakkan pavattitan appativattiyan samaṇena vā brāhmaṇena vā devena vā mārena vā brahmunā vā kenaci vā lokasmin'ti.

Tusitanan devanan saddam sutva Nimmānaratī deva sadda manussāvesun.
Etan Bhagavatā Bārāạasiyan Isipatane Migadāye anuttaran dhammacakkan pavattitan appativattiyan samaṇena vā brāhmaṇena vā devena vā mārena vā brahmunā vā kenaci vā lokasmin'ti.

Nimmanratinan devanan saddam sutva Paranimmitavasavattī devā sadda manussāvesun.

Etan Bhagavatā Bārānasiyan Isipatane Migadāye anuttaran dhammacakkan pavattitan appativattiyan samaṇena vā brāhmaṇena vā devena vā mārena vā brahmunā vā kenaci vā lokasmin'ti.

Paranimmitavasavattīnan devānan saddam sutva Brahma Parisajja deva sadda manussāvesun.
Etan Bhagavatā Bārānasiyan Isipatane Migadāye anuttaran dhammacakkan pavattitan appativattiyan samaṇena vā brāhmaṇena vā devena vā mārena vā brahmunā vā kenaci vā lokasmin'ti.

Brahma Parisajjanan devanan saddam sutva Brahma Purohita deva sadda manussāvesun.
Etan Bhagavatā Bārānasiyan Isipatane Migadāye anuttaran dhammacakkan pavattitan appativattiyan samaṇena vā brāhmaṇena vā devena vā mārena vā brahmunā vā kenaci vā lokasmin'ti.

Brahma Purohitanan devanan saddam sutva Mahā Brahma deva sadda manussāvesun.
Etan Bhagavatā Bārānasiyan Isipatane Migadāye anuttaran dhammacakkan pavattitan appativattiyan samaṇena vā brāhmaṇena vā devena vā mārena vā brahmunā vā kenaci
vā lokasmin'ti.

Mahā Brahmanan devanan saddam sutva Parittabha deva sadda manussāvesun.
Etan Bhagavatā Bārāạasiyan Isipatane Migadāye anuttaran dhammacakkan pavattitan appativattiyan samaṇena vā brāhmaṇena vā devena vā mārena vā brahmunā vā kenaci vā lokasmin'ti.

Parittabhanan devanan saddam sutva Appamanabha deva sadda manussāvesun.
Etan Bhagavatā Bārāạasiyan Isipatane Migadāye anuttaran dhammacakkan pavattitan appativattiyan samaṇena vā brāhmaṇena vā devena vā mārena vā brahmunā vā kenaci vā lokasmin'ti.

Appamanabhanan devanan saddam sutva Abhassara deva sadda manussāvesun. Etan Bhagavatā Bārānasiyan Isipatane Migadāye anuttaran dhammacakkan pavattitan appativattiyan samaṇena vā brāhmaṇena vā devena vā mārena vā brahmunā vā kenaci vā lokasmin'ti.

Abhassaranan devanan saddam sutva Paritta Subha deva sadda manussāvesun.
Etan Bhagavatā Bārānasiyan Isipatane Migadāye anuttaran dhammacakkan pavattitan appativattiyan samaṇena vā brāhmaṇena vā devena vā mārena vā brahmunā vā kenaci vā lokasmin'ti.

Paritta Subhanan devanan saddam sutva Appamana Subha deva sadda manussāvesun.

Etan Bhagavatā Bārānasiyan Isipatane Migadāye anuttaran dhammacakkan pavattitan appativattiyan samaṇena vā brāhmaṇena vā devena vā mārena vā brahmunā vā kenaci vā lokasmin'ti.

Appamana Subhanan devanan saddam sutva Subha kinhaka deva sadda manussāvesun.
Etan Bhagavatā Bārānasiyan Isipatane Migadāye anuttaran dhammacakkan pavattitan appativattiyan samaṇena vā brāhmaṇena vā devena vā mārena vā brahmunā vā kenaci vā lokasmin'ti.

Subha kinhakanan devanan saddam sutva Vehappala deva sadda manussāvesun. Etan Bhagavatā Bārānasiyan Isipatane Migadāye anuttaran dhammacakkan pavattitan appativattiyan samaṇena vā brāhmaṇena vā devena vā mārena vā brahmunā vā kenaci vā lokasmin'ti.

Vehappalanan devanan saddam sutva Aviha deva sadda manussāvesun.

Etan Bhagavatā Bārānasiyan Isipatane Migadāye anuttaran dhammacakkan pavattitan appativattiyan samaṇena vā brāhmaṇena vā devena vā mārena vā brahmunā vā kenaci vā lokasmin'ti.

Avihanan devanan saddam sutva Atappa deva sadda manussāvesun. Etan Bhagavatā Bārānasiyan Isipatane Migadāye anuttaran dhammacakkan pavattitan appativattiyan samaṇena vā brāhmaṇena vā devena vā mārena vā brahmunā vā kenaci vā lokasmin'ti.

Atappanan devanan saddam sutva Sudassa deva sadda manussāvesun.
Etan Bhagavatā Bārāṇasiyan Isipatane Migadāye anuttaran dhammacakkan pavattitan appativattiyan samaṇena vā brāhmaṇena vā devena vā mārena vā brahmunā vā kenaci vā lokasmin'ti.

Sudassanan devanan saddam sutva Sudassi deva sadda manussāvesun.
Etan Bhagavatā Bārānasiyan Isipatane Migadāye anuttaran dhammacakkan pavattitan appativattiyan samaṇena vā brāhmaṇena vā devena vā mārena vā brahmunā vā kenaci vā lokasmin'ti.

Sudassinan devanan saddam sutva Akanittakha deva sadda manussāvesun. Etan Bhagavatā Bārānasiyan Isipatane Migadāye anuttaran dhammacakkan pavattitan appativattiyan samaṇena vā brāhmaṇena vā devena vā mārena vā brahmunā vā kenaci vā lokasmin'ti.
12. Ithha tenakkhaṇena tena muhuttena yāva brahmalokā saddo abbhūggañchi. Ayañca dasasahassī lokadhātu sañkampi sampakampi sampavedhi. Appamāṇo cā ulāro obhāso loke pāturahosi. Atikkamma devānam devānubhāvan ti.

## 13. Atha kho Bhagavā udānan udānesi: - Aññ̄āsi vata bho Kondañño, añ̃n̄āsi vata

 bho Koṇḍañño'ti. Iti h'idamं āyasmato Koṇ̣aññassa Añ̃n̄a Kondañño tve'va nāman ahosi'ti.End of Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta

### 17.7.2 Essence of Buddhism - In the First Sutta

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The essence of Buddhism (Buddha Dhamma) is in the first sutta of the Buddha, Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta (SN 56.11).

## Introduction

1. In the very first discourse that he delivered, "WebLink: suttacentral: Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta (SN 56.11)," the Buddha laid out the "foundational aspects" or the essence of Buddha Dhamma.

- These days, there are many discussions about what is meant by Nibbāna. In particular, "secular Buddhists" who do not believe in rebirth try to provide their interpretations. But as we will discuss below, Buddha's position is crystal clear from this sutta.
- Some people doubt the existence of beings in realms other than the human and animal realms and whether life exists outside the Solar system, i.e., the Earth. This sutta clarifies both, as we will see below.


## A Sutta Is a Highly Condensed Summary

2. Some people think the Buddha recited each sutta (as it appears in the Tipitaka). That could be why sutt $\bar{a}$ are translated word-by-word by most people today. But that is far from the truth.

- For example, the Buddha delivered Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta to the five ascetics over several days. See ""The Life of the Buddha" by Bhikkhu Nānamoli." " A direct account from the Tipitaka at "WebLink: suttacentral: The Long Chapter (Mahākhandhaka);" see "Section 6. The account of the group of five."
- Only Ven. Koṇạañña attained the Sotāpanna stage on the first night. Then the Buddha explained the material over several days. The other four ascetics reached the Sotāpanna stage over several days.
- The above book contains many passages from the Vinaya Pitaka of the Tipiṭaka, which provide many details not available in the sutt $\bar{a}$. It also provides the timeline of critical sutta and significant events.

3. Therefore, the Buddha did not recite the sutta as it appears in the Tipitaka. If so, it would have been recited within 15 minutes!

- It will take many people a lifetime to fully understand this sutta.
- It appears that the Buddha himself summarized the material in each sutta in a short, concise way to a limited number of verses that were suitable for oral transmission (easy to remember); see "Sutta Interpretation - Uddesa, Niddesa, Patiniddesa."
- We must remember that all the sutt $\bar{a}$ in the Tipitaka were transmitted orally by many generations. Tipitaka was written down about 500 years after the Parinibbāna of the Buddha. See "Preservation of the Dhamma."


## A Sutta Needs to be Explained in Detail

4. Only a summary of a sutta is in the Tipitaka. Many of the suttā are highly condensed and need detailed explanations. It is not reasonable to assume that one could understand a sutta by reading a word-byword translation of a few pages of the sutta.

- However, that is what happens these days. Suttā are translated word-by-word into English. That is a terrible practice. It is no different from just reciting a sutta!
- Some of these deep suttā need detailed explanations.


## First Noble Truth in Just a Single Verse!

5. Now, let us examine how the Buddha summarized the First Noble Truth about suffering in that sutta.

Idä̀ kho pana, bhikkhave, dukkhaì ariya saccaì:
jātipi dukkhā, jarāpi dukkhā, byādhipi dukkho, maranampi dukkhā̀ं, appiyehi sampayogo dukkho, piyehi vippayogo dukkho, yampicchaì na labhati tampi dukkhā̀ं-samikhittena pañcupādānakkhandh $\bar{a}$ dukkhā. [khitta :[pp. of khipati] thrown; overthrown; casted away; upset.] [sañkhittena means being overthrown by defilement]

Translated: Bhikkhus, What is the Noble Truth of Suffering?
"[@1]Birth is suffering, getting old is suffering, getting sick is suffering, dying is suffering. [@2] Having to associate with things one dislikes is suffering and separation from those one likes. [@3]If one does not get what one wants, that is suffering - [@4] - in brief, the origin of suffering is the craving for the five aggregates of rūpa, vedanā, sañ̃̄̄̄, sañkhāra, viñ̃̄̄̄ṇa (pañcupādānakkhandha). Pañcupādānakkhandha (upādāna or craving/desire for pañcakkhandha) represents all we crave in this world.

- (Here, I have translated upādāna as craving. However, the word upādāna cannot be translated by just one word. It is a good idea to grasp the meaning. See "Concepts of Upādāna and Upādānakkhandha.")
- There are four sections in that verse. I have highlighted alternating sections to explain each of the four below.

6. Many think that dukkha Sacca (the First Noble Truth, pronounced "dukkha sachcha") says everything is suffering. That is not true; there is a lot of apparent happiness, which makes people unaware of the hidden suffering until it is too late.

- The first seven parts of the verse in \#5 that summarizes the First Noble Truth explain that there is "hidden suffering" in the world that an average person would not see. For example, people celebrate birthdays, but every birth ends up in old age and death. Another is that we pursue worldly things with high expectations but EVENTUALLY end up suffering because of such expectations. These ideas are explained in detail in Paṭicca Samuppāda and Tilakkhaṇa.
- The last part of the verse is the key part of the First Noble Truth. It is not a type of suffering but the root cause of (future) suffering. We become subjected to suffering because we attach to certain $r \bar{u} p a$ in this world and our vedanā, sañña, sañkhāra, and viññāna that arise from interactions with such rūpa. That is pañcupādānakkhandh $\bar{a}$ (pañca upādāna khandhā), loosely meaning "attachment to the pañcakkhandhā."
- Also, see "Does the First Noble Truth Describe only Suffering?"


## The Key Aspects of Suffering

7. The first part [@1] in bold indicates what we consider forms of suffering: Birth, getting old, getting sick, and dying.

- Every birth ends up in death. That is why birth is suffering. All births - without exception - end up in death.
- We also DO NOT LIKE to get old, get sick, and do not like to die. If we experience any of those, that is suffering.
- We WOULD LIKE it to stay young, not get old, not get sick, and not die ever. If we can have those conditions fulfilled, we will be forever happy.
- Therefore, it is clear that the Buddha focused on the suffering associated with the rebirth process in his first discourse.


## Root Cause of Suffering - Not Getting What One Desires

8. Anyone can see that not getting what one desires is suffering.

- The second part [@2] of the verse in \#5 (in red) says: Having to associate with things that one does not like is suffering, and having to separate from those things one wants is suffering.

9. That part in \#7 is stated in one concise statement in the third part [@3] of the verse in \#5 (in bold): "yampicchamं na labhati tampi dukkham்."
"Yampicchaì na labhati tampi dukkhamं" is a shortened version of the verse (that rhymes).
The full sentence is "Yaim pi iccham na labhati tam pi dukkham."

- "Yaín pi icchamं" means "whatever is liked or craved for." "Na labhati" means "not getting." "tamं pi dukkhaì" means "that leads to suffering."
- Therefore, that verse says: "If one does not get what one craves or likes, that leads to suffering."
- That is a more general statement and applies in any situation. We can see that in our daily lives. We like to hang out with people we like, and it is stressful to be with people we do not like.
- Furthermore, the more one craves something, the more suffering one will endure in the end. But this requires a lot of discussions.
- Note that "iccha" (and "icca") is pronounced "ichcha." See "Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars - Part 1" and Part 2 there.


## Yampicchain na labhati tampi dukkhaì

10. "Yampiccaì nalabhati tampi dukkhaì" ("Yaim pi icchaì na labhati taì pi dukkhaì") verse gets us closer to the deeper meaning of the First Noble Truth on suffering.
 word "iccha" with the emphasis on the last syllable indicates "strong icca" or "strong attachment."

- The word "icca" (liking) is closely related to "taṇh $\vec{a}$ " (getting attached). Taṇh $\bar{a}$ happens automatically because of icca.
- Not getting what one desires or craves is the opposite of "icca" or "na icca" or "anicca." That is the same way that "na āgami" becomes "Anāgāmi" ("na āgami" means "not coming back"; but in the context of Anāgāmi, it means "not coming back to kāma loka or the lowest 11 realms. Both these are examples of Pāli sandhi rules (connecting two words).
- The intrinsic nature of this world is "anicca," i.e., we will never get what we crave for, and thus in the end (at least at death,) we will leave all this behind and suffer; that is dukkha.
- There is another (and related) way to explain anicca as the opposite of "nicca"; see "Three Marks of Existence - English Discourses."
- To get the deeper meaning of what we have discussed so far, we need to realize that the suffering in \#5 above is the FUTURE suffering in future births. That is stated clearly also in the sutta.


## Rebirth Process Is Irrefutable in Buddha Dhamma

11. After explaining the four Noble Truths (we briefly discussed just the First Noble Truth), the Buddha says in the middle of the sutta: "Ñānañca pana me dassanaì udapādi: 'akupp $\bar{a}$ me vimutti, ayamantima $\bar{a}$ $j a \bar{t} t i, n a t t h i ~ d a ̄ n i ~ p u n a b b h a v o ' t i . " ~$

Translated: "The knowledge and vision arose in me: 'unshakable is the liberation of my mind. This is my last birth. There is no more renewed existence.' "

- That statement states the outcome of that knowledge, i.e., the solution to future suffering. It is the ending of the rebirth process. It will stop those four leading causes of suffering discussed in \#5 and \#6.
- So, my point is that this statement confirms the following facts. (i) The Buddha was focused on stopping suffering in future lives. (Some of which in lower realms could be unimaginably harsh.) (ii) There is no "safe" rebirth anywhere in this world, whether it is a human, Deva, or a Brahma realm.


## The Need for Detailed Explanations

12. As you can see, one single verse takes a lot of explaining. The above explanation addresses only the four major types of suffering in the rebirth process.

- For example, many humans may not experience much suffering while young. Suffering during a human life may be much less than animal life.
- Suffering in the other three lower realms would be much higher than in the animal realm.
- There is no realm among the 31 realms where suffering is absent.
- The need for detailed explanations is clarified in "Satipatthāna Sutta - Structure."


## "Sainkhittena Pañcupādānakkhandhā Dukkhā"

13. The last part [@4] of the verse in \#5 (not in bold), "saíkhittena pañcupādānakkhandhā dukkhā," will take much more explaining. One needs to understand the five khandhas (rūpa, vedan $\bar{a}$, sañ $\tilde{n} \bar{a}$, sañkhāra, viññ̄ạa) first, even to begin to understand this part. See "Does the First Noble Truth Describe only Suffering?" (especially \#15-\#17.) [sañkhittena means being overthrown by defilement]

- Note that upādāna is related closely to craving or icca. Upādāna means "pulling closer in one's mind due to craving (iccā)."
- The more one does upādāna with vacī sañkhāra - or vitakka/vicāra - (because of one's iccā), one's tanhhā grows. Those three words have slightly different meanings but are closely related.
- Until one sees this anicca, dukkha, anatta nature of this world, one will be trapped in the suffering-filled rebirth process.
- A detailed discussion at "Tipitaka - A Systematic Approach."


## Word-by-Word Translations Can be Dangerous

14. The other key point: Translating some key verses word-by-word can lead to dire unintended consequences. Many key Pāli words CANNOT be translated as single English words. For example, the word rūpakkhandha should not be translated as "form aggregate." See "Difference Between Physical Rūpa and Rūpakkhandha."

- The five ascetics attained the Sotāpanna stage by understanding the detailed description of the material embedded in this sutta. That holds today too. One MUST realize the suffering "hidden in sensory experiences."
By the way, nothing in this sutta says impermanence leads to suffering. The keywords are icca and anicca.
- Anicca is not the same as Sanskrit "anitya" (which does mean impermanence), which in Pāli is "aniyata" or "addhuvam." None of those three words appear in this sutta. I don't think the word "anicca" appears directly in this sutta either; of course, it appears in many other sutt $\bar{a}$ in the same context. But the word "anitya" does not appear in a single sutta in the Tipitaka; "aniyata" and "addhuvaí"" appear in a few suttā to indicate impermanence in other contexts. For example, "jīvitaim aniyataim, maranain niyata $\dot{m} "$ or "life is impermanent, death is certain."
- As I explained above, the root cause of suffering is "icca" (or craving), according to this sutta.

15. Therefore, a lot of information is in this sutta. Further analysis of the sutta in this subsection: "Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta."

- Also, see "Paticca Samuppāda - Essential Concepts."


### 17.7.3 Majjhimā Paṭipadā - Way to Relinquish Attachments to this World

January 22, 2016; Revised January 23, 2016; July 19, 2020
Please read the first post on the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta (also called Dhamma Cakka Pavattana Sutta) before reading this second post: "Dhammacakkappavatta Sutta Interpretation - Uddesa, Niddesa, Patiniddesa."

1. In almost all English translations, majjhimā patipadā is termed the "middle way of the Buddha". This gives the impression that all one needs to do is to avoid extreme sense pleasures and extreme hardships for the body. In general, that is true but the Buddha meant something deeper. One should live such a simple and comfortable life but should start seeing the dangers of craving for sense pleasures.

- Many Pāli words have two meanings: conventional (mundane) and transcendental (lokuttara). We saw that the Noble Eightfold Path can be interpreted either way: "Buddha Dhamma - In a Chart" or "Mahā Cattārīsaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty)." As I explained in "Sutta -Introduction," I believe this was a strategy by the Buddha to facilitate at least the conventional transmission of the Tipitaka during times when Ariyā (Noble Persons) are few in number to explain the lokuttara meanings of key Pāli words.
- Thus majjhima patipad $\bar{a}$ is the "middle path" in the conventional sense, and it is a good first step. But the lokuttara meaning is much deeper, and this sutta lays out the basic structure of how to explain the deeper meaning. Throughout his 45 years of his ministry, Buddha explained the details in various ways.
- One lokuttara (or deeper/transcendental) meaning of majjhimā pațipadā is to "avoid being intoxicated by sense pleasures." See, "Need to Experience Suffering in Order to Understand it?." Here we will examine It in detail to show that it is a gradual process. High levels of intoxication are removed via removing micch $\bar{a}$ ditṭhi when attaining the Sotāpanna stage. After that, lower and lower intoxication levels removed as one gains more wisdom in steps.
- We will follow the text of the sutta in this pdf: Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta-3

2. First, I want to emphasize what is meant by "relinquish" in the title. It means "voluntarily giving up" and NOT to give up attachments to this world by sheer will or force. This is something most people do not comprehend either. The mind will not give up things that it considers pleasurable unless there is a good reason.

- Those reasons are what Buddha Dhamma is all about. One becomes a Sotāpanna by truly comprehending why it is not only unfruitful, but also DANGEROUS to attach to things that one perceives to be pleasurable. But even a Sotāpanna only has "seen" the truth of the "anicca nature" of this world of 31 realms.
- The actual "giving up" comes next, when one slowly start "giving up" voluntarily and progress through the next two stages of Sakad $\bar{a} g \bar{a} m \bar{\imath}$ and $\operatorname{An} \bar{a} g \bar{a} m \bar{u}$, and eventually gives up all attachments at the Arahant stage.
- Thus one does not need to worry about giving up ANYTHING until reaching the Sotāpanna stage. Giving up happens automatically when one realizes the true nature of this world.

3. In the first verse of section 2 of the above pdf, it says, "Bhikkhus, what is the majjhima paṭipad $\bar{a}$ declared by the Tathāgatha (Buddha) that leads to the vision, wisdom, calming down, special knowledge (abhiñ̃̃̄̄), comprehend "san" (sambodhi), and to Nibbāna?"

- 'It is the Noble Eightfold Path wit Sammā ditṭhi, sammā sañkappa, sammā vaca, sammā kammanta, sammā ājīva, sammā vāyāma, sammā sati, sammā samādhi."
- In the third verse, he affirms that it is indeed the Path or the majjhima patipad $\bar{a}$.

4. In section 3, the Four Noble Truths are briefly stated (uddesa; see, "Sutta -Introduction"), and each can be described in detail filling thousands of books, depending on the level of detail.

- First, suffering is: "Jāti'pi dukkhā, jarā'pi dukkhā,.....". This verse we have already analyzed in "Does the First Noble Truth Describe only Suffering?," among others.
- The next verse succinctly states the causes for suffering (dukkha samudhaya): "the root cause is taṇh $\bar{a}$. The tendency to attach to various things (yayam tanhā), make bhava (ponobbhavikā) through valuing such things (nandirāga) and giving priority to them (abhinandini). These things are: craving for sense pleasures (kāma tanh $\bar{a}$ ), bhava taṇh $\bar{a}$, and vibhava taṇhā." The three types of taṇh $\bar{a}$ are discussed at: "Kāma Tanhā, Bhava Tanhā, Vibhava Tanhā."
- The third verse is the truth about how to eliminate those causes: "By removing tanhh $\bar{a}$ without a trace (yeva taṇhāya asesa-virāga-nirodho), by giving without expecting anything back (cāgo), by cutting off all bonds (patinissaggo), by becoming un-entangled (mutti), by removing all attachments (anālayo)".
- And the fourth is the way to do that, i.e., via the Noble Eightfold Path that was stated in \#3 above.
- There are other posts that further describe the above four Noble Truths in more detail. You can use the "Search" box on top right or scan the "Pure Dhamma - Sitemap" to locate relevant posts. There are so many ways to present the material.

5. Sections 4 through 7 describe how the Buddha attained the Buddhahood via comprehending tiparivatta (three walls of bondage) that keep one trapped in the rebirth process. That process of generating new rebirths is described by Paticca Samuppāda. That has never been known to the world (except during the times of previous Buddhas): "..pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu...".

- We discussed the term tiparivattta or the "three rounds of bondage" briefly in the previous post. We will discuss it in more detail in the next post.
- I would like to first discuss the term, "..pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhum udapādi, ñānaìm udapādi, paññā udapādi, vijjā udapādi, āloko udapādi...".

6. When the Buddha attained the Buddhahood via comprehending this Dhamma that has never been known to the world, five types of special knowledge arose in him.

Those are cakkhu, ñāna, paññ̄a, vijja, and āloka.

- Here "cakkhu" is the "Dhamma eye", the ability to "see" the true nature of this world. We can loosely translate ñāna and pañ̃̃ā as "knowledge" and "wisdom".
- The next one is "vijjā" (the Sanskrit word is "vidy $\bar{a}$ "). This is the "ultimate science" about the world, what I called the "Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma." A Buddha Is the greatest scientist that comes to the world very infrequently.
- Simultaneously with the comprehension of vijjā, one is totally removed from "this material world" or "āloka" ("ā" + "loka"). The word "ăloka" has other meanings, including "light", which we will discuss later.

7. Those five factors arise simultaneously in a Buddha upon attaining the Buddhahood, but all others attain them in stages. For a normal human being:

- "Cakkhuì udapādi" or "arising of the Dhamma eye" occurs upon attaining the Sotāpanna stage, i.e., sammā ditṭhi.
- "Nanaì udapādi" takes place upon attaining the Sakadāgāmī stage.
- "Paññā udapādi" takes place upon attaining the Anāgāmī stage.
- "Vijjā udapādi" takes place upon attaining the Arahant stage, where "aloko udapadi" takes place simultaneously.

8. In section 9, it is stated, "..āyasmato Koṇ̣aññassa virajam vitamalam dhammacakkhum udapādi- yaim kiñci samudayadhammaì sabbaì taì nirodhadhamman'ti".

- Upon hearing this first desanā, the ascetic Koṇ̣anna became a Sotāpanna and , "dhamma cakkhum udapādi" or "Dhamma eye arose in him".
- The next part of the verse, "Ya.m kiñci samudayadhamma.m sabba.m ta.m nirodhadhamman'ti" states what that Dhamma eye grasped: "any Dhamma that gives rise to this world (samudaya dhamma), is a Dhamma that can be eliminated (i.e., it is a nirodha dhamma)".
- Thus at the Sotāpanna stage, one can "see" how this "nirodha" is done. Actually doing it leads to the next stages Nibbāna, and eventually to the Arahanthood.
- One gets to the Sotāpanna stage (overcoming the first round of the tiparivatta) by comprehending the wider world view, and by seeing the fruitlessness of "high levels of intoxication" just through that understanding.

9. When a Sotāpanna acquires the second knowledge ("Ñānaim udapādi"), that is when he/she really "STARTS to see the anicca nature a bit more by cutting through apparent pleasures of the world with the Dhamma eye". This process continues through the next phase "Pañ̃̃̄ $u d a p a \bar{d} i$ " when one is able to really see the adverse effects and the dangers of any sense pleasures and attains the Anāgāmi stage.

- Thus, as you can see, the actual "giving up" happens in a gradual and natural way. One does not need to, and one should not try to, give up sense pleasures by sheer will power (except of course those acts that are called "pāpa kamma" i.e., that lead to the suffering of other beings).
- For example, one does not need to feel guilty about eating a nice meal, having a nice house to live in, etc. Those are the results of previous good kamma vipāka. But what one needs to do is to reduce the CRAVING for such things by comprehending the anicca nature of this world, i.e., by learning Dhamma and by contemplating. One would realize that cravings/desires for worldly things are fruitless.

10. I can give a simple example from my experience. A few years ago, my wife and I noticed that we had not watched television for many weeks. We decided it was pointless to keep paying for the cable service and canceled the service (We still read the news on the internet). Thus we had not deliberately stopped watching television. We had gradually stopped watching even without us noticing it for several weeks. Of course, there have been more changes like that since then. I just wanted to mention this to emphasize that Buddha Dhamma is not just a theory. It can be experienced: "..sandiṭthiko, akāliko, ehipassiko...".

- Many of you may wonder why is it a good thing to stop watching TV ("that is something I enjoy after a hard day at work'). But that is a perception we all get used to. I remember being very agitated at night watching TV coverage of the 2008 US presidential election season. It is more enjoyable to listen to or read Dhamma.
- Please note that I am not saying that one needs to stop watching TV to attain magga phala or that one who has attained the Sotāpanna stage would necessarily not watch TV. There was a Sotāpanna (named Sarakāni) during the time of the Buddha who could not give up his drinking habit as I mentioned in another post. Only at the Anāgāmī stage that one gives up kāma rāga (sense pleasures) as mentioned above. But each person could reduce or even give up some sense pleasures upon attaining the Sotāpanna stage, depending on one's personality (gati).

11. I also would like to point out that one should not restrict one's time just to learn Dhamma. One should also engage in meritorious deeds and make an homage to the Buddha, Dhamma, Sañgha as well. Those activities help get the mind to a state suitable to receive and comprehend Dhamma.

- This is a subtle aspect that was discussed in the "Anantara and Samanantara Paccaya," and a few other posts. Just like a seed needs suitable conditions (soil, water, sunlight, etc) to germinate and grow, one needs to make necessary conditions for the mind to be receptive to deep and subtle concepts by doing meritorious deeds that make one's mind joyful and calm. Engaging in giving (dāna) and living a moral life (sīla) help enormously with Bhāvanā (contemplation and comprehension).


### 17.7.4 Tiparivatṭa and Twelve Types of Ñāṇa (Knowledge)

January 29, 2016; revised January 7, 2019; February 22, 2020

## Introduction

1. We discussed the tiparivatt!a (three rounds of bondage) briefly in the post "Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta Interpretation - Uddesa, Niddesa, Patiniddesa." Here we will discuss it in a bit more depth.

- We remind ourselves that the Buddha delivered this sutta to the five ascetics right after attaining the Buddhahood. The five ascetics first refused to believe that the ascetic Siddhartha had attained the Buddhahood. This and other details of Buddha's life described in the Vinaya Pitaka, "WebLink: suttacentral: Going forth (Pabbajjā)." This particular account is in the sub-section, "ON THE GROUP OF FIVE."
- According to that account, the five ascetics first refused to believe that ascetic Gotama had attained the Buddhahood. They did not believe Buddha's words!
- Some people ask me whether there is a way to know some other person has attained the Sotāpanna stage. Those five ascetics, who were with the ascetic Siddhartha for five years, could not even believe Buddha's own words. How can any of us figure out whether another person has attained magga phala? Unless that person declares it, there is no way to know. Even then, there is no way to verify it. Now let us get back to the sutta.


## Four Noble Truths Comprehended in Three Rounds (Tiparivatta)

2. At each round of the three rounds (tiparivatta, three pieces of knowledge about the Four Noble Truths arose in the Buddha. Those 12 pieces of knowledge stated in section 4 through 7 of the sutta.

- We will follow the text of the sutta (you may want to print it out so that you can refer to each section): Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta Text.
- Of course the Buddha attained all 12 types of knowledges together upon attaining the Buddhahood, but we (normal humans) achieve them in four stages of Sotāpanna, Sakadāgāmi, Anāgāmi, and Arahant.


## The Three Rounds or Barriers

3. There are three rounds or barriers $(t i+$ parivatta) to overcome: (1) The $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$ or the four lowest realms,
(2) kāma loka (human realm and the six deva realms), (3) rūpa loka (16 rūpi brahma realms) and arūpa loka (4 arūpi brahma realms).

- At each round, one comprehends the Four Noble Truths to a certain extent.
- For example, when one becomes a Sotāpanna and overcomes the first round (barrier), he/she understands all Four Noble truths to some extent. When one becomes an Anägāmi by overcoming the second round, he/she has understood all Four Noble truths to a higher level, and it is complete at the Arahant stage.
- The Four Noble Truths are discussed at, "Four Noble Truths - Suffering and Its Elimination."


## First Noble Truth in Three Rounds

4. First is the knowledge about the suffering in the wider world of 31 realms, as stated in verse 4(i) (Idan dukkhan ariyasaccan'ti me). This Dhamma had never been known to the world. That is what a average human comprehends when he/she attains the Sotäpanna stage, and overcomes the first round of bondage in the three rounds (tiparivatta), i.e., becomes free of rebirths in the ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$.

- Then that knowledge becomes even more evident when one starts to lose attachments to this world; verse 4(ii). That is the second round of tiparivatt!a overcome at the $A n \bar{a} g \bar{a} m \bar{\imath}$ stage. The keyword is "pariñneyyan'ti," which means "seeing with less attachment to sense cravings" or "pirisindha" ("piri" or liking + "sindha" or removed in Sinhala). Thus an Anāgāmī will never be reborn in the kāma loka (i.e., overcome the second round of tiparivatta). [pariññeyya: [nt.] what should be known accurately]
- The last round is when "seeing" is done with all cravings removed, as stated by "pariññātan'ti." This happens to a human when attaining the Arahant stage. But here it is stated, "pariñnātan'ti me," as stated by the Buddha, where " $m e$ " means " I " in verse $4(\overline{\mathrm{i}})$. That will become more clear in section 8 . [pariññāta: [pp. of parijānāti] known for certain; comprehended; known accurately.]
- These three types of knowledge are about the First Noble Truth, dukkha sacca.


## Second Noble Truth in Three Rounds

5. Section 5 describes three pieces of knowledge for Second Noble Truth, the causes for suffering (dukkha samudaya). The Four Noble Truths are succinctly stated in Section 3.

- At the second round of the tiparivațta the root cause for suffering identified as "tanhh $\bar{a}$ "; verse $5(\mathrm{i})$ : Idan dukkhasamudayan ariyasaccan'ti me. This is the knowledge a Sotāpanna acquires simultaneously with round 1 for dukkha sacca. See, "Tanhā - How We Attach Via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance" for a discussion on tanhh $\bar{a}$.
- In the second round, one realizes that cause for suffering is attachments to all sensory pleasures (kāma rāga): "pahātabban'ti," where "pahä" means 'to remove". For an average human, this knowledge comes in two stages of Sakad $\bar{a} g \bar{a} m \bar{\imath}$ and $A n \bar{a} g \bar{a} m \bar{\eta}$; verse 5(ii). [pahātabba : which must be discarded, to be eliminated.]
- In the third round, at the Arahant stage, one realizes without any doubt that any tanhh $\bar{a}$ is a cause for suffering: "pahīnan'ti"; verse 5(iii). [pahīna : [pp. of pajahati] eliminated; abandoned; destroyed.]
- These three types of knowledge are about the Second Noble Truth, dukkha samudaya sacca.


## Third Noble Truth in Three Rounds

6. Section 6 describes the three pieces of knowledge for Third Noble Truth, stopping causes for suffering (dukkha nirodhaya).

- At the first round of the tiparivatṭa one realizes that tanhā must be removed to end the suffering; Idaim dukkhanirodhan ariyasaccan'ti me. As stated in section 3: "..Yo tassā yeva taṇhāya asesa-virāganirodho, chāgo, paṭinissaggo, mutti, anālayo..." This was discussed in the previous post, "Majiima Patipada - Way to Relinquish Attachments to this World." That realization sets in at preliminary level in the first round (i.e., Sotāpanna stage.) verse 6(i).
- In the second round, the need to lose all attachments to sensory pleasures (kāma rāga) is realized: "sacchikātabban'ti." For a normal human, this knowledge comes in two stages of Sakadāgāmī and Anāgāmi, when one actually starts seeing the perils of kama rāga; verse 6(ii). [sacchikātabba: [pt. p. of sacchikaroti] realising.]
- In the third round, one realizes without any doubt that any type of tanhh $\bar{a}$ (including bhava tanhh $\bar{a}$ and vibhava taṇhā) must be removed: "sacchikatan'ti"; verse 6(iii). [sacchikata: [pp. of sacchikaroti] realised; experienced for oneself.]


## Fourth Noble Truth in Three Rounds

7. The way to accomplish this nirodhaya comes in three rounds, as stated in section 7.

- The Noble Eightfold Path as the way to liberation is first grasped in the first round. For a normal human, this knowledge is gained when attaining the Sotāpanna stage: Idaỉ dukkha nirodhagāmini paṭipad $\bar{a}$
ariyasaccan'ti me. One "sees" the Path through the "Dhamma eye": verse 7(i). An enormous amount of defilements disappear just with this "clear vision". [dukkha nirodhagāmini paṭipadā = magga] [nirodha: [m.] extinction; cessation; the final truth.] [paṭipad $\bar{a}$, (f.) [ff. paṭi+pad] means of reaching a goal or destination, path, way, means, method, mode of progress.]
- Then in the second round, it is realized that one must cultivate the Noble Eightfold Path (bhāvanā) to remove the root causes (verse 7(ii)): bhāvetabban'ti [bhāvetabba: [pt. p. of bhāveti] should be cultivated.]
- In the third round, it is realized that one has completed that task, and there is nothing else to be done (verse 7(iii)): bhāvitan'ti [bhāvita: [pp. of bhāveti] increased; cultivated; developed.]
- However, as I mentioned above, all 12 types of knowledge arose in the Buddha simultaneously, upon attaining the Buddhahood.


## Declaring the Attainment of the Buddhahood

8. In section 8, the Buddha says: "I had NOT previously declared the Buddhahood since I had not attained all 12 types of knowledge..." Here, "na suvisuddhaì ahosi" means "had not accomplished it completely".

- In the next phrase, the Buddha declares that he has now done that (suvisuddham ahosi), and that he is declaring to the ".. world of humans, Devā, Brahmā,.." that he has attained the Buddhahood.
- In the next verse (Section 9,) he declares: "the vision arose in me (dassanaim udapādi), unmovable calm mindset arose in me (akuppā me vimutti), this is my last birth (ayaimantima $\overline{\boldsymbol{j}} \overline{\boldsymbol{a} t} \boldsymbol{i}$ ), and there will be no more bhava for me (natthi' dāni punabbhavo)."
- Lastly: "Idamavoca Bhagava": "Thus declared the Buddha."


## The Last Long Section

9. Section 10 stats that one of the five ascetics, Kondañ̃na, attained the Sotāpanna stage at the conclusion of the desanā. This section was discussed in the previous post, "Majjima Patipada - Way to Relinquish Attachments to this World."

- Then those Devā and Brahmā who attended the desanā identified in a repetitive manner; see, "Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta Interpretation - Uddesa, Niddesa, Patiniddesa."
- Note that this sutta mentions many of the 31 realms. Large numbers of Devā and Brahma from most of those realms were present to hear the first discourse. I have marked in blue those different realms.


## Path to Be Followed Sequentially

10. The important thing to understand is that one needs to go through these stages sequentially (only a Buddha goes through them at once). Some people try to get rid of "the perception of a self" even before the Sotāpanna stage. A "self" is going to be there until any kind of "gati" are still there. With the "apāya gati" removed at the Sotāpanna stage, one overcomes the first stage. "Kāma gati" reduce at the Sakadāgāmī stage, and eliminated at the An $\bar{a} g \bar{a} m \bar{\imath}$ stage, thus overcoming the second round of bondage.

- The two samyojanā of māna and uddhacca go away only at the Arahant stage together with the other three sanimyojanā of rūpa rāga, arūpa rāga, and avijjā. Māna is the perception, "I need to be treated well because I am superior in some way." The tendency to get at least irritated when not respected is uddhacca.
- However, the levels of māna, uddhacca, avijjā that an Anāgāmī has, are at much reduced level. They are gradually decrease through various stages of Nibbāna and disappear at the Arahant stage.
- Thus the critical step is to understand the nature of the wider world of 31 realms and get through the first round of bondage. That releases one from rebirths in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$ where the dangers are the highest. The
only way to do that is to learn and contemplate the true and pure Dhamma. Relinquishing sense pleasures comes naturally after that. trying to give up sense pleasures forcefully before the Sotāpanna stage will only lead to frustration.

11. A normal human, no matter how intelligent, cannot grasp the dangers of existence in the wider world of 31 realms because of various forms of wrong views or micchā dittthi. A Buddha discovers the existence of those realms and the unbearable suffering encountered (especially in the apa $\bar{a} \bar{a})$.

- Until one gets rid of the those wrong views and attain the Sotāpanna stage, it is impossible to "clearly see" the dangers of sense cravings.


## Suttā Should Not Be Translated Word-by-Word

12. That is why a sutta cannot be translated word by word. A sutta, states the key ideas or steps. The key ideas need detailed explanations. This sutta, even though delivered overnight, is summarized in a few pages.

- The Buddha must have described what we discussed here plus much more during the several hours of delivery of the sutta. In the next post, we will try to discuss some details making the connection to concepts that we have already discussed in other sections.
- As we have seen, the same holds for other suttā and for Paticca Samuppāda. Just listing the eleven steps in Pațicca Samuppāda will have no benefit. The steps in Paṭicca Samuppāda vary according to each individual Paṭicca Samuppāda cycle of relevance (akusala-mūla, kusala-mūla, etc.) Yet, the steps are same.


## Relinquishing Defilement via Three Rounds and Four Stages

February 4, 2016; revised September 12, 2019

## Tiparivattaya - Three Rounds of Bondage to This World

1. Here we will link the concepts like tiparivattaya in the sutta to other basic ideas that we have discussed in other sections throughout the site.

- I want to emphasize that "relinquish" means "giving up voluntarily, through acquired wisdom."
- When one acquires wisdom, one realizes that defilement arise due to cravings for sense pleasures.
- The real danger is when cravings for sense pleasures lead to bad kamma (such as killing) that makes one eligible for the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$.

2. The Buddha gained all 12 types of knowledge at once in attaining the Buddhahood. However, an average human being will go through the tiparivattaya (or the three rounds of bondage) via four stages of Nibbāna. We can compare this to building a new complex structure.

- A Sotapanna overcomes the first round by gaining the basic knowledge on the Four Noble Truths. Those are: what suffering is, the causes for suffering, stopping the causes from taking place, and the way to stop causes. It is seeing the plan to construct a building. All the details are in that blueprint.
- Let us continue with the analogy of constructing a building. The Sakadāgāmī stage is starting to build the building. With the basic structure finished, one is at the Anāgāmi stage. That overcomes the second round.
- When the building is all finished with the finer details, that is like attaining the Arahant stage. One has overcome the third round. There is nothing more to be done.


## Sotāpanna Anugāmi

3. Even though the above analogy gives the basic idea, we need to examine it in more detail. It is the Sotāpanna Anugāmi (one who is striving to become a Sotāpanna) who does the bulk of the work. $\mathrm{He} /$ she needs to learn the necessary background on "how to design and build the building."

- He/she cannot do that without learning the critical fundamentals from a Noble Person who has gone through at least one of the three rounds (or one of the four stages).
- Thus to become a Sotāpanna Anugāmi, one must learn the true nature of the world from an Ariya (at least a Sotāpanna). There are several posts on this issue. One can find by doing a keyword search or by looking through the posts under "Sotāpanna stage of Nibbāna."

4. To become a Sotāpanna Anugāmi, one first needs to get rid of the ten types of micchā diṭthi; see, "Micchā Ditthi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage."

- First, the mind needs to grasp that it has to be devoid of the extreme levels of greed (lobha), hate (dosa). That leads to a gradual reduction of total ignorance (moha) via learning the right message of the Buddha, i.e., one needs to see the dangers in acting with lobha, dosa, moha.
- One cannot grasp the dangers of the rebirth process if one does not believe that the four lowest realms with unimaginable suffering exist. Those who are striving to become Sotāpanna need to carefully read about what constitutes micchā ditṭhi, for example, "Key to Sotāpanna Stage - Ditthi and Vicikicca."

5. A subtle (but stronger) level of micchā ditthi remains until one starts comprehending Tilakkhaṇa (anicca, dukkha, anatta). That means one needs to begin understanding that it is not possible to achieve AND maintain ANYTHING to one's satisfaction.

- Just by having learned the true nature of this world (anicca, dukkha, anatta), a Sotāpanna Anugāmi gradually removes a bulk of defilement and attains the Sotāpanna stage. Now he/she can see the Path to the Arahanthood.
- It is important to note that he/she did not have to remove any attachments BY FORCE. All he/she did was to comprehend Dhamma to the level to see not only the unfruitfulness but the dangers of the rebirth process. See, "Is It Necessary for a Buddhist to Eliminate Sensual Desires?."


## Sotāpanna stage - First Round of Bondage Overcome

6. When one attains the Sotāpanna stage, one significantly reduces lobha (extreme greed), dosa (intense hate), and moha (sheer ignorance). They cut to the levels of rāga (attachment to worldly pleasures), patigha (tendency to become irritated when one does not get one wants), and avijja (not fully knowing the true nature of the world). These terms discussed in "Lobha, Dosa, Moha versus Raga, Patigha, Avijjā."

- By going through this first round of the tiparivattaya, a Sotāpanna removes the bulk of defilement. See, "Why a Sotāpanna is Better off than any King, Emperor, or a Billionaire." That illustrates how one is capable of doing immoral acts that makes one to be eligible for the apay $\overline{\boldsymbol{a}}$, just because one has micchā diṭthi.
- It is essential to realize that there are many people with micch $\bar{a}$ ditṭthi who go through their lives without doing any such horrible acts. However, the possibility to do such an act remains with one through future lives until one attains the Sotāpanna stage. That is what is meant by anusaya, the hidden defilement. They can be removed only via learning and comprehending Dhamma.

7. What is the reason that a Sotāpanna WILL NOT do any highly immoral act that makes him/her eligible to be born in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$ ? It is not something he/she does consciously. Such decisions come automatically. That is the result of comprehending anicca (unfruitful) nature of this world.

It sinks into one's mind that no matter what one can gain by doing such an act, it is going to far more dire consequences in the future. Not only that, but "what is the point of harming another being for anything in this world that one will have to eventually give up anyway?".

- It sinks to one's mind that no matter what one can gain by doing such immoral actions, it will lead to far more dire consequences in the future. Not only that but "what is the point of harming another being for anything in this world?." One will have to give up that eventually, when one dies!
- For example, one may kill someone and get a million dollars without getting caught, and may live a luxurious life. But he/she will pay for it by being born in the apāyā for millions of years to come.
- When one comprehends the anicca nature, one realizes deep down the foolishness (and the dangers) of such acts. Anusaya (craving) for such action will be removed when one attains the Sotāpanna stage. One would have shed such "gati" or character without a trace left. Again, there are many posts on these concepts.


## The Second Round of the tiparivattaya

8. The second round of the tiparivattaya is tackled in by a Sotāpanna in two steps. First, to become a Sakadāgāmī and then to become an Anāgāmī. An Anāgāmī has gone through the second round.

- Remember that a Sotāpanna has reduced lobha, dosa, moha to the levels of rāga, patigha, and avijjā; see \#4 above. Rāga means the attachments for things in this world, which are three basic types: (i) Kāma rāga means attachment to sense pleasures, i.e., those available in kāma loka. (ii) Rūpa rāga means attachment to jhānic pleasures in rūpa loka, and (iii) Arūpa rāga means attachment to jhānic pleasures in arūpa loka.
- Kāma rāga is actually of two "strengths": "klesha kāma" [klesha is in Sinhala (kilesā is in Pāli)] means attachment to sense pleasures, and "vatthu kāma" ("vatthu" means "property") is stronger because one also wants to own such sense objects.
- When a Sotappanna sees the perils of sense pleasures and the tendency to angry (patigha), both kāma rāga and paṭigha are first reduced to the levels of a Sakadāgāmi. Here, one actually loses the "vatthu $k \bar{a} m a "$ completely. Thus, a Sakadāgāmī is said to be "healthy forever" because he will never be born with a body that is subject to diseases. That means he will never be born at or below the human realm.
- As one sees the perils of $k \bar{a} m a$ assāda (sensory pleasures) starting at the Sotāpanna stage, one begins to see the world more clearly; see, "Assāda, Ādīnava, Nissarana - Introduction."

9. A Sakadāgām̄ makes more progress via contemplating the drawbacks or perils (ādīnava) of sense pleasures and overcomes the second round of bondage to become an Anāgāmī. Thus at this stage one eliminates the "klesha kāma" [klesha is in Sinhala (kilesā is in Pāli)] component of the kāma rāga, AND remainder of patigha.

- Thus an Anāgāmī has given up all attachments to the kāma loka (those including the human and deva realms), and hence will not be born anywhere in kāma loka.


## The Third Round

10. Now we can see that an $A n \bar{a} g \bar{a} m \bar{\imath}$ has only the rūpa rāga and arūpa rāga remaining with him/her (which are low levels of greed). Furthermore, there is no trace of hate (dosa) or friction (patigha) left. Thus only rebirths in the brahma realms are possible for an Anāgāmī. Of course, there is still some of avijjā leftover too.

- When an Anāgāmī overcomes those remaining defilement from his/her mind, the mind becomes purified. Then one attains the Arahant stage of Nibbāna by overcoming the third round of the tiparivattaya.

11. We are bound to the perpetual cycle of rebirths via ten fetters called "sanyojana = "san+yojana"; see, "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Samsāra)"; yojana means bond. Sanyojana is sometimes called samyojana.

- Those ten sanyojana (or samyojana) are also gradually removed as one goes through the three rounds or tiparivattaya in four stages.
- At the Sotāpanna stage, one removes the two sanyojana of sakkāya dittthi and silabbata paramasa by removing micch $\bar{a}$ ditṭhi. One also removes the vicikicch $\bar{a}$ sanyojana that is associated with moha, and thus reduces moha to avijj $\bar{a}$.

12. At the Sakadāgāmī stage, one reduces the two sanyojana of kāma rāga and patigha. Those two entirely removed by attaining the $A n \bar{a} g \bar{a} m \bar{l}$ stage.

- In terms of sanyojana, an Anāgāmī has five left to remove: rūpa rāga, arūpa rāga, māna, uddhacca, and $a v i j j \bar{a}$. With the removal of those, one attains the Arahanthood.


## Summary

13. Thus we can see that there are many types of analyses one can do. They all mean the same thing at the end. One needs to first comprehend the three characteristics of this world (anicca, dukkha, anatta) to some extent to reach the Sotāpanna stage. That is the first round of tiparivattaya. Then going through the second and third rounds of bondage via the next three stages of Nibbāna leads to the complete comprehension of anicca, dukkha, anatta. That leads to stopping the sansāric (or samsāric) journey filled with so much suffering.
14. Therefore, the whole journey is a truth-seeking mission about this world of 31 realms. That suffering can be intense in some realms. But one's comprehension of suffering is minimal at the beginning. The more one understands the true nature; one's mind AUTOMATICALLY gives up attachments to this world VOLUNTARILY.

- This is why majjhima pațipadā is not just "middle path" as discussed in a previous post in this series: "Majjhimā Patipadā - Way to Relinquish Attachments to this World."

15. Thus, the Dhammacakkappavattana sutta (or Dhamma Cakka Pavattana sutta) gives the blueprint of what Buddha Dhamma is all about. What the Buddha did in the following 45 years was to describe this blueprint in detail in various ways.

- More details on the material in this post at "Tiparivattaya and Twelve Types of Ñāna (Knowledge)."
- One could scan through all the posts at: Pure Dhamma - Sitemap


### 17.8 Anguttara Nikāya - Suttā on Key Concepts

June 20, 2018
Anguttara Nikāya has many short suttā (note that plural of sutta is suttā) with key information; see, "Nikāya in the Sutta Pitaka." In this subsection, we will discuss many such suttā at various levels.
"Dasa Akusala/Dasa Kusala - Basis of Buddha Dhamma"
"Dasa Akusala/Dasa Kusala - Basis of Buddha Dhamma - 2"

## 17.s. 1 Dasa Akusala/Dasa Kusala - Basis of Buddha Dhamma

June 20, 2018; revised February 17, 2021

## Moral Basis of Buddha Dhamma

1. Dasa kusala and dasa akusala are the moral foundations of Buddha Dhamma. Nature's laws are based on them.

- A wide variety of synonyms are given for dasa kusala and dasa akusala in a number of short suttā in Añguttara Nikāya; see, "Annguttara Nikāya - Suttā on Key Concepts."
- Any one of Dasa akusala corrupts a mind, and and they lead to samisāric suffering.
- Any one of Dasa kusala purifies a mind, and and they lead to permanent happiness (Nibbāna).


## Two Types of Micchā Ditṭhi - Removed Sequentially

2. We can easily see connections to a number of key Pāli words and concepts with this information.

- The most potent of the dasa akusala is micchā dittthi, which basically corrupts the mind and leads to other nine types of akusala. As we have discussed, micch $\bar{a}$ ditṭhi is of two types: 10 types of micch $\bar{a}$ ditṭhi and being unaware of Tilakkhana.
- As one first starts getting rid of the 10 types of micchā dittthi, one's tendency to do the other nine types of akusala will decrease. This is the same as saying that one will be cultivating samma diṭthi and the tendency to do other nine types of kusala will also increase.
- One is fully on the mundane path when one gets rid of the 10 types of micchā ditthi. One switches to the Noble Path when one starts comprehending Tilakkhaṇa.


## Deeper Level of Micchā Diṭthi Is Not Comprehending Four Noble Truths/Paṭicca Samuppāda/Tilakkhaṇa

3. This is why dasa kusala and dasa akusala are really the moral foundation of Buddha Dhamma. All deeper concepts like anatta are embedded in these as the deeper level of micchā ditthi; see, "Sakkāya Ditthi and Paticca Samuppāda."

- I had used two other sutt $\bar{a}$ (note that plural of sutta is suttā) not listed below to point out the connection to anatta in that post.
- The other concepts listed below: Dhamma/Adhamma, Ariya dhamma/Anariya dhamma, Saddhamma (beneficial dhamma)/Assaddhamma, Sappurisa (moral) dhamma /Asappurisa dhamma, Sādhu (praiseworthy)/Asādhu, Tapaniya (lead to a stressful mind) /Atapaniya, Acayagāmi (lead to rebirth)/Apacayagāmi, Dukkudrayo (lead to suffering) dhamma /Sukkudrayo dhamma, Ariyo maggalAnariya magga.
- Several other concepts become clear from other suttā, showing connections to other concepts. I may add more suttā, as I find them.


## Pali

## English

## Kusala Sutta (AN 10.180)

"Kusalañca vo, bhikkhave, desessāmi akusalañca. Taì suñātha ... pe ... katamañca, bhikkhave, akusalaì? Pāṇātipāto ... pe ... micchādiṭthi-idam vuccati, bhikkhave, akusalaì.

Katamañca, bhikkhave, kusalain? Pāṇātipāt $\bar{a}$ veramaṇi ... pe ... sammādiṭthi-idaín vuccati, bhikkhave, kusalan"ti.

## Akusala Sutta (AN 10.136)

"Akusalañca vo, bhikkhave, desessāmi kusalañca. Taï suṇātha ... pe ... katamañca, bhikkhave, akusalaì? Micchādiṭthi ... pe ... micchāvimutti-idain vuccati, bhikkhave, akusalaì. Katamañca, bhikkhave, kusalaï? Sammādiṭthi ... pe ... sammāvimutti-idaì vuccati, bhikkhave, kusalan"ti.

Akusala: Wrong views, wrong thoughts, wrong speech, wrong actions, wrong livelihood, wrong effort, wrong mindset, wrong samadhi, wrong understanding, wrong vimutti (defined in terms of micch $\bar{a}$ path).
Kusala: Opposites in the Noble Eightfold Path.

We see that Kusala/Akusala can be defined in two ways (dasa akusala/dasa kusala or micchā path/Noble Path), as shown by the above two sutt $\bar{a}$. The same is true for all other terms discussed below. However, in order to save space, I will just provide the name of the sutta on the right that gives the definition in terms of micch $\bar{a}$ path/Noble Path.

## Dhamma Sutta (AN 10.182) and Dhamma Sutta (An 10.138)

'"Dhammañca vo, bhikkhave, desessāmi adhammañca. Taì suṇātha ... pe ... katamo ca, bhikkhave, adhammo? Pāṇātipāto ... pe ... micchādiṭthi-ayaí vuccati, bhikkhave, adhammo.

Katamo ca, bhikkhave, dhammo? Pāṇātipātā veramaṇī ... pe ... sammādiṭthi-ayaí vuccati, bhikkhave, dhammo"ti.

Adhammo: taking a life, stealing, abusing sense pleasures, speaking untruth, slandering, harsh speech, gossiping, greed, ill-will, wrong views.
Dhammo: Opposites: see, "KilesaRelationship To Akusala, Kusala, And Puñña Kamma"

## Ariyadhamma Sutta (AN 10.179) and Ariyadhamma Sutta (AN 10.135)

"Ariyadhammañca vo, bhikkhave, desessāmi anariyadhammañca. Taỉ suṇātha ... pe ... katamo ca, bhikkhave, anariyo dhammo? Pāṇātipāto ... pe ... micchādiṭ!hi-ayaí vuccati, bhikkhave, anariyo dhammo.

Katamo ca, bhikkhave, ariyo dhammo? Pāṇātipātā veramaṇ̄ ... pe ... sammādiṭthi- ayaín vuccati, bhikkhave, ariyo dhammo"ti.

Anariyadhammo: taking a life, stealing, abusing sense pleasures, speaking untruth, slandering, harsh speech, gossiping, greed, illwill, wrong views.

Ariyadhammo: Opposites: see, "Kilesa Relationship To Akusala, Kusala, And Puñña Kamma"

## Saddhamma Sutta (AN 10.191) and Saddhamma Sutta (AN 10.147)

'Saddhammañca vo, bhikkhave, desessāmi
Asaddhammo (Asath/Bad dhamma): taking

Second part: "Dasa Akusala/Dasa Kusala - Basis of Buddha Dhamma -2."

## Dasa Akusala/Dasa Kusala - Basis of Buddha Dhamma - 2

June 27, 2018
This is the second post in a series. The first post: "Dasa Akusala/Dasa Kusala - Basis of Buddha Dhamma."

1. Dasa kusala and dasa akusala are the foundations of Buddha Dhamma. Nature's laws are based on them.

- A wide variety of synonyms are given for dasa kusala and dasa akusala in a number of short suttā in Añguttara Nikāya; see, "Annguttara Nikāya - Suttā on Key Concepts."
- Dasa akusala corrupt a mind and they lead to sansāric suffering.
- Dasa kusala purify a mind and they lead to permanent happiness (Nibbāna).

2. We can easily see connections to a number of key Pāli words and concepts with this information.

- The most potent of the dasa akusala is micchā ditthi, which basically corrupts the mind and lead to other nine types of akusala. As we have discussed, micch $\bar{a}$ dittthi is of two types: 10 types of micch $\bar{a}$ diṭthi and being unaware of the deeper laws of Nature including Tilakkhaṇa (sometimes asubha nature is also included, in addition to the anicca, dukkha, anatta nature).
- As one first starts getting rid of the 10 types of micch $\bar{a}$ diṭthi, one's tendency to do other nine types of akusala will decrease. This is the same as saying that one will be cultivating samma diṭthi and the tendency to do other nine types of kusala will also increase.
- One is fully on the mundane path when one gets rid of the 10 types of micch $\bar{a}$ dittthi. One switches to the Noble Path when one starts comprehending Tilakkhaṇa.

3. This is why dasa kusala and dasa kusala are really the foundation of Buddha Dhamma. All deeper concepts like anatta are embedded in these; see, "Dasa Akusala and Anatta - The Critical Link."

- I had used the first two sutta (note that plural of sutta is sutt $\bar{a}$ ) listed below to point out the connection to anatta in that post.
- The other suttā listed below involve several more of deeper concepts: Attho(Atto), Āsava, Sāvajja (Blamesworthy), Uppādetabba (should arise in a mind), Āsevitabba (to be associated with), $B h \bar{a} v e t a b b a$ (to be used), Bahulikatabba (to be used frequently), Anussaritabba (to be thought about or contemplated).
- In the previous post I discussed suttā involving the following basic concepts: Dhamma/Adhamma, Ariya dhamma/Anariya dhamma, Saddhamma (beneficial dhamma)/Assaddhamma, Sappurisa (moral) dhamma /Asappurisa dhamma, Sādhu (praiseworthy)/Asādhu, Tapaniya (lead to a stressful mind) /Atapaniya, Acayagāmi (lead to rebirth)/Apacayagāmi, Dukkudrayo (lead to suffering) dhamma /Sukkudrayo dhamma, Ariyo magga/Anariya magga;
see, "Dasa Akusala/Dasa Kusala - Basis of Buddha Dhamma."
- In future posts I will discuss other suttā, showing connections to other concepts.


## Pali

## English

## Attha Sutta (AN 10.181)

"Atthañca vo, bhikkhave, desessāmi anatthañca.
Tam̀ suṇātha, sādhukamं manasi karotha,

Anattho (One without refuge/protection): taking a life, stealing, abusing sense pleasures, speaking

## Pali

bhāsissāmi"ti. "Evaín, bhante"ti kho te bhikkhū bhagavato paccassosum. Bhagavā etadavoca: "katamo ca, bhikkhave, anattho? Pānātipāto, adinnādānaì, kāmesumicchācāro, musāvādo, pisuñā vācā, pharusā vācā, samphappalāpo, abhijjhā, byāpādo, micchādiṭthi-ayamं vuccati, bhikkhave, anattho.

Katamo ca, bhikkhave, attho? Pānātipāta veramaṇī, adinnādānā veramaṇī, kāmesumicchācārā veramaṇī, musāvādā veramaṇī, pisuṇàya vācāya veramaṇī, pharusāya vācāya veramaṇī, samphappalāpā veramaṇ̄̄, anabhijjhā, abyāpādo, sammādiṭthi-ayam vuccati, bhikkhave, attho"ti.

## Attha Sutta (AN 10.137)

"Atthañca vo, bhikkhave, desessāmi anatthañca. Taì suṇātha, sādhukaì manasi karotha, bhāsissāmı"ti. "Evaï, bhante"ti kho te bhikkhū bhagavato paccassosumi. Bhagavā etadavoca: "katamo ca, bhikkhave, anattho? Micchādiṭthi, micchāsañkappo, micchāvācā, micchākammanto, micchāājīvo, micchāvāyāmo, micchāsati, micchāsamādhi, micchāñāṇam, micchāvimuttiayaì vuccati, bhikkhave, anattho.

## English

untruth, slandering, harsh speech, gossiping, greed, ill-will, wrong views (defined in terms of dasa akusala).

Attho (One with refuge/protection): Opposites: see, "Dasa Akusala and Anatta - The Critical Link"

Anattho (One w/o refuge or protection):: Wrong views, wrong thoughts, wrong speech, wrong actions, wrong livelihood, wrong effort, wrong mindset, wrong samadhi, wrong understanding, wrong vimutti (defined in terms of micchā path).

## Attho (One with refuge/protection): Opposites in the Noble Eightfold Path.

Katamo ca, bhikkhave, attho? Sammāditṭhi, sammāsañkappo, sammāvācā sammākammanto, sammāājīvo, sammāvāyāmo, sammāsati, sammāsamādhi, sammāñāṇam, sammāvimuttiayaì vuccati, bhikkhave, attho"ti.

We see that attho/anattho can be defined in two ways (dasa akusala/dasa kusala or micchā path/Noble Path), as shown by the above two sutt $\bar{a}$. The same is true for all other terms discussed below. However, in order to save space, I will just provide the name of the sutta on the right that gives the definition in terms of micchā path/Noble Path.

## Āsava Sutta (AN 10.183) and Sāsava Sutta (AN 10.139)

"Sāsavañca vo, bhikkhave, dhammaì desessāmi anāsavañca. Tamं suṇātha ... pe ... katamo ca, bhikkhave, sāsavo dhammo? Pānātipāto ... pe ... micchādiṭ! hi-ayaì vuccati, bhikkhave, sāsavo dhammo.

Katamo ca, bhikkhave, anāsavo dhammo? Pānātipātā veramaṇi ... pe ... sammādiṭthiayà̇ vuccati, bhikkhave, anāsavo dhammo"ti.

Sāsava Dhamma (that help cultivate āsava): Wrong views, wrong thoughts, wrong speech, wrong actions, wrong livelihood, wrong effort, wrong mindset, wrong samadhi, wrong understanding, wrong vimutti (defined in terms of micch $\bar{a}$ path).
Anāsava Dhamma (that remove āsava):
Opposites in the Noble Eightfold Path.

## Sāvajja Sutta (AN 10.184) AND Sāvajja Sutta (AN 10.140)

"Sāvajjañca vo, bhikkhave, dhammaì desessāmi Sāvajja Dhammo (blamesworthy): taking a life, anavajjañca. Tam suṇātha ... pe ... katamo ca, bhikkhave, sāvajjo dhammo? Pānātipāto ... pe .. micchāditṭhi-ayà̀ vuccati, bhikkhave, sāvajjo dhammo.

Katamo ca, bhikkhave, anavajjo dhammo? Pāṇātipātā veramaṇī ... pe ... sammāditṭhiayam vuccati, bhikkhave, anavajjo dhammo"ti. stealing, abusing sense pleasures, speaking untruth, slandering, harsh speech, gossiping, greed, ill-will, wrong views.
Anavajijo dhammo (praiseworthy): Opposites: see, "Kilesa - Relationship To Akusala, Kusala, And Puñña Kamma"

## Uppādetabbadhamma Sutta (AN 10.193) AND Uppādetabba Sutta (AN 10.149)

"Uppādetabbañca vo, bhikkhave, dhammaì desessāmi na uppādetabbañca. Tam் suṇātha ... pe ... katamo ca, bhikkhave, na uppādetabbo dhammo? Pān̄ātipāto ... pe ... micchādiṭṭhiayaì vuccati, bhikkhave, na uppādetabbo dhammo.

Katamo ca, bhikkhave, uppādetabbo dhammo? Pānāātipātā veramaṇī ... pe ... sammādițthi-ayain vuccati, bhikkhave, uppādetabbo dhammo"ti.
na Uppādetabbo Dhammo (dhamma that should not arise): taking a life, stealing, abusing sense pleasures, speaking untruth, slandering, harsh speech, gossiping, greed, ill-will, wrong views.
Uppādetabba Dhammo (dhamma that should arise): Opposites: see, "Kilesa - Relationship To Akusala, Kusala, And Puñ̃̃a Kamma"

## Āsevitabbadhamma Sutta (AN 10.194) and Āsevitabba Sutta (AN 10.150)

"Āsevitabbañca vo, bhikkhave, dhammain desessāmi nāsevitabbañca. Taỉ suṇātha ... pe ... katamo ca, bhikkhave, nāsevitabbo dhammo? Pānātipāto ... pe ... micchādiṭthi- ayamं vuccati, bhikkhave, nāsevitabbo dhammo.

Katamo ca, bhikkhave, āsevitabbo dhammo? Pānāātipātà veramaṇī ... pe ... sammādițthi-ayain vuccati, bhikkhave, āsevitabbo dhammo"ti.

Nāsevitabba dhammo (dhamma that one should not be associated with): taking a life, stealing, abusing sense pleasures, speaking untruth, slandering, harsh speech, gossiping, greed, ill-will, wrong views.
$\bar{A} s e v i t a b b a d h a ~ d h a m m o ~(d h a m m a ~ t h a t ~ o n e ~$ should be associated with): Opposites: see, "Kilesa - Relationship To Akusala, Kusala, And Puñña Kamma"

## Bhāvetabbadhamma Sutta (AN 10.195) AND Bhāvetabba Sutta (AN 10.151)

"Bhāvetabbañca vo, bhikkhave, dhammaì desessāmi na bhāvetabbañca. Taì suñātha ... pe ... katamo ca, bhikkhave, na bhāvetabbo dhammo? Pānāātipāto ... pe ... micchādiṭṭhiayaì vuccati, bhikkhave, na bhāvetabbo dhammo.

Katamo ca, bhikkhave, bhāvetabbo dhammo? Pānātipātā veramaṇī ... pe ... sammādiṭthi-ayamं vuccati, bhikkhave, bhāvetabbo dhammo"ti.

Dhamma thould not be used (na bhāvetabbo dhammo): taking a life, stealing, abusing sense pleasures, speaking untruth, slandering, harsh speech, gossiping, greed, ill-will, wrong views. Dhamma that should be used (bhāvetabbo dhammo): Opposites: see, "Kilesa - Relationship To Akusala, Kusala, And Puñña Kamma"

## Pali

## English

## Bahulīkātabba Sutta (AN 10.196) AND Bahulīkattabba Sutta (AN 10.152)

"Bahulīkātabbañca vo, bhikkhave, dhammaí desessāmi na bahulīkātabbañca. Tà̀ suṇātha ... pe ... katamo ca, bhikkhave, na bahulīkātabbo dhammo? Pānāātipāto ... pe ... micchādiṭthiayaì vuccati, bhikkhave, na bahulīkātabbo dhammo.

Katamo ca, bhikkhave, bahulīkātabbo dhammo? Pānāātipātā veramaṇī ... pe ... sammādițthi-ayami vuccati, bhikkhave, bahulīkātabbo dhammo"ti.

Dhamma that should not be frequently associated with (na bahulīkātabbo dhammo): taking a life, stealing, abusing sense pleasures, speaking untruth, slandering, harsh speech, gossiping, greed, ill-will, wrong views.
Dhamma that should be frequently associated with (bahulīkātabbo dhammo): Opposites: see, "Kilesa - Relationship To Akusala, Kusala, And Puñña Kamma"

Dhamma that should not be experienced (na sacchikātabbo dhammo Dhammo): taking a life, stealing, abusing sense pleasures, speaking untruth, slandering, harsh speech, gossiping, greed, ill-will, wrong views.
(Dhamma that should be experienced (sacchikātabbo dhammo): Opposites: see, "Kilesa - Relationship To Akusala, Kusala, And Puñña Kamma"

Sacchikātabba Sutta (AN 10.198) AND
Sacchikātabba Sutta (AN 10.154)
"Sacchikātabbañca vo, bhikkhave, dhammaì desessāmi na sacchikātabbañca. Tà̇ suṇātha pe ... katamo ca, bhikkhave, na sacchikātabbo dhammo? Pānātipāto ... pe ... micchādiṭthiayamं vuccati, bhikkhave, na sacchikātabbo dhamтo.

Katamo ca, bhikkhave, sacchikātabbo dhammo? Pāṇātipātā veramaṇī ... pe ... sammāditṭhi-ayaì vuccati, bhikkhave, sacchikātabbo dhammo"ti.

## Anussaritabbadhamma Sutta (AN 10.197) AND Anussaritabba Sutta (AN 10.153)

"Anussaritabbañca vo, bhikkhave, dhammaì desessāmi nānussaritabbañca. Tamं suṇātha ... pe ... katamo ca, bhikkhave, nānussaritabbo dhammo? Pān̄ātipāto ... pe ... micchādiṭṭhiayàं vuccati, bhikkhave, nānussaritabbo dhamто.

Katamo ca, bhikkhave, anussaritabbo dhammo? Pān̄ātipātā veramaṇī ... pe ... sammādițthi-ayam̀ vuccati, bhikkhave, anussaritabbo dhammo"ti.

Dhamma that should not be thought about (na anussaritabbo dhammo): taking a life, stealing, abusing sense pleasures, speaking untruth, slandering, harsh speech, gossiping, greed, ill-will, wrong views.

Dhamma that should be thought about (anussaritabbo dhammo): Opposites: see, "Kilesa - Relationship To Akusala, Kusala, And Puñña Kamma"

### 17.9 Na Cetanākaraṇīya Sutta

## May 21, 2018; revised May 23, 2018; November 19, 2021; July 23, 2022

1. "Na Cetanākarañiya Sutta" is the correct name of the sutta, NOT "Cetanākarañ̄ya Sutta," as it is entitled on several websites, including the Sutta Central website: "WebLink: suttacentral: Cetanākaranīyasutta (AN 11.2)." The English translation there is entitled accordingly and erroneously: "Making a Wish."

- Cetanā is what one intends or wishes; karaniya means "what one should do," and "na" means "not." The sutta is the teaching: "Just by wishing such and such, one will not get to Nibbāna."
- The correct title appears in the Pāli/Sinhala Buddha Jayanthi Tipitaka Series XXIII, A $\dot{n} g u t t a r a ~ N i k a \bar{a} a$ (Part 6, p.586).
- Therefore, the English title of the sutta should be something like "Making a Wish Will Not Work."

2. It is a fairly short sutta. So, I decided to translate the full sutta and put it side-by-side with the Pāli version so that one can see how it is translated.

- As mentioned above, there is no point in just chanting or repeating to oneself, "May I be free of this, May I be that," etc.
- One must map out what must be done to stop future suffering and follow that path. There are no easy solutions like sitting down in a quiet place and just chanting or meditating, even though that should be a part of the whole process.
- This step-by-step process is summarized clearly in the sutta.
- I have put in bold every other verse, so it would be easier to match the English and Pāli verses.
"For a person engaged in moral conduct (sīla), and "Sillavato, bhikkhave, silasampannassa na is thus moral and virtuous, there is no need to wish cetanāya karañ̄̄yain: 'avippatisāro me (cetanā): "May I be able to act with a calm mind." uppajjat $\bar{u} t t$. Dhammatā esā, bhikkhave, yaim Agitation of the mind does not arise in a person sīlavato sīlasampannassa avippatisāro uppajjati. engaged in silla and is virtuous.
"For a person free from an agitated mind, there Avippatisārissa, bhikkhave, na cetanāya is no need to wish (cetanā): "May happiness karan̄̄yain: 'pāmojjam me uppajjatū'ti. arises in me." Happiness (tranquility) arises Dhammatā esā, bhikkhave, yam avippaṭisārissa naturally in a person free from agitation of the pāmojjaì uppajjati.
mind.
"For a person with happiness (tranquility of mind), Pamuditassa, bhikkhave, na cetanāya there is no need to wish (cetanā): "May joy arises in Karañìyain: 'pīti me uppajjatū'ti. Dhammatā esā, me."Joy arises in a person with a peaceful mind. bhikkhave, yam pamuditassa pīti uppajjati.
"For a joyful person, there is no need to wish Pītimanassa, bhikkhave, na cetanāya (cetanā): "May I feel lightness in the body." A karañ̄yain: 'kāyo me passambhatū'ti. joyful person attains bodily lightness Dhammatā esā,bhikkhave, yaí pītimanassa (passaddhi). kāyo passambhati.
'For a person with bodily lightness, there is no need Passaddhakāyassa, bhikkhave, na cetanāya to wish (cetanā): "May I experience sukha." A karañ̄yam: 'sukhaim vediyām $\vec{\imath} t$. Dhammatā esā, person with bodily lightness experiences sukha. bhikkhave, yam passaddhakāyo sukhaì vediyati.
"For a person experiencing sukha, there is no Sukhino, bhikkhave, na cetanāya karañ̄yain: need to wish (cetan $\bar{a})$ : "May my mind get to 'cittaì me samādhiyat $\bar{u}$ 'ti. Dhammat $\bar{a}$ esā, samādhi." Naturally, the mind of a person bhikkhave, yam sukhino cittaí samādhiyati. experiencing sukha gets to samädhi.
'For a person who gets to samādhi, there is no need Samāhitassa, bhikkhave, na cetanāya karañ̄̄yam: to wish (cetanā): "May I know and see the true 'yathābhūtaì jānāmi passām $\vec{\imath} t i$. Dhammat $\bar{a}$ es $\bar{a}$,
nature of things in this world (yathābhūta ñāna or bhikkhave, yaim samāhito yathābhūtaì jānāti comprehension of Tilakkhana)." A person who gets passati.
to samādhi will see the true nature of this world.
(Here, it is assumed that one has learned
Tilakkhana from an Ariya; see \#3 and \#4
below).
"For a person with yathābhūta ñāna, there is no Yathābhūtaí, bhikkhave, jānato passato na need to wish (cetanā): "May I not be attracted cetanāya karañ̄̄yam: 'nibbindām $\vec{\imath} \boldsymbol{t} \boldsymbol{t}$. to temptations in this world (virāga)." A person Dhammatā esā, bhikkhave, yaì yathābhūtaì who knows and sees things as they are naturally jānaì passaim nibbindati. dispassionate towards things in this world.
"For a person who thus naturally dispassionate, there Nibbinnassa, bhikkhave, na cetanāya karañ̄yain: is no need to wish (cetanā): 'May I be free of 'virajjām $\vec{\imath} t i$. Dhammatā es $\bar{a}$, bhikkhave, yaì cravings for things in this world." A person who is nibbinno virajjati.
dispassionate through understanding the real nature
of things will be free of cravings.
"For a person who is free of cravings, there is Virattassa, bhikkhave, na cetanāya karan̄̄yain: no need to wish (cetanä): "May I realize the 'vimuttiñānadassanamं sacchikarom’’ti. knowledge of the final release from all suffering Dhammatā esā, bhikkhave, yam viratto vimutti(vimuttiñānadassana)." A person who is free of $\tilde{n} a ̄ n a d a s s a n a \dot{m}$ sacchikaroti. cravings will attain the final release from all suffering.
'In this way, bhikkhus, freedom from cravings Iti kho, bhikkhave, virāgo vimuttiñ̄ānadassanat(dispassion) has released from all suffering as its tho vimuttiñānadassanānisaimso, nibbidā reward, Disenchantment has dispassion as its virāgatthā virāgānisamisā, yathābhūtañạ̄adasreward, yathābhūta ñāna has, disenchantment as sanaì nibbidatthaì nibbidānisamisaì, samādhi its reward, samādhi has yathābhūta ñāna as its yathābhūtañānadassanattho yathābhūtañānadasreward, sukha has samādhi as its reward, bodily sanānisamiso, sukhai் samādhatthaim samādhālightness (passaddhi) has sukha as its reward, joy nisamisaì, passaddhi sukhatthā sukhānisamisa, has bodily lightness as its reward. A calm mind has pīti passaddhatthā passaddhānisaimsā, pāmojjaìm joy as its reward, freedom from an agitated mind has pìtatthai் pītānisaìsaì, avippaṭisāro a calm mind as its reward, and moral conduct has pāmojjattho pāmojjānisaìso, kusalāni sìlāni freedom from an agitated mind as its reward. avippaṭisāratthāni avippatisārānisaimsāni. Iti 'In this way, dhamma qualities cultivated and fulfilled kho, bhikkhave, dhammā dhamme abhisandenti, will lead to more dhamma qualities in the Noble Path dhamma dhamme paripūrenti apārā pāraì in getting from this shore to the Far shore gamanāyä"ti.
(Nibbāna)."

3. The path to Nibbāna is not a straight step-by-step process in a linear fashion. Rather, a given person cycles through the steps repeatedly until the Arahant phala moment is attained.

- One starts with mundane sīla and can get to the early stages of samādhi without hearing about Tilakkhaṇa. One cannot proceed beyond that with just sïla, which is on shaky grounds, until one comprehends Tilakkhana.
- Once one starts comprehending Tilakkhaṇa (and becomes a Sotāpanna/Sotāpanna Anugāmi), one's sīla (moral conduct) will become unbreakable: It is called Ariyakānta sīla.
- That is when one gets into the Noble Eightfold Path.

4. In other words, there are two paths: One starts on the mundane path, and with the comprehension of Tilakkhana, one switches to the Noble Path; see, "Buddha Dhamma - In a Chart."
－Only a Sammasambuddha or a pacceka Buddha can figure out（or comprehend）Tilakkhaṇa by themselves；all others have to learn Tilakkhaṇa from an Ariya．

5．Another key thing to note is that there is no mention of the need to attain $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$ ．
Jhān $\bar{a}$ are a special kind of samādhi．It is good to cultivate $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$ ，but they are not necessary to attain magga phala．

And there are innumerable types of samādhi；one gets to Ariya samādhi（conducive to attaining Nibbāna） with the comprehension of Tilakkhaṇa．

6．Key words：
－Avippaṭisāra（రోతిల్రెజర வอ（vigilance）in Sinhala［vipilisara bava in Sinhala］）：One＇s mind is normally agitated．It tends to go everywhere．This is why it is hard for most people to comprehend Dhamma．When one focuses on maintaining moral conduct（sila）and stays away from dasa akusala， this agitation of the mind will gradually diminish，and one will be able to concentrate on a given concept for longer．［Avippaṭisāra ；［a＋vippațisāra］absence of regret or remorse］
 or tranquility of mind is the closest English translation．This is below the＂joyful state of mind＂or pīti （з 8 \％is in Sinhala［priti in Sinhala］）．
－passambhati／passaddha：calming down（lightness）of the physical body（2x x w 飞ొ cep［kāya sæhælluva］（physically light））．
－nibbindati：get weary of，unsatisfied with（毋ைய゚ర゚○［kalakirima］（disappointment））．
－virajjati（related to virāga）：absence of cravings．［virajjati ：$[v i+r a d+y a]$ detaches oneself，shows lack of interest in．］
－vimutti：becomes free of suffering，final release（ூ2）మibs［vimukti］（iberation））．

### 17.10 <br> Paṭhama Mettā Sutta (AN 4.125)

## June 7, 2018; revised June 8, 2018; September 13, 2018; August 30, 2020

1. WebLink: suttacentral: Pathama Mettā Sutta (AN 4.125) clearly states the difference between $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$ cultivated by Noble Persons (Ariy $\bar{a}$ ) and those who are merely on the mundane path (assutav $\bar{a}$ puthujjano). Here assutava puthujjano means one who has not comprehended Tilakkhaṇa; one MUST have removed the ten types of micchā diṭthi even to cultivate anāriya jhāna.

- Since $j h a \overline{n i c}$ states represent the same $r \bar{u} p \bar{a} v a c a r a$ realms, the $j h a \overline{n i c}$ experience could be the same for both Ariya and anāriya jhāna (I am not sure).
- However, the critical difference is that Noble Persons (who have cultivated jhāna) NEVER come back to kāma loka and attain Parinibbāna, while the anāriyās come back to kāma loka, and could be born in the apāyā too.
- That is because the Ariyā have REMOVED kāma rāga (ucceda pahāna), while anāriyās have only SUPPRESSED them (vikkhambhana pahāna).
[pahāna : 'overcoming', abandoning. There are 5 kinds of overcoming:
(1) overcoming by repression (vikkhambhana-pahāna), i.e. the temporary suspension of the 5 hindrances (nīvarana, q.v.) during the absorptions,
(2) overcoming by the opposite (tadanga-pahāna),
(3) overcoming by destruction (samuccheda-pahāna),
(4) overcoming by tranquillization (patipassaddhi-pahāna),
(5) overcoming by escape (nissarana-pahāna).
[nissarana : [nt. ] 1. going out; departure; 2. escape. ]
(1) "Among these, 'overcoming by repression' is the pushing back of adverse things, such as the 5 mental hindrances (nīvarana q.v), etc., through this or that mental concentration (samādhi, q.v.), just as a pot thrown into moss-clad water pushes the moss aside....
(2)" 'Overcoming by the opposite' is the overcoming by opposing this or that thing that is to be overcome, by this or that factor of knowledge belonging to insight (vipassana $\mathrm{q} . \mathrm{v}$.), just as a lighted lamp dispels the darkness of the night. In this way, the personality-belief (sakkāyaditthi, s. ditthi) is overcome by determining the mental and corporeal phenomena ... the view of uncausedness of existence by investigation into the conditions... the idea of eternity by contemplation of impermanency ... the idea of happiness by contemplation of misery....
(3)"If through the knowledge of the noble path (s. ariyapuggala) the fetters and other evil things cannot continue any longer, just like a tree destroyed by lightning, then such an overcoming is called 'overcoming by destruction' "(Vis.M. XXII, 110f.).
(4) When, after the disappearing of the fetters at the entrance into the paths, the fetters, from the moment of fruition (phala) onwards, are forever extinct and stilled, such overcoming is called the 'overcoming by tranquillization'.
(5) "The 'overcoming by escape' is identical with the extinction and Nibbāna" (Pts.M. I. 27). (App.).]

2. The Brahma Vihāra in Buddha Dhamma are four types: mettā (loving-kindness), karuṇā (compassion, the opposite of karuṇā is anger), muditā (empathetic joy), and upekkhā (equanimity towards all beings).

- The four realms correspond to the four highest-intensity rūpāvacara jhāna levels (in sutta categorization of $j h a ̄ n a)$.
- We can clearly see the concept of gati; most translators do not even know what that word means.
- Instead of translating the sutta word-by-word, I have just provided the meaning of each verse.

|  | Pāli | English |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 1 | Cattārome, bhikkhave, puggalā santo samivijijamānā lokasmimi. Katame cattāro? | Bhikkhus, there are four types of "cooled down" individuals (santo). Which four? |
| 2 |  | Bhikkhus, There is an individual who cultivates mettă bhavana in four directions. Thus he keeps pervading above, below, and all around the universe with compassion. |
| 3 | Tattha thito tadadhimutto tabbahulavihārī aparihīno kālai் kurumāno brahmakāyikānai் devānaì sahabyataì upapajjati. Brahmakāyikānam், bhikkhave, devānaì kappo āyuppamāṇain. Tattha puthujjano yāvat $\bar{a} y u k a \dot{m}$ thatv $\bar{a}$ yāvatakaì tesaì devānaì āyuppamāṇaì taín sabbai் khepetv $\bar{a}$ nirayampi gacchati tiracchānayonimpi gacchati pettivisayampi gacchati. | When he dies, he is reborn in the realm Brahmakayika realm. Those devas have a lifespan of a eon (kappa). An anāriya person having stayed there, having used up all the lifespan of those devas, can be reborn in hell, animal womb, or the state of the hungry ghosts. |
| 4 | Bhagavato pana sāvako tattha yāvatāyukaì thatv $\bar{a}$ yāvatakaì tesaì devānaì āyuppamānaì taì sabbaì khepetvā tasmimyeva bhave parinibbāyati. Ayaì kho, bhikkhave, viseso ayaì adhippayāso idamं nānākaraṇaì sutavato ariyasāvakassa assutavatā puthujjanena, yadidaì gatiya upapattiyā sati. | But a disciple of the Blessed One (an Ariya), having used up all the life-span of those devas, attains Parinibbāna there. The difference is in the gati between a Noble Person and an anāriya (assutavatā puthujjanena). |
| 5 | Puna caparam, bhikkhave, idhekacco puggalo karunāsahagatena cetasā ekaì disaì pharitv $\bar{a}$ viharati,..(rest of the verse same as that of 2 above). | Again, Bhikkhus, There is an individual who cultivates karuna bhāvanā in four directions (rest same as in 2 above). |
| 6 | Tattha thito tadadhimutto tabbahulavihārī aparihīno kālaì kurumāno ābhassarānaì devānaì sahabyataì upapajjati. $\bar{A} b h a s s a r a ̄ n a \dot{m}, \quad b h i k k h a v e, ~ d e v a ̄ n a \dot{m}$ dve kappā āyuppamānàm. Tattha puthujjano yāvatāyukaì thatvā yāvatakaì tesaì devānaì āyuppamānaì taì sabbaì khepetvā nirayampi gacchati tiracchānayonimpi gacchati pettivisayampi gacchati. | When he dies, he is reborn in the Abhassara realm. Those devas have a life-span of 8 eons (Maha Kappa). An anāriya person having stayed there, having used up all the life-span of those devas, can be reborn in hell, animal womb, or the state of the hungry ghosts. |
| 7 | Bhagavato pana sāvako tattha yāvatāyukaiं thatvā yāvatakaì tesaì devānaì àyuppamānaì taì sabbaì khepetvā tasmimyeva bhave parinibbāyati. Ayam kho, bhikkhave, viseso ayamं adhippayāso idamं nānākaraṇàm sutavato ariyasāvakassa assutavat $\bar{a}$ puthujjanena, yadidaì gatiy $\overline{\boldsymbol{a}}$ upapattiyā sati. | But a disciple of the Blessed One (an Ariya), having used up all the life-span of those devas, attains Parinibbāna there. The difference is in the gati between an the noble ones and an anāriya (assutavatā puthujjanena). |

Puna caparaì, bhikkhave, idhekacco puggalo Again, Bhikkhus, There is an individual who
pharitv $\bar{a}$ viharati,..(rest of the verse same as that of 2 above).
Tattha ṭhito tadadhimutto tabbahulavihār̄̄ When he dies, he is reborn in the Subhakinha aparihīno kālaì kurumāno Subhakinha devānaì sahabyataì upapajjati. Subhakinha, bhikkhave, devānaì cattāro kappā having used up all the life-span of those devas,
9 āyuppamānaim. Tattha puthujjano can be reborn in hell, animal womb, or the state of yāvatāyukaì thatvā yāvatakaì tesaì the hungry ghosts.
devānaì āyuppamānaì tà̀ sabbaì khepetv $\bar{a}$ nirayampi gacchati tiracchānayonimpi gacchati pettivisayampi gacchati.
Bhagavato pana sāvako tattha yāvatāyukaì But a disciple of the Blessed One (an Ariya), thatv $\bar{a}$ yāvatakaì tesaì devānaì having used up all the life-span of those devas, $\bar{a} y u p p a m a ̄ n a \dot{m}$ taì sabbaì khepetvā attains Parinibbāna there. The difference is in tasmimyeva bhave parinibbāyati. Ayaim kho, the gati between an the noble ones and an bhikkhave, viseso ayai் adhippayāso idamं anāriya (assutavatā puthujjanena).
nānākaraṇam sutavato ariyasāvakassa
assutavatā puthujjanena, yadidaì gatiyā upapattiyā sati.

Puna caparam, bhikkhave, idhekacco puggalo upekkhāsahagatena cetasā ekaì disaì cultivates upekkha bhāvanā in four directions. pharitv $\bar{a}$ viharati,..(rest of the verse same as that of 2 above)
Tattha thito tadadhimutto tabbahulavihār $\bar{\imath}$ When he dies, he is reborn in the Vehapphala aparihīno kālaì kurumāno vehapphalānai̇ realm. Those devas have a life-span of 500 eons devānaì sahabyataì upapajjati. (kappa). An anāriya person having stayed there, Vehapphalānaì, bhikkhave, devānaì pañca having used up all the life-span of those devas, kappasatāni āyuppamānam. Tattha can be reborn in hell, animal womb, or the state of puthujjano yāvatāyukaì thatvā yāvatakaì the hungry ghosts.
tesaì devānaì āyuppamānaì tà̀ sabbaì
khepetv $\bar{a}$ nirayampi gacchati
tiracchānayonimpi gacchati pettivisayampi gacchati.
Bhagavato pana sāvako tattha yāvatāyukaì thatv $\bar{a}$ yāvatakaì tesaì devānaì having used up all the life-span of those devas, $\bar{a} y u p p a m a ̄ n a \dot{m}$ taìm sabbaim khepetvā attains Parinibbāna there. The difference is in tasmimyeva bhave parinibbāyati. Ayam kho, the gati between an the noble ones and an bhikkhave, viseso ayaì adhippayāso idaì anāriya (assutavatā puthujjanena).
nānākaranaim sutavato ariyasāvakassa
assutavatā puthujjanena, yadidaì gatiy $\bar{a}$ upapattiyā sati.
Ayaí kho, bhikkhave, viseso ayam Bhikkhus, this is the difference in outcomes due to adhippayāso idamं nānākaraṇam sutavato difference in gati between a Noble Person and ariyasāvakassa assutavatā puthuijanena, an anāriya (assutavatā puthujjanena). yadidaì gatiy $\bar{a}$ upapattiy $\bar{a}$ sati. Ime kho, bhikkhave, cattāro puggalā santo samivijjamānā lokasmin"ti.

## Notes:

1. The four jhānic states attained by an Ariya discussed in this sutta are from anāriya jhāna. Therefore, they are jhānic states attained specifically by a Sotāpanna, by SUPPRESSING kāma rāga. If a Sotāpanna attained even the first Ariya jhāna, then he/she would be born not in those four realms, but in the realms
 Existence."
2. Note that by cultivating mettā, karuṇa $\bar{a}, m u d i t \bar{a}$, and upekkh $\bar{a} b h \bar{a} v a n \bar{a}$, one is born in Brahmak $\bar{a} y i k a$, Abhassara, Subhakinha, and Vehappala Brahma realms with lifetimes of 20000, 40000, 60000, and 84000 kappā.
3. For more information on jhānā, see "Samādhi, Jhāna (Dhyāna), Magga Phala" and "Power of the Human Mind."
4. Information on 31 realms comes from suttā like this one. I have corrected the lifetimes of these four rūpāvacara realms in the post, " 31 Realms of Existence."

### 17.11 Kukkuravatika Sutta (Majjhima Nikāya 57) - Kammakkhaya

June 11, 2018; revised April 12, 2020; December 29, 2020; January 7, 2021; January 22, 2021 (\#11)

## What Is Meant by Kammakkhaya?

1. Kammakkhaya is a bit difficult concept to understand. WebLink: suttacentral: Kukkuravatika Sutta (Majjhima Nikaya 57) explains it briefly and also clarifies how pāpa (kaṇha) kamma and puñña (sukka) kamma lead to bad and good kamma vipāka in various realms. Kusala kamma (also called khammakkhayāya kamma in this sutta) leads to kammakkhaya or "effectively nullifying" kamma vipāka.

- Kanhha means "dark or black" (Sinhala word is "kalla"), and sukka is "white or bright" (Sinhala "sudu"). The King of Gods is named "Sakka" because he is engaged in sukka (puñña) kamma.
- Please read the post, "Kanha (Dark) and Sukka (Bright) Kamma and Kammakkhaya" before reading this one, because all these are discussed in detail there. You will not be able to understand this post without reading that.
- Before discussing kammakkhaya, the Buddha also explains how one's gati (habits/character) can lead to corresponding future rebirths.


## Kukkuravatika Sutta (MN 57) - Introduction

2. The first half of the sutta describes the background, which led the Buddha to analyze various types of kamma. We will first go through the essence of the first half, just stating the essence.

- Suttā become boring only because the translators basically translate the whole sutta word-by-word. There are many repetitive statements in a sutta (done for various reasons, the effective oral transmission being one), and it is unnecessary to translate word-by-word.
- Furthermore, it is better to provide the essence of a verse rather than translating word-by-word, which can lead to wrong interpretations in some cases.

3. "Evaì me sutaì - ekaì samayaì bhagavā koliyesu viharati haliddavasanaì nāma koliyānaì nigamo. Atha kho punno ca koliyaputto govatiko acelo ca seniyo kukkuravatiko yena bhagavā tenupasañkamimisu; upasañkamitvā puṇno koliyaputto govatiko bhagavantaì abhivādetv $\bar{a}$ ekamantaì nisīdi. Acelo pana seniyo kukkuravatiko bhagavatā saddhim sammodi. Sammodanīyaì kathaí sāran̄̄̀yam vītisāretvā kukkurova palikujjitvāekamantaì nisīdi. Ekamantaim nisinno kho punno koliyaputto govatiko bhagavantaì etadavoca: "ayamं, bhante, acelo seniyo kukkuravatiko dukkarakārako chamānikkhittaì bhojanaì bhuñjati. Tassa taì kukkuravataì dīgharattaì samattaì samādinnaì. Tassa kā gati, ko abhisamparāyo"ti? "Alaì, puṇna, tiṭthatetaì; mā maì etaì pucchī"ti. Dutiyampi kho puṇno koliyaputto govatiko ... pe ... tatiyampi kho puṇno koliyaputto govatiko bhagavantaì etadavoca: "ayam், bhante, acelo seniyo kukkuravatiko dukkarakārako chamānikkhittaì bhojanamं bhuñjati. Tassa taì kukkuravataì dīgharattaì samattaì samādinnaì. Tassa kā gati, ko abhisamparāyo"ti?"

- Translated: "Thus have I heard. On one occasion, the Buddha lived in the Koliyan country where there was a Koliyans' town named Haliddavasana. Then Puṇna, an ascetic who lived like an ox (govatiko). This was a cult based on the belief that one can attain Nibbāna by subjecting the body to harsh living like an ox). He went with Seniya, an ascetic who lived like a dog (kukkuravatiko). Puṇ̣a, the ox-mimicking ascetic, said to the Buddha: "Venerable sir, this Seniya is a naked dog-ascetic who does what is hard to do: he eats his food when it is thrown to the ground; he does everything like a dog. He has been practicing that for a long time. What will be his rebirth? What will be his future gati?
- "Enough, Puṇna, let that be. Do not ask me that." But Puṇna asked the question three times.


## "Dog Gati" Leads to "Dog Births"

4. "Addhā kho te ahaì, punṇa, na labhāmi. Alaín, puṇna, titṭhatetaín; mā maí etaín pucchīti; api ca tyāhaỉ byākarissāmi. Idha, puṇna, ekacco kukkuravataì bhāveti paripuṇ̣à் abbokiṇnam், kukkurasīlamं bhāveti paripuṇnamं abbokiṇnam், kukkuracittamं bhāveti paripuṇnamं abbokiṇnam், kukkurākappai் bhāveti paripuṇnaì abbokiṇ̣am். So kukkuravataì bhāvetvā paripuṇnam̀ abbokiṇnaì, kukkurasīlaì bhāvetvā paripuṇnam abbokiṇ̣aì, kukkuracittaì bhāvetvā paripuṇnamं abbokiṇnaì, kukkurākappaì bhāvetvā paripuṇ̣aì abbokiṇnaì kāyassa bhedā paraì maraṇā kukkurānaì sahabyataì upapajjati. Sace kho panassa evai்diṭthi hoti: 'imināhaì sīlena vā vatena va tapena vā brahmacariyena va devo va bhavissāmi devaññataro vāti, sāssa hoti micchādiṭthi. Micchādiṭthissa kho ahaì, puṇ̂na, dvinnai் gatīnai் aññataramं gatim vadāminirayaì vā tiracchānayonim vā. Iti kho, puṇna, sampajjamānaì kukkuravatai் kukkurānaì sahabyataí upaneti, vipajjamānaì nirayan"ti.

Evaì vutte, acelo seniyo kukkuravatiko parodi, assūni pavattesi."

- Translated: Finally, the Buddha answered. "Here, Puṇna, if someone lives like a dog, he develops the dog-behavior or dog-habits fully. He develops the dog-mindset fully. If so, at his death, he will be reborn as a dog. But if he also has a view as this: 'By this observance of "holy life," I shall be born a god,' then he will have a wrong view too. Now there are two destinations for one with a wrong view: hell or the animal realm. So, Puṇna, if his dog-mimicking succeeds, it will lead to birth as a dog. if it fails, it will lead him to birth in hell (niraya) due to wrong views."
- When this was said, Seniya, the naked dog-duty ascetic, cried out and burst into tears.

5. "Atha kho bhagavā punṇam koliyaputtaì govatikam etadavoca: "etaim kho te ahaí, puṇna, nālatthaím. Alaí, puṇna, tiṭthatetaì; mā maï etaín pucchī"ti. "Nāhaím, bhante, etaím rodāmi yaí maì bhagavā evamāha; api ca me idaì, bhante, kukkuravataì dīgharattaì samattaì samādinnaì. Ayaì, bhante, puṇno koliyaputto govatiko. Tassa taiं govatamं dīgharattaì samattaì samādinnaì. Tassa kā gati, ko abhisamparāyo"ti? "Alaì, seniya, titṭhatetaì; mā maím etaì pucchī"ti. Dutiyampi kho acelo seniyo ... pe ... tatiyampi kho acelo seniyo kukkuravatiko bhagavantaim etadavoca: "ayamं, bhante, puṇno koliyaputto govatiko. Tassa taì govataì dīgharattaì samattà̀ samādinnaì. Tassa kā gati, ko abhisamparāyo"ti?"

- Translated: Then the Blessed One told Puṇna: "Puṇna, I could not persuade you when I said: 'Enough, Punna, let that be. Do not ask me that.'" Then Seniya the naked-dog ascetic said: "Venerable sir, I am not crying because the Blessed One has said this about me, but because I have wasted my time practicing this foolish method. Venerable sir, this Puṇna is an ox-ascetic. He has long taken up and practiced living like an ox. What will be his birth? What will be his future gati?" "Enough, Seniya, let that be. Do not ask me that." A second time and a third-time Seniya asked the same question.


## Gati of an Ox Leads to Birth of an $\mathbf{O x}$

6. "Addhā kho te ahamं, seniya, na labhāmi. Alamं, seniya, tiṭthatetaí; mā maí etaí pucchīti; api ca tyāhai் byākarissāmi. Idha, seniya, ekacco govatai் bhāveti paripuṇnam abbokinṇaim, gosīlaì bhāveti paripuṇnamं abbokinṇà், gocittaì bhāveti paripunṇaì abbokiṇnaì, gavākappaì bhāveti paripuṇnam abbokiṇnam. So govataì bhāvetvā paripuṇnaì abbokiṇnam், gosīlaì bhāvetvā paripuṇnam abbokiṇnam, gocittaì bhāvetvā paripuṇnam abbokiṇnaím, gavākappaì bhāvetvā paripunnamं abbokinnaim kāyassa bhedā param் maraṇā gunnaì sahabyatamं upapajjati. Sace kho panassa evam்dittthi hoti: 'imināhamं silena vā vatena vā tapena va brahmacariyena vā devo v $\bar{a}$ bhavissāmi devaññataro vāti, sāssa hoti micchādiṭ̣thi. Micchādiṭthissa kho ahaí, seniya, dvinnamं gatīnaì aññataraì gatim vadāmi-nirayaì vā tiracchānayonimं vā. Iti kho, seniya, sampajjamānaì govataiं gunnai் sahabyataì upaneti, vipajjamānai் nirayan"ti. Evaì vutte, puṇno koliyaputto govatiko parodi, assūni pavattesi."

- Translated: Finally, the Buddha answered. "Here, Seniya, someone develops the ox-behavior or oxhabits fully. He develops the mindset of an ox. If so, at his death, he will be reborn as an ox. But if he also has a view as this: 'By this observance of "holy life," I shall be born a god,' then he will have a wrong view too. Now there are two destinations for one with wrong views: hell or the animal realm. So, Seniya, if his ox-mimicking succeeds, it will lead to birth as an ox. If it fails, it will lead him to birth in hell (niraya) due to wrong views."
- When this was said, Puṇna, the ox-duty ascetic, cried out and burst into tears.

7. "Atha kho bhagavā acelaì seniyam kukkuravatikamं etadavoca: "etaím kho te ahaí, seniya, nālatthaín. Alaín, seniya, tiṭthatetaì; mā maiं etaì pucchī"ti. "Nāhaín, Bhante, etaín rodāmi yaì maì bhagavā evamāha; api ca me idam், Bhante, govataì dīgharattaí samattaí samādinnai். Evaì pasanno ahaì, Bhante, Bhagavati; pahoti bhagavā tathā dhammaì desetuì yath $\bar{a}$ ahaì cevimaì govataì pajaheyyamं, ayañceva acelo seniyo kukkuravatiko taì kukkuravataì pajaheyyā"ti. "Tena hi, puṇna, suṇāhi, sādhukam manasi karohi, bhāsissāmī"ti. "Evaì, Bhante" $t i$ kho punṇo koliyaputto govatiko bhagavato paccassosi. Bhagavā etadavoca: "

- Translated: "Then the Blessed One told Seniya the naked dog-duty ascetic: "Seniya, I could not persuade you when I said: ‘Enough, Seniya, let that be. Do not ask me that.'"
- Then Puṇna said, "Venerable sir, I am not crying because the Blessed One has said this about me, but because I have wasted my time practicing this foolish sila. Venerable sir, I have confidence in the Blessed One; thus, 'The Blessed One is capable of teaching us the Dhamma the right way.'
- "Then, Punṇa, listen and attend closely to what I shall say."-"Yes, venerable sir," he replied. The Blessed One said this:


## Four Types of Kamma

8. "Cattārimāni, puṇna, kammāni mayā sayamं abhiññā sacchikatvā paveditāni. Katamāni cattāri? Atthi, puṇna, kammaì kaṇhaì kaṇhavipākaì; atthi, puṇna, kammaì sukkaì sukkavipākaì; atthi, puṇna, kammaì kaṇhasukkamं kaṇhasukkavipākamं; atthi, puṇna, kammai் akaṇhai் asukkaì akaṇhaasukkavipākam̀, kammakkhayāya sam்vattati."

- Translated: "Puṇ̣a, there are four kinds of actions (kamma) proclaimed by me after realizing them for myself. What are the four? There is dark action (kanha or pāpa kamma) with a dark result. A bright action (sukka or puñña kamma) brings a bright result. A dark-and-bright action (kaṇhasukkaì) brings a dark-and-bright result (kanhhasukkavipākaim.) Then there is an action that is neither dark nor bright with the neither-dark-nor-bright result, an action that leads to the destruction of defilements (kammakkhayāya or kusala kamma)."


## "Dark" Kamma With "Dark" Results

9. "Katamañca, puṇna, kammaì kaṇhaì kaṇhavipākaì? Idha, punṇa, ekacco sabyābajjhaì kāyasañkhārai் abhisañkharoti, sabyābajjhaì vacīsañkhāraì abhisañkharoti, sabyābajjhaì manosañkhāraì abhisañkharoti. So sabyābajjhaì kāyasañkhāraì abhisañkharitvā, sabyābajjhaì vacīsañkhāraì abhisañkharitvā, sabyābajjhaì manosañkhāraì abhisañkharitvā, sabyābajjhaì lokai் upapajjati. Tamenaì sabyābajjhamं lokai் upapannaì samānaì sabyābajjhā phassā phusanti. So sabyābajjhehi phassehi phuṭtho samāno sabyābajjhaì vedanaì vedeti ekantadukkham், seyyathāpi sattā nerayikā. Iti kho, punṇa, bhūtā bhūtassa upapatti hoti; yamं karoti tena upapajjati, upapannamenam் phassā phusanti. Evampāhaì, puṇna, 'kammadāyādā sattā’ti vadāmi. Idà் vuccati, puṇna, kammaì kaṇham̀ kaṇhavipākaì. (1)"

- Translated: "And what, Puṇna, is dark action with dark result? Here someone generates a suffering (sabyābajjham or destined to or bound by dukha) kāyasañkhāra, a dukkhita vacīsañkhāra, a dukkhita manosañkhāra. Having generated such dukkhita abhisañkhara, he is reborn in an apāya. When he is reborn in an apāya, he contacts appropriate dukkhita (painful) sensory contacts. Being
touched by such painful contacts, he feels painful feelings, exclusively painful, as in the case of the beings in hell (niraya). Thus a being's rebirth is due to a being's own actions. One's rebirth is through the actions one has performed. Thus I say beings are the heirs of their actions. This is called dark action with dark result."


## "Bright" Kamma With "Bright" Results

10. "Katamañca, puṇna, kammaì sukkaì sukkavipākaì? Idha, puṇna, ekacco abyābajjhaì kāyasañkhāraiं abhisañkharoti, abyābajjhaì vacīsañkhāraì abhisañkharoti, abyābajjhaì manosañkhāraì abhisañkharoti. So abyābajjhaì kāyasañkhāraì abhisañkharitvā, abyābajjhaì vacīsañkhāraì abhisañkharitvā, abyābajjhaì manosañkhāraì abhisañkharitva abyābajjhaì lokai் upapajjati. Tamenai் abyābajjhaiं lokaì upapannaì samānai் abyābajjhā phassā phusanti. So abyābajjhehi phassehi phuṭtho samāno abyābajjhamं vedanamं vedeti ekantasukham், seyyathāpi devā subhakiṇhā. Iti kho, puṇṇa, bhūtā bhūtassa upapatti hoti; yam karoti tena upapajjati, upapannamenaì phassā phusanti. Evampāhaì, puṇna, 'kammadāyādā sattā'ti vadāmi. Idà̀ vuccati, puṇṇa, kammaì sukkaì sukkavipākaì. (2)"

- Translated: "And what, Puṇna, is bright action with bright result? Here someone generates a pleasant life (abyābajjhaín or destined to or bound by sukha) kāyasañkhāra, a sukkhita vacīsañkhāra, a sukkhita manosañkhāra. Having generated such sukkhita abhisañkhara, he is reborn in a realm with happiness (sukkhita). When he is reborn in such a realm, he contacts appropriate sukkhita sense contacts. Being touched by such sukkhita contacts, he feels sukha feelings, as in the case of subhakinha deva realm. Thus a being's rebirth is due to a being's own actions. One gets a rebirth through the actions one has performed. Thus, I say beings are the heirs of their actions. This is called bright action with bright result"


## "Dark and Bright" Kamma With "Dark and Bright" Results

11. "Katamañca, punṇa, kammaì kaṇhasukkaì kaṇhasukkavipākaì? Idha, punṇa, ekacco sabyābajjhampi abyābajjhampi kāyasañkhārai் abhisañkharoti, sabyābajjhampi abyābajjhampi vacīsañkhāraì abhisañkharoti, sabyābajjhampi abyābajjhampi manosañkhāraì abhisañkharoti. So sabyābajjhampi abyābajjhampi kāyasañkhāram abhisañkharitvā, sabyābajjhampi abyābajjhampi vacīsañkhāraì abhisañkharitvā, sabyābajjhampi abyābajjhampi manosañkhāraì abhisañkharitvā sabyābajjhampi abyābajjhampi lokaì upapajjati. Tamenaì sabyābajjhampi abyābajjhampi lokam upapannaì samānaì sabyābajjhāpi abyābajjhāpi phassā phusanti. So sabyābajjhehipi abyābajjhehipi phassehi phuṭtho samāno sabyābajjhampi abyābajjhampi vedanam vedeti vokiṇnasukhadukkhamं, seyyathāpi manussā ekacce ca devā ekacce ca vinipātikā. Iti kho, puṇna, bhūtā bhūtassa upapatti hoti; yaì karoti tena upapajjati. Upapannamenam̀ phassā phusanti. Evampāhaì, puṇna, 'kammadāyādā sattā'ti vadāmi. Idaì vuccati, puṇ̣a, kammaì kaṇhasukkaì kaṇhasukkavipākam. (3)".

- Translated: "And what, Puṇna, is dark-and-bright action with a dark-and-bright result? Here someone generates abhisañkhara of both types. Then he is reborn in a realm with both happiness (sukkhita) and suffering (dukkhita). When he is reborn in such a realm, he contacts appropriate sukkhita and dukkhita sensory contacts. Being touched by such contacts, he feels sukha and dukha feelings interchangeably, as in human, deva, and vinipātika (apāya) realms. Thus a being's rebirth is due to a being's own actions. One gets a rebirth through the actions one has performed. Thus I say beings are the heirs of their actions. This is called dark-and-bright action with a dark-and-bright result". [vinipätika : (adj.) [fr. vinipāta] destined to suffer in purgatory, liable to punishment after death.]


## Neither Dark nor Bright Kamma

12. "Katamañca, puṇna, kammai் akaṇhai் asukkai் akaṇhaasukkavipākaí, kammakkhayāya saìvattati? Tatra, punṇa, yamidaì kammaì kaṇhaì kaṇhavipākaì tassa pahānāya yā cetanā,
yamidaï kammaí sukkai் sukkavipākai் tassa pahānāya yā cetanā, yamidaíkammaí kaṇhasukkaì kaṇhasukkavipākaì tassa pahānāya yā cetanā-idaì vuccati, puṇ̣na, kammaì akaṇhamं asukkamं akaṇhaasukkavipākaì, kammakkhayāya saimvattatīti. Imāni kho, puṇna, cattāri kammāni mayā sayaim abhiññā sacchikatvā paveditānū"ti. (4)".

- Translated: "And what, Puṇna, is an action that is neither dark nor bright with the neither-dark-norbright result, action that leads to the destruction of defilements (and āsavalanusaya)? Such volitions (cetana) abandon actions that are dark or bright with dark-or-bright results. Such an action (kamma) is neither dark nor bright with a neither-dark-nor-bright result. Therefore, such actions lead to the destruction of defilements (and asava/anusaya). They do not lead to rebirth in any realm.)
- These are the four kinds of kamma proclaimed by me after realizing them for myself with direct knowledge."

13. It is important to realize that such cetana AUTOMATICALLY arises in those who have realized the "unsatisfactory and dangerous nature" of this world of 31 realms, i.e., Tilakkhana.

- In that context, it is also important to understand that cetana is NOT conventional "intention," but is how good and bad mental factors (cetasika) AUTOMATICALLY arise in one's thoughts based on one's gati.
- The above two points are the most important teachings from the sutta. This is explained in detail in the post, "Kanha (Dark) and Sukka (Bright) Kamma and Kammakkhaya."
- One also needs to understand that cetana is just a single mental factor. The "intention" comes from the incorporation of good or bad cetasika. The cetana cetasika just incorporates relevant cetasika based on one's gati. See \#9 of "Kamma, Sañkhāra, and Abhisañkhāra - What Is "Intention"?"


## Puṇṇa and Seniya Understood

14. "Evaì vutte, puṇ̣o koliyaputto govatiko bhagavantaì etadavoca: "abhikkantam், bhante, abhikkantaì, bhante. Seyyathāpi, bhante ... pe ... upāsakaì maì bhagavā dhāretu ajjatagge pānupetaì saranaì gatan"ti. Acelo pana seniyo kukkuravatiko bhagavantaì etadavoca: "abhikkantamं, bhante, abhikkantaì, bhante. Seyyathāpi, bhante ... pe ... pakāsito. Esāham், bhante, bhagavantaì saraṇam gacchāmi dhammañca bhikkhusañghañca. Labheyyāhamं, bhante, bhagavato santike pabbajjaì, labheyyamं upasampadan"ti. "Yo kho, seniya, añnatitthiyapubbo imasmimi dhammavinaye ākañkhati pabbajjaì, ākañkhati upasampadaì so cattāro māse parivasati. Catunnaì māsānaì accayena āraddhacittā bhikkhū pabbājenti, upasampādenti bhikkhubhāvāya. Api ca mettha puggalavemattatā viditā" $t i$."

- Translated: When this was said, Puṇna said to the Blessed One. 'Magnificent, venerable sir! The Blessed One has made the Dhamma clear in many ways...From today let the Blessed One accept me as a lay follower who has gone to him for refuge for life."
- Seniya said to the Blessed One. "Magnificent, venerable sir! The Blessed One has made the Dhamma clear in many ways, as though an upside-down vessel was turned to the upside, revealing what was hidden, or showing the way to one who was lost or holding up a lamp in the dark for those with eyesight to see. I take refuge in the Blessed One, the Dhamma, and the Sangha. May I receive the going forth under the Blessed One?".
- "Seniya, one who formerly belonged to another sect and desired the going forth and the full admission in this Buddha Sasana lives on probation for four months. At the end of four months, if the bhikkhus are satisfied with him, they give him the going forth and the full admission to the bhikkhus' state. But I recognize individual differences in this matter."

Seniya became an Arahant
15. "Sace, bhante, añnatitthiyapubbā imasmim dhammavinaye $\bar{a} k a \dot{n} k h a n t \bar{a} ~ p a b b a j j a \dot{m} \bar{a} k a \dot{n} k h a n t \bar{a}$ upasampadaì te cattāro māse parivasanti catunnaì māsānaì accayena āraddhacittō bhikkhū pabbājenti upasampādenti bhikkhubhāvāya, ahaì cattāri vassāni parivasissāmi catunnaì vassānaì accayena āraddhacittà bhikkhū pabbājentu, upasampādentu bhikkhubhāvāyā"ti.

Alattha kho acelo seniyo kukkuravatiko bhagavato santike pabbajjai், alattha upasampadai். Acirūpasampanno kho panāyasmā seniyo eko vūpakatṭho appamatto ātāp̄̄ pahitatto viharanto nacirasseva-yassatthāya kulaputtā sammadeva agārasmā anagāriyà் pabbajanti, Tadanuttaraìmbrahmacariyapariyosānaì diṭtheva dhamme sayai் abhiññā sacchikatvā upasampajja vihāsi.
"Khīn̄ā jāti, vusitaì brahmacariyaim, kataì karan̄īyam, nāparaì itthattāyā"ti abbhaññāsi. Añnataro kho panāyasmā seniyo arahatam ahosīti. "

- Translated: "Venerable sir, if those who formerly belonged to another sect and desire the going forth and the full admission in this Dhamma and Discipline live on probation for four months, and if at the end of the four months the bhikkhus being satisfied with them to give them the going forth and the full admission to the bhikkhus' state, then I will INSTEAD live on probation for four years. At the end of the four years, if the bhikkhus are satisfied with me, let them give me the going forth and the full admission to the bhikkhus' state."
- (Clarification of the terms: Probation means what is called Sämanera; the bhikkhu would wear the robes but has not yet been given full admission or Upasampadā. Seniya was saying he was willing to spend four years in probation.)
- Then Seniya, the naked dog-ascetic, received the going forth under the Blessed One, and he received the full admission. And soon, not long after his full admission, dwelling alone, withdrawn, diligent, ardent, and resolute, the venerable Seniya became an Arahant.

16. The post, "Kanha (Dark) and Sukka (Bright) Kamma and Kammakkhaya," provides a simpler explanation of the key terms.

- Discussion of both posts at: "WebLink: Kusala/Akusala and Puñña/Pāpa Kamma."


### 17.12 Buddhism and Evolution - Aggañña Sutta (DN 27)

January 24, 2019; revised January 30, 2019; July 30, 2019; February 16, 2020; August 24, 2020
(\#5 - \#7); May 12, 2021; July 22, 2022

## Introduction

1. Aggañ̃na Sutta is one of several complex suttā that requires a lengthy explanation. One must have a broad background in Buddha Dhamma to understand the sutta. I have been very reluctant to write even this post because it could lead to many questions in many people who do not yet have that background.

- "Agga" means "highest," and thus, the word "Aggañña" means "highest knowledge," in this case, about our world.
- The Buddha delivered the Aggañ̃̃a sutta to two brahmins (Vāsetṭha and Bhāradvāja), to explain the 'human origins." That not only Vedic Brahmins - but ALL LIVING BEINGS - on this Earth came from Brahma realms at the beginning of the Earth. In other words, each living being on this Earth was a Brahma at the beginning of the present Earth).
- I must forewarn that some features contradict existing "scientific theories." Please do not bring them up. I am aware of them. That is why I have been reluctant to write this post.
- However, at least for those who have faith in Dhamma, there are some benefits in seeing how selfconsistent Buddha Dhamma is.


## Summary of Sutta

2. Following is a summary:
(i). The universe has no traceable beginning, just like for life; see "Origin of Life."
(ii). The universe has "clusters or groups" of stars. Our Solar system is one of 10,000 "star systems" (cakkavāla or planetary systems; chakrawāta in Sinhala). There is an infinite number of such cakkavāla in the universe.
(iii). When a star in the vicinity of our Sun blows up in a few billion years, that blast will destroy 10,000 other star systems in the neighborhood. In modern science, such a "star explosion" has a particular name, a supernova.
(iv). Such a cluster of 10,000 world systems blows up from time to time in the universe. Again, scientists observe such supernovae every year.
(v). Science does not know yet that those destroyed star systems re-form over billions of years.
(vi). Not all 31 realms get destroyed when our Solar system blows up at the end of a mahā kappa. Higher lying Brahma worlds (where there is very little "destructible matter") survive. That is where all living beings on this Earth end up before the destruction of the Earth.
(vii). How all living beings end up in the Brahma realms is a long story.
(viii). Then when the Earth re-forms, those Brahm $\bar{a}$ - at the end of their lifetimes in those worlds - are reborn as humans with very light, Brahma-like bodies at first.
(ix). Then the life on Earth evolves to other lifeforms too. That is a "reverse evolution" compared to the "theory of evolution" currently accepted by science. After billions of years, the realms below the
 cycle will keep repeating.
(x). So, that is the life cycle. It happens all over the universe at any given time. Scientists observe several supernovae in our galaxy yearly (billions of cakkavāla).

## Model of the Universe

3. Therefore, life exists in an infinite number of "star systems" where a star provides the energy to sustain life. In our "Solar system," life exists in 31 realms centered on Earth, located inside, on the surface, and extending out into space. Of course, the Sun is our star.

- In the post " 31 Realms of Existence," these 31 realms are listed. The information there comes from several suttā. In particular, the "Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta" names many of those spheres. Most versions of the sutta skip that section. The following pdf file contains the sutta's full text: WebLink: PDF Download: Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta-3.

4. A Buddha appears only in one cakkavāla out of that cluster of 10,000 such cakkavāla in that group; that is our Earth. Brahmā and devas from those 10,000 systems (dasa sahassi lokadhātu) can come and listen to Dhamma on the Earth.

- Of course, humans from those worlds do not have access to Buddha Dhamma.
- So, we can see how rare it is for humans to "have access" to Buddha Dhamma. Sometimes there can be many consecutive mahā kappā without a single Buddha appearing!


## Model of the Solar System (Cakkavāla)

5. The Buddha stated that the length of one kappa or kalpa in Sinhala) unimaginably long. He gave the following comparison. In that time, a man could wear away a mountain of solid granite one yojanā (about 7 miles) around and one yojan $\bar{a}$ high by stroking it once every hundred years with a silk cloth.

- The WebLink: suttacentral: Pabbata Sutta (SN 15.5) has the above analogy; "Samsāric Time Scale, Buddhist Cosmology, and the Big Bang Theory."

6. A mahā kappa consists of 4 "antakkappa," as explained in the WebLink: suttacentral: Kappa Sutta (AN 4.156):
"Cattārimāni, bhikkhave, kappāsa asañkhyeyyāni. Katamāni cattāri? Yadā, bhikkhave, kappo saìvaṭtati,..kappo samंvaṭto tiṭthati,..kappo vivaṭati,..kappo vivaṭto tiṭthati, .."

- "There are four incalculable kappā. Destruction takes place for a kappa, remains in that state (void) for a kappa, re-formation takes place over a kappa, and then it exists in that state for a kappa."
- That last stage is where the Earth is now.
- Each incalculable kappa has 20 kappā.

7. The Solar system will last another 5 billion or so. Thus the total time in the existence of the current Sun (and Earth) is about 10 billion years, according to modern science. That is the existence phase lasting 20 kapp $\bar{a}$, assuming that the current scientific estimate is correct.

- The other three kappa take 10 billion years each, which is how the time for a complete cycle takes 40 billion years.
- The Earth (and the whole Solar system) continues through this cyclic process that takes roughly 40 billion years per cycle, i.e., for a mahā kappa (with the above assumption.)
- This cycle will keep repeating. There was no "Big Bang" beginning.


## Migration of Living Beings at Destruction/Re-Formation of Earth

8. When the Sun dies in the future, it will start expanding and expand to reach the Earth. Long before that, all life on Earth would have been destroyed (except those in higher Brahma realms.)

- So, what happens to all the living beings on Earth? We remember that while humans and animals live on the Earth, those belonging to the other three lower realms live on or underneath the Earth's surface. All those will perish.
- It is a long story, but all those beings move to higher realms as the Earth gets hot.

9. We remember that the deva and Brahma realms lie above the Earth. But the "density" in those realms is well below the "density" of things at the surface. As we know, deva bodies are much less dense than human bodies, and Brahma "bodies" are even more subtle.

- One critical thing we learn from science is that "more dense stuff" burns first. For example, in an incinerator, we can burn anything dense. But of course, gases are not burned (i.e., not decomposed.)
- There is nothing much of what we call "material" in those realms. Whatever is there will gradually decay and be replaced by other "fine matter." Of course, all beings in those realms will also have long but finite lifetimes.
- The deduction is that all those realms above the Ābhassara Brahma realm will not destroy in the destruction phase. That is why the lifetimes of some Brahmā are many mahā kapp $\bar{a}$.
 that time, all the living beings would have "migrated" up to that realm.
- How do all these living beings, including those in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$, migrate to higher realms?
- That is related to the fact that when the Earth starts getting "hot," those "mind pleasing sense objects" will be destroyed over time. Living beings will have fewer "sense attractions," and thus, their minds will be temporarily freed from "upādāna."
- That needs a detailed explanation, but those who understand Patticca Samuppāda may be able to at least a glimpse of how it happens.

11. When the Earth is re-formed about 20 billion years after its destruction (10 billion years remaining in the destructed state and 10 billion years for the re-formation,) those Brahmā will start coming down to those newly-formed lower realms.

- That also will take some explaining. But the critical point is that with time, old "gati" (which have been lying dormant as anusaya) start to re-surface, and the activation of Paticca Samuppāda cycles will ensure those "downward paths."


## Conflicts with Current Scientific Theories

12. Now, we immediately run into difficulties with the current scientific knowledge of Earth's history. According to current understanding, the first humans appeared only about 2 million years ago. Note that a billion years is 1000 million years!

- Therefore, what we described above is a "reverse evolution" compared to the "theory of evolution" currently accepted by science.
- We need to go back only 500 years to see how a prevailing world view changed and became compatible with Buddha Dhamma. See \#13 below.
- I have discussed how Buddha Dhamma has so far withstood past such "contradictions"; see "Dhamma and Science - Introduction." I hope the next revision in science will happen during my lifetime.

13. For example, only 500 years ago, the accepted "world view" was that Earth was at the center of the universe with all the stars embedded in "WebLink: wikipedia.org: celestial spheres."

- If someone had tried to explain that the Earth was rotating around the Sun, he would have had a hard time. Galileo spent the rest of his life in solitary confinement after proving that the Earth was rotating around the Sun.
- Of course, no one will be prosecuted for proposing any theory these days. Still, they will not be taken seriously by the scientific community.
- As new experiments/observations provide further evidence, an accepted scientific view changes to accommodate the new evidence. For example, the above change in the world view occured after Galileo invented the telescope.
- Of course, adopting scientific method for mundane purposes is only rational. That is the only way science can make progress.
- However, when one comprehends Buddha's Dhamma, one can better understand our world.


## The Rarity of Buddha Dhamma in the World

14. There have been four Buddhas in this mahā kappa, and one more Buddha will appear before the destruction of this Earth and the Solar system.

- Then after 30 billion more years, the Earth will come to exist again in this cyclic process (not the same Earth).

15. In the WebLink: suttacentral: Vepullapabbatta Sutta (SN 15.20), the Buddha provides the names of the three Buddhas on this Earth (in this mahā kappa) before him: Kakusandha, Konāgama, and Kassapa. He describes how a particular mountain had three different names and heights during those Buddha's times.

- The point here is that those Buddhas had been on this Earth at times far apart from each other. Considering that the age of the Earth is about 4.5 billion years, it is reasonable to assume that they were about a billion years apart.
- One piece of evidence in the Tipitaka for material from previous Buddhas transmitted via Vedic teachings (with superficial meanings) is given in the post, "Arogyā Paramā Lābhā.." (see \#8 there).

16. By the way, the existence of Buddha Kassapa before the Buddha Gotama helps explain many questions about the connection between Vedic terms and Buddhist terms. Some examples are kamma (karma), Bhikkhu (Bhikshu), paññ̄ā (pragnā), jhāna (dhyāna), Nibbāna (Nirvāna), and so on.

- After the end of the Kassapa Buddha Sāsana, his teachings were transmitted as Vedic teachings without deeper meanings. I will need to write some posts just on this issue.
- A good example is the $\bar{A} n \bar{a} p a ̄ n a ~ b h a ̄ v a n a \bar{a}$, which got transmitted as "breath meditation."
- After re-gaining Buddha Kassapa's interpretation during our Buddha's time, the Vedic description has been retaken hold by the current time. The correct version will be fully restored in the coming years. But, of course, it will again disappear to be rediscovered by the Maitreya Buddha in the future.

17. Furthermore, there have been only 7 Buddhas within the past 91 mahā kappā; see, "WebLink: suttacentral: Mahāpadāna Sutta (DN 14)."

- There have been 30 mahā kapp $\bar{a}$ without a single Buddha before the current mahā kappa. That is 1200 billion years or over a trillion years!
- Even in this mahā kappa, the Gotama Buddha Sāsana would last only 5000 years, a negligible time compared to a mahā kappa. That is why we should not waste this rare opportunity.


## Origins of the World - Limits of Inquiry

18. The human mind is naturally curious. We want to know everything, especially regarding this wondrous place called the universe. It is mind-boggling but exciting at the same time., Growing up, I spent a lot of time reading science fiction and speculations about the origins of the universe, etc.

- One time, Ven. Moggallāna, who was only second to the Buddha in psychic (abhiññā) powers, wanted to explore the universe and see for himself how far he could go. He got lost! Buddha had to come to his rescue.
- Then there is the account about a yogi, Rohitassa, who developed abhiññ̄a powers. He wanted to see the end of the world and took off looking for it, got lost, and died. He was reborn as a deva, came to see the Buddha, and told the Buddha about his quest. See, "WebLink: accesstoinsight.org: Rohitassa Sutta: To Rohitassa."

19. Cosmology is one of the things that the Buddha declared "unthinkable (acinteyya)" for an average human; see, "WebLink: suttacentral: Acinterya Sutta (AN 4.77)":
"There are these four things that one should not conjecture about and would bring anxiety and madness to anyone who speculates. Which four? (i) capabilities of a Buddha, (ii) subject of jhānā, (iii) detailed knowledge of kammalkamma vipāka, and (iv) origins of the world.

- One can spend a lifetime looking into the details of those subjects, and getting no where.
- However, we can gain some insights by having a rough idea about those subjects as we saw above. One gets into trouble when one tries to get into details.
- We will explore some more aspects in the future that are beneficial for progressing on the Path.

20. Please keep that in mind when you comment on the discussion forum. We can learn a few things from the sutta, but it is useless to get into arguments about how it contradicts current scientific findings.

- I have opened a new topic, "Post on "WebLink: puredhamma.net/forums: Buddhism and Evolution Aggañña Sutta (DN 27)" for comments and questions at the discussion forum.
- Also, please read the post carefully before commenting or asking a question. There is a lot of material there.

July 12, 2019: I have started a new subsection, "Origin of Life," to discuss the necessary background material for future posts on the Aggañña Sutta.

### 17.13 Tapussa Sutta (AN 9.41) - Akuppā Cetovimutti

## February 28, 2019; \#21 added March 1, 2019; July 19, 2022

1. Most suttā have been translated word by word without paying attention to the context or the underlying teachings. I hope this sutta translation will convey what I mean by that statement.

- This sutta explains why it is necessary to reduce cravings for sense pleasures and to stay away from dasa akusala - and eventually to get rid of them - if one wants to cultivate Ariya jhāna.
- Just suppressing sense cravings (kāma rāga) induces jhāna too; see "Jhānic Experience in Detail Sāmaññaphala Sutta (DN 2)."
- However, to attain Nibbāna (akuppā cetovimutti), one needs to remove those cravings at each jhānic state; see, "Ascendance to Nibbāna via Jhāna (Dhyāna)." In this post, we discuss the step-by-step process.
- Still, getting rid of sense cravings (kāma rāga) is not an easy task. It needs to be done by contemplating the drawbacks (and dangers) of them - called ādinava (pronounced "aadeenava") and also the benefits (ānisamsa) of giving up such cravings (renunciation); see "Mundane versus Supramundane Thāna."

2. One could follow the Pāli version while reading: "WebLink: suttacentral: Tapussa Sutta (AN 9.41)" a "WebLink: suttacentral: English Translation," and "WebLink: suttacentral: Sinhala Translation" at that same website. It is a useful website, but translations are not correct for some key Pāli words, and suttā are translated word-by-word without paying attention to the embedded teachings. That is the case for basically all current English translations.

- Suttā are designed to be extremely repetitive, enabling faithful oral transmission over the first 500 years. But, in the written form, it is unnecessary to translate the whole sutta word-by-word to understand its message. That could be very boring reading.
- So, I will start with a lengthy translation and cut it short as I proceed to the end to make it readable yet (hopefully) provide the key ideas.
- We also need to remember that before becoming the Buddha, the Bodhisatta had learned how to get to all the $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$ from other yogis. One can attain cetovimutti (highest $j h a \bar{a} a$ ) by such anāriya techniques as breath meditation, but those $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$ are not stable. As described below, the Buddha figured out to cultivate unbreakable (stable) jhāna and attained the Buddhahood with akuppā cetovimutti.
- That is the process described in this sutta, which we discuss now.

3. Thus, I have heard. On one occasion, the Blessed One was staying in Malla near a Mallan town named Uruvelakappa. Then early in the morning, the Blessed One, having put on his robes and carrying his bowl and outer robe, went to Uruvelakappa for alms. Having gone into Uruvelakappa for alms, after his meal, on his return from his alms round, he said to Ven. Ānanda, "Stay here, Ānanda, while I go to the forest to rest."

- "As you say, lord," Ven. Ānanda replied.
- Then the Blessed One went to the forest and sat down at the root of a tree to rest.

4. Then Tapussa, the householder went to Ven. Ānanda and, having bowed down to him, sat to one side on arrival. As he was sitting there, he said to Ven. Ānanda: "Venerable Ānanda, we are householders who indulge in sensuality, delight in sensual pleasures, enjoy sensual pleasures, rejoice in sensual pleasures. For us, staying away from sensual pleasures - or renunciation - seems like jumping off a cliff (it is hard to contemplate). Yet I've heard that in this Buddha Säsana, there are young bhikkhus (monks) who have given up sense pleasures and have attained peace of mind and ultimate release from suffering. How are those bhikkhus different from most people like us?"

- "This is true, householder. Let's ask the Blessed One to explain this".

5. Then Ven. Ānanda, with Tapussa, went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. Then Ven. Ānanda said to the Blessed One: "Bhante, Tapussa the householder, here, has said to me, 'we are householders who indulge in sensuality, delight in sensual pleasures, enjoy sensual pleasures, rejoice in sensual pleasures. For us, staying away from sensual pleasures - or renunciation seems as unappealing as jumping off of a cliff. Yet I've heard that in this Buddha Sāsana, there are young monks who have given up sense pleasures and have attained peace of mind and ultimate release from suffering. How are these monks different from most people like us?"
6. 'So it is, Ānanda. So it is. Even before attaining the Buddhahood, when I was still an unawakened Bodhisatta, I thought: 'abstaining from sensual pleasures (nekkhamma) is good, peace of mind (viveka) is good'. But such thoughts free of sense cravings (nekkhamme cittam) would not sink in (na pakkhandati), would not purify (na pasidati), would not calm down (na santitthati) my mind, and it would not become liberated (na vimuccati)".

- Then a thought occurred to me: "What is the reason that such thoughts free of sense cravings (nekkhamme cittam) would not sink in (na pakkhandati), would not purify (na pasidati), calm down, would not calm down (na santitthati) my mind so that it would not become liberated (na vimuccati)?".
- Then this thought occurred to me: "I have not seen the dangers/drawbacks (ādinava) of sensual pleasures; I have not contemplated the dangers/drawbacks of sensual pleasures at depth (abahulikato). I have not understood the rewards of renunciation (nekkhamme ānisamsa). I have not contemplated at depth (anāsevita) the rewards of renunciation. That's why my mind would not become liberated (na vimuccati)."
- Then this thought occurred to me: "If I see the dangers of sensual pleasures and the benefits of renunciation of sense pleasures, such thoughts free of sense cravings (nekkhamme cittam) will sink in (pakkhandati), will purify (pasidati), will calm down (santitthati) my mind so that it will become liberated (vimuccati)".

My comment: One needs to pay attention to the Buddha describing to Tapussa how he had thought about the above thought process. But, he figured out exactly how to do that only on the night of attaining the Buddhahood:
7. "At a later time - aparena samyena - (the night of attaining the Buddhahood), having seen the drawback of sensual pleasures, I pursued that theme; I contemplated on the drawbacks of sense pleasures, and understood the rewards of renunciation, and understood the solution of getting rid of cravings ( $\bar{a} s \bar{a} v \bar{a} s)$. Then my mind firmly held such a mindset, calmed down, and was released from such sensual thoughts.

- The above paragraph describes what happened on the night of the Enlightenment when he finally realized $\bar{a} s a v a k k h a y a ~ n ̃ a ̄ n a$, how to remove $\bar{a} s \bar{v} v a \bar{s}$ by contemplating on Tilakkhaṇa; see, "The Way to Nibbāna - Removal of Asavas."
- As we know, he went through six years of various types of suffering to discover āsavakkhaya ñāna.
- Now we get back to the difficulties faced by the Bodhisatta in the intervening six years in trying to make the first jhāna unbreakable or stable.

8. "Withdrawn from sensuality (vivicca kāmehi), withdrawn from immoral (vivicca akusala dhammehi), I entered and remained in the vicinity of the first jhāna with rapture and pleasure born from that restfulness (vivekajam), accompanied by savitakka/savicara (nekkhamma/avihimsa thoughts)."

- "However, I was still beset with recurring perceptions of sensuality (kāmasahagatā saññāmanasikārā samudācaranti). That was a suffering for me. Just as pain arises as an affliction for a healthy person, even so, those recurring sensual thoughts were an affliction for me".
(Note that the Bodhisatta experienced this problem early when he learned how to get to jhānāan from his early anāriya teachers: Alara Kalama and Uddaka Ramaputta. He developed the


## pathway during those intervening six years but successfully implemented it only on the night of Enlightenment via āsavakkhaya ñäna).

9. "At a later time (the night of attaining the Buddhahood), having seen the drawback of vitakka, I pursued that theme; I contemplated on the drawbacks of vitakka and understood the rewards of avitakka when I understood the benefits of getting rid of cravings ( $\bar{a} s \bar{a} v \bar{a} s$ ). Then my mind firmly held such a mindset, calmed down, and was released from such sensual thoughts.

- Now we get back to the difficulties faced by the Bodhisatta with the second jhāna before the night of the Enlightenment.

10. "Then I thought: 'I should get to the samādhi-generated (samādhijam) the second jhāna that is free of these thoughts burdened with (vitakka/vicāra)'". Here it is important to realize that vitakka means to have the mind set on defiled thought object and vicāra means to keep it there.

- "However, in the second jhāna, such thoughts free of vitakka (i.e., avitakka) would not sink in, would not purify, calm down, would not calm down my mind so that it would not become liberated (avitakke cittaì na pakkhandati nappasīdati na santitṭhati na vimuccati)".
- Then this thought occurred to me: "I have not seen the dangers/drawbacks (ãdinava) of vitakka; I have not contemplated the dangers/drawbacks of vitakka at depth (abahulikato). I have not understood the rewards of avitakka (avitakke ānisamsa). I have not contemplated in depth (anāsevita) the rewards of avitakka. That's why my mind would not become liberated (na vimuccati)".
- "At a later time (the night of attaining the Buddhahood), I was able to enter and stay in the vicinity of the second jhāna that was devoid of such defiled thoughts (vitakka) and with pīti and sukha.

11. This is a recurring theme for the rest of the sutta. The difficulty encountered at each jhāna level starting from the next verse, and the solution found on the night of Enlightenment.

- I will skip a few repeating steps here, for the third and fourth jhāna.

12. I could enter and stay in the vicinity of the third jhāna devoid of $\overline{\boldsymbol{u}} \bar{t} i$ but with sukha.

- However, even then the perception of piti kept arising in me (pitisahagata sannamanasikara samudacaranti). That was an affliction for me. Just as pain arises as an affliction for a healthy person, even so, those recurring pitti was an affliction for me.
- "At a later time (the night of attaining the Buddhahood), verse is skipped here.

13. I could enter and stay in the vicinity of the fourth jhāna devoid of sukha but with upekkhā.

- However, even then the perception of upekkhā sukha kept arising in me (upekkhasukhasahagata sannamanasikara samudacaranti). That was an affliction for me. Just as pain arises as an affliction for a healthy person, even so, those recurring upekkhā sukha was an affliction for me.
- "At a later time (the night of attaining the Buddhahood), the verse is skipped here.
- Now we get to the arūpāvacarajhāna, and the steps are the same.
 transcending of perceptions of rūpa, with the disappearance of perceptions of patigha, and not heeding various ārammaṇa ('yannūnāhaì sabbaso rūpasaññānaì samatikkamā patighasañn̄ānaì atthañgamā nānattasañ̃̄ānaì amanasikārā ").
 was an affliction for me (..iminā vihārena viharato rūpasahagatā saññāmanasikārā samudācaranti. Svassa me hoti äbādho).

15. "At a later time (the night of attaining the Buddhahood), having seen the drawback of forms ( $r \bar{u} p a$ ), I pursued that theme; I contemplated the drawbacks of $r \bar{u} p a$, and understood the rewards of
$\bar{a} k \bar{a} s a ̄ n a n ̃ c \bar{a} y a t a n a$, when I understood the benefits of getting rid of cravings ( $\overline{\boldsymbol{a}} \bar{s} \bar{a} \boldsymbol{v} \bar{a} s$ ). Then my mind firmly held such a mindset, calmed down, and was released from such sensual thoughts.
16. I was able to enter what I thought was viññanañncāyatana, the infinitude of consciousness.

- "As I remained there, I was beset with attention to perceptions dealing with the dimension of the infinitude of space (ākāsānañcāyatanasahagatā saññāmanasikārā samudācaranti). That was an affliction for me. Just as pain arises as an affliction for a healthy person, even so the attention to perceptions dealing with the dimension of the infinitude of space that beset me was an affliction for me.

17. So at a later time, having seen the drawback of the dimension of the infinitude of space (ākāsānañcāyatana), I pursued that theme; having understood the reward of the dimension of the infinitude of consciousness (viññānañcāyatana), I familiarized myself with it. My heart leaped up at the dimension of the infinitude of consciousness and grew confident, steadfast, and firm, seeing it as peace. With the complete transcending of the dimension of the infinitude of space, [perceiving,] 'Infinite consciousness,' I entered and remained in the dimension of the infinitude of consciousness.

- The sutta goes through the rest of the arūpāvacara jhāna. At each stage, the Buddha on the night of Enlightenment, REMOVE each jhāna factor, not just bypass it as in anāriya jhāna.
- This was done by contemplating the anicca, dukkha, and anatta nature of each jhānic state.

18. "So at a later time, having seen the drawback of the dimension of neither perception nor nonperception (nevasaññānāsaññāyatana), I pursued that theme; ... With the complete transcending of the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception, I entered and remained in the cessation of perception and feeling (saññ̄̄vedayitanirodha). And as I saw with discernment, the mental fermentations ( $\bar{a} s a v \bar{a}$ ) were totally eliminated.

- It is important to note that sañ̃n̄̄vedayita nirodha cannot be attained via anāriya jhāna. This is Nibbāna experienced by a living Arahant.

19. "Ānanda, as long as I had not attained and emerged from these nine step-by-step dwelling-attainments in forward and backward order in this way, I did not claim to have attained the Buddhahood that is supreme in the cosmos with its Devās, Mārās, and Brahmā, with its contemplatives and brāhmans, with its royalty and common people.

- But as soon as I had attained and emerged from these nine step-by-step dwelling-attainments in forward and backward order in this way, then I did claim to have directly awakened to the right self-awakening supreme state in the cosmos with its Devās, Mārās, and Brahmā, with its contemplatives and brāhmans, its royalty and common people. Knowledge and vision arose in me: 'My release is unshakable (akuppā me cetovimutti), This is the last birth and no more rebirths (ayamantima $\bar{a}$ jāti, natthi dāni punabbhavo’"ti).

20. That is the step-by-step process of getting to the "total detachment" from the 31 realms of this world via successive Ariya jhānic states. That ultimate release of the mind attained this way is called akupp $\bar{a}$ cetovimutti.

- Of course, one can get to the same ultimate state (Arahanthood) without going through jhāna, and that is called pañ̃̃ $\bar{a} v i m u t t i$; see, "Pannāvimutti - Arahanthood without Jhāna."
- It is also clear that a paññāvimutti Arahant cannot get to the sañ̃̃āvedayita nirodha state during his/her lifetime.

21. The efforts by the Bodhisatta to figure out how to remove $\bar{a} s a v \bar{a}$ (including kāma rāga) - mainly by inflicting many bodily sufferings - for six years, are described in detail in the following two suttā: "WebLink: suttacentral: Bodhirājakumāra Sutta (MN 85)" and "WebLink: suttacentral: Mahāsaccaka Sutta (MN 36)."

# 17.14 Yamaka Sutta (SN 22.85) - Arahanthood Is Not Annihilation but End of Suffering 

May 23, 2019; revised March 20, 2020; August 29, 2022

## Introduction

The Pāli version of the Yamaka Sutta can be found at: "WebLink: suttacentral: Yamaka Sutta (SN 22.85)." This is an important sutta that clearly explains what Nibbāna is and what the Buddha's description of a living being is. It makes it clear that a "living being" exists "in this world" only as long as its craving for the five aggregates exists (which is inevitably accompanied by a lot of suffering). There is no "real person" that exists to be annihilated.

- On one occasion the Venerable Sāriputta was dwelling at Sāvatthi in Jetavanārāma built by Anathapiṇdika. At that time the following wrong view had arisen in a bhikkhu named Yamaka. "As I understand, a bhikkhu who attains the Arahanthood would not exist after death and thus would be annihilated."
- Several bhikkhus heard that such a wrong view had arisen in bhikkhu Yamaka. They approached the Venerable Yamaka and exchanged greetings with him, after which they sat down to one side and said to him: "Is it true, friend Yamaka, that such a view as this has arisen in you: 'As I understand the Dhamma taught by the Blessed One, a bhikkhu whose $\bar{a} s a v \bar{a}$ are destroyed would not exist after death and thus would be annihilated'?"
- "Exactly so, friends. As I understand the Dhamma taught by the Blessed One, a bhikkhu whose $\bar{a} s a v \bar{a}$ are destroyed would not exist after death and thus would be annihilated."
- "Friend Yamaka, do not speak thus. Do not misrepresent the Blessed One. It is not good to misrepresent the Blessed One. The Blessed One would not speak thus: 'A bhikkhu whose $\bar{a} s a v \bar{a}$ are destroyed would not exist after death and thus would be annihilated.'"

2. Although other bhikkhus admonished him this way, Bhikkhu Yamaka still held on to that wrong view and declared: "As I understand the Dhamma taught by the Blessed One, a bhikkhu whose $\bar{a} s a v \bar{a}$ are destroyed is annihilated and does not exist after death."

- Since those bhikkhus could not detach the Venerable Yamaka from that wrong view, they approached Venerable Sāriputta. They told him all that occurred, adding: "It would be good if the Venerable Sāriputta would approach bhikkhu Yamaka and explain to him out of compassion for him." Venerable Sāriputta consented by silence.


## Analysis by Ven. Sāriputta -1

3. Then, in the evening, the Venerable Sāriputta emerged from seclusion. He approached the Venerable Yamaka and exchanged greetings with him, after which he sat down to one side and said to him: "Is it true, friend Yamaka, that such a wrong view as this has arisen in you: 'As I understand the Dhamma taught by the Blessed One, a bhikkhu whose $\bar{a} s a v \bar{a}$ are destroyed is annihilated and does not exist after death'?"
"Exactly so, friend."

- 'What do you think, friend Yamaka, is a form (rūpa) nicca or anicca (can or cannot be maintained as one likes)?"-"anicca, friend."..."If something is anicca does it lead to sukha or dukha?'—"It leads to dukha, friend."
"If something is of anicca, viparināma nature, it cannot be maintained as one likes and is subjected to unexpected changes. Would it be appropriate to take that to be me, to be mine, or my att $\bar{a}$ ("self" is the translation used in English)?" - "That is not appropriate, friend".
- "What do you think, friend Yamaka, is vedanā, saññā, sañkhāra, viññāna - are they nicca or anicca?"-"anicca, friend."...'If something is anicca does it lead to sukha or dukha?'- "dukha, friend".
"If something is of anicca, viparināma nature, is it appropriate to take that to be me, to be mine, or my attā?" - 'No, friend".
(My comment: Thus, it is clear that it does not make sense to take any or all five ENTITIES of rūpa, vedanā, saññā, sañkhāra, viññ̄ạna as me, as mine, or my attā.)


## Analysis by Ven. Sāriputta -2

4. Now Ven. Sāriputta goes one step further.

- "Whatever kind of form there is, Yamaka, whether past, future, or present, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near. This is the form aggregate ( $r \bar{u} p a k k h a n d h a$ ). It is inappropriate to take any of those as "me, to be mine, or my attā." The same is true for the other four aggregates".
- "When one comprehends this Yamaka, one will not take any of those five aggregates as "me, to be mine, or my att $\bar{a}$." Then one will be liberated".
- "What do you think, friend Yamaka, do you regard the body (part of rūpakkhandha) as a living being?"-"No, friend."-"Do you regard vedanā, sañ̃̃̄̄, sañkhāra, or viñ̃̃āña as a living being?"-'No, friend."
(My comment: Thus, it is clear that it does not make sense to take any or all five AGGREGATES of $r \bar{u} p a$, vedanā, sañ̃n̄a, sañkhāra, viññāna as me, as mine, or my attā.)


## Analysis by Ven. Sāriputta -3

5. Now Ven. Sāriputta goes one step further.

- "What do you think, friend Yamaka, do you regard a living being as in its body?"-"No, friend."-"Do you regard a living being as apart from its body?"-'No, friend."-"Do you regard a living being as in its vedanā? As apart from its vedanā? In saññā? As apart from saññā? In its sañkhāra? As apart from sañkhāra? In its viññāṇa? As apart from its viññāṇa?"-'No, friend."
- "What do you think, friend Yamaka, do you regard rūpa, vedanā, sañña, sañkhāra, and viññāna, taken together, as a living being?"-"No, friend."
- "What do you think, friend Yamaka, do you regard a living being as one who is without rupa, without vedanā, without saññā, without sañkhāra, without viññāna?"-'No, friend."
- "But, friend, when a living being is not understood by you to be real and actual here in this very life, is it appropriate for you to declare: 'As I understand the Dhamma taught by the Blessed One, a bhikkhu whose āsavās are destroyed is annihilated and does not exist after death'?"
- "Formerly, friend Sāriputta, when I was ignorant, I did hold that wrong view, but now that I have heard this Dhamma teaching of the Venerable Sāriputta I have abandoned that wrong view and have made the breakthrough to the Dhamma."


## My Comments

6. The following are My comments:
7. This is the main point of the whole sutta. It is impossible to talk about the destruction or annihilation of a "person" or a "living being" that does not truly exist.
8. We conventionally talk about a person, but in reality, there is no such "person", just a collection of five aggregates that keeps CHANGING at every moment according to Paṭicca Samuppāda; see, "Paticca Samuppāda - Overview").
9. This incessant continuation of the five aggregates hopping from one realm to another among the 31 realms can be called a "lifestream". The Buddha said he could not see a beginning of such a lifestream. We all have existed from a beginning that cannot be traced back. We have suffered so much in the four lower realms during most of that time. We could say that the death of an Arahant is the end of that "lifestream" (and end of suffering!); see, "What Reincarnates? - Concept of a Lifestream").

## Analysis by Ven. Sariputta -4

7. Now, Ven. Sariputta wants to make sure that Ven. Yamaka has fully understood.

- "Suppose, friend Yamaka, they were to ask you the following: 'Friend Yamaka, when a bhikkhu is an Arahant, one whose $\bar{a} s a v \bar{a} s$ are destroyed, what happens to him with the breakup of the body, after death?'-being asked thus, what would you answer?"
- "If they were to ask me this, friend, I would answer thus: 'Friends, the form is of anicca nature; anything of anicca nature leads to suffering and passing away. In the same way, vedana $\bar{a}$, sañña $\bar{a}$, sañkhāra, and viññāna are all of anicca nature; anything of anicca nature leads to suffering and passing away. I would answer that way".
- "Sādhu Sādhu, friend Yamaka!"


## Summary

8. There is more in the sutta. But the main point is in the above section.

This is why the Buddha rejected both extremes of the existence of an existing "self" or denial of existence.

- At every moment there is an existence, complete with vedanā (suffering/pleasures); those vedanā arise momentarily and pass away. But there is no $a t t \bar{a}$ or a "self" that is unchanging.
- But the problem is that those vedanā are real, and for the most part are dukha vedan $\bar{a}$, not sukha $v e d a n \bar{a}$, in the long run in the rebirth process.
- To stop any dukha vedanā from arising, one MUST terminate the continuation of the arising of the five aggregates, i.e., the rebirth process. It is not possible to have sukha vedana AND to be free of dukha vedana $\bar{a}$ anywhere in the 31 realms.
- Arising of the five aggregates is inevitable as long as $a v i j j \bar{a}$ is present. As long as $a v i j j \bar{a}$ is there, the Pațicca Samuppāda process continues (and leads to suffering.) Removal of avijjā happens at the Arahant stage with optimization of pañ̃̄̄̄a (wisdom.)
- For an Arahant with that optimized pañña $\bar{a}$, this vision becomes crystal clear. Thus he/she would not grasp (upādāna) a new bhava at the cuti-patisandhi moment. That is how this incessant continuation of a lifestream comes to an end. It is not an annihilation of a "person"; it is the end of suffering!

9. The moment-to-moment change of the five aggregates happens automatically (based on one's gati), via "Paticca Samuppāda During a Lifetime" process.

- This is why it is important to learn Buddha Dhamma, get rid of "bad gati," and cultivate "good gati": "ㅇ. Key to Ānāpānasati - How to Change Habits and Character (Gati)." Then one's five aggregates will automatically evolve in the direction of Nibbāna.
- That is the same as following the Eightfold Path: Sammā Ditṭhi, Sammā Sañkappa, ...Sammā Samādhi.


### 17.15 Three Types of "Bodies" - Poṭ̣hapāda Sutta (DN 9)

July 16, 2022
Living beings in the 31 realms generally possess one of "three types of bodies" (kāya), as the Buddha pointed out in the Potṭhapāda Sutta (DN 9.)

## Atta versus Attapaṭilābha

1. During the time of the Buddha, many believed in a "soul-like entity" (ātma/ātman in Hinduism) associated with any person. Once a Brahmin named Potṭhapāda had a lengthy conversation with the Buddha about different kinds of living beings in this world.

- The Buddha explained to him that, in general, there are three types of living beings categorized as having different "attapatiläbha." Still, none would have anything like a permanent "atta"" or "an essence" that is indestructible. That discussion is in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Potthapāda Sutta (DN 9)."
- Buddha's explanation is in section 2.2. Tayoattapatilābha. We will only focus on that in this post.
- Note that the English translation in the link of "Tayoattapatiläbha" is "Three Kinds of Reincarnation." The word "reincarnation" may indicate "something like an attā that keeps coming back." Thus, a better translation is "Three Kinds of Rebirth."


## Three Kinds of Rebirth - Tayoattapaṭilābha

2. Section 2.2. Tayoattapațilābha starts with the Buddha saying: "Tayo kho me, poṭthapāda, attapațiläbhā-olāriko attapaṭilābho, manomayo attapaṭilābho, arūpo attapațilābho." Tayo means "three."

Then the Buddha briefly explained each category.
(i) oḷārika attapaṭilābha: Rūpī cātumahābhūtiko kabaḹ̄kārāhārabhakkho.
(ii) manomaya attapaṭilābha: Rūpī manomayo sabbañgapaccañgī ahīnindriyo.
(iii) arūpa attapatiliābha: Arūp̄̄ saññāmayo.
3. The three types of "attapatilābha" are the possible rebirths with a solid body, a mind-made subtle body, and an "arūpa body."

- A solid, heavy physical body like those of ours or animals belongs to the first category. Such a physical body arises due to the food we eat (kabaḷīkāra āhāra.) Such food, when broken down, is made of the four great elements (mahā bhūta or pathavi, āpo, tejo, and vāyo.) Most living beings in the kāma loka have such dense bodies. Devā in the six Deva realms also have this body type but are less dense than ours.
- A mindl-madle subtle body has only the essential, kammically (i.e., mind-generated or manomayo) subtle rūpa, i.e., hadaya vatthu and a set of pasāda rūpa. Since this "collection" can take the shape of a figure, it is Rūpi. All rūpāvacara Brahmas (in the 16 rūpāvacara Brahma realms) have this body type.
- An arūpa body has only one suddhāṭthaka, the smallest element in Buddha Dhamma (much smaller than an atom in modern science.) Thus it cannot take the "shape of a figure" and, therefore, "arūpa." It shouldn't even be called a "body" in the sense of a "collection." But, of course, it is the "seat of the mind" and thus can generate sañ̃̃̄ $\bar{a}$, vedanā, etc., i.e., citta. Hence the description, "Arūp $\bar{\imath}$ saññ̄amayo." All arupāvacara Brahmas in the four arupāvacara Brahma realms have such "bodies."


## Mind-Made Subtle Body Inside the First Category

4. The solid, heavy bodies of the first kind cannot arise without mind-made subtle bodies as the "seeds." Furthermore, sensing the external world takes place in the "subtle bodies" made of the hadaya vatthu and a set of pasāda rupa.

- As we have discussed, human/animal existences (i.e., attapatilābha) start with a rūpi manomaya kāya at the patisandhi moment. That is the birth of a (human or animal) gandhabba. That gandhabba is pulled into a womb to merge with a zygote that will grow into a heavy physical body. See "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception."
- A human/animal can experience taste, smell, and touch only when born with such a physical body. Still, those "sensors" or "hadaya vatthu/pasāda rūpa" are in the gandhabba.
- Thus within a human or animal existence, transitions between manomaya attapatilāabha and olārika attapaṭiläbha take place many times. That ends with the ending of the manomaya attapaṭiläbha with the demise of the gandhabba.


## NDE - Temporary Transition to the Gandhabba State

5. Near-Death Experiences (NDE) provide concrete evidence for the process discussed in \#4 above.

- There have been many accounts of NDE in recent years. Physicians have also started keeping records of such cases. A collection of such studies is in the book "Consciousness Beyond Life" by Pim van Lommel (2010.)
- The manomaya kāya of the gandhabba overlaps the dense physical body and "energizes it." The six critical elements of hadaya vatthu and five pasāda rūpa of a gandhabba overlap the physical heart. That is why the gandhabba comes out of the physical body during some heart operations.
- That can also happen in critically-injured people who almost die. The gandhabba comes out of the physical body, as in the case of the death of the physical body. However, even after being declared dead, the gandhabba may "go back in," and the patient recovers "miraculously."
- We have discussed such cases in "Out-of-Body Experience (OBE) and Manomaya Kāya."


## Descriptions of the "Gandhabba World" as "Heaven"

6. Thus, most NDE accounts are by those who had "close encounters with death." They were either terminally ill or undergoing heart surgeries.

- It is an indescribable relief to come out of a physical body filled with such suffering. Any physical pain one may have been experiencing would be gone instantly. No wonder many think they just visited a heavenly world! But they temporarily visited the "para loka" of gandhabbā.
- The same human temporarily visited the "para loka" of gandhabb $\bar{a}$. It is not a transition to a Deva realm or any other realm!
- Some people report meeting previously-died close relatives or friends during NDE experiences. That is a possibility. Those deceased relatives may be still waiting for a suitable womb to be pulled into (of course, they would not know that.)
- Therefore, SUBJECTIVE experiences described by many NDE subjects need to be "taken with a grain of salt" or skepticism. However, some OBJECTIVE experiences are undeniable.


## Concrete Facts from NDE Accounts

7. In almost all cases, it is clear that the person's physical body was unresponsive and even declared dead by the physicians.

- Yet, many provide solid evidence that they "saw" the heart operation or the emergency procedures taken by the physicians and nurses. They could see with their mind-made subtle body, i.e., gandhabba kāya.

Thus, the first objective fact verified is the following. The physical body with a brain is NOT where vision takes place. "Seeing" takes place in hadaya vatthu, with the aid of the cakkhu pasāda rūpa.

- The second point is that they could travel at incredible speeds while in their gandhabba kāya. They could go through walls, ceilings, etc. As mentioned in \#3 above, hadaya vatthu and pasāda rūpa are much smaller than an atom in modern science. Going through solid objects is not a problem!
- The following NDE experience provides those two critical pieces of evidence WITHOUT being contaminated by subjective experiences.


## Woman Born-Blind Sees for the First Time

8. Sometimes, people are born with the cakkhu pasāda rūpa, but the optic nerve (or the physical eye itself) may be damaged. Thus, images of the external world do not reach the brain. As we know, the brain must process those visuals and transmit them to the gandhabba inside the physical body for it to be able to see.

- Therefore, those people are blind only because their cakkhu pasāda rūpa is not getting a signal from the brain. But if the gandhabba can come out of the body, it can see directly. (Note that some others may be born without the cakkhu pasäda rūpa; they will never be able to see.)
- The following videos illustrate this situation and verify the discussion in \#7.

WebLink: youtube: Near Death Experience - Blind woman 'sees' while out of body
WebLink: youtube: What has happened to blind people who have a near-death experience?

## Miscellaneous

9. All five sensory faculties of a human are in the gandhabba or the manomaya kāya. During the time when a gandhabba "resides" in a physical body, the brain first processes those signals, and then those signals arrive at the corresponding pasāda rūpa. Each pasāda rūpa transfers the signal to the hadaya vatthu, and it is the hadaya vatthu that really "sees," "hears," etc. See, for example, "How Do We See? - Role of the Gandhabba."

- Not all who die will end up in the "para loka" of gandhabbā. Those who have depleted the kammic energy sustaining the human bhava will be reborn in another realm.
- Anyone ignorant enough to still call gandhabba an "anatarābhava state" should read "Antarābhava Discussion in Kathāvatthu - Not Relevant to Gandhabba."


## Xvii Myths or Realities? <br> <br> I

 <br> <br> I}April 29, 2016; revised August 28, 2022

1. In this section, I plan to address some concepts and practices in Buddha Dhamma that appear to be myths and/or contradictions to many. Some are indeed myths, but some are not. And sometimes, it depends on the interpretation. There are two aspects to some of these practices.

- It is hard for people from various religions to understand why Buddhists respect Bodhi trees or pagodas (chetiya) which look like pyramids with different shapes.
- On the other hand, even many Buddhists who worship them do not know why they are doing it.
- Some practices are outright myths, like the belief that one can attain Nibbāna by doing breath meditation. There is no basis for that. How can one remove defilements (greed, hate, ignorance) by concentrating on the breath?
- However, some of them can be shown to be verifiable and inter-consistent fundamentals of nature: realities or verities.

2. Then there are other concepts like a Bodhisattava getting "niyata vivarana," or confirmation from another Buddha that he WILL become a Buddha at such a time. How does that tally with the concept that one can change one's future drastically by even a single act and that kamma is not deterministic?
3. The value and strength of Buddha Dhamma come from its unshakable foundational concepts (axioms) and inter-consistency. Nothing is inconsistent in the practices or concepts in true and pure Buddha Dhamma.

- But it requires some background material to be able to discuss some of these issues. Buddha Dhamma cannot be assessed with conventional thinking. One needs to comprehend the basics of Buddha Dhamma first.
- The more one understands the basic premises, the easier it will become for one to sort out myths from realities.
- After two years of posting essays on key concepts, we are at a stage to start discussing some of these issues. With time, we will have enough background to cover more of these issues.
- Animisa Locana Bodhi Poojā - A Prelude to Acts of Gratitude
- Paramita and Niyata Vivarana - Myths or Realities?
- Tisarana Vandana and Its Effects on One's Gathi
- Does the Hell (Niraya) Exist?
- Can Buddhist Meditation be Dangerous?
- Boy Who Remembered Pāli Suttā for 1500 Years
- Do Buddhists Pray and Engage in Idol Worshipping?

4. More related topics in the following sections.

- "Buddhahood Associated Controversies"
- "Mystical Phenomena in Buddhism?" in the subsection, "Origin of Life"
- "Myths about Meditation" in the subsection, "Bhāvanā (Meditation)"


### 18.1 Animisa Locana Bodhi Poojā - A Prelude to Acts of Gratitude

April 29, 2016; December 1, 2017

1. The conventional interpretation of Animisa Locana Bodhi Poojā (here "locana" is pronounced "lochana") is that Buddha paid his gratitude to the sacred Bodhi tree that gave him shade when he attained Enlightenment (Buddhahood). In current literature, it is described as the Buddha spending the second week after attaining Enlightenment - looking at that Bodhi tree even without blinking - as an act of gratitude for sheltering him during that Noble effort.

- It is true that the Bodhi tree was (and still is) a special tree, and has many unique properties which we will discuss in a future post.
- But there is no basis to the interpretation that he was looking at the Bodhi tree without even blinking. There the word "animisa" is incorrectly translated as "unblinking". What he did during that week was related to his acts of gratitude that were to follow.

2. Nimisa or nimesa is a moment, and animisa is "without pausing for even a moment". "Lo" is for the "lokaya" or "world", "ca" is for the citta (thoughts), and thus "locana" is basically contemplation, in this case about his long path to the Buddhhood (bodhi is the "path to Enlightenment", thus the name 37 Bodhipakshika Dhamma, where "pākshika" means "relevant to" or "associated with". The current English translation is 37 Factors of Enlightenment, which is not too far off).

- What the Buddha did during that Animisa Locana Bodhi Poojā (for 7 days) was to trace back to the time that he started fulfiling the requirement for the Buddhahood (pāramitā), i.e., scanned the memory records (nama gotta) of his previous lives to see who helped him during that whole time.
- Records of our past remain intact basically forever; see, "Namagotta, Bhava, Kamma Bīa, and Mano Thalaya (Mind Plane)" and "Recent Evidence for Unbroken Memory Records (HSAM)."
- After leaving the site of the Bodhi tree, he spent the first several years (and even at later times) locating those who helped him during that whole time and helped them attain Nibbāna. We will discuss some cases below.

3. It is said that it took the Buddha (or rather the Bodhisattva) a "sāra asenkkheyya kappa lakhayak" to fulfilled the requirements (pāramit $\bar{a}$ ) to attain the Buddhahood. See, "Difference between a Wish and a Determination (Paramita)" for a simple explanation of paramita.

There are four asenkkheyya kappas in a mahā kappa, and "lakhayak" is 100,000. But human beings live in kāma loka only during one asenkkheyya kalpa and during the other three asenkkheyya kappas the kāma lokas (and some of the lower lying rūpa lokas) are destroyed and re-formed. We will discuss this in detail later.

- Thus in calculating the pāramitā time, "asenkkheyya kappa lakhayak" actually takes the time of a mahā kalpa. I have not yet been able to find out what "sāra" means to my satisfaction even though I have come across some estimates. Thus, the time taken to fulfill the pāramita $\bar{a}$ was some number ("sāra") of hundred thousand mahā kappas.
- However, there are other data points that give us an idea how long that is. According to the Tipitaka, there have been 512,000 Buddhas that appeared in our world during the time Buddha Gotama to fulfill his pāramitā.
- There have been only 7 Buddhas during the past 31 mahā kappas, and with the Maithreya Buddha that is expected to appear before the end of this mahā kappa, there would be 8 Buddhas in those 31 maha kappas. Thus if we assume there is roughly a Buddha appearing for every four mahā kappas, then the time taken for our Bodhisattva to complete the pāramitā would be roughly two million mahā kappas. If we take a mahā kappa to be about 30 billion years (see, "Sansāric Time Scale"), then this time would be around 60 trillion years!
- Regardless of the actual time taken, it can be assumed to be truly mind-boggling. Working nonstop (that is what "animisa" means), it took the Buddha fully seven days to cover this time span (recall the nama gotta).
- Of course many of the key people had been with him in repeated lives; this is why it took so long (seven days) for the Buddha to go through those records.

4. When the Buddha left the site of the Bodhi tree seven weeks after attaining the Buddhahood, he immediately started "paying back debts" to them.

- This highlights the importance in paying back debts and showing gratitude for those who come to help; see, "Kamma, Debt, and Meditation."
- One of the ten wrong views is the belief that there is no merit in paying back debts or showing gratitude; see, "Three Kinds of Ditthi, Eightfold Paths, and Samādhi"" and "Wrong Views (Micchā Ditthi) - A Simpler Analysis."
- Buddha's own actions were to highlight the importance of getting rid of that wrong view.

5. It is said that he first wanted to pay back his most recent "teachers": Alara Kalama and Uddaka Ramaputta. Unfortunately, both had died recently and both had been born in the arüpa loka (they had both cultivated anāriya arūpa jhānā). In arūpa loka, beings do not have eyes or ears, and thus are unable to learn Dhamma. Thus the Buddha was not able to help them.

- Next, he thought about the five ascetics (Kondanna, Bhaddiya, Vappa, Mahānāma, and Assaji) who had attended to him while he was practicing austerities for six years. It is those five ascetics that the Buddha delivered the first and second discourses at the Deer Park at Isipathana: Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta and the Anatta Lakkhana Sutta (Anatta is the third of the Tilakkhana: anicca, dukkha, anatta). They all became Arahants after the two discourses.
- Then the Buddha sought out and preached Dhamma to Yasā, a son of a wealthy brahmin, who lived nearby. Yasā and 54 friends of his became Bhikkhus and soon attained the Arahantship.

6. It is also important to note that most of those who helped the Bodhisattva in in his efforts, had also filled versions of pāramitā to be major disciples of the Buddha. They themselves had worked towards liberation (Nibbāna) in previous lives.

- This is why most of them were able to attain the Arahanthood or various stages of Nibbāna in short times.
- Even these days, it is easier for some than others because of their past efforts. Thus no one should be discouraged in their efforts. The efforts will pay off in time, possibly even later in this life or in future lives.

7. By the time the Buddha left Isipathana, there were thus 60 Arahants in his Säsana. After sending them in different directions to propagate his message of liberation, the Buddha himself left towards Uruvela, to meet the three Kassapa brothers and their followers who had been with him in numerous lives in the long past.

- On the way there, he intercepted 30 young wealthy men who were looking for a woman who had robbed them of their valuables. That was not an accidental meeting either. All 30 of them had encounters with the Buddha in previous lives and were ready to comprehend the Dhamma. They all attained Arahanthood shortly.

8. Upon arriving in Urevala, the Buddha had to spend a considerable time and effort to convince the Kassapa brothers that were not Arahants. They were yogis who were under the impression that they had already attained liberation, and were very reluctant to embrace the Buddha Dhamma. Finally, they became disciples of the Buddha and all 1000 of them attained the Arahanthood upon hearing the Aditta Pariyaya Sutta.

- Then the Buddha traveled with those 1000 Arahants to Rajagaha, the capital of the Kingdom of Magadha. King Bimbisara became a Sotāpanna and offered the Buddha his first monastery, the Bamboo Grove in Rajagaha.

9. While the Buddha was residing in the Bamboo Grove two brahmins, Upatissa and Kolita, met Assaji Thero (who was one of the five ascetics), and became Sotāpannas upon hearing a single verse from the Asssaji Thero. Then they came to see the Buddha and requested to become bhikkhus, and attained the Arahanthood within two weeks.

- Of course they became the two chief disciples of the Buddha: Ven. Sariputta and Ven. Moggallana.

10. Then the Buddha, accompanied by the bhikkhus, made the way to Kapilavatthu, his father's Kingdom. Here, he was able to help numerous people who had been together with him many, many lives in the past.

- By the way, it is those who have mutual debts to each other who are born into the same family and share common relatives and friends. Thus one's obligations are mostly in that order. Of course one is most indebted to one's parents.
- Just so this will not convey the wrong message, this is not to condone the common practice of "giving perks" to family and friends by misusing government resources, done by many politicians today. One should give only things of one's own.

11. Thus the first several years of Buddha's life was dedicated to helping those who had been with him and helped him in many ways through multiple rebirths in his endeavor to become a Buddha. Of course, neither a Bodhisattva (until becoming a Buddha) nor his helpers "knew" that was the case beforehand. That is how nature works. The next post in this series discusses this issue.

- It is easy to see that people with same interests always tend to stay together, because they have similar gathi. This is a very deep concept that we have encountered many times. A simple explanation is given in the post, "The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Āsavas)."

12. King Suddhodana, Prince Siddhartha's father, attained the Arahanthood just before passing away about five years after the Enlightenment of the Buddha.

- The Buddha, as a mark of gratitude to his mother who was born as a deva in Tavatimsa deva realm, preached the Abhidhamma to his mother together with other devas continuously for three months. The principal topics of Abhidhamma were then repeated by the Buddha to Venerable Sariputta, who subsequently worked with his clan of 500 bhikkhus to compile the Abhidhamma Pitaka that we have today.
- Of course, both Princess Yasodhara and Prince Rahula entered the monastic order and attained Arahanthood too.
- Numerous other relatives entered the monastic order and attained various stages of Nibbāna.
- A fairly good book that goes through this timeline is "The Life of the Buddha" by Bhikkhu Nanamoli. It is important to note that the Tipitaka itself does not show the actual timeline of events; it is categorized according to other criteria.

13. Sometimes, it is not only those who help each other, but also arch enemies that follow each other through the cycle of rebirths (sainsāra). While almost all other relatives of the Buddha (Prince Siddhartha) were able to attain Nibbāna, there were a few who could not overcome their deeply-embedded hatred towards the Buddha.

- The best examples were Devadatta and King Suppabuddha, who were the brother and father, respectively, of Princess Yasodhara. They both eventually ended up in the niraya (hell) for committing violent acts towards the Buddha.

Next, "Paramita and Niyata Vivarana - Myths or Realities?", ......

### 18.2 Pāramitā and Niyata Vivarana - Myths or Realities?

April 29, 2016; revised November 22, 2018; September 10, 2022

1. Pāli is a "phonetic language": some meanings come from how words are pronounced, and sometimes grammar rules are bypassed (or Pāli has its own rules, particularly when combining words). This is why people sometimes get into trouble applying grammar rules to Pāli.

- Luckily, most Pāli words have related Sinhala words, so one with good Sinhala knowledge and the basics of Buddha Dhamma can understand many Pāli terms. This is called "pada nirutti" or clarifying via using some key phrases and sounds. (But it takes a special knowledge or "patisambidhā ñạna" of a jāti Sotäpanna to glean the meanings of keywords like anicca, dukkha, and anatta, without anyone's help).
- The word "pāramitā" comes from "pireema", or to fulfill. Certain conditions must be met while purifying one's mind to become a Buddha. Buddha's 80 great disciples (mahā sāvaka) must also fulfill less stringent conditions.
- Attaining magga phala - including Arahantship — does not have such specific requirements (at least, I have not seen them). Yet, those also require cleansing one's mind over multiple lives. No goals can be achieved without effort. Even when one wins a lottery, there is a reason (a good kamma vipāka from previous lives).
- See "Difference between a Wish and a Determination (Paramita)" for a simple explanation of pāramitā .

2. The above paragraphs may give the impression that one "knows" that one is fulfiling pāramitā to be a Buddha or a great disciple. They do not know that they are gradually fulfilling such requirements. It is only when a Bodhisatta reaches a certain stage of progress that he gets told by Buddhas at those times:

- First, he gets "aniyata vivarana" meaning a Buddha tells him that he is likely to become a Buddha in the future because he has acquired "Buddha gati" through his moral gati and his drive to find truth in past lives.
- Then when more "Buddha gati" are acquired and firmly established with time, a later Buddha may give "niyata vivarana," i.e., that he will definitely become a Buddha.
- We discussed this in detail in the post, "Animisa Locana Bodhi Poojā - A Prelude to Acts of Gratitude."

3. At first, this "niyata vivarana" seems to say that the future can be deterministic. But in most cases, the future is not deterministic. One can change one's future drastically by one's determined efforts; see, "What is Kamma? - Is Everything Determined by Kamma?."

- The key lies in one's gati (āsava and anusaya are related). It is comparatively easy to remove/change those gathi that one has recently acquired, but the longer one acts according to those gatī, the more deeply embedded they become. One gets "niyata vivarana" when one's Buddha gati is unshakable.
- This is closely related to the fact that when one attains any stage of a magga phala, that is never removed in future rebirths.

4. To give a very simple example, a child who has just memorized, but not grasped the concept of adding, may be able to give the correct answer if that particular addition has been memorized. But a child who has grasped the concept of addition can add any two numbers, and that "knowledge base" cannot be removed from him.

- This is the same thing that happens when one attains the Sotāpanna stage of Nibbāna, for example. When one grasps that nothing in these 31 realms can be maintained to one's satisfaction for a long time, That "base level of comprehension of the nature of this world" is not going to change ever, even though future lives.
- With that level of understanding, one does not have to consciously think to avoid the drastic immoral actions that make one eligible to be born in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$; thoughts of such actions never come to a Sotāpanna's mind.

5. In another example from the Tipitaka, once there was going to be a war between two factions. Bhikkhus asked Ven. Sariputta which side was going to win, and Ven. Sariputta named the winning side.

- But when the war was fought months later, the other side won. The bhikkhus were perplexed; how can a prediction of Ven. Sariputta be wrong? They went and asked the Buddha. The Buddha said that Ven. Sariputta's prediction was correct based on the conditions at that time. But as unforeseeable factors came into play, the outcome changed.

6. The world is extremely complex, and it is impossible to make predictions most of the time. This is related to the anicca nature: any sañkhata can undergo unexpected change, called vipariṇāma.

- But some gati and kamma can become so strong that it becomes virtually impossible to change the outcome. For example, if one kills one's parent, it is impossible to avoid birth in an ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$ in the next birth.
- In the same way, when one's views about this world become clear to some level, and one can truly "see" the dangers of births in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$, or the unfruitfilness of such actions, one's mind becomes permanently averse to such actions. That is when one becomes a Sotāpanna.
- Through the next two stages (Sakadāgāmī and Anāgāmı ), one's mind becomes purified to the extent that one will cease to enjoy sense pleasures automatically, and then one will never be born in kāma loka. At the Arahant stage, one sees the dangers of rebirth anywhere in the 31 realms.

7. But all those stages can be attained only if one is taught the correct path by a Noble Person, who has attained one of the four stages of Nibbāna. The special aspect of a Buddha is the ability to figure out that without anybody's instructions. And the mind of a Buddha is much purer than an Arahant's.

- Even when one attains Arahanthood, some samisāric habits remain. Those are not defilements but just habits in the sense of doing something in a particular way, for example. Many such cases are mentioned in the Tipitaka. One Arahant could not remove the habit of addressing others inappropriately, even though no malice was involved. Another Arahant had the habit of jumping over puddles on the road.
- But the mind of a Buddha was perfect. Not even a minor behavioral problem could be detected in a Buddha.

8. This can be compared to removing dirt from a glass of water. One could filter the water and get rid of the big pieces of contaminants first. Then one could use better filters to remove even smaller particles. Now there may not be any visible contamination. But for all practical purposes, the water is clean and that can be compared to an Arahant.

- But there may still be some contaminant molecules that can be uncovered only with a chemical analysis. Perfectly pure water without even a single molecule of a contaminant can be compared to the purity level of a Buddha.
- Another meaning of "pāramit $\bar{a} "$ is "pereema" or "to filter". As one keeps filtering out contaminants (defilements) from one's mind, it becomes purer. Filtering to the ultimate level is fulfilling "pāramitā."

9. A person who eventually becomes a Buddha starts as a scientist or a philosopher in today's terminology. It is started via two paths, and both need to be fulfilled: "kim sacca gavesi, kim kusala gavesi": investigations of truth and morality.

- Sacca (pronounced "sachcha") means the truth; "kusala" is, of course morals, and "gavesi" is one who investigates. One starts with the intention of finding out how nature works, what morals are, and the origins of morals.
- Even today, we can assign such labels to many scientists and philosophers. Of course, only a minute fraction of them will eventually become a Buddha or a great disciple, but that is how one starts.

10. That habit (gati) of looking into the truth and morals grows through successive lives. Most of them drop due to off external influences and unexpected circumstances. But those few who get to cultivate those gati keep cultivating them. As I said before, one may not have even heard of a Buddha for many eons while cultivating such gati. It is just that when one is on the right (or even wrong) path, nature starts guiding one:
"Dhammo ha ve rakkathi dhammacari."

- By the way, one could start as a man or a woman, but only a man attains Buddhahood . This and several other things "that would not happen" are discussed in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Bahudhātuka Sutta (MN 115)."
- In our rebirth process, one could change sex. Sex change can happen even during a lifetime (these days, such transgenders are common).
- In the rebirth process, we have been born a man and a woman innumerable times. If I remember correctly, the Bodhisatva was a woman when she started cultivating pāramitā to become Buddha. But at some point (probably after getting niyata vivarana), he had been a male.
- There is a slight difference between males and females. That may not be politically correct to say these days, but that is the reality. One is a man or a woman because one has cultivated the corresponding gati. No matter how many laws are passed, the military will always be dominated by men, for example.

11. In the Tipitaka, it says the usual progression of one's character (gati) buildup is dāna (giving), sīla (moral conduct), bhāvanā (mostly loving kindness towards others), and culminating in paññ̄a (wisdom).

- While these main ones are being cultivated, others simultaneously cultivate, and the set of ten is called dasa pāramitā. The others are: sacca (truth), viriya (effort), khanti (patience), adhitthāna (determination), mettta (loving-kindness), nekkhamma (renunciation), and upekkhā (equanimity).
- The process has been analyzed in great detail. For example, each of those ten grows into higher stages: upa pāramitā (middle) and aramatta pāramitā (ultimate). As one keeps making progress through successive lives, such gati get amplified, and one makes advances to those higher stages.
- As we saw in the previous post, "Animisa Locana Bodhi Poojā - A Prelude to Acts of Gratitude," it takes an unimaginably long time to purify the mind and get to the perfect mind of a Buddha.

12. As an example, let us consider the dāna pāramitā. Here one starts with mundane giving (dāna), i.e., giving to the needy, animals, elders, yogis, etc.

- Then one advances to the abhaya dāna. Here one comprehends that every being values its life the most and thus does everything possible to save all lives. It also has an even deeper meaning: Abhaya means remove "bhaya" or fright. Thus the metta pāramitā grows simultaneously too. Most categories are interrelated and grow together.
- The highest is dhamma dāna. Of course, it starts with teaching others morals while living an exemplary life. When one becomes a Buddha, one starts teaching the Buddha Dhamma (the way to "eliminate bhava" or "bhava uddha" and attain Nibbāna).

13. As I said before, such instructions about dasa pāramitā are unknown to the world even through eons. There are many mahā kapp $\bar{a}$ where not a single Buddha is born. Thus it is not like following a set of instructions. Those qualities grow as one's samisāric gati without even realizing that one is fulfilling such requirements.

- Even today, many people engage in such activities regardless of their religions or cultures. Many of today's scientists, teachers, physicians, philanthropists, etc., could be in such early stages.
- Thus, we should always respect and honor those who live exemplary lives regardless of their religions, cultures or any other categorization. One is considered "suitable for paying respects" only based on one's actions.

14. It is informative to see why there are special categories of five Buddhas, seven Buddhas, 24 Buddhas, and 28 Buddhas in Buddhist literature. All these Buddhas are named and discussed in the following Wikipedia article:

## WebLink: WIKI: List of the named Buddhas

- After striving for a long time as discussed in \#3 above, our Bodhisattā first obtained "niyata vivarana" that he will definitely become a Buddha in the future, from Buddha Dīpañkara, who was the 24th Buddha preceding Buddha Gotama. A Bodhisatta customarily obtains "niyata vivarana" from 24 Buddhas before attaining the Buddhahood. The last Buddha our Bodhisattā obtained "niyata vivarana from" was Buddha Kassapa.
- Before obtaining "niyata vivarana," our Bodhisattā obtained "aniyata vivarana" or "not confirmed, but very likely" from three Buddhas named Tannankara, Medhankara, and Saranankara. As the Bodhisattā kept fulfilling the requirements, they were first fulfilled during the time of Buddha Dīpañkara, as mentioned above.
- The special aspect of the seven Buddhas is that those were the most recent Buddhas. There have been four Buddhas (Kakusanda, Konagama, Kassapa, Gotama) in this mahā kappa, and there were 30 mahā kappā before that which did not have even a single Buddha. In the mahā kappa before that, there were 2 Buddhas (Siki and Vessabhu); Before that, there was only a single Buddha going back to 91 mah $\bar{a}$ kapp $\bar{a}$. So, there have been only 7 Buddhas within the past 91 mah $\bar{a} k a p p \bar{a}$, and the timeline is discussed in the "WebLink: Suttacentral: Mahapadana Sutta (DN 14)."
- The present mahā kappa is a very special one, having the maximum number (five) of Buddhas in a given mahā kappa. We have had four Buddhas so far, and there will be one more, Buddha Maitreya, before this mahā kappa ends.

15. Finally, pāramit $\bar{a}$ are also associated with one striving to become one of the 80 disciples of a future Buddha.

- Furthermore, one striving to attain the Arahanthood (or Nibbāna) is also fulfilling pāramitā.


### 18.3 Tisarana Vandana and Its Effects on One's Gati

May 28, 2016

1. Many people consider the recital of namaskaraya followed by the 24 supreme qualities of the Buddha, Dhamma, Sañgha (Tiratana vandana or Tisarana vandan $\bar{a}$ ) in three possible ways: (i) recite them mechanically (and erroneously), (ii) disregard them as unimportant, or (iii) even consider the practice as "mythical" per benefits of their recital.

- These qualities are called "suvisi guna," where suvisi means 24 and guna are the qualities.
- These qualities (and the meanings of the words Tisarana Vandana) are discussed briefly in "Supreme Qualities of Buddha, Dhamma, Sangha"; correct way to recite them are also discussed there.

2. As I have discussed in many posts, there are many things in this world that we do not really understand. Many of the Buddhist practices have become "mystical" simply because their true interpretations as well as their correct usage have been lost. This current topic is a good example. One can reap many benefits by understanding the true meanings of these phrases AND by reciting them correctly. I have experienced these benefits.

- Now, this does not mean one can attain Nibbāna (or the Sotāpanna stage) by reciting them day and night. This is simply one of the many tools available to calm the mind and to slowly but surely change one's character (gathi) over time.
- As everything else with Buddha Dhamma, it is all in one's mind. If one has the motivation and the drive to learn and apply these tools, they can bring many benefits not only in this life but in future lives. But it is not like taking a pill for a headache; one cannot expect results quickly. We have developed "bad gathi" over beginning-less rebirths and it is not easy to change them quickly.

3. First of all, we all have seen how it is possible to convey a given message by just changing the tone. The words, "come here" can give different meanings based on the way how the words are uttered. When a parent says, "come here" to a child with love and affection, the child would be delighted to oblige. The same parent can get angry at the same child and yell, "COME HERE!", the child is likely to cringe and back out afraid of a possible spanking.

- The "gathi sound" ("gathi handa" in Sinhala) in the two cases were totally different even though the words were the same; see below. The way the same phrase was uttered made a difference to the child's mind.

4. Many Pāli words have a different kind of power too; certain words can influence the mind strongly.As we will discuss in future posts, the early humans had a single language called Magadhi from which Pāli words originated. It was a universal language with the effects conveyed by the way the words were pronounced.

- This is why I mentioned in other posts also that Pāli is a phonetic language. Grammar rules are secondary.
- Just by listening to a recital of a pirith desanā (i.e., recital of sutt $\bar{a}$ ) can make a change in one's mindset, which may be even visible to others. There is a subliminal message (sañ̃̃̄ $\bar{a}$ ) in the suttā that the mind can grasp, even if the person may not understand what is being said.
- The words themselves, how they are uttered, and even who utters them, are "embedded" in "gathi sounds".

5. There are several such examples mentioned in the Tipitaka. A famous example is about a frog who was attentively listening to a discourse of the Buddha. Of course a frog could not understand what the Buddha was saying. But the "gathi sound" ("gathi handa" in Sinhala) that came from the Buddha combined with sansäric gathi of the frog led the frog to attentively listen to the pleasing sound from the Buddha and to have a pleasant mindset.

- While listening to the discourse, the frog was accidentally killed by the walking stick of a person there, and the frog was born in a deva loka instantaneously. His name was Manduka deva and he immediately realized how he was born there. He came back to listen to the same discourse and attained a magga phala.
- Then there were a bunch of bats who resided in a cave that was used by Bhikkhus who used to recite pirith every night. Those bats were all said to have born as children in the same village and to have attained Arahantship later. There are few other accounts as well.

6. These may sound like myths, but when one learns Abhidhamma and understands the power of a "somanassa sahagata citta", (or a "thought with joy"), one could make the connection. We all, including animals who had been humans at some point in the past, have accumulated good kamma seeds as well as bad ones from the past.

- One of the factors that comes into play at the dying moment is the state of the mind. If the mind is highly perturbed or is "covered with" panca nivarana (see, "Key to Calming the Mind - The Five Hindrances"), then it allows conditions for a bad kamma seed to come into play. But while listening to Dhamma or pirith, those panca nivarana are temporarily suspended and that allows for a good kamma seed to come into play; see, "Patisandhi Citta - How the Next Life is Determined According to Gati."
- One's gathi are not fixed. Even a person with many immoral gathi has some moral ones as well. What kind of gathi operates at a given moment depends on one's state of mind.

7. Now we can come back to the issue of "gathi sound" that we mentioned in \#5 above. Tisarana vandanā especially has the power to change one's mindset, if recited correctly.

- Entities with same gathi always naturally tend to be close to other entities with same gathi. This can be clearly seen anywhere. People who like sports get together. People like to party all the time, hang out with others who like to do the same. This is discussed in a simple but illustrative post: "The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Āsavas)."
- This is why in Asian Buddhist countries it is customary to turn on pirith (recital of sutt $\bar{a}$ ) on the radio in the mornings and/or at night. This is supposed to keep undesired beings away and attract benevolent beings to the houses. It is actually effective if done properly. Those pretas with immoral gathi do not like to hang around when such chanting are being played. On the other hand, devas of the lowest realm (Bhummataka devas) like to stay close to such sounds/environments.

8. Another related property is "gathi ruva" or "gathi picture". The obvious example is a picture of a Buddha, not the distorted laughing Buddha, but the serene Buddhas like shown below.


- This is why most meditators keep a Buddha statue in the meditation room. It is just another factor that helps in getting to the right mindset.
- Then there is "gathi suvanda" or "gathi smell". Burning incense gives an odor that is also compatible with a meditation environment. A perfume on the other hand, is a distraction. A good perfume is compatible when going out on a date; that sets a compatible environment for sense pleasures.
- All these subtle things add up to make a difference. And how much of a difference depends on the person too. Some people do not need any of such "incentives" to get onto even j$j \bar{a} n \bar{a}$. But for some others they could make a difference.

9. In order to establish this point we can think about a "party atmosphere" compared to a "meditation atmosphere". When someone organizes a party or a dance, one decorates the room with bright colors, eye catching pictures, sensual fragrances, loud music, etc. That is the environment with "matching gathi" for such an event. That would be a disastrous setting for a meditation session; one would not be able to concentrate at all.

- On the other hand, a meditation atmosphere is not compatible for a dance. One cannot dance to pirith or to Tisarana vandana $\overline{\text {. It }}$ provides a setting that is calm and peaceful, and conducive for contemplation.
- Another aspect is that people when attracted to Dhamma will start skipping parties as I have. I would rather stay home and learn Dhamma rather than going to a noisy environment let alone a party.
- One will start associating with different people too, if one seriously gets into Dhamma. It is not done by sheer will power; rather it just happens because one's gathi change. It is just natural for "likes to get together with likes", the Law of Attraction: "The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings ( Āsavas)."

10. This concept actually works at a deeper level too. We emit electromagnetic radiation (cittaja rūpa) according out gathi and mindset at a given moment. Whatever the types of Dhamma that are attracted at
any given time are compatible with that state of the mind. A deeper discussion is at "What are Dhamma? - A Deeper Analysis."

- For example, when we are angry we never receive more good thoughts. If we are arguing with someone, what always comes to mind are just bad thoughts, bad memories about that person.
- On the other hand, when we are calm and in a joyful mood, we mostly think about good memories.
- When one is at a funeral, one's thoughts and complexion becomes attuned to that environment: one sees and hears people crying, and one gets sad and one's face shows that as well; one does not feel like laughing. On the other hand, when one is at a party it is totally opposite atmosphere, and one feels like laughing and dancing.
- Other people can also be affected by our mindset. It is quite pleasant to look at a Buddhist monk. They just have that calm demeanor which is part of their cultivated gathi. In fact, our bodies also change over time according our gathi. There are other people whom we can instantly recognize as "rough characters".
- This is a deep subject with many complexities and even exceptions. But I hope I have been able to convey the basic idea.

11. When one is reciting Tisarana vandana $\bar{a}$ correctly in a suitable environment, one's gathi will change at least during that short time for the better. One will be able to grasp deeper concepts during meditation following the recitation. When one does this over a long time, one's salient gathi will gradually change too.

- I know mine have changed over the past several years, and in particular within the past several months. It is a process that needs a bit of time to get traction, and then the results becomes clear one day. When I first wrote the original post (which I just revised), my enthusiasm for reciting Tisarana vandanā was not that high.
- However, I do not want to over emphasize this aspect. It can be considered a tool that could make a difference for some people.

12. For those who may be trying to cultivate the anicca sañña (i.e., comprehend what is meant by anicca, dukkha, anatta), reciting Namasakaraya followed by Tisarana vandanā could be helpful. I am providing the recordings below.

- The Buddha has also stated that when one is in a dangerous situation or gets frightened by something, reciting Budu Guna (Ithipi so Bhagavā.....) can help getting rid of the fear. One could recite this just before going to bed and it might help with falling asleep; again, it depends on one's own gathi, how faithfully one does it, whether it is done with $s a d d h \bar{a}$, etc.

Here is a recital of the Namaskaraya by the Venerable Thero (you need to adjust volume control on your computer). It is normally recited three times:

## WebLink: Listen to the verses of Namaskaraya recital

Here is a recording of the Tisarana vandana by the Venerable Thero (You need to control the volume level on your computer):

WebLink: Listen to the verses of Tiratana Vandana
Pāli text (click to open the pdf file):
WebLink: PDF File: Tiratana Vandana

### 18.4 Does the Hell (Niraya) Exist?

## December 18, 2015; revised August 29, 2019

## Introduction

1. The Buddha described a "much wider" world of 31 realms, compared to the just two realms (human and animal) that we experience. See, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma."

- The Buddhist worldview is not a theory or speculation. The Buddha could "see" each of the 31 realms of this world. He could "see" how a lifestream moves from one realm to another based on kamma vipāka and prevailing conditions, i.e., Paticca Samuppāda.
- Many suttā describe Buddha's and his disciples' visits to brahma and deva planes. Others describe visits of brahma $\bar{a}$ and devas to the human world (mainly to listen to the discourses of the Buddha and to ask questions from the Buddha). In the latter category, there are 81 sutt $\bar{a}$ in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Devatā Sam̈yutta (SN 1.1 ~ 1.81 )" and 111 suttā in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Devaputta Samimutta (SN 2.1 ~ 2.30)" in the Samimutta Nikāya.

2. Even though devas and brahma do not have to face much suffering during their lifetimes, those lives have finite lifetimes. When they die, they are mostly born in the lower realms.

- The importance of those realms is that living beings spend most of their time in the rebirth process in those apāyā. See, "Rebirth - Connection to Suffering in the First Noble Truth."
- Several suttā discuss the unbearable suffering in hell and other lower realms; see below. Also, see my post on August 28, 2019, at the discussion forum on, "WebLink: Pure Dhamma Forums: Questions on Posts in the "Origin of Life" Subsection." It discusses "life in hell".
- The following book provides vivid details of life in hell, compatible with the description in the sutt $\bar{a}$ : "A Guided Tour of Hell - A Graphic Memoir" by Samuel Bercholz (2016). He first describes an "out-ofbody experience" that is similar to many given by others (seeing his body from above), but the second experience is a "trip to the hell".

3. Here we will discuss more indirect evidence from our experiences for the existence of hell (niraya). This post also provides a bit more information on the way to clarifying the role (and importance) of the human brain.

- Beings in most realms do not have the capacity to change their destiny; they just pay off their past kamma, whether good kamma in deva or brahma realms or bad kamma in the human and lower realms (apāyā).
- Among living beings, it is mostly humans who can mold their future; they are the ones who can cultivate citta with high javana power. They are ones who do (abhi)sañkhāra that lead to both good and bad rebirths (via improving the character or "gati"). They either enjoy the fruits of those in good realms or pay for them in the apāy $\bar{a}$, and eventually - after long times - come back to the human realm. That is what all of us have been doing from an untraceable beginning.


## Genuine Hell Sounds or Not?

4. Here is a well-circulated youtube video that claims to playback the "sounds of hell" recorded in a deep underground mine in Siberia. I must warn that these sounds are horrific, even though the recording is likely to be a fake; see below.

## WebLink: youtube: Siberia Hell sounds

There is a post describing the background of this video: WebLink: skeptoid.com: The Siberian Hell Sounds and refers to the following youtube video proving that the above video is a hoax:

- If it is a fake (as it appears to be), it does not make sense to try to fool people by making videos such as above. One should realize that truth always comes out at the end.
- Still, debunking the "hell sounds" video does not prove that the hell does not exist either.


## Do We Need Firsthand Experience on the Existence of Hell?

5. We should ask the following question. Is it necessary for us to directly observe something with our five physical senses to believe its existence?

- When many people hear about the apāy $\bar{a}$ — other than the animal realm that we can see - or heavenly worlds of devas, they refuse even to consider their existence. That is because "they cannot see those realms." (By the way, there are four apāy $\bar{a}$ (niraya, preta, asura, or animal).
- But science disproves that contention. Science was not aware of the existence of billions of galaxies and an uncountable number of planetary systems like our solar system until the 20th century. Then better instruments became available; see, "Wrong Views (Miccha Ditthi) - A Simpler Analysis." There are many such examples given in the "Dhamma and Science" section.
- However, the Buddha was able to see those realities 2500 years ago by purifying his mind. We can also "see' the existence of some of these realms if we can cultivate abhiñña powers.
- It is not a good idea to refuse to consider anything that cannot be confirmed with one's direct experiences. That is discussed in detail in several posts, including "Wrong Views (Miccha Ditthi) - A Simpler Analysis."


## Description of Life in Hell in the Sutta

6. I am going to summarize what we can glean from the sutt $\bar{a}$ (plural of sutta is sutt $\bar{a}$ ) in the Tipitaka of the four $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$ and other realms including the niraya (or the hell). The general layout of the 31 domains was summarized in the post, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma."

- The niraya is in the deep interior of the Earth. The "hell beings" have solid bodies that can withstand various forms of torture. A "hell being" is born via opapatika birth, with a full physical body capable of experiencing the suffering.
- The hell-wardens who impart those sufferings to the hell beings are also living beings. They are born in the niraya because of their "gati" (character qualities) due to the "sañkhāra" that they developed in previous lives. Their bodies are tolerant of the harsh conditions in the niraya. They do not suffer like hellbeings.
- There are many posts in the website on "gati." For an introduction, see, "The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Āsavas)."
- "WebLink: suttacentral: Devadūta Sutta (MN 130)" describes "hells" or "niraya." A translation at: "WebLink: accesstoinsight.org: Devaduta Sutta: The Deva Messengers." A similar sutta about some realms located close to Earth is the "WebLink: suttacentral: Ātānātiya Sutta (DN 23)." A translation at, "WebLink: suttacentral: The Ātānātiya Discourse (DN 23)."

7. Devadüta Sutta explains in vivid detail how the hell-wardens torture a hell being. There is a king Yama (or probably many kings) in each niraya (there are several). He interrogates some of the newly arrived hellbeings "who were at the borderline" and just barely made it to the hell. He reminds him/her of the opportunities that he/she had to understand the bad consequences of their actions.

- It is important to note that the king Yama interrogates only those new arrivals that are from the human realm. There is an uncountable number of beings born in the niraya from other apāy $\bar{a}$. They move from one apāya to another until a rare opportunity comes to get out of the apāya
- Such a Yama king is born there also according to the "gati" they had cultivated in previous lives; see below. Like all other living beings, those hell wardens and king Yama have finite lifetimes.


## Based on Experience - Not Speculation

8. It is significant to note the ending of the sutta, where the Buddha says, 'I tell you this, monks, not from having heard it from another contemplative or brahman. On the contrary, I tell you this just as I have known for myself, seen for myself, understood for myself." That is what I mean when I say all that the Buddha had experienced what he taught. He could "see" all of 31 realms.

- Of course, we have to have faith in the Buddha to believe that. However, we can see that all he had taught is self-consistent. There are no contradictions; see, "Buddha Dhamma: Non-Perceivability and Self-Consistency."

9. There are close comparisons in the world that we experience. A good example is the comparison of policemen to the hell-wardens. They both like to punish those who have done immoral acts. Being a policeman is not easy; they are under stress, and it is not easy to deal with rough criminals. Not everyone can be a policeman (or policewoman).

- They have cultivated "gati" or habits that do not tolerate "bad behavior." They always think about ways to find and bring to justice those who do immoral deeds.
- King Yama is like a criminal judge; he also has similar gati comparable to hell-wardens but does not engage in personally punishing the culprits.


## Body Types in Different Realms

10. A discussion on the body types can illustrate the point that the specific kamma vipāka prepares the physical body. Each body type can experience vipāka in according to gati of that being.

- The hell-being is born in a niraya to experience the kamma vipāka corresponding to kamma done with hate, like killing or torturing others. But that kamma was done after cultivating "hate sañkhāra" for long times.
- A preta's body is in such a way to experience hunger, many have huge bodies with tiny mouths so that they can never satisfy hunger. One is born a preta because one has cultivated "preta sañkhāra." One will always be thinking about sense pleasures and also crave for what others have. That applies not just to the poor. One can be wealthy, but still may not be satisfied with what one has. On the other hand, there may be a poor person who is satisfied with what he/she has and does not cultivate "preta sañkhāra."
- The "asuras" are those who have cultivated "asura sañkhāra," i.e., those who like to get "free rides." They depend on others for their needs and are too lazy to work and make a living. Those who steal or embezzle money from others also have similar gati.
- Animals (called "thirisan" because they have all three "san" of lobha, dosa, moha) have a mixture of those gati; see, "What is 'San'?."
- One cultivates particular sañkhāra because one has a specific character or gati. And the more sañkhāra one does (thinking, speaking, and doing certain things), the more established gati become, which in turn leads to corresponding $j \bar{a} t i$ (births); see, "Gati to Bhava to Jāti - Ours to Control."


## Comparison with Modern Science

11. In the post "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma," the 31 realms were represented by spherical shells with a sphere in the middle and the bodies of the beings in lower realms were higher in general than the bodies of the living beings in the higher realms. Each "inhabited" planetary system has all 31 realms. But most planetary systems are not "inhabited."

- Scientists say that the nearest planetary system to the solar system is Alpha Centauri, which is located 4.37 light-years away; see, WebLink: wikipedia: Alpha Centauri. A light-year is a distance traveled by light in a YEAR at the speed of $299792458 \mathrm{~m} / \mathrm{s}(186,000$ miles/second $)$.
- That is a humongous distance that cannot be traveled with current technology or any technology in the foreseeable future. It would take 100 years to reach that star system; see WebLink: wikipedia: Project Longshot. Thus it is doubtful that we will verify the existence of life in other planetary systems during our lives.
- However, there are other living beings in the solar system itself that science has not found. That is in agreement with scientists' admission that only $4 \%$ of the mass of the universe is explainable by science.

12. The niraya or hell is located deep inside the Earth, and those beings have very dense bodies.

- The other three $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$ are located at and close to the surface of the Earth. Of course, the animals live among humans, and asuras are said to live mostly in the oceans. The petas also live on the surface of the Earth just like us, but normally we cannot see them. They all have body densities comparable to humans, except for petas. Some petas have "fine bodies" suffer not via bodily punishments, but mentally: they can recall the past lives and bad deeds that led to the preta bhava.
- There are three other human realms close to the Earth that we cannot see. Most deva realms lie wellabove the surface of the Earth. The brahma realms are even further out. Of course, devas have much less dense bodies than humans, and brahmas' bodies are finer at higher realms. At the highest brahma realm, an arupa brahma has only one suddhatthaka, the hadaya vatthu; see, "The Origin of Matter Suddhatthaka."
- The body types in the 31 realms have been discussed in the previous post: Body Types in 31 Realms Importance of Manomaya Kaya.


## Births Correspond to Gati (Character Qualities)

13. Roughly speaking, we can say beings with more immoral "gati" are born with denser bodies inside or on the surface of the Earth. Their thick bodies are used to impart kamma vipāka either via torture or via bodily ailments and diseases.

- The beings in the deva and brahma realms, who have less and less dense bodies do not suffer bodily ailments. At the end of their kammic energy, they disappear and are born at the next realm appropriate for the most potent kamma seed they have. It could be in a lower sphere, including the niraya (unless they had attained at least the Sotāpanna stage).
- Thus beings with better and better "gati," i.e., "deva gati" and "brahma gati" are located further and further away from the surface of the Earth, and those hell-beings with the "worst gati" are located below the surface of the Earth.

14. Therefore, each living being can be said to "carry his/her dhamma"; here, dhamma means "to bear." More precisely, each bhava carries its dhamma, and when the bhava changes, the types of dhamma one carries changes.

- A hell being is carrying a heavy load and has the most significant burden. Devas carry very light loads, they have negligible suffering during that lifetime, and brahma $\bar{a}$ even lower.
- But the load carried by a being cannot always be determined by the body density. Some petas have light bodies and their kamma vipāka are imparted by the mind, not physically via the body.


## Our Own Experiences

15. We all have seen some children when they don't get their way and become mad, fall on the floor and cry. It is as if they want to go towards the niraya (sometimes they bang their heads on the floor). That is a reflection of their "gati" AT THAT MOMENT.

- In the same way, they (and even adults) jump up with joy. It is as if they are trying to go up towards the higher realms. Again it is a reflection of their "joyous gati" at that moment.
- Another example is the behavior of criminals. We all have seen pictures of criminals when they come to the court of law: their heads are lower. They feel a heavy burden.
- On the other hand, when we have done something exemplary, we feel good and keep our heads high. Our bodies feel lighter too.
- These may not be Earth-shattering observations, but they are consistent with the Buddha's world view.

16. Thus each of us can momentarily live in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$ or higher $\operatorname{dev} a$ and brahma realms.

- I am sure anyone can recall such moments. When we get outraged, we burn inside, our bodies even get heated, faces get reddish, and we sweat. It is not a pretty sight to see a furious person or even a child.
- On the other hand, when we are calm and relaxed, especially after doing a moral deed, we feel good, and our body language reflects that. We are confident; we feel lighter, and also are "cooled down" inside. It is always a pleasure to look at Buddhist monks.

17. Thus even though we may not see the beings in the other realms, many indicators are consistent with the "bigger world picture" of the Buddha. We have reasons from our experiences to believe the existence of such realms. That may be a small part of the whole story, but indirect pieces of evidence like this are always consistent with Buddha Dhamma; we will discuss more in the future. These are things that one can contemplate during insight meditation and verify for oneself.

### 18.5 Can Buddhist Meditation be Dangerous?

June 17, 2016; revised July 22, 2021

1. A friend of mine alerted me to a recent article (in 2016) on the possible dangers of mindful meditation:

## Weblink: BBCRadio: Is Mindfulness Meditation Dangerous?

- It seems that there are possible dangers in not only "mindful meditation" but other types of meditation too. I did a Google search and found many articles, videos, and podcasts on the subject. You can do the same to get an idea (try "dangers of meditation" and "dangers of meditation youtube").
- A recent book, "The Buddha Pill" by Miguel Farias (2015), which downplays benefits of meditation and also points to some reported bad outcomes.
- There is a vast amount of misinformation out there. So, I thought of writing down my own thoughts based on the Buddha Dhamma that I understand and practice. In genuine Buddhist meditation, too, one may encounter some discomforts, as I will discuss below. But those are temporary and definitely not dangerous.

2. First of all, $99 \%$ of "Buddhist meditation programs" that are being taught and practiced today are not compatible with Buddha Dhamma, the Buddha's original teachings. Let us first discuss this point.

- The goal of the Buddha was NOT to teach practices and methods by which to attain temporary relief from the daily stresses of life. Such procedures had been practiced even when the Buddha (Prince Siddhartha) was born 2500 years ago.
- For example, breath meditation used by even Theravāda Buddhists today was a practice that the Buddha rejected; see, "Bhāvanā (Meditation)" section and in particular, " 6 . Ānāpānasati Bhāvanā (Introduction)," which discusses breath meditation.

3. I do not dispute or agree with the findings reported in the above articles or the above book. I do not know those specific cases, and it does not matter either because those meditation techniques are not "Buddhist meditations".

- So-called "Buddhist meditators" use many meditation techniques; most are a waste of time and some are definitely bad. For example, one of the dangerous techniques is to try remove all thoughts that come to one's mind. One could lose memory (and perception) if this is done for a long time.
- The Buddha said to stop IMMORAL thoughts, not ALL thoughts. There is a big difference between the two. Furthermore, he encouraged cultivating moral thoughts (Ānāpāna is "āna" AND "pāna"; see, " $\underline{\text {. }}$ Ānāpānasati Bhāvanā (Introduction)."

4. The Buddha really focused on the sansäric suffering, i.e., unimaginable suffering in some realms of this world; see "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma" or other posts on suffering.

- For a normal human, It is not possible to avoid births in the future in the four lowest realms (apāyā) filled with suffering without attaining at least the Sotāpanna stage of Nibbāna. Not only are bad actions done in this life, but bad actions in previous lives can contribute. We have been lucky to get this human life due to a past good action (kamma), but all of us have done both good and bad actions in our deep past.
- Future births in the $a p \bar{a} y \bar{a}$ are stopped not by "erasing" past bad kamma but mainly by a subtle mechanism that involves understanding the Buddha's world view.
- This website is all about explaining that complex process, but I can state what the result is: the solution is to remove greed and hate from our minds which happens to a large extent when one comprehends the "bigger world picture" of the Buddha (which is called getting rid of ignorance of the correct worldview or attaining sammā diṭthi).

5. Thus one could take one of three approaches:

- One could learn pure Buddha Dhamma, the original teachings of the Buddha, and understand his world view. When one learns and comprehends this wider world view, one can clearly see the possibility of much suffering in future lives.
- The other approach is to believe in the above stated conclusion, i.e., that getting rid of greed and hate from one's mind will remove future suffering, and to start working on it.
- But there is a third approach, which is to do both in parallel.

6. The third approach above is the best since it accelerates the process of cleansing. Furthermore, one can experience relief from not only future suffering but also in this life.

- However, we must understand that it is impossible to remove all types of suffering in this life by meditation. What we experience in this life are a result of what we have done in the past. It is possible to avoid some bad outcomes but not all; see, "What is Kamma? - Is Everything Determined by Kamma?."
- The best way to convey the information is to describe my own experience (at least parts of it). Even though each person's experience will be different, there are some common themes.

7. First of all, one does not even need to understand what Nibbāna is to get started. Even though it is possible to describe what Nibbāna is (there are many posts at the site), it is not easy to truly comprehend what is meant by stopping rebirth process, especially at early stages.

- For example, a child in primary school may say she wants to be a scientist. That is her goal because she has heard it is a good occupation. But she has no idea what a scientist does.
- In the same way, most Buddhists know that Nibbāna is a coveted and worthy goal but have no idea what it is. Most have not even thought much about it. They know that it involves stopping the rebirth process, but If pressed some may even say they do not "really want to attain Nibbāna yet; I want to enjoy life a bit more." That is because it is not easy to comprehend the dangers of such "enjoyments."
- However, the above child knows that she has to work hard and get good grades to become a scientist in the future. As she progresses through primary, secondary, and high school, she will gradually get a better idea of what becoming a scientist means and involves.
- Most Buddhists can be compared to that child stuck in primary or secondary school. They refrain from immoral actions to some extent but have not proceeded any further due to several reasons: lack of time, lack of understanding the urgency to do something before one gets old and the brain starts slowing down, etc.

8. On the other hand, most beginners to Buddhist meditation may not have any idea what Nibbāna is or may not believe in the rebirth process. And one does not need to.

- As I have tried to explain in many posts, Nibbāna has many levels starting from just a relaxed state of mind all the way to stopping the rebirth process. One needs to proceed gradually, experiencing the increasing level of relief on the way.
- Any reasonably moral person can see the benefits of living a moral life. Most religions teach how to live a moral life, at least to some degree.
- The first thing to do is to try extending this way of moral living by incorporating factors that other religions may not teach. For example, killing animals is not considered immoral in many of the major religions.
- Killing other people for any perceived benefit is an inconceivably bad idea. We have to stop calling such ideas "religious" regardless of the "religious label" attached. One would be bound for the worst sufferings imaginable for billions of years.

9. I think we live in a world today that is too "politically correct." We are afraid to give our honest points of view due to fear of being labeled "insensitive to other religions or cultures." We should be free to point out and condemn immoral and harmful actions.

- For me, there are no religious or cultural boundaries; we live this life for about 100 years and may be reborn in a different culture that may follow a different religion; see "Implications of the Rebirth Process in Daily Life and in Society." However, it is not good to impose sudden cultural changes. That could lead to major disruptions in societies.
- I intent to make as much progress as possible in this short time left and to help others who may be interested.
- I also think it is a disservice not to share something that one has experienced to be of value. It is, of course, up to others even to bother reading about it.

10. Going back to our discussion, one should avoid things that we know deep inside to be bad: engaging in dishonest and harmful behavior. This of course has many facets and levels. So, one should start stopping actions such as: taking advantage of others in any way, engaging in sexual misconduct, avoiding drugs and cutting down on alcohol, etc.

- This gradual process is described in detail in the first several posts in the "Bhāvanā (Meditation)" section. What I like to do here is to point out some key points that I think could be useful.

11. It is obvious that meditation, at least in the beginning, does not require one even to sit down. Before one gets to that stage, one needs to remove some cobwebs from the mind that have accumulated over time.

- Some people cannot sit down and concentrate anyway; the mind likes to wander around. This "agitation" is due to greed and hate, even though it may not be obvious. What breath meditation does is force the mind to concentrate on breathing. That helps stop this wandering.
- And it does work for some people. But any calming effect is temporary. One may feel good during a meditation retreat, but the mind goes back to the agitated state after returning to "real life."
- Thus if one does the standard "breath meditation" (without doing crazy things like trying to stop all thoughts) it is unlikely that they will experience any bad psychological effects. Still it is bad in the sense of being an utter waste of time in the long run.
- Many people I know to be meditators are stuck in this stage for tens of years, enjoying the temporary relaxation and refusing to get out of that "comfort zone." By their own accounts, they have not made significant progress. But for some reason, they are still "being hopeful."

12. Genuine Buddhist meditation is focused on long-term effects. As the book's title in \#1 above implies, many people believe that going to a meditation session is like taking a pill for a headache; one is after a quick, temporary solution.

- Buddhist meditation starts with stopping immoral activities that one can clearly see, such as those mentioned in \# 8 and \#10 above.
- If one can persevere for a few weeks or months (depending on how many "cobwebs" are there), one should start experiencing a better state of mind. One will be able to concentrate on a given task (even a mundane task) better. In a few months, one can look back and see that one has changed in some ways.
- Then one can incorporate more "good habits" and discard more bad habits. One will start seeing the futility of lyin
- By the way, one will be able to absorb more from the posts at this site with time too.

13. As time goes, one can try "sitting down" meditation sessions. Just sit in a quiet room away from disturbances, and think about a Dhamma concept. One could even read a post and contemplate it while reading.

- Actually, this is what I did in my early days. I would be sitting at my desk and reading a book or listening to a discourse on the internet from my teacher Thero. As I contemplated and started comprehending some concepts, I felt joyful in my mind, and I could start feeling a lightness in the body with time.

14. This is the beginning of a process that the Buddha described as, "pītimanassa kāyo passambhati, passaddhakāyo sukhaiं vediyati, sukhino citaì samādhiyati." That means, "joy in the mind (from absorbing Dhamma) leads to a lightness in the body, lightness in the body leads to happiness (nirāmisa sukha), and that leads to samādhi (enhanced concentration and a relaxed mind)."

- Once one starts feeling joy in the mind and lightness in the body, there is no stopping. Because, now, one can clearly see the benefits.
- Then it becomes easier to grasp deeper concepts, which in turn leads to more joy, etc., and the whole process repeats and accelerates.
- However, how much progress one makes depends on many factors. Some have practiced meditation in previous lives and they progress relatively fast. Regardless of the actual time taken, most should be able to make at least some progress. If it appears that one has not cultivated meditation in previous lives, it is time to start now.

15. When I was making more progress (especially when grasping anicca, dukkha, anatta), I felt some physical sensations. When I started feeling those, luckily, I had heard about them from my teacher Thero's discourses (by the way, I have not met Thero or talked to him personally; both times I went to Sri Lanka, he was not available).

- Different people feel this kind of discomfort in different body parts above the waist. I am not talking about leg pains due to sitting cross-legged, etc. If a given posture becomes uncomfortable, one needs to change the posture. Some people can sit cross-legged for longer times simply because they are more flexible or have had more practice.
- Mine started in the head, throat, and hands. They were not painful at all. They are more like pressure waves. But if one did not know that it could happen, one could be concerned because it happens only during formal sit-down meditation sessions.
- Other possible "symptoms of progress" are sweating and becoming thirsty (if this is the case, keep a glass of water close by). Yes. All these are good symptoms; they indicate that the body is beginning to respond.
- This was my first personal confirmation that it is not the body that gives rise to consciousness. It is ALWAYS the mind that controls the body. My mind decides when I want to do a meditation session. Furthermore, I can change my body sensations with my thoughts!
- I have not yet heard anyone else experience it, but my body freezes when I get into $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$ (up to the third). It really freezes like a statue. If someone comes and tries to pull my hands apart, it is difficult for them to do. But when I decide to stop the session, the body unfreezes within seconds. This is undeniable evidence that the mind can control the body.
- The explanation for these (and other types of) experiences involves the concept of the gandhabba that I have been discussing for some time now. These are discussed in, "Possible Effects in Meditation Kundalini Awakening."


### 18.6 Boy Who Remembered Pāli Suttas for 1500 Years

November 21, 2018; April 25, 2020

## Introduction

1. This is a true story about a boy (Dhammaruwan) who recited complex and lengthy Pāli suttā at five years of age, which sounded very different from current chantings. Furthermore, he remembers accounts of his previous life 1500 years ago, when he accompanied the famous Buddhaghosa on his trip to Sri Lanka.

- Dhammaruwan was born on November 18, 1968, in Matale, Sri Lanka. At the age of about two years he would sit in meditation and then start chanting. At times he would speak in a language not understood by his mother, who tried to hush him up.
- His step-father encouraged the boy to continue and regularly made recordings of the chants.
- These accounts come from the book, "WebLink: wisdompubs.org: Rebirth in Early Buddhism and Current Research" by Bhikkhu Anālayo (2018), and WebLink: discourse.suttacentral: Skype interview with Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi, 16th September 2014. Both Bhikkhus have had long-term interactions with Dhammaruwan.


## Previous Life in India - 1500 Years Ago

2. According to Dhammaruwan's memories, he learned the Pāli chants in a former lifetime in India, where he had been born as the son of a Brāhmin and trained in memorization of the Vedas. He had gone forth as a Buddhist monk and become a student of the eminent monk Buddhaghosa at Nālandā, India. For a historical time line, see, "Buddhaghosa and Visuddhimagga - Historical Background."

- My comment: This means Dhammaruwan was born a human over 1500 years ago: That is another piece of evidence that a human bhava can last thousands of years during which one may be reborn with a human body many times. In between those rebirths, one would be in the gandhabba state, just with the mental body; see, "Bhava and Jāti - States of Existence and Births Therein" and "Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya)- Introduction." Further more, both Dhammaruwan in that previous life and Buddhaghosa were Vedic Brāhmins before converting to Buddhism. That is how those breath and kasiṇa meditations got into Buddhism. See, "Is Ānāpānasati Breath Meditation?."

3. After being trained as a bhānaka (a reciter), he was chosen to accompany Buddhaghosa from India to Sri Lanka. Having come to Sri Lanka, he stayed with Buddhaghosa at the Mahāvihāra in Anurādhapura, of which he remembers various details.

- These recordings of Dhammaruwan are strong evidence for rebirth. How could a child of age 3-5 even remember such complex Pāli words?
- The way he recites the sutt $\bar{a}$ - the way he pronounces Pāli words - is better than most bhikkhus today. But the recitals sound different from those that we hear these days; instead of monotonic chants of today, keywords stand out in this recital style.
- One can clearly see that Dhammaruwan, as an adult, chants just like any other adult today; see \#6 below.


## Recitals From 1500 Years Ago

4. Here is a youtube video of a few of his recitals:

## WebLink: youtube: Dhammaruwan - Maha Mangala, Karaniya Metta and Ratana Sutta

Here are recordings of several suttā, with downloadable links:

## Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta:

# Mahā Mangala, Ratana, and Karaniya Metta Suttā: 

WebLink: Mahā Mangala, Ratana, and Karaniya Metta Suttā Download

## Bojjhanga Sutta:

## WebLink: Bojjhanga Sutta Download

## Information From Bhikkhu Bodhi Interview

5. The following is an excerpt from the interview mentioned above with Bhikkhu Bodhi in 2104, which had a discussion on Dhammaruwan about a quarter of the way into the interview:
"There is almost no other rational explanation [apart from real past life memories] for how he could know these sutt $\overline{\text { a }}$. The sceptic might say he must have listened to monks chanting them over the radio. We might accept that explanation if he had recited the Metta Sutta (Sn 1.8), the Mangala Sutta (Sn 2.4), or the Ratana Sutta (Sn 2.1), or maybe even the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta. But even that would be somewhat stretching the bounds of credulity: that a 3 or 5 year old boy should be reciting the whole Dhammacakka Sutta (SN 56.11) just by listening to it on the radio, without any text in front of him. But as a 7 or 8 year old he also chanted the entire Girimannanda Sutta (AN 10.60), and that is just so rarely chanted by monks on the radio. And then there is a recording of him reciting passages from the Pattthāna, the book of conditional relations in the Abhidhamma. I didn't compare his recitation with the text, because he doesn't say which portion he's reciting ... the Patṭhāna consists of six or seven volumes of very repetitive text with just minor variations.

Then his intonation is very different from the contemporary Sri Lankan style of chanting. Just by listening, you can tell it's coming from another era. It's not the modern style of Sri Lankan chanting. And then there's something very interesting. I don't think anything has been published or spread around about this. Years ago I was listening to his recitation of the Mahānidāna Sutta (DN 15) with the PTS Pāli edition in front of me, where they have footnotes with variant readings. I found that in a number of places where there were differences between the Sinhala and the Burmese script editions he was reciting in accordance with the Burmese script edition. But not always: there were a few places where there were differences, and he was following the Sinhala edition. But in maybe $65 \%$ of the cases where there was a difference, he was following the Burmese script edition".

## "Old Recital Ability" Lost at Age Twelve

6. Dhammaruwan lost this ability to recite in this particular fashion after about 12 years of age. These days, when he chants the same sutta, he recites them like current bhikkhus recite them.

- Even in those early years, he was not able to recite in that "special way" at any time. According to Bhikkhu Bodhi: "You know, you'd ask him, "Ruwan recite such and such a text," and he was not able to do it. But occasionally he would say to his adopted father, Bertie: "Uncle, uncle, I'm starting to remember. I'm starting to remember!" Then Bertie would get the tape recorder and set it up and record his recitation."
- Therefore, the ability to recite that way was not there all the time, even in those early years.
- Now, of course he has lost those memories and recites those suttā just like anyone else recites them these days.

Here is a recording of the Karaniya Metta Sutta as an adult (chanting starts @2 minutes):
WebLink: Karaniya Metta Sutta as an adult Sutta Download

## Related Information

7. Bhikkhu Anālayo's book has complete transcripts of all the recorded suttā that Dhammaruwan recited; see, pp. 167-237.

- Other rebirth stories and evidence for rebirth are discussed in, "Evidence for Rebirth."

In the following video, a child describes her life as a deva during the time of the Buddha (in Sinhala.) She says the Buddha was different than depicted in the current statues @21 minutes).

## 

- More information at, "Mental Body - Gandhabba," "Gandhabba (Manomaya Kaya)," and "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma."


### 18.7 Do Buddhists Pray and Engage in Idol Worshipping?

## May 5, 2019

These are issue that are a bit hard to understand for those who do not have a deeper understanding of Buddha Dhamma.

1. First of all, paying respects to the Buddha (and symbols representing him) cannot be equated with "prayer" in many other religions. Praying is associated with making a request from a higher being (a God, a Brahma, etc), and those requests are for making one's life better, to solve a mundane problem one has, or asking for a material gain.

- The prayers are requests to the gods for mundane things and protection. The gods are asked to bestow health, wealth, material things, and to provide for various needs; they are also asked to forgive one's transgressions.
- In some cases, offerings are made to the higher being(s) first, and then one prays for whatever one desires, as in Hinduism (nowadays, this is practiced even in some Buddhist temples).
- Buddhists do not pray. They engage in meditation, contemplating the true nature of this suffering-filled world. There is nothing in this world that is worth craving (and thus praying for).

2. On the other hand, the primary goal of a Buddhist is to stop the rebirth process and attain Nibbāna; see, "A Buddhist or a Bhauddhaya?."

This itself is hard for many to understand, especially for those who do not believe in the rebirth process. But the Buddha taught that one's existence does not end at the death of physical body; one will be reborn endlessly in one of 31 realms "in this world"; see, "Buddhism without Rebirth and Nibbāna?."

- Rebirth process continues as long as one thinks that existence in this world is fruitfiul and, some day, will lead to true happiness. The Buddha explained that acting with greed, hate, and ignorance causes this wrong perception.
- One part of ignorance is not believing in rebirth.
- Suffering is present at any of those 31 realms and thus suffering exists even in the highest brahma realms; see, " 31 Realms Associated with the Earth."
- Therefore, the goal of a true Buddhist is to stop the rebirth process all together. This is done by cleansing one's mind. Learning the world view of the Buddha and following his Noble Eightfold Path, which includes contemplation (meditation) and living moral life (sila), will lead to cleansing of the mind; see, "Living Dhamma."

3. Therefore, there is nothing to ask from the Buddha; the Buddha no longer lives in this world. It is actually quite the opposite. Understanding Buddha's teachings (Buddha Dhamma) leads to the realization that there is nothing in this world that is worth craving or desiring for. In fact, it is those cravings traps one in the rebirth process.

- The only way to stop future suffering is to learn the true nature of this world and see not only the futility (unfruitfulness), but also the dangers in craving for worldly things.
- A Buddhist never asks favors from the Buddha nor requests forgiveness for any immoral deeds committed. A true Buddhist tries to abstain from immoral deeds, speech, and thoughts by controlling one's mind, i.e., by being mindful; see, "Mahā Satipatthāna Sutta."
- So, why do Buddhists pay respects to symbols representing the Buddha?

4. A big part of a life of a Buddhist is to "pay back debts" and also pay respects to those with higher wisdom. One of the first acts of the Buddha after his attaining Enlightenment was to look back at previous lives and to recall who helped him (in past lives) in his efforts to attain the Buddhahood; see, "Animisa Locana Bodhi Poojā - A Prelude to Acts of Gratitude."

- Then he spent a significant part of his early years after Enlightenment to seek and teach Dhamma to those people, as explained in the above post.
- True comprehension of Buddha Dhamma leads to the realization that the greatest gift one could have is to receive the true and pure Buddha Dhamma: the way to stop even a trace of suffering from arising.
- The worship of the Buddha (using symbols that represent him) means paying homage, veneration and devotion to him and what he represents, and not to a stone statue, a picture, etc.

5. There is a second - and equally important - aspect of paying respects to the Buddha. This is more to be experienced. When I was child in Sri Lanka, our family used to go to the temple regularly, especially on Full Moon days when bhikkhu would deliver a discourse (desanā).

- We would go to the temple ahead the scheduled delivery of the desanā, and would offer flowers to the Buddha, light some oil lamps and incense, and recite several gāthās while make those "offerings". Then we would sit and listen to an hour-long desana $\bar{a}$ by a bhikkhu.
- That really helps calm the mind and get in to a mindset where one is able to forget about the day-to-day stresses and comprehend the desan $\bar{a}$.
- The calm and serene image of the Buddha is conducive to calming one's mind, and the offerings of pretty flowers symbolize one's intention of not being attached (and not to crave for) worldly things.

6. Some people say that Buddhists worship statues, in the sense of believing that those statues have some inherent magical power.

- But such ideas are quite incorrect. Buddhists do not 'worship' Buddha statues any more than Christians worship the cross or Muslims the Kaaba.
- Like the cross and the Kaaba, a Buddha statue, a Bodhi tree, or a stūpa is a symbol that can be seen as helpful in showing devotion, uplifting and calming the mind, and thus enables one to meditate with a calm mind.

7. Now let us discuss the significance/purpose of making offerings.

- There are many kinds of offerings: meals to the bhikkhus are the most meritorious among the "giving" (dāna) category.
- Making offerings to the Buddha is also done traditionally; small portions of the food that is prepared for the Bhikkhus is first offered in the name of the Buddha, before the food is offered to the bhikkhus.
- Giving to poor or anyone in need and even feeding hungry animals are all meritorious deeds.

8. Making offerings to devas is just another category. The mechanism of how that works is hard to imagine for most people.

- I remember listening to a desanā by Waharaka Thero, where he mentioned that those food offerings can be used by higher devas to feed their underlings (there are different levels, just like in the human world). He mentioned that when people offer nice-smelling fruits etc, just after the offering, the aroma would be gone (if it is done right). That means the "essence" ( $o j \bar{a}$ ) of the food has been extracted.
- However, one does not need to offer large quantities. The higher devas can make the offering to "multiply" to feed many.
- I don't want to get into that issue right now, since this is not a critical issue, and could bring out more questions than answers. There are many things about other realms (as well as about our own realm) that we do not fully understand.

9. Offering flowers, incense, etc do not belong to that "dāna" category discussed in \#7 and \#8 above.

- In Buddhist temples, such "offerings" are made to the Buddha.
- In reality, these "offerings of the second kind" setup the necessary background for the mind to grasp the Buddha Dhamma, and thus to lead to "bhava uddha" (stopping existences in any of the 31 realms), which is the real meaning of "Buddha"; see, "A Buddhist or a Bhauddhaya?."
- For example, those flowers symbolize the anicca nature. They are pretty when they offered, but in a couple of days they become wrinkled and eventually wither away. One is supposed not to admire the beauty of the flowers, but to contemplate on the anicca nature clearly displayed by the decay of those flowers; see, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta."
- The incense offered emit an odor that conducive to meditation. Even though it is a pleasing odor, it is very different from those fragrances that one wears to a party, which has the tendency to encourage "seeking sense pleasures".
- In other words, those fragrances worn to a party lead to sensual thoughts, whereas the smell of incenses is conducive to meditation, since it helps calm the mind.

10. Lighting of candles or oil lamps also provide a suitable background for meditation and contemplation. Light symbolizes wisdom.

- Comprehending Buddha Dhamma leads to the opening of the "Dhamma eye", and enables one to "see the true nature of the world of 31 realms", i.e., existence in any of those realms is NOT devoid of suffering.
- Furthermore, an oil lamp symbolizes the how the rebirth process is maintained by cravings. Just as oil keeps an oil lamp burning, cravings (tanh $\bar{a}$ ) fuel the rebirth process.

11. Finally, the practice of paying respects to the Buddha using symbols representing him was started at the time of the Buddha. There are at least two accounts in the Tipitaka where the Buddha himself recommended this practice.

- First, in the Mahāparinibbāna Sutta, when it was getting close to the Parinibbāna (death) of the Buddha, Ven. Ananda asked him how people can pay respects to the Buddha after his Parinibbāna.
- The Buddha advised: "..stūpās should be made for the Buddha at the crossroads. People can offer flowers, incense, etc and pay respects, and that will be for their benefit and happiness".
- Here is the relevant section: WebLink: suttacentral: DN 16 Mahāparinibbāna Sutta (29. Ānandapucchākathā), where it is stated: "..Cātumahāpathe tathāgatassa thūpo kātabbo. Tattha ye mālaì vā gandham vā cunnakam vā āropessanti va abhivādessanti vā cittam vā pasādessanti tesaì taì bhavissati dīgharattaì hitāya sukhāya."

12. There is another sutta which describes how planting of Bodhi trees was recommended by the Buddha himself too: When the Buddha was absent from Jetavanarāma, devotees naturally missed him, so Ven. Ananda, Buddha's attendant, asked the Buddha what in his absence might be used to pay homage to him.

- The Buddha answered that bodily relics, things reminiscent of him and things that he had used, in particular the great Bodhi tree under which he had attained Enlightenment.
- Ven. Ananda then had a seed of the Bodhi Tree brought to Jetavanārāma and planted so that it would be, as the Buddha himself said, as if the Buddha were constantly present at Jetavanāräma.
- This account is in the WebLink: suttacentral: Kālingabodhijātaka; see the English translation: "WebLink: suttacentral: Kalinga-Bodhi Jātaka."

The bottom line is that just like giving (dāna) or living a moral life, paying respects to the Buddha via any of those different ways cannot directly lead to Nibbāna (magga phala). But all of them can help set the background for one to get to the mindset that makes it easier to comprehend the deep Dhamma of the Buddha.

## XIX About Author

Revised March 9, 2017; April 14, 2018; November 10, 2018; August 13, 2019


My name is Lal Ariyaratna Pinnaduwage. I loved physics from the school days and became a physicist, and became a Senior Scientist at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory and a Research Professor at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. I was elected a Fellow of the American Physical Society in 2004. Since retiring in 2009 at age 55 , I have been on a quest to uncover the pure Dhamma of the Buddha.

Even though I am a Buddhist by birth, I did not really "practice" until I retired. Initially, it was to find out what "Buddhism" really was, and how it compared with other world religions.

- I provided the above description in keeping with my intention to be fully open. Also, I intend to make the website "as experienced" by myself. I will specifically mention what I have not experienced as such. I will record my progress in these web pages as much as advisable. (Not everybody will have the same kind of experiences related to samādhi, jhāna, or magga phala).
- What I have found is that Buddha Dhamma is different from not only other religions but also many forms of "Buddhism" that we have today. Other religious and cultural influences have contaminated even the Theravāda version.

In July 2013, I accidentally came to know about new interpretations of anicca, dukkha, anatta (true Nature of existence). It was "the main missing piece" for me. I will never forget the ecstatic feeling while listening to that fateful desanā from one Thero on July 30, 2013, on the internet. I made a trip to Sri Lanka and was able to get more information, even though I was not able to meet Venerable Waharaka Abhayaratanalankara Thero, who had uncovered the actual teachings. What I present here is this complete picture, with my input from my science background.

- Waharaka Thero passed away on February 9, 2017; see, "Parinibbāna of Waharaka Thero." A large number of his desanās available at "waharaka.com" (explore the top menu!). Unfortunately, those desanās are available only in the Sinhala language.
- As in science, here, I am going to treat Buddha Dhamma as a theory and explore whether it provides a consistent picture of our world. Buddha Dhamma is a complete worldview and its principles are the laws of Nature. Scientists have uncovered only a fraction of these laws, and only those about inert matter. But mind precedes matter.

I hope is that I can give you a taste of the exhilarating experience that I have enjoyed over the past several years in uncovering the pure Dhamma. Buddha Dhamma is indeed for those who seek to broaden their horizons. You will truly gain benefit from this site if you leave behind any preconceived ideas about "Buddhism."

- Above all, I wanted to convey the truth of the fact that one CAN experience the "cooling down" or "Nivana" or "Nibbāna" at various levels as one LEARNS AND LIVES the pure Dhamma. That is not something to be attained in future lives but is something that one CAN experience in this very life by cleansing one's mind. What I describe here is what I have experienced, to a large extend.
- Most people do not like to talk about their "spiritual experiences," and that is understandable. But I think it could be beneficial to others if I describe my progress to get an idea of what to expect. A brief description of my progress is given in, "10. Attaining the Sotāpanna Stage via Removing Ditthasava" and the posts mentioned there. This will also provide a context for the material presented at this website. Please be aware that each person's experience is different.
- Please ask your questions at the discussion forum; see below. If you have a questions of personal Nature, you can send it to me at: lal@puredhamma.net.
- Buddha Dhamma is a self-consistent description of the Nature's laws, and if there are any inconsistencies in these pages, they are due to my own mistakes and I should be able to correct them. I do revise these posts on a continuously as my own understanding improves.

The Buddha said, "Sabba dānaì Dhamma dānaim jināti", or "Gift of Dhamma excels all other giffs." Please inform others about this site if you benefit from it.

December of 2017: Discussion forum initiated: "Forum."
Updates and new posts at " 2 - General Information and Updates."
March 2018: A new section on "Quantum Mechanics and Dhamma."
November 10, 2018: There are over 500 posts at the site as of today. There are two ways to find relevant posts on a given concept/ topic.

- All posts are under sections and subsections; see "Pure Dhamma - Sitemap." One could scan through it to locate relevant posts.
- The "Search" button at the top right is also good at extracting relevant posts for a given keyword or keywords.

July 2019: New sub-section on "Origin of Life."
April 2020: Re-writing of the section on "The Five Aggregates (Pañcakkhandha)."

## xx Quantum Mechanics and Dhamma

March 13, 2018
This section will discuss two issues:

1. A new interpretation of quantum mechanics (QM) based on non-locality is presented based on Feynman's ideas. Concepts like wave-particle duality, observer effect, are not needed. Furthermore, complex interpretations like the "Many-Worlds interpretation" are avoided. All existing experimental data will be shown to be consistent with this interpretation.
2. A deeper understanding of how kamma automatically lead to corresponding kamma vipāka in Buddhism (Buddha Dhamma), becomes clear with this interpretation.

- Quantum Mechanics and Dhamma - Introduction
- Quantum Mechanics and Consciousness
- Will Quantum Mechanics Be Able to Explain Consciousness?
- The Observer Effect in Quantum Mechanics
- Quantum Mechanics - A New Interpretation
- What Is a Wave and What Is a Particle?
- Photons Are Particles Not Waves
- Basis of the Proposed Interpretation - Feynman's Technique in QED
- Feynman's Glass Plate Experiment
- Feynman's Method of "A Particle Exploring All Possible Paths"
- "Exploring All Possible Paths" Leads to Fermat's Principle of Least Time
20.1 Quantum Mechanics and Dhamma - Introduction

March 13, 2018; revised January 9, 2019; November 15, 2019; June 5, 2021; August 10,2022

## Introduction

1. This section will discuss two issues:
a. A new interpretation of quantum mechanics (QM) based on non-locality is presented, where wave-particle duality is an incorrect and unnecessary assumption. All existing experimental data are shown to be inter-consistent with this interpretation.
b. This interpretation can lead to deeper insights into the relationship between kamma and kamma vipāka in Buddhism (Buddha Dhamma.)

## Relevant Work of Richard Feynman

2. I started working on this project to provide a new interpretation of quantum mechanics based on some new and exciting experimental observations within the past 20 years. I aim to provide a simple explanation with only a few mathematical equations. This work is an extension of the work of the late physicist Richard Feynman.

- To understand this material, one must have a high-school level physics background. Only those who have some background QM can follow the content here.
- I would NOT recommend anyone to start learning QM to follow this section. It is better to spend that time learning Buddha Dhamma. But of course, anyone may be able to get a general idea. Just read the first several posts and see.
- At the end of this project, I believe that a deep connection to Buddha Dhamma can be made, especially regarding how kamma vipāka materializes naturally due to one's kamma.


## Going "Against the Grain" of Scientific Consensus

3. When I started working on this project over two years ago, I had conversations with Professor Gayanath Fernando. We tried to get a paper published on the proposed interpretation of QM. However, we were unable to convince the reviewers, and the article did not get published. I am attaching the pdf of the last version here: "WebLink: PDF file download: A Self Consistent Interpretation of Quantum Mechanics Based on Nonlocality."

- But it got rejected from several journals because physicists refuse to believe that the "light speed barrier" can be broken: Einstein's relativity theory says nothing can propagate faster than light.
- Our point is that nothing actually "travels" between the two "connected electrons." They are intrinsically connected.
- However, it is ironic that the nonlocality of Nature was firmly established in 2015, as we discussed in the above paper.


## Fundamental Ideas

4. Let me try to give the gist of the mechanism: There are techniques to create two electrons simultaneously with two opposing spins (say A with spin up and B with spin down). Then they can be sent even to opposite ends across the universe and remain "entangled."

- What does it mean that A and B remain "entangled" even when separated by great distances? That means if the A's spin flips, then B's will flip AT THE SAME TIME. It is as if they can instantly interact across the universe.
- The basic idea is that the two electrons will stay "connected" no matter how far apart. This idea is called "non-locality." An external website provides a good introduction: "WebLink: physicsoftheuniverse.com: Nonlocality and Entanglement."
- More information on the basic idea at: "Quantum Entanglement - We Are All Connected."


## Kammic Influences Have No Space Limitations

5. II want to develop this idea to show that kammic energy has instantaneous influence across the universe. If particles have this "connectedness" in Nature, extending it to the mental realm is natural.

- The bridge is the kammic energy (also called viññāna). We create these energies in our minds with javana citta. That is a subject matter in Abhidhamma; see, "Nāma \& Rūpa to Nāmarūpa."

6. In this section, I will discuss the implications of this new interpretation of QM for Buddha Dhamma and try to provide some key ideas. A key issue that keeps coming up in the discussion forum is what intention in kamma is and how Nature "knows" the connection of the person committing the kamma to the person affected by that kamma.

- For example, consider person X, who was adopted and brought up by foster parents soon after birth and is unaware he is adopted. Suppose X kills his biological father later on, of course, without knowing that it was his father. It is still an anantariya kamma. Since Nature automatically manages kammalkamma vipāka, how would Nature know the connection between those two people?


## Confirmation From Recent Experiments In QM

7. That is the crucial question we may get some clues from QM. Nonlocality is a key feature of the proposed interpretation of QM. I will explain what is meant by nonlocality in future posts (see also, "Quantum Entanglement - We Are All Connected"). Nonlocality of Nature automatically enforces kamma/kamma vipāka.

- Of course, the Buddha had not mentioned this mechanism because, at that time, it was impossible to explain concepts like quantum entanglement.
- Furthermore, it is not necessary to know such details. But since we are at a point in making this connection, it is better to do so. That could help build confidence in Buddha Dhamma.

8. I plan to write several posts in this section laying out the basic ideas and welcome comments from knowledgeable readers familiar with quantum mechanics concepts. I have opened a new forum entitled "Quantum Mechanics - A New Interpretation" at the discussion forum to discuss each published post.

- Anyone will be able to read these posts and also the posts in the discussion forum. However, one needs to register at the discussion forum to ask questions or make comments. Forum registration instructions at "WebLink: General Information and Updates."
- Now, let us discuss the key idea briefly behind the proposed connection of kamma vipāka to QM.


## The Intention in Kamma - Connection to Quantum Mechanics

1. Two key steps are relevant in evaluating how to assess a kamma vipāka:
i. Which of the dasa akusala is the intention? For example, it could be taking a life, stealing, harsh speech, etc. Who is affected is not involved in this step. The "cetana" in "cetana ham bhikkhave kammaín vadami," is just which dasa akusala (and associated cetasika) are in one's mind when one is committing that kamma. That is all.
ii. Then the strength of the kammā vipāka is based on the "level of consciousness" or "moral qualities" of the living beings affected by that kamm $\bar{a}$. For example, killing a human will bring stronger kamma vipāka than killing an animal. In the same way, giving to an Arahant will be much more worthy than giving to an average human.

That is the best way to analyze any given situation.
2. In another example, in the recent discourse on Tilakkhaṇa, I discussed the case of a person killing a bunch of people with a bomb; see Discourse 2 in "Three Marks of Existence - English Discourses."

- His intention (cetanā) was to kill. Thus the dasa akusala involved is "pānatipāta," that of taking a life.
- Now to the second step. That person may not even know who was killed. By some coincidence, if the bomb killed one of the killer's parents, he would have done a $\bar{a} n a n t a r i y a ~ p \bar{a} p a ~ k a m m \bar{a}$. If an Arahant was killed, the same. If a Sotāpanna were killed, it would not be a ānantariya kammā, but still equivalent to killing thousands of normal humans.
- So, it is important to understand that "cetana"" is which of dasa akusala are in one's mind when a kamma is committed. It could be more than one. In the case of the bomber, there is miccha dittthi, and likely greed also, in addition to "pānātipātā."
- One can analyze various situations with the above two steps.

3. We know that there are five annantariya kammā. Those are so grave that one will be subjected to their vipäkain the very next life in the niraya (lowest realm.) They are, killing one's mother, killing one's father, killing an Arahant, injuring a Buddha, and causing a schism in the Sañgha (which really means trying to propagate a wrong version of the Buddha Dhamma).

- Since killing an average human is not a annantariya kamm $\bar{a}$, it is clear that the "strength of the kamm $\vec{a}$ " depends on who got killed.
- Kamma vipāka for committing any other offense is similar. Hurting an Arahant would be a million-fold stronger kamma than hurting an average human. Thus, logically, beating an Anāgāmi, a Sakadāgāmi, or a Sotāpanna would have corresponding levels of consequences.
- The "value of a life" depends on the "mental status" of that life-form. Any life is not the same. It is impossible to compare the value of an animal's life with that of a human. There are huge variations among animals, and we can easily see that a gorilla or a dog is "more sentient" than a worm.
- However, we must remember that we all were born lowly-worm. So even though we need to keep in mind that there is a variation, we should never take the life of ANY sentient being intentionally (unnecessarily).

4. Regarding the issue of "how would one know" the status of the living person affected by one's actions, that does not matter. "Nature" would know.

- This point of "we are all inter-connected" is now proven by quantum mechanics: "Quantum Entanglement - We Are All Connected."
- That is a key factor in understanding kammā/vipāka. The proposed interpretation of QM can show this at an even deeper level.

5. The above discussion is a part of the post, "Details of Kamma - Intention, Who Is Affected, Kamma Patha." You may want to read that to get more information.

- Another relevant post is, "What is Kamma? - Is Everything Determined by Kamma?."

6. We will start a discussion on QM with the next post. These days there is so much confusion about whether a photon is a particle or a wave, i.e., "wave-particle duality" in QM. I will address the issue of wave-particle duality in the next few posts.

- We will define what is meant by a wave and what is meant by a particle. Furthermore, many people confuse a "wave function" with a "wave." A wave function is a mathematical concept that can REPRESENT the motion of a particle; it is not a wave.
- We will show that a photon is a particle, not a wave. It does not have dual Nature (particle and wave Nature), even though a wave function can represent it.

As I always say, one needs to know (or define) such fundamental entities before tackling more in-depth issues. Otherwise, we will get bogged down in redefining what a particular word means in the middle of a discussion.

### 20.2 Quantum Mechanics and Consciousness

March 20, 2018
Will Quantum Mechanics Be Able to Explain Consciousness?
The Observer Effect in Quantum Mechanics

### 20.2.1 Will Quantum Mechanics Be Able to Explain Consciousness?

March 20, 2018; revised March 12, 2021; April 18, 2022

## Quantum Mechanics and Consciousness Are Both "Mysterious"

1. Quantum mechanics $(\mathrm{QM})$ has some features (quantum entanglement, Heisenberg uncertainty principle, etc.) that make it appear "mysterious" compared to classical physics, where the predictions are intuitive and transparently deterministic.

- The "hard problem in consciousness" (discussed in philosophy) is also mysterious, just like quantum phenomena: the question of how consciousness can arise in a brain made of inert matter.
- When quantum mechanics emerged in the early 1900s, many people started tying the two together and speculating that the newfound quantum theory would explain how consciousness arises in the brain.


## Attempts to "Explain" the Origin of Consciousness With Quantum Mechanics

2. There have been several such QM -based theories proposed to explain consciousness.

- Several popular books recently published emphasize the possible role of QM in generating human consciousness (Walker, 2000; Penrose et al., 2011; Rosenblum and Kuttner, 2011; Stapp, H., 2011).
- A recent review paper: "WebLink: PDF File: Neural correlates of consciousness- Koch et al.- 2016."
- Another proposed approach, for example, is based on consciousness originating in microtubules in neurons: "WebLink: PDF File: Consciousness in the universe - Hameroff, and Penrose-2014."
- However, those are just unverified "theories." They will NEVER be proven to be correct. The Buddha explained that the mind is the precursor to everything in this world. Nothing in the brain can give rise to consciousness. See, "Origin of Life."


## Philosophers Are Starting to Realize

3. Other than such activities in science, a hot topic in current philosophy is "how consciousness arises in a material brain." Most philosophers are physicalists and believe that a physical (matter) basis can explain all phenomena. For a collection of discussions with several philosophers, see (Blackmore, 2005).

- As David Chalmers pointed out in 1994 at the first Tucson conference on consciousness: "The hard problem...is the question of how physical processes in the brain give rise to subjective experience" (Chalmers, 1995).
- The problem in philosophy (and in science) then is to figure out how the "subjective" consciousness arises from "objective" matter. That is an impossiblility.

4. This critical bottleneck was also emphasized by Thomas Nagel (Nagel, 1974) even earlier in his famous essay, "WebLink: PDF File: What Is It Like to Be a Bat- Nagel- 1974". As he pointed out at the end of the paper, "...it seems unlikely that any physical theory of mind can be contemplated until more thought has been given to the general problem of subjective and objective. Otherwise, we cannot even pose the mind-body problem without sidestepping it".

- The difference between "subjective" and "objective" is becoming clear with the neuroscience research done, especially in the past decade. We will discuss those new developments below. Subjectivity plays a vital role in cognition (consciousness), and the question is how that can arise from an "objective" material base.


## Subjective versus Objective: Difference between Mind and Matter

5. To clearly state the issue we intend to address, we need to clarify the distinction between "objective" and "subjective."

- Objective means one's personal opinions and biases do not come into play. It is easy to be objective about the physical properties of matter: We all agree what the length, weight, density, color, etc., of a given object, is. We have developed standard procedures for measuring them. Therefore, no matter who makes the measurement, the same answer will result.
- Thus we all agree (unless one is color blind) that a particular rose is red; that is also objective.


## What Is Subjective?

## 6. Then, what is subjective? Those are personal opinions that can vary from person to person.

- For example, if you ask the opinion about politician X, some will love him, some will hate him, and others will be somewhere in between.
- The same is true about politics, religions, foods, smells, books, movies, etc. All those are subjective.
- In Buddha Dhamma, those subjective opinions arise because different people have different "gati"; see, "The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Āsavas)."


## Science Is Based on Objective Assessments

7. We have a thriving science and technology field because we deal objectively (and thus rationally) with the inert matter in such cases. Therefore, we can lay out an experiment in detail and then carry it out anywhere by any team of competent scientists who design and carry out experiments objectively. They will get the same result (within experimental uncertainties).

- Science and technology would not flourish if such experiments did not produce consistent and repeatable results.

8. Science is focused on "material phenomena" involving inert matter. Scientists can send a rocket to the Moon. That only involves the motion of objects that strictly follow the laws of motion. Therefore, it is clear that objective assessments are much more straightforward than subjective assessments.

- By definition, we all cannot agree on something subjective. We place different values on things and have different opinions based on our value systems.
- One would think that it should be easy for science to figure out how objective assessments may take place in our brains. But even that is more complex than we would think.


## The Mystery of Consciousness

9. For example, neuroscience cannot explain how our brains even discern a rose as "red," i.e., how inert neurons can give rise to an "experience" even if it is objective. Explaining subjective experiences is much more challenging.

- This root problem, even in handling such essential aspects of "qualia," has been pointed out by several philosophers and scientists over the years; see, for example, Noe and Thompson (2004), Bitbol (2008), Miller (2014), Aru and Bachmann (2015), and references therein.
- As these authors point out, currently, efforts are focused on investigating just neural correlations of consciousness. But finding a neural constitution of consciousness (how consciousness arises) appears impossible (and it is!).
- It is impossible because consciousness is not in the physical body. It is in the mental body (gandhabba); see, "Ghost in the Machine - Synonym for the Manomaya Kāya?."


## How Does Consciousness Arise?

10. Can an inert brain identify a color? How can a brain feel pain? Those are critical problems.

- Furthermore, "the actual problem of consciousness" is much more complex because the feeling that arises upon seeing a red-color object can be different for different people; some like red clothes to wear, for example, and some don't.
- Thus, those feelings and perceptions arise due to a sensory experience that is truly subjective. Material phenomena are, by definition, objective.
- Until recently, neuroscience had not been able to recognize the existence of mental attributes such as emotions, feelings, and perceptions. The availability of precision neuro-imaging methods has enabled an explosion of activity in those areas basically within the past decade; see, for example (Lindquist and Barrett, 2012; Bird and Viding, 2014; Klasen et al., 2014; Lamm and Majdandzic, 2015). However, these studies can point out only neural correlates (not neural constitution) of these mental qualities.


## Subjective Experiences Are Impossible to Explain With Modern Science

11. Therefore, even if we solve the "hard problem" associated with discerning fundamental aspects of "qualia" (such as experiencing "redness of a rose"), that will still not solve the problem of the "subjective experience." The neurons in each person's brain must have their own set of unique "characteristics" to provide the "subjective experience." Yet, neurons are neurons. How can person X's neurons be different from those of person Y ?

- Thus the difference between mind and matter is much deeper than just "qualia" (redness of a rose). Emotions that arise in the mind (happiness, sadness, greediness, hatefulness, jealousy, etc.) are complex and personal. The mind is complex.
- The problem in trying to explain the mind phenomena with inert neurons in the brain has its root in trying to explain complex "subjective mental phenomena" with an ontologically different "objective" material base (neurons).
- The Buddha has explained that those feelings arise not in the physical body but the mental body (gandhabba).; see "Mental Body - Gandhabba."

12. In any case, we are focusing on even a narrower aspect in this paper, i.e., the role of quantum mechanics.

- There is no evidence for a correlation between the mind and quantum phenomena, let alone a causal connection.
- Results of QM experiments do not depend on the "subjectivity" of the person conducting those experiments simply because truly subjective decisions are not involved in such experiments.

13. Subjective decisions are very personalized, like voting liberal versus conservative, buying versus selling a given stock, OR liking versus disliking a given food-zillions of such choices that are truly subjective.

- Quantum mechanical experiments do not involve such subjective decisions, and the outcome is the same regardless of the experimenter. In science, the reproducibility of experimental results is the final arbiter. Quantum mechanical measurements are reproducible.
- That is the key to realizing that quantum phenomena have nothing to do with the mind. Quantum phenomena may be different than "classical phenomena," but they are reproducible.


## Both Classical and Quantum Phenomena Are Objective and Deterministic

14. Transparently, "deterministic" classical physics (Newtonian mechanics) did not come even close to explaining the "subjective" consciousness. But the emergence of QM with its "unusual aspects" immediately led many to infer that it may be able to explain the equally "mysterious" consciousness.

- Since the 1920s, attempts have been made to rationalize the "unusual" nature of QM and ideas emerged from the physics community itself that conscious observations could affect the outcomes of an experiment (e.g., the "observer effect"); see "The 'Observer Effect' in Quantum Mechanics." Recently, such ideas have been adopted to explain the origin of consciousness itself.
- We will summarize the existing experimental results in future posts to show that there is no evidence to suggest that quantum mechanical phenomena are even related to consciousness, let alone explain consciousness.

15. Quantum phenomena have characteristics that are very different from classical phenomena (described by Newtonian mechanics). Still, both quantum and classical phenomena are objective. There is no evidence of quantum phenomena having anything to do with subjective consciousness.

- The phrase "non-deterministic" (or "indeterminacy") for quantum phenomena is a misleading one. It gives the impression that the results of QM experiments cannot be pre-determined. That is false.
- Even though many "classical experiments" have just one outcome, that is not true in all cases. For example, in chaos theory, one can calculate only probabilities.
- Similarly, in QM experiments, one can calculate only probabilities, but those predictions are ALWAYS consistent with experimental measurements. Therefore, it is misleading to label QM phenomena as "non-deterministic."


## All QM Experiments Are Objective

16. All QM experiments conducted have been objective. Subjective consciousness does not play any role in those experiments. A given QM experiment may yield different results based on the experimental conditions.

- There is no "intrinsic subjectivity" in those experiments other than the possibility of a range of outcomes (with known probability) due to the Heisenberg uncertainty principle.
- An experiment conducted under the same conditions will yield the same result is obtained regardless of the experimenter-no connection to the observer's consciousness. Many try to use the famous double-slit experiment to show such a connection, but that is incorrect. See, "The Double Slit Experiment Correlation between Mind and Matter?"
- We will continue this discussion in the next post, "The Observer Effect in Quantum Mechanics."

We can discuss any questions on these posts on QM at the discussion forum: "Quantum Mechanics - A New Interpretation."

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### 20.2.2 The Observer Effect in Quantum Mechanics

March 20, 2018; revised April 20, 2022

1. The "observer effect" - sometimes called the "measurement problem"- in quantum mechanics is the problem of how (or whether) wave function collapse occurs. But the whole point is that there is no need for a "wave function collapse," as we explain in this post.

- Let us start with what is meant by "wave function collapse." It is always good to start with the basics.
- Please read the previous post, "Will Quantum Mechanics Be Able to Explain Consciousness?", including the section there on "Subjective versus Objective: Difference between Mind and Matter."

2. The wave function in quantum mechanics evolves deterministically according to the Schrōdinger equation as a linear superposition of different states. But actual measurements always find the physical system in a definite, well-defined, state. Therefore, it seems that at the time of the measurement all those multiple states should collapse to just one (the observed).

- This is known as the "observer effect" since an observer is needed to make a measurement (and thus "cause a collapse").

3. Even if such an "observer effect" exists, just the mere decision to make a measurement does not make such a measurement "subjective" in terms that we defined the term subjective in the post, "Will Quantum Mechanics Be Able to Explain Consciousness?".

- There is no "measurement problem" because the "personal" mental state of an observer does not play a role.
- In these quantum systems one can calculate only the probability of a given outcomes. If one carries out a large number of measurements, that outcome will be consistent with that prediction.
- That is quite similar to throwing a dice. We can only say that it will land on " 5 " about 1 out of six throws since the dice has six faces.
- Anyone can initiate such measurements and will get the same result. Furthermore, a given experiment can be run by a computer program, and a conscious observer is not needed.

4. This controversy over an "observer effect" arises in the first place because of the assumption that the wave function is "ontic", i.e., it has all the correct information about the particle in it.

- But this assumption has been rejected by Einstein and many others including Bell: "..Either the wavefunction, as given by the Schrodinger equation is not everything, or it is not right." (Bell, 1987, p. 201).

5. Furthermore, this requirement to "collapse the wave function" or the involvement of an "observer" is absent in Bohmian mechanics, a version of quantum theory discovered by Louis de Broglie in 1927 and rediscovered by David Bohm in 1952 (Bohm, 1952).

- In Bohmian mechanics a system of particles is described in part by its wave function, evolving, as usual, according to Schrōdinger's equation. But a complete description is provided by specifying actual positions of particles by a "pilot wave" or a "guiding wave." Bohmian mechanics tracks the trajectory of a particle in real-time and there is no need for a "wave function collapse."

6. A key experiment that led to the concept of an "observer effect" is the famous "double-slit experiment."

- However, in recent double-slit experiments (Kocsis et al., 2011; Schleich et al., 2013b) monitored individual trajectories of particles, and any possibility of a "mind effect" or "observer effect" was ruled out.
- Their results were consistent with the trajectories of individual particles calculated with Bohmian mechanics.

7. Bohmian mechanics naturally describes all possible paths. Each one can be assigned a probability, and experimental outcomes are in agreement with those probabilities.

- So, the measurements are deterministic om the following way. The outcome is compatible with the predictions in a series of measurements. Those measurements are objective.
- A detailed description of Bohmian mechanics is in (Durr, Goldstein, and Zanghi, 1992).

8. Physicists have been slow to use Bohmian mechanics because it involves more work (solving the pilot wave equation), but there has been a renewed interest in recent years.

- We have done a literature survey on the Science Citation Index and found that interest in Bohmian mechanics seems to have accelerated starting around the turn of the century. The total number of publications from 1992 to 1999 was 52. From 2000-2005, 2006-2011, and 2012-2017 had 134, 174, and 200 papers published. Thus, even though it took time to gain traction, Bohmian mechanics now seems to be attracting attention.

9. Furthermore, a series of recent papers have illustrated the beautiful connection between classical mechanics and quantum mechanics; see, for example, (Field, 2011; Taylor, 2003, Hanc et al., 2003), which was initially pointed out by Feynman (Feynman, 1948).

- These and other papers show how the "sum over all possible paths" by Feynman in quantum mechanics (Feynman, 1948) converges to the "path of least action" in classical mechanics at the limit h (Planck's constant) approaching zero. Thus classical mechanics is just a limiting case of quantum mechanics.

10. Other have described how the Schrōdinger's equation comes out naturally from classical mechanics (de Gosson and Hiley, 2011; Field, 2011; Schleich et al., 2013a).

- The so-called "quantum weirdness" arises due to the effects of the Heisenberg uncertainty principle, which becomes non-negligible when " h " in the equation is non-negligible in the microscopic realm.

11. Therefore, there is no connection to human consciousness in QM experiments. Quantum mechanical experiments always provide consistent results that are not subject to or even related to the "conscious state" of the observer.

- The need for a "personal" or subjective conscious mind is not even needed. A computer program may randomly decide when to initiate/terminate a measurement and get the same result.


## Quantum Phenomena May Be "Weird" but Nothing to Do with Mind

Quantum phenomena, just like some phenomena in relativity, seem "unusual" to us since they were uncovered only since 1900, and are not of common occurrence. But they all involve the behavior of inert matter at a small scale (quantum phenomena), and speeds approaching the speed of light (relativity). This unusual behavior has nothing to do with the human consciousness; that is how Nature works in the microscopic realm.

1. Two issues need to be separated:
(i). Do quantum phenomena display characteristics that are very different from phenomena displayed by classical (Newtonian) systems?
(ii). Do quantum phenomena provide any evidence that they are related to mental phenomena (i.e., are they affected by the particular state of mind of the experimenter?).
2. The answer to (i) above is unequivocal "yes". The experiments discussed below have characteristics that are alien to the phenomena displayed by Newtonian or classical systems.

- However, QM is not alone in that respect. The two theories of relativity also apply to phenomena that are not compatible with classical phenomena: time dilation and length contraction are prominent examples.

3. In both relativity and QM, observer's mental state does not play a role.

- For example, relativity predicts that if a person takes off in a rocket, travels at speeds close to speed of light for an extended time, and return, he will find that those on Earth have aged much more than him. That is called time dilation.
- However, if two people travel at similar speeds for a specific time and come back, the time dilation experienced by both will be the same.
- In the same way, if two different people conduct any of those "weird" QM experiments, they will get the same result.

4. In both cases of QM and relativity, the results may be "weird" by classical standards. However, there is no involvement of the "consciousness of the observer." The apparent "weirdness" in QM goes away smoothly as the Plank's constant (h) becomes negligibly tiny (and in relativity when the speed low).

- There is no "mind effect" or "observer effect" in the sense that the observer's subjectivity affects the results of either type of experiment,. There are no subjective decisions to be made during an experiment.
- By definition, result of an experiment is not reproducible unless an experimenter is truly objective.

5. In other words, all quantum phenomena and those explained by relativity are objective, just like classical phenomena.

- On the other hand, mind phenomena CAN BE subjective. As discussed earlier, when describing physical properties of matter, two people can be objective, i.e., they report the same length, weight, etc., for the object. But their PERCEPTION of a given person X, or a given food or music, etc., could be very different. Those are subjective.
- For example, consider two people with opposing political views (A and B). Each runs into a politician C who has views compatible with those of A. Person A will be happy to meet C and may go up to C , shake his hands and talk to him enthusiastically. On the other hand, Person B will automatically have irritable thoughts about C and is likely to avoid C .
- What properties of neurons in A and B could lead to such a huge difference in feelings and intentions (consciousness) upon seeing the same person?
- Such subjective mental states do not play a role in carrying out experiments, whether quantum or classical. But they do play critical roles in making decisions in everyday life.

6. Therefore, those two issues need to be handled separately. Quantum phenomena have characteristics that are very different from classical phenomena, but both quantum and classical phenomena are objective. There is no evidence of quantum phenomena having anything to do with the subjective consciousness.

- The crucial distinction that we need to realize here is that the phrase "non-deterministic" as applied to such QM experiments is incorrect. For example, some measurements may not provide the exact location of a particle. There could be many possible locations for that particle, but they can all be accurately predicted with associated probabilities.
- Those experiments have no "intrinsic subjectivity" in those experiments, other than the indeterminacy depicted by the Heisenberg uncertainty principle. The same investigation conducted under the same conditions will yield the same result. It does not matter who experiments, i.e., consciousness of the experimtnter does not play a role.

Any questions on these QM posts can be discussed at the discussion forum: "Quantum Mechanics - A New Interpretation."

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### 20.3 Quantum Mechanics - A New Interpretation

March 13, 2018; revised December 8, 2020

1. A new interpretation of quantum mechanics ( QM ) based on nonlocality and realism is presented, where wave-particle duality is shown to be an incorrect and unnecessary assumption.

- In our proposed interpretation, appropriate wave functions are established instantaneously across space per nonlocality.
- Nonlocality of Nature is hard for many to accept, but it is valid in three key experiments conducted in 2015.
- All existing experimental data, including those, are shown to be inter-consistent with this interpretation.

2. I will systematically expand the arguments given in the above paper (in \#3 below) in a series of posts on the website. The following are the posts published so far. It would be helpfil to read these posts first since they provide key ideas.

## What Is a Wave and What Is a Particle?

## Photons Are Particles, Not Waves

## Basis of the Proposed Interpretation - Feynman's Technique in QED

- Feynman's Glass Plate Experiment
- Feynman's Method of "A Particle Exploring All Possible Paths"
- "Exploring All Possible Paths" Leads to Fermat's Principle of Least Time

It may be a good idea to read the following posts as well:

- Will Quantum Mechanics Be Able to Explain Consciousness?
- The Observer Effect in Quantum Mechanics

3. When I started working on this project over two years ago, I had conversations with Professor Gayanath Fernando. We tried to get a paper published on the proposed interpretation of QM.

- However, we were unable to convince the reviewers, and the paper did not get published. The pdf of a recent version can be downloaded here: "WebLink: PDF File: A Self Consistent Interpretation of Quantum Mechanics Based on Nonlocality."
- The reviewers' main objection of the reviewers seemed to be the nonlocality argument, and some were reluctant to reject the "wave-particle duality." I will be discussing those and other issues in detail in this section.
- However, it is ironic that the non-locality of Nature was firmly established in 2015, as we discussed in the above paper.

4. I plan to write a series of posts in this section and welcome comments from knowledgeable readers who are familiar with concepts in quantum mechanics. I have opened a new forum entitled, "Quantum Mechanics - A New Interpretation" at the discussion forum in order to discuss each post that is published.

- Anyone will be able to read these posts and also the posts at the discussion forum. However, one needs to register at the forum to ask questions or make comments. Forum registration instructions can be found at, "WebLink: General Information and Updates."
- Now, let us discuss briefly the key idea briefly behind the proposed connection of kamma vipāka to QM.
- Feynman's Glass Plate Experiment
- Feynman's Method of "A Particle Exploring All Possible Paths"
- "Exploring All Possible Paths" Leads to Fermat's Principle of Least Time


### 20.3.1 <br> What Is a Wave and What Is a Particle?

## March 13, 2018; revised April 18, 2020 (added video in \#7); August 28, 2022

1. Waves involve the transport of energy without the transport of matter. When you drop a pebble onto a water reservoir, you can see the ripples move out. There is no water displacement from one place to another, but the disturbance moves out.

- Therefore, a wave can be described as a disturbance that travels through a medium, transporting energy from one location (its source) to another without transporting matter.
- On the other hand, a particle can move and transfer matter. The most important characteristic of a particle is that its position is localized at any given time and is detected as a single detection event or a "single click" on the detector. That means a "whole particle" arrived at the detector.
- Those are the ways waves and particles were expected to behave before the advent of quantum mechanics. But starting around 1900 , our ideas about waves and particles became somewhat confusing due to many drastic changes that took place over many years.

2. The fundamental concepts in quantum mechanics (QM) were worked out roughly from 1900 to 1930. Andrew Whitaker gives a good description of the evolution of QM within this period and beyond in his book "Einstein, Bohr and the Quantum Dilemma" (second edition, 2006).

- That book describes how the keywords like waves, particles, and wave functions related to QM evolved. Some of the old - and unnecessary - concepts like "wave-particle duality" linger because of the impressions made at that time.
- Experiments carried out within the past 20-30 years (some key experiments within the past few years), show that such lingering ideas on "wave-particle duality" are an obstruction to grasping the reality revealed by QM.

3. For a long time, the light was thought to be a wave, specifically an electromagnetic wave. That idea still lingers on.

- Light consists of particles (photons.) That was firmly established only in 1986. See "Photons Are Particles Not Waves."
- The most distinguishing characteristic of a particle is that its detection is recorded as a single event ("a click") at the detector.

4. However, the motion of a particle - including a photon - can be represented by a wave function, which is a mathematical function, not a wave. A wave function is extremely useful for calculating experimental results but does not have a physical reality. Rather it represents the physical reality.

- It is easier to see the differences among the terms waves, particles, and wave functions by looking at what happens when waves and particles go through two adjoining slits.

5. When normal particles that we are familiar with go through two slits and fall on a screen to make their imprints, we will see two "line images," as shown on the left in the figure below. On the other hand, a wave (like a water wave) will give rise to "fringes," as shown on the right.


- In normal life, we will see particles (say marbles) going through two large slits leading to those marbles hitting the screen, as shown on the left
- With a water wave going through two slits, we will see ripples giving rise to water wave crests as shown on the right.

Those are the scenarios with normal particles and normal waves.
6. If quantum particles (like electrons or photons) are going through two slits where slit openings are LARGE (say a cm or more), then we will again see the "normal particle pattern" shown on the LEFT.

- However, if quantum particles (like electrons or photons) are going through two slits where slit openings are SMALL (say less than an mm ), then we will see the "wave pattern" shown on the RIGHT. If the aperture dimensions are of the order of $\mathrm{h} / \mathrm{p}$ (where $\mathrm{h}=$ Planck's constant and p is the particle's momentum), then such diffuse wave patterns can be expected.
- Those experimental results can be CALCULATED in such cases by using wave functions to represent the motion of such particles.
- However, a particle is never spread out. A given particle will always be detected at a certain point within that diffraction pattern. To get that diffraction pattern, one must repeat the experiment with a single particle many times.

7. April 18, 2020: Here is a youtube video that simply explains the above: WebLink: youtube: Electrons aren't actual waves

We will discuss the above and the following related issues in detail in this section: "Quantum Mechanics and Dhamma."

## Light is a Wave or a Particle?

8. Newton's concept of light consisting of particles prevailed for a long time in the early days. But Newton's corpuscular theory of light was abandoned around 1850 because it could not explain interference and diffraction phenomena Young and Fresnel showed that the wave picture could explain those experimental results.

- However, a wave needs a medium to support it. A "water wave" propagates in water, and a sound wave can propagate in a solid or a liquid and needs at least air to propagate. Still, light can travel in a vacuum, and therefore the existence of a yet unknown "aether" was proposed as the all-pervading medium through which light could propagate.
- The "ether theory" itself ran into several objections, and was finally abandoned after the famous Michelson-Morley experiment performed in 1887 conclusively proved the absence of an aether.

9. Now we know that light doesn't need a medium through which to travel. Furthermore, the speed of light is constant. It is independent of the movement of the source or detector or the direction in which it travels, as shown by Einstein's theory of relativity (discovered in 1905).

- Therefore, light is not a wave. This was confirmed by an experiment conducted with single photons in 1986, which we will discuss in the next post. I just wanted to present the background in this post.


## Matter as Waves?

10. While the debate was going on about whether light is a wave or a particle between the 1850 s to early 1900s, and even up to 1986 to some extent, another related development came with the early studies in quantum mechanics beginning around 1900.

- The issue was whether solid particles could be treated as waves.

11. After Planck, Einstein, Compton, and others established that light behaved as particles (photons), in 1913, Bohr came up with an idea to quantize the energy levels of a hydrogen atom. He was able to explain why discrete lines in the spectra of hydrogen.

- Yet another groundbreaking hypothesis by de Broglie in 1924 clarified why Bohr's idea worked. He proposed that just like photons can be represented by a wave (specifically with electromagnetic wave equations of Maxwell), a "wave can represent the motion of electrons." At that time, it was not clear what this "wave" would be. Now, we know that it is a wave function.

12. Light has been considered a wave for a long time, as discussed above. But the idea that waves could represent electrons with no-zero rest mass was unanticipated.

- Then in 1927, Davisson and Germer produced clear diffraction patterns for electron scattering from a nickel lattice, just like a diffraction pattern due to light. This led to the speculation that maybe particles sometimes behave as waves.
- That is how the idea of "wave-particle duality" evolved in the confusing period of 1900 to about 1930. Even though an accepted "quantum theory" was established around 1930, the idea of "wave-particle duality" lingers to the present.
- Nowadays, those diffraction patterns seen with electrons can be explained via the wave functions representing electrons' motion. However, a given electron can be found only at one location at a given time.


## Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle

13. To make things even more complicated, in 1927 Heisenberg came up with his famous uncertainty principle. This principle says that the uncertainty of the position of a particle ( $\sigma_{\mathrm{x}}$ ) multiplied by the uncertainty of the particle's momentum $\left(\sigma_{\mathrm{p}}\right)$ must be larger than what is known as Planck's constant, $\hbar$ :
$\sigma_{\mathrm{x}} \cdot \sigma_{\mathrm{p}} \geq \hbar$

- Planck's constant is extremely small; it has a value of about $10^{-34} \mathrm{Js}$.
- For any particle that we can see with our eyes, any uncertainty in the particle's position will be much smaller than the size of the particle. Therefore, we don't notice this in our normal lives.

14. However, when it comes to microscopic particles like electrons, the uncertainty in position is normally very large. If you have seen a pictorial representation of the orbit of an electron in a hydrogen atom, it is shown as an area; the electron could be anywhere within that area.

The following picture shows some examples of such electron orbitals. An electron could be anywhere within a given orbital at a given time.


- Therefore, the key point to remember is that the uncertainty in a particle's position and the momentum (or velocity) becomes significant only for small particles like electrons and photons.

15. We can make the following statements about the location of such a "quantum particle" at a given time.

- The significance of this uncertainty is that we cannot say precisely where such a small particle is to be found. We can only say that it should be located within a certain region. We can calculate the probability of finding it at a given point within that region.
- But that does not mean "the particle is spread out in that volume." At any given time, the particle is located at only one point. It is just that we cannot say precisely at which point due to the uncertainty principle.

16. I hope you can see the difference. Some people make the grave mistake of saying a quantum particle is "spread over space" like a wave. That is a grave mistake and a key reason people have difficulty understanding quantum mechanics.

Any questions on these QM posts can be discussed at the discussion forum: "Quantum Mechanics - A New Interpretation."

### 20.3.2 Photons Are Particles Not Waves

March 13, 2018; revised August 29, 2022
Summary: Photons are ALWAYS particles. They travel as particles and are detected as particles. But the position of a photon during travel cannot be pinned down to a point (due to the Heisenberg uncertainty principle; see, "What Is a Wave and What Is a Particle?"). Only POSSIBLE LOCATIONS of the photon at any time (and the probability of detection at each location) are provided by the wave function that represents the photon. The difference between a wave and a wave function was discussed in the previous post.

1. I must warn you that this post could be too advanced for many people. However, this is the sort of "deepest level" that we will go to in this section, and if one can at least comprehend the basic idea, then one should be able the follow the future posts. The basic idea that I am trying to express is that light consists of particles, called photons.

- What is meant by a "wave" in wave-particle duality is vague, and people interpret the term differently. Therefore, resolving what is meant by a "wave" in "wave-particle" duality is helpful. Is it a "real wave" like a water wave or is it a mathematical function?
- As shown below, it has been confirmed that photons are particles, and the word "wave" SHOULD NOT be used to describe light. But, the motion of a photon can be REPRESENTED by a wave function; it is a mathematical representation.

2. For example, a statement that is made frequently is, "..the position of a single particle is spread out over space..." This is a misleading statement, and should never be used. A particle always occupies a localized position; what is spread out is the wave function, indicating possible positions for the particle to be at a given time. See the summary statement above.

- A particle, whether an electron or a photon, is detected at a detector as a single detection event. When light - reduced to low intensity - is detected at a detector, those photons are registered as "single clicks".
- Therefore, we should give up the notion of light as a "wave". Light consists of photons; each photon may be represented by a wave function, which is a mathematical concept. This lingering and false idea of a "wave" is the main obstacle to having a unified theory of QM.

3. Newton believed that light consisted of particles. Newton's corpuscular theory of light prevailed until around 1850 when it was abandoned because it could not explain light's interference and diffraction effects. Since then, light has been regarded as a wave for a while.

- But starting around 1900 that wave picture could not account for many new experimental observations including the photoelectric effect, black-body radiation, and Compton scattering. Einstein proposed that light is quantized to explain the photoelectric effect (Einstein, 1905) - for which he received the Nobel Prize in physics in 1921 - and those quanta were given the name photon; they are the original "quanta" of quantum mechanics.
- Compton (Compton 1923) confirmed that a photon is a particle with momentum, for which he received the Nobel Prize in 1927.
- The photon concept has led to momentous advances in experimental and theoretical physics such as lasers, Bose-Einstein condensation, and quantum field theory.

4. Then, in 1948 Feynman illustrated that it is not necessary to consider photons as waves at all in quantum electrodynamics (Feynman, 1948; Feynman, 1949; Feynman, 1985).

- While the first two references above are technical papers, the third one is a book written in very simple terms. I would recommend those who are interested to read the book. I am only going to summarize what is in the book.
- That book was based on a series of 4 lectures. These are simple lectures delivered to non-physicists, and could be useful especially if one does not have access to the book:


## WebLink: YOUTUBE: QED: Photons - Corpuscles of Light - Richard Feynman (1/4)

5. However, there was a persistent view up to 1986 that light could not be particles, and that many effects such as the photoelectric effect can be explained without the concept of a photon (Lamb and Scully, 1968; Crisp and Jaynes, 1969; Mandel, 1976).

- The final confirmation of a photon as a particle had to wait until single photon sources were developed. In 1986 Granger, Roger, and Aspect confirmed in their anticorrelation experiments that photons are indeed particles. We discuss this experiment below.


## Proof That Photons Are Particles

The figure below shows the experimental configuration used by Granger, Roger, and Aspect to verify that photons are indeed particles (Granger, Roger, and Aspect, 1986).


1. Single photons generated at $S$ are sent through a beam splitter, and a signal via each leg is detected at $D_{1}$ and $\mathrm{D}_{2}$. In this experiment, one photon at a time is incident on the beam splitter A .

- If a photon is a particle, then it can be either reflected at A and go towards mirror M1, which will then be detected at detector D1, OR, it could go through A, reflected by mirror M2, and detected at detector D2. Then a detection would register only at D1 or D2.
- However, if the photon is a wave, it could partially propagate through each arm and be detected at both $\mathrm{D}_{1}$ and $\mathrm{D}_{2}$ simultaneously. That would count as a "coincidence count $\left(\mathrm{N}_{\mathrm{C}}\right)$ ".
- If a photon sometimes acts like a wave, there should be some coincidence counts.

2. The experiments confirmed that a given photon always takes one path at a time (Granger, Roger, and Aspect, 1986).

- This experiment conclusively proved that a photon travels either via path $A M_{1} D_{1}$ or path $A M_{2} D_{2}$.
- If photons had the "wave nature", there would have been at least some coincidence counts.

3. With this experimental confirmation, a photon is now categorized as an elementary particle. A photon at any wavelength is detected as a particle.

- In Feynman's Quantum Electrodynamics (QED), a photon is successfully treated as a particle that takes into account "all possible paths" via path integrals.
- In our proposed theory, a photon is a particle, and its motion is governed by a mathematical wave function set up instantaneously across space taking into account the details of the experimental arrangement; this wave function explains interference and diffraction effects.

4. Newton's corpuscular theory of light was abandoned around 1850 because it could not explain interference and diffraction phenomena.

- However, when Feynman introduced his new approach to quantum mechanics in 1948, he proposed that, "..The probability that a particle will be found to have a path $x(t)$ lying somewhere within a region of space time is the square of a sum of contributions, one from each path in the region. The contribution from a single path is postulated to be an exponential whose (imaginary) phase is the classical action (in units of $\hbar$ ) for the path in question.." (Feynman, 1948, p. 367).
- Then he applied that concept to describe the propagation of photons and electrons in his formulation of quantum electrodynamics (QED); see (Feynman, 1949). The basic idea of photon propagation using "all possible paths available" has been explained by Feynman in his introductory book (Feynman, 1985) on QED.

5. Feynman explained his theory of QED with simple diagrams without equations in his book (Feynman, 1985). See "Basis of the Proposed Interpretation - Feynman's Technique in QED."

- However, his technique was completely ad hoc; there was no rationale behind it. As he explained (p. 10 of Feynman, 1985): "..what I am telling you is, while I am describing how Nature works, you won’t understand why Nature works that way. But you see, nobody understands that. I can't explain why Nature behaves in this particular way".
- With new experimental results published since then, we can now understand the rationale behind his technique. That is what we will be discussing in the first series of posts, and is also in the unpublished paper: "WebLink: Docx File: A Self-Consistent Interpretation of Quantum Mechanics Based on Nonlocality."

6. Of course, many phenomena involving light can be explained with light treated as an electromagnetic (EM) wave, just like the motion of large particles can be treated with Newtonian mechanics.

- But when analyzing quantum phenomena, the EM theory does not work for light and the Newtonian mechanics does not work for microscopic particles. This is quite apparent in QED, which deals with the interactions of light with electrons.

Any questions on these QM posts can be discussed at the discussion forum: "Quantum Mechanics - A New Interpretation."

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Mandel. L., The case for and against semiclassical radiation theory, in Progress in Optics, vol. 13, NorthHolland (1976). (pdf not available).
20.3.3 Basis of the Proposed Interpretation - Feynman's Technique in QED

March 29, 2018
Feynman's Glass Plate Experiment

Feynman's Method of "A Particle Exploring All Possible Paths"

## "Exploring All Possible Paths" Leads to Fermat's Principle of Least Time

Any questions on these QM posts can be discussed at the discussion forum: "Quantum Mechanics - A New Interpretation."

### 20.3.3. Feynman's Glass Plate Experiment

March 16, 2018; revised March 25, 2018

1. Feynman's glass plate experiment that he discussed in pages $17-35$ in his book (see the References below) is discussed in order to lay the foundation for our new interpretation of quantum mechanics ( QM ).

This is a key post that lays the foundation for the "nonlocality" argument. Even before I explain in detail what "nonlocality" is, I want to illustrate the simple fundamental idea behind it.

- This idea is: Even before a particle takes off, Nature evaluates all possible paths that particle could take, and come up "with a plan" for its motion. This happens AUTOMATICALLY and some "unconventional paths" could result only in the case of microscopic particles like electrons and photons.
- This is why quantum mechanics appear to reveal "strange phenomena". But when particles increase in size, this "unusual behavior" goes away naturally.
- This simple idea that the physicist Richard Feynman came up is best illustrated with a simple experiment that is discussed in his book (see the References below). That experimental setup and the key result is shown in the figure below.


Experiments show signal at $D_{R}$ to vary from 0\% to $16 \%$ as the thickness of glass plate varied.

## One would expect constant reflection at about $8 \%$.

2. There are two "special features" in this experiment (it could be easier to print the post and read):
i. The two surfaces of the glass slab are well-polished and are parallel to each other with high accuracy.
ii. The light is monochromatic, which means it has a well-defined wavelength.
3. Light from the source $(\mathrm{S})$ is incident on a glass plate. Part of the light is reflected as indicated by the arrow labelled \#1, and the rest is transmitted through the glass and incident on the second surface where a part of it
is reflected and goes back up as indicated by the arrow \#2. Rest of light emerges from the other side of the glass plate indicated by the dotted arrow. Two more things to be noted:

- What is plotted on the right side of the figure is the light signal in the reflected beams \#1 and \#2.
- Variable on the $\mathbf{X}$-axis of that figure is the thickness of the glass plate ( L ).

4. The first thing one would expect is to have a fraction of light (about 8\%) to be reflected via path \#1. In fact, that is what one WILL observe with normal light (with all wavelengths in the visible region).

- However, as we can see in the experimental data to the right in the figure, that reflected signal varies from $0 \%$ to $16 \%$ as the thickness of the glass plate in increased for light with a well-defined wavelength (like from a laser).
- It is interesting to see that the reflected signal is zero (very low) at some thicknesses of the glass plate. This is a KEY feature that cannot be explained without our interpretation of QM. If anyone can, please post at the discussion forum. Feynman explicitly said that he could not, on p. 10 of his book.

5. Normally, one would expect the light reflected from the front surface (\#1) to be at a constant level since photons are particles, i.e., a photon hitting the first surface would have no idea whether another interface existed below or not. Again, this is the key to the puzzle.

- For an analogy, we can consider the following case. Imagine a wire fence with holes a bit larger than a ball that we throw at it. Some balls (those that align with the holes) will go through those holes and others will bounce back. Would it make any difference to the number of balls that bounce back if we install another fence a little bit beyond the first fence? Would it matter how far apart the fences are? Of course not.
- That is a reasonable analogy that shows how amazing the above observations - seen with the glass plate and the particles of light (photons) - are.
- But such effects are seen only in the microscopic realm, as we will discuss later.

6. The following is how Feynman devised a "rule" that turned out to be able to account for those observations in the figure above.

- For a photon to get to the detector $\mathrm{D}_{\mathrm{R}}$, there are two paths available via the glass plate (\#1 and \#2), as shown in the figure. Feynman's key assumption was that wave functions are established instantaneously via both those paths, and the vector sum of them would determine the possible path for a photon. These are not real waves, but just mathematical functions.
- In quantum electrodynamics (QED), this procedure of "summing up all possible paths" is given the fancy name, "path integrals".
- When the path difference between those two paths is equal to the wavelength of the light, those two contributions are cancelled out (there is a phase shift of $180^{\circ}$ for the two paths in addition). That is why one sees zero intensity at plate thicknesses that are multiples of even number of half the wavelength.
- On the other hand, when the path difference between those two paths is equal to the half of the wavelength of the light, those two contributions add together. That is why one sees large intensity at plate thicknesses that are odd multiples of half the wavelength.
- Those are just technical details. Don't worry about them if you are "non-technical".

7. As long as one uses monochromatic light (and glass with no defects), one could in principle make the width of the plate arbitrarily large and those oscillations in the signal in the above figure persist. Thus as long as those two possible paths are available (without any defects in the glass plate), the resultant wave function will enforce "no reflection" at the front surface regardless of how thick the glass plate is.

- On p. 21 of his book (Feynman, 1985), Feynman says, "..Today, with lasers (which produce a very pure, monochromatic light), we can see this cycle still going strong after more than $100,000,000$ repetitions - which corresponds to glass that is more than 50 meters thick.." This is an amazing observation!

8. Therefore, QM wave functions - which take into account the phases and amplitudes of all possible paths - are established instantaneously. This is a consequence of the nonlocality of nature that we will discuss in detail in upcoming posts.

- In the case of the above figure, there are two possible paths for a given photon - indicated by the arrows \#1 and \#2 - leading to $\mathrm{D}_{\mathrm{R}}$ as shown in the figure. It is important to note that the path of a given photon leaving the source $(\mathrm{S})$ is predetermined from the start.
- Thus the question does not arise as to how the photon coming to the first surface "knows" that there is a second surface below it. There is no causality problem here, since the QM wave function is established at the very beginning because of the nonlocality of nature; if any changes are made to the experimental setup, the wave function will adjust instantaneously. Nonlocality means exactly that: physical proximity is not needed for this mechanism to work.

9. Now we will discuss a critical implication of Feynman's "a particle exploring all possible paths" or "path integral" approach, that even Feynman did not realize.

- What happens when we increase the thickness of the (defect-free) glass plate to a value that is greater than the distance from the glass plate to the detector $D_{R}$ ?
- Now, a photon reflecting off of the front surface would have had time to reach the detector before another photon going through the glass plate even reaches the lower glass-air surface, and start coming back to the detector $\mathrm{D}_{\mathrm{R}}$ via \#2 path.
- You need to take time and think about this. That is why it could be better to print the post and read. I don't think the reviewers of our paper even realized this key point; see, bullet \#3 of "Quantum Mechanics and Dhamma - Introduction."

10. Therefore, in the absence of wave functions establishing instantaneously across both possible paths (and thus undergoing destructive interference), there CANNOT be a zero signal at the detector DR, for ANY thickness of the glass plate if that thickness $(\mathrm{L})$ is greater than the distance from the glass plate to the detector DR.

- This is the second aspect of the key observation that cannot be explained without our proposed interpretation of QM .
- Again, please make comments at the discussion forum, if anyone can explain this observation in another way.

11. With the above observation, this experiment also confirms that photons are not waves, which we established in the post, "Photons Are Particles Not Waves." In principle, two waves coming off of the front and back surfaces of the glass plate COULD destructively interfere to yield the zero intensities at those plate thicknesses.

- However, in this particular case (thickness of the glass plate larger than the distance from the glass plate to the detector $\mathrm{D}_{\mathrm{R}}$ ), the "light wave" from the front surface would have arrived at the detector and be gone, by the time "light wave" from the back surface of the glass surface arrives at the detector.
- Therefore, destructive interference at the detector cannot take place in the case of real waves propagating at the speed of light. What undergoes destructive interference are the mathematical wave functions representing a photon.
- This is why it is important to distinguish between waves and wave functions; see, "What Is a Wave and What Is a Particle?."

12. Therefore, the zero intensity observed at some plate thicknesses is not due to the destructive interference of waves. Instead it is due to the combined contributions from those two paths (two wave functions).

- If the two wave functions destructively interfere, then not even a single photon will be directed via either of those paths, and all incident photons will go through the glass slab.
- If the two wave functions interfere constructively, then maximum possible number of photons will be directed via those paths, and maximum possible signal ( $16 \%$ ) will be observed at $D_{R}$; rest of the photons will go through the glass slab.

13. Therefore, it is very important to understand the difference between waves and wave functions. Light cannot be really called electromagnetic waves, even though the term is used even today. We have established that in the post, "Photons Are Particles Not Waves." I am proceeding slowly to establish a solid foundation, so that questions like this do not arise later on.

- Feynman's method says that even before a particle starts moving, wave functions for "all possible paths" for that particle are established instantaneously. The particle will then move along a path that results from the "summation over all those paths".
- These wave functions are vectors (i.e., they have a magnitude and a direction). Therefore, vector addition must be used in "summing up all possible paths". For those who are "non-technical" such details can be skipped; just get the idea.
- This vector addition using a simple method with arrows is described by Professor Feynman in his book and also in a series of four public lectures (see the References below).

14. To summarize the above discussion in another way, let me quote from Feynman's book (p.36):

- "This strange phenomenon of partial reflection by two surfaces can be explained for intense light by a theory of waves, but the wave theory cannot explain how the detector makes equally loud clicks as the light gets dimmer. Quantum electrodynamics "resolves" this wave-particle duality by saying that light is made of particles, but the price of this great advancement of science is retreat by physics to the position of being able to calculate only the probability that a photon will hit a detector, without offering a good model of how it actually happens."
- Our proposed theory shows exactly how it happens.

15. As we will discuss in the upcoming posts, we point out that Feynman's idea of a photon exploring all possible paths is none other than the enforcement of nonlocality; Feynman's QED implicitly assumed nonlocality.

- A wave function is instantaneously set up over all space taking into account the phases for all possible paths; there is no spatial limitation. This is why two particles across the universe could be still entangled; see, "Quantum Entanglement - We Are All Connected."
- In the next post we will show that in the above case, a photon will actually "explore ALL possible paths", an infinite number of them! However, only those two paths actually came into play in the above discussion, because all others cancel out at ALL TIMES.

Any questions on these QM posts can be discussed at the discussion forum: "Quantum Mechanics - A New Interpretation."

## REFERENCES

1. Richard Feynman, "QED: The Strange Theory of Light and Matter", Princeton University Press (1985).
2. The above book is based on a set of simple lectures delivered to non-physicists, and could be useful especially if one does not have access to the book:

### 20.3.3. Feynman's Method of "A Particle Exploring All Possible Paths"

March 29, 2018

1. In the previous post we discussed Professor Feynman's illustration of how two wave functions (not waves) corresponding to two possible paths for a photon interfere (constructively and destructively) to produce an oscillating signal; see, "Feynman's Glass Plate Experiment."

- It was pointed out that this experimental result is not explainable if light is treated as an electromagnetic wave.
- More importantly, it showed that a path for a photon is mapped out instantaneously by Nature, as soon as the photon takes off.
- In this post, we will discuss his argument that the Nature actually takes into account ALL possible paths, an infinite number of them! This is our key idea behind "nonlocality", so we will proceed step-by-step to make our case crystal clear.

2. This discussion is also based on the following figure from Feynman's book (p 43); see the reference below. Light received at point $P$ due to source $S$ is considered; direct path from $S$ to $P$ is blocked by a screen placed in between them.

- Everyone is familiar with the "law of light reflection" where the light from from A goes to a Point B in a path that is defined by the angle incident being equal to the angle of reflection.

- Of course, the time for a photon to get from $S$ to $D$ is minimum close to the center of the mirror.
- However, Feynman showed that a better picture with more explanatory power is available with the concept of "a photon exploring all paths". He showed that most possible paths are cancelled out and only those paths that lie close to the expected path stated by the Law of Reflection contribute to the final detection probability.

3. In order to illustrate the concept of a photon "exploring all possible paths", the mirror is divided into sections A through M , and reflection from each section of the mirror is indicated (see the above figure).

- Due to different distances of travel, the time taken for each path varies as shown in the middle figure, and correspondingly the phase varies as shown below that. The final amplitude is given by adding those arrows, and is indicated at the bottom of the figure.

4. Just like in adding the contributions from two "waves", adding the contributions from "wave functions" requires one to take into account the difference in phase angle. Feynman has described this in simple terms, how to add contributions due to many wave functions using vector addition (see pp. 24-35).

- It is evident that the major contribution to the final arrow's length is made by arrows E through I (from the central part of the mirror), whose directions are nearly the same because the timing of their paths is nearly the same. This also happens to be where the total time is the least indicated by the heavy arrow, which is the expected path from the law of reflection.
- The law of reflection, that we learn at high school, is a simple rule that works. But actually reflections from each point in the mirror contribute to the signal at P . It is just that most of those contributions cancel out (as shown by the bottom part of the above figure).

5. To prove that even the edge of the mirror does contribute to the signal at $\mathbf{P}$, we chop off most of the mirror, leaving only the sections A, B, C on the left. From the above figure, if we add the three arrows due to those those three sections, they nearly cancel out. This is why we do not see significant contributions from parts of the away from the center.

- If we now divide that section (of $\mathrm{A}, \mathrm{B}, \mathrm{C}$ in the above figure) into four equal sections, they of course again cancel out as shown in the top section of the figure below.

- But if we now carefully scrape two alternating sections of those four sections (as shown in the bottom figure), then the signals due to the two reflecting sections add up to give an intense signal; see the bottom part of the above figure.

6. This conclusively proves that during normal reflection, parts of the mirror away from the center also contribute to the signal. It is just that most of that signal is cancelled out. Thus, for all practical purposes, it is sufficient to just take the reflection from the center part of the mirror (i.e., to use the law of reflection in geometrical optics).

- However, If only the arrows in a particular direction are kept, while the others in opposite direction are removed (by etching the mirror in those places), then a substantial amount of light reflects from a piece of mirror located away from the center, as shown in $\# 5$ above.
- That modified section of the mirror is of course now a diffraction grating.

7. Feynman discusses several examples in his book, but let us discuss just one more example to illustrate the point that this method is consistent with the Principle of Causation.

- Here we consider the case of refraction, which had led to causal issues with the "photon as a particle" idea of Newton and Fermat.
- Those who are really interested can read in detail the historical evolution of ideas from Newton through Fermat to Feynman, in the book by Ivar Ekeland (see References below).

8. Figure below shows the refraction of light from a source ( $S$ ) in the air to a detector (D) placed in water. As in the case of the mirror, we consider all possible paths from $S$ to $D$, and map out the time taken for a photon to reach point D via "different sections" of the water surface.

- The observation of light taking the "time of least time" to reach a detector in the water by changing its path (called "refraction") was explained by Fermat back in 1657, by taking into the account that light travels slower in water than in air; we will discuss this in the next post, "'Exploring All Possible Paths" Leads to Fermat's Principle of Least Time".
- However, until Feynman came up with his method of "a particle exploring all possible paths", this phenomenon could not be explained within the "particle picture".


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- Once again, most paths away from the optimum path are CANCELLED OUT. The major contributions come from those paths close to the expected arrow indicated by the heavy arrow, and the Fermat's Principle of Least Time is recovered with this "particle representation".

9. What bothered everyone (including Feynman) about Fermat's idea is that it seemed to require agency. How could light choose a path? How could it possibly know which path was the fastest?

Here's how Feynman puts it (Feynman Lectures, Vol. 1, Chapter 26):
"The principle of least time is a completely different philosophical principle about the way nature works. Instead of saying it is a causal thing, that when we do one thing, something else happens, and so on, it says this: we set up the situation, and light decides which is the shortest time, or the extreme
one, and chooses that path. But what does it do, how does it find out? Does it smell the nearby paths, and check them against each other? The answer is, yes, it does, in a way. "

- The explanation is that Feynman method works because the Nature is nonlocal. We will discuss this in detail in future posts.
- A link to Feynman Lectures is given in the References.


## An Electron Will Also Explore All Possible Paths

As Feynman pointed out, everything we have discussed so far can be applied to the propagation and detection of electrons: Electrons also "explore all possible paths", and these paths are determined by the experimental configuration.

- If the experimental configuration changes, those paths reconfigure instantaneously. Of course, quantum electrodynamics (QED) incorporates the possible trajectories of both electrons and photons.
- It is amazing to realize that physicists used Feynman's version of QED for 70 years without realizing that the same needs to be applied to quantum phenomena like the "double-slit experiment".


## Conclusion

The key philosophical problem that existed for Newton to Fermat to Feynman with their "particle representation of light" was to explain how a photon would know in advance how to determine the path of least time.

- But that problem goes away when we realize that a photon (or any particle) takes into account "all possible paths" dictated by the nonlocality of Nature.
- We will discuss the nonlocality in detail in upcoming posts. I just wanted to provide the experimental evidence from the work of Professor Feynman first.

Any questions on these QM posts can be discussed at the discussion forum: "Quantum Mechanics - A New Interpretation."

## References

I. Ekeland, "The Best of All Possible Worlds: Mathematics and Destiny", (University of Chicago Press, 2006).
R. P. Feynman, "QED: The Strange Theory of Light and Matter" (Princeton University Press, 1985).

WebLink: Online Book: The Feynman Lectures on Physics, Volume I
WebLink: Online Book: The Feynman Lectures on Physics, Volume II
WebLink: Online Book: The Feynman Lectures on Physics, Volume III

### 20.3.3. "Exploring All Possible Paths" Leads to Fermat's Principle of Least 3 Time

April 1, 2018; revised June 22, 2021
Why Does Light Bend When Entering Water?

1. In 1657, the French lawyer and mathematician Pierre De Fermat (behind Fermat's Last Theorem) worked out that when light travels from one place to another, it always takes the path of least time. The path of a ray of light going from air to water shown below.

## Source



- There's a formula called Snell's law (shown in the figure) that correctly predicts the exact angle by which the light bends, depending on the materials it's traveling through and the angle at which it hits the surface.
- Fermat explained this observation of light taking the "time of least time" to reach a detector in the water by changing its path (called "refraction") by taking into account that light travels slower in water than in air.
- But the question of WHY it does that has not been answered up to now. Furthermore, how would a photon know there is an interface coming up ahead? As we saw in the post, "Feynman's Method of "A Particle Exploring All Possible Paths," the wave theory of light cannot explain it.
- As we also saw in that post, Feynman came up with a technique called "a photon exploring all possible paths" but admitted that he did not know WHY it worked. In future posts, we will show that it is due to the nonlocality of Nature and the instantaneous establishment of quantum fields for "all possible paths" for the photon.


## A Swimmer Does the Same as Light!

2. That is precisely the same procedure followed by a lifeguard (instinctively) in reaching a drowning swimmer in the water. The figure below illustrates the situation.

## Lifeguard



## How to Find the Path of Least Time?

3. When we look at the above figure, at first glance, one may wonder whether a straight line (path A) is the fastest path. That is indeed the shortest one, but it isn't the quickest because one can run faster along the beach, and cover more distance on land than in water.

- However, if one runs on path B , making the distance in water minimum, that is also not the quickest. That route is too long, and it slows you down.
- The quickest path is C , a particular path that lies somewhere between A and B , where the lifeguard jumps in at a distance x before the shortest path in the water.
- Of course, a lifeguard would not even think about all this. Instead he/she would instinctively choose a path that turns out to be close to this optimum path $C$.


## An Experiment on a Dog

4. I have not come across anyone experimenting on lifeguards and seeing how close they get to the "optimum path." But I came across a paper by a math professor who studied his dog fetching a ball thrown into Lake Michigan.

- He found out that his dog's path (over many measurements) came close to the "optimum path" predicted by Snell's law: "WebLink: PDF File: Do Dogs Know Calculus- Pennings-2003."

5. After collecting 35 data points (the x and y values in the figure above, in meters), Professor Pennings plotted them. Along with these data points, he also drew the optimal trajectory predicted by Snell's law, shown by the straight line below (figure from the above paper).


- Therefore, just like a photon "would know" how to take the "path of least time," a dog would too!


## Ants Take the Path of Least Time Too!

6. Even more interestingly, even ants seem to find the "optimum path" that takes the least time to get to their food.

- A group of researchers used a glass surface and a rough green felt surface - analogous to air and water or sand and water in the above cases - to separate a colony of ants. They placed ant-food some distance into the rough green felt surface.
- They found that the ant trails were far closer to the quickest path than to the direct route. Like light and lifeguards, these ants seemed to minimize time and not distance. The following figure showing the trail of the ants is from their paper: "WebLink: PDF File: Fermat's Principle of Least Time Predicts Refraction of Ant Trails at Substrate Borders."



## Conclusion

The critical philosophical problem that existed for Newton to Fermat to Feynman with their "particle representation of light" was to explain "how a photon would know" in advance how to determine the path of least time; see the book by Ivar Ekeland in the References.

- But that problem goes away when we realize that a photon (or any particle) takes into account "all possible paths" instantaneously due to the nonlocality of Nature. That is the basis of our new interpretation of quantum mechanics. We will discuss this in detail in upcoming posts.
- Interestingly, the observations that humans, dogs, and ants all taking the "path of least time" instinctively illustrate that this is how Nature works. Even living beings are guided by this "nonlocality of Nature." This example illustrates that there is so much that we DO NOT KNOW about how Nature works.
- That is closely related to how Nature AUTOMATICALLY executes kamma vipāka. That will become more clear as we proceed. Also see, "Quantum Entanglement - We Are All Connected."
We can discuss any questions on these QM posts at the discussion forum: "Quantum Mechanics - A New Interpretation."


## References

I. Ekeland, "WebLink: PDF File: The Best of All Possible Worlds: Mathematics and Destiny" (University of Chicago Press, 2006).
R. P. Feynman, "WebLink: PDF File: QED: The Strange Theory of Light and Matter" (Princeton University Press, 1985).
J. Oettler et al., "WebLink: PDF File: Fermat's Principle of Least Time Predicts Refraction of Ant Trails at Substrate Borders," PLOS ONE, vol. 8, issue 3, e59739 (2013).
T. J. Pennings, "WebLink: PDF File: Do Dogs Know Calculus?", The College Mathematics Journal, vol. 34, No. 3, pp. 178-182 (2003); link to pdf in \#4 above.

## xxI References

- Popup Pāli Glossary with Pronunciation
- Reflections on 2015
- Buddha Dhamma - In a Chart
- Nirāmisa Sukha - In a Chart
- New / Revised Posts
- Reflections on 2014
- Ancient teeth found in China challenge modern human migration theory
- Mars Curiosity Photos Suggest Life May Have Existed on Red Planet
- Recent Publications on Benefits of Meditation
- Laniakea: Our home supercluster
- Think Outside the Box!
- There are as many creatures on your body as there are people on Earth!
- News Article on Robin Williams and Buddhist Meditation
- World Historical Timeline
- Second Largest Religion by State in the US
- Introduction to "Rebirth by Francis Story" - Ian Stevenson
- Thirty One Planes of Existence
- Curiosity Rover finds Crater probably was once a Giant Martian Lake


### 21.1 Parinibbāna of Waharaka Thero

March 9, 2017; Pictures of $d h a ̄ t h u$ added June 10, 2017; Revised September 7, 2017; February 6, 2018; desanā on jhāna/magga phala added April 28, 2018; revised \#4, \#5 on July 18, 2020; new \#7 on December 12, 2020; February 16, 2021; latest update on September 6, 2021


1. It is with great sadness that I report the Parinibbāna of my Noble teacher, Waharaka Abhyaratanalankara Thero a month ago, on February 9, 2017.

- Even though he had not confirmed attaining the Arahanthood, several years ago he had declared that he would not be reborn again. That means he would at least reach the Antara Parinibbāna state; see the video below.
- The Antara Parinibbāna state is reached when someone dies with three samiyojana of kāma rāga, rūpa rāga, and arūpa rāga removed. (But without the removal of māna, uddhacca, and avijjā samyojana. Then one cannot grasp a new bhava in any of the 31 realms).
- The gandhabba would still survive the death of the body and come out and stay alive until the kammic energy for the human bhava is exhausted. At that time, since a new bhava cannot be grasped, the actual anupadisesa Nibbāna will take place. That is explained at the discussion forum topic "Antara Parinibbana" and also in the post, "Gandhabba State - Evidence from Tipitaka."
- From the accounts below, it appears that he did attain Parinibbāna (i.e., bypassed the Antara Parinibbāna state) at the dying moment.

2. When the news came out first, it was not clear whether the Thero had passed away or whether he was in Nirodha Samāpatti. Breathing stops while one is in Nirodha Samāpatti, but the body does not get cold. The body was warm for six days, but then it started to get cold. Therefore, his death was not declared for six days.

- Even though I made trips to Sri Lanka in 2014 and 2015, both times, I did not get an opportunity to meet him because he was not well.

3. He was the first person to extract the true meanings of the critical Pāli words in the Tipitaka in recent times- after hundreds of years.

- It appears that his Patisambhidhā Ñāna (the knowledge to extract the meanings of words) was at the same level as many of renowned Arahants at the time of the Buddha.

4. As I discussed in the post, "Four Conditions for Attaining Sotāpanna Magga/Phala," one has to learn the correct Dhamma from a Buddha or a true disciple of the Buddha. He was able to bridge a gap that will
hopefully last until the end of the Buddha Sāsana (Ministry) of Buddha Gotama, i.e., for 2400 years from now for a total of 5000 years.

- I am grateful to his followers in Sri Lanka (Ven. Attidiye Sudheethadheera and others) who made recordings of thousands of hours of his desanās over the years. They have organized those recordings here: "WebLink: waharaka.com: Waharaka Sadaham Desana" (updated September 11, 2017).
- Unfortunately, those are available only in the Sinhala language. I will do my best to convey these actual teachings in English on this website.
- I was able to meet Ven. Walasmulle Abhaya and Ven. Attidiye Sudheethadheera (both of whom were laypeople at that time) on a trip to Sri Lanka in early 2014 and also in 2015. They provided me with many desana recordings before they became available on the internet. I am also grateful to Dr. Neranga Abeysinghe, with whom I had many discussions. He also updated me on recent events of Waharaka Thero's last days.
- Ven. Walasmulle Abhaya conducts regular desanās and meditation sessions. Recordings of those at: "WebLink: Nirapekshathwayemaga."
- September 7, 2017: Just yesterday, I came to know about Ven. Rathupasketiye Vimukthirathana in Sri Lanka. His desanas (in Sinhala) at: "WebLink: youtube: Ariya Asankathaya."
- August 15, 2019: I have forgotten to add a link to a good set of English desanas: "WebLink: youtube: Dharmayai Obai Sermons - English (From 2017-07-30)." I have not met this Venerable, but these desanas are based on Waharaka interpretations.
- July 18, 2020: Cultivating jhāna is a good way to make progress on the Path. However, initially, those jhānā are anariya in nature. As one makes progress, they will be converted to Ariya jhāna. Some people may be under the false impression that getting into jhāna necessarily means magga phala. Furthermore, even the first Ariya jhāna requires the REMOVAL of kāma rāga. See, "Samādhi, Jhāna (Dhyāna), Magga Phala."

5. April 28, 2018: Here is a desana $\bar{a}$ by Waharaka Thero where he present clear evidence that jhāna is not necessary to attain magga phala (it is in the Sinhala language):

WebLink: Download "Are Jhāna Required for Magga-Phala"

- However, cultivating jhāna is a good way to make progress on the Path, even after (or especially after) getting to the Sotāpanna stage.
- The main point Thero makes is that we know that there are jāti Sotāpannas born in the human realm. But if a jhāna were REQUIRED to attain the Sotāpanna stage, then that person WOULD NOT be born in the human realm, but in a Brahma realm corresponding to that jhāna.
- Furthermore, just listening to the correct Buddha Dhamma and/or attaining jhāna does not make one become a Sotāpanna. The Thero points out that Devadatta ended up in an apāya, even though he had not only cultivated jhāna but had supernormal powers (iddhi) too. Devadatta obviously listened to many discourses from the Buddha but was not able to attain the Sotāpanna stage of Nibbāna.
- The critical point is that without comprehending Tilakkhaṇa, just getting being able to get to jhāna is of no use. But one can use jhāna effectively to comprehend Tilakkhana. The best way to verify that one has attained Ariya jhāna is to check whether one has lost any desire for all sense pleasures (including sex.)

6. Last but not least, I must also express my gratitude to Ven. Meevanapalane Dhammalankara, who had been in close association with the Waharaka Thero. I first came across these correct interpretations when I came across one of his desanās on the internet on July 30, 2013.

- Ven. Meevanapalane Dhammalankara's desanās at "WebLink: Sirisaddharmaya"

7. December 12, 2020: Over the past couple of weeks, I have been following a series of desanas from Susila Thero. He is in Sri Lanka and these discourses are in Sinhala. These are excellent and provide deep insights.

- Those who understand the Sinhala language can follow these discourses at "Lowthuru Arana eøอ?20

- I will, of course, incorporate those new insights in my posts.
- December 15, 2020: The contents in the above long discourses have been separated into topics at the


8. February 16, 2021: I recently came across another set of excellent discourses at, "WebLink: youtube: Bopitiye Sadaham Pasala."

- Note that there are some discourses in English and Italian languages.
- These sessions are conducted by Bopitiye Sumangala Thero.

9. September 6, 2021: I have been following a series of desanas by a 16-year old Sri Lankan over the past few months. He recently became a bhikkhu by the name Ven. Botale Siri Ariya Vimutti.

- It is apparent to me that to teach Buddha Dhamma with such insight at such a young age, he is likely to be a Jāti Sotāpanna.
- Those who understand the Sinhala language can follow these discourses at:


##  Interview ll Part 01

10. June 6, 2017: I received some pictures of "dhātu" collected after the cremation of Waharaka Thero's body. Some of an Arahant's bones becomes crystallized. These are called "dhātu," and they cannot be destroyed by fire or anything else. I selected the following two pictures out of many sent by Ven. Attidiye Sudheethadheera Thero and Dr. Neranga Abeysinghe.


11．By the way，here is a historical picture of the＂Tooth relic＂of the Buddha kept at the＂Dalad $\bar{a}$ Maligāwa＂in Kandy，Sri Lanka：

－Such Dhāthu of the Buddha or an Arahant are considered to be indestructible up to the end of the current＂Buddha Sāsana，＂which will last roughly another 2500 years．

12．Here are two youtube videos of the funeral of the most venerable Thero（the speech by Mr．Chandana Siriwardhana－where he stated the possibility of Antarā Parinibbāna of the Thero－is in Sinhala language）：

WebLink：youtube：そ饣ゥธ


Weblink: youtube: FULL VIDEO : Last rites of Waharaka himi waharaka abayarathanalankara himi

### 21.2 Pure Dhamma - Sinhala Translation

## January 24, 2017; more sections added December 2, 2017

1. Professor J. M. R. Sarath Bandara, who is a retired professor at the University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka, has kindly taken upon the task to translate the Pure Dhamma site to Sinhala language.

- With his mastering of both Sinhala and English languages, this translation is very much superior to the word-by-word translation provided by the Google Translator plugin for WordPress.
- Therefore, I will remove Sinhala as an option in the Google Translator.

2. The pdf files for different sections at the website are given below. Only some of the sections have been translated so far, and there could be gaps in those sections as well.

- As he translates more posts and sections, the updated files will be uploaded here.

3. We have left the English titles for each section below as they appear at the website. That will make it easier to refer back to the original English posts.

- The links in the Sinhala translation to various websites - and especially videos - may not work. One can access those in the original English posts.

Much merits to Professor Sarath Bandara and his family for this meritorious deed!

## Cover page - Pure Dhamma - Sinhala

## Section 1- Buddha Dhamma

Section 2.1 - Key Dhamma concepts -San

## Section 2.2 - Key Dhamma Concepts - Nibbāna

## Section 2.3 -Key Dhamma Concepts - Anicca Dukka Anatta

## Section 2.4 -Key Dhamma Concepts - Gati Bhava and Jāti

## Section 2.5 -Key Dhamma Concepts - Sorting Out Key Pāli Terms

Section 2.6 -Key Dhamma Concepts - The Five Aggregates
Section 7 - Paticca Samuppāda
Section 11.1 - Abhidhamma - Mind and Consciousness
Section 11.2 - Abhidhamma - Citta and Cetasika
Section 11.3 - Abhidhamma - Gandhabbayā (Manomaya Kāya)
Section 11.4 - Abhidhamma - Individual posts on Abhidhamma
December 2, 2017

## Meditation

Kamatthana
Sutta Interpretations
Living Dhamma

### 21.3 Pure Dhamma - German Website

October 21, 2017

1. Puredhamma.net, which discusses Buddha's teachings per Tipitaka, is now available in German, thanks to Mr. Tobias Große in Heilbad Heiligenstadt, Germany. Here is the link:

## https://puredhamma/de

- Mr. Große has spent a lot of time studying Buddha Dhamma, and he tells me that he has read almost all posts at the puredhamma.net site and many posts more than once. From the questions that I have been getting from him over the past year, I feel that he has grasped the key concepts and is quite capable of expressing those concepts in German.
- As of today, he has translated three main sections, and will continue to add more sections until the two sites are "in sync".
- He is also willing to answer questions; there is a "Comment" bar at the bottom of each page.

2. Even though the "Google Translator" at the top right of the puredhamma.net site is a useful resource that can be used to translate the site material to many languages, it is done by a mechanical process, which basically translates word for word.

- Such a word for word translation sometimes gives incorrect interpretations, especially since key Pāli words with deep meanings are involved. Therefore, the "Google Translator" is not very reliable. I will remove German as an option for the "Google Translator" in a couple of months after enough sections are available at https://puredhamma/de.

3. Finally, it has been a pleasure to interact with Mr. Große and his family over the past year or so. His wife and children are also fully engaged and it is heartwarming to see how much they have advanced, and their enthusiasm for this meritorious project. Much merits to the whole family for their efforts!

### 21.4 New / Revised Posts

There are three useful tools to find relevant posts: One is the "Search" box on the top right.
Second is User's Guide to Pure Dhamma Website. The third is Pure Dhamma - Sitemap.

## New Posts:

Year 2022
Mahārāhulovāda Sutta and Ānāpānasati - 28/10/22 (in the "Elephant in the Room 3 - Ānāpānasati"" subsection)

Ānāpānasati Not About Breath - Icchānanggala Sutta - 07/10/22 (in the "Elephant in the Room 3 Ānāpānasatị" subsection)

Kilesa - Relationship To Akusala, Kusala, And Puñña Kamma - 27/08/22 (in the "Dhamma Concepts" subsection)

Anusaya, Gati, Bhava - Connection to Manomaya Kāya (Gandhabba) - 21/08/22 (in the "Gati, Bhava, and Jātř" subsection)
Cuti and Marana - Related to Bhava and Jāti - 17/08/22 (in the "Gati, Bhava, and Jāti"' subsection)
Four Types of Births in Buddhism - 30/07/22 (in the "Origin of Life" subsection)
Details of Kamma - Intention, Who Is Affected, Kamma Patha - 24/07/22 (in the "Dhamma Concepts" subsection)

Three Types of "Bodies" - Potthapāda Sutta (DN 9) - 16/07/22 (in the "Sutta - Interpretations" subsection) Jhāna, Jhāya, and Jhāyi - Different Meanings - 23/06/22 (in the "Elephant in the Room 2 - Jhāna and Kasinna" subsection)

Samādhi, Jhāna, and Sammā Samādhi - 16/06/22 (in the "Elephant in the Room 2 - Jhāna and Kasinna" subsection)

Elephant in the Room 2 - Jhāna and Kasina - 16/06/22 (in the "Word-for-Word Translation of the Tipitaka" subsection)
Assāsa Passāsa - What Do They Mean? - 08/06/22 (in the "Elephant in the Room 3 - Ānāpānasati" subsection)
Ānāpānasati Overview - 02/06/22 (in the "Elephant in the Room 3 - Ānāpānasatt"' subsection)
Elephant in the Room 3 - Ānāpānasati - 02/06/22 (in the "Word-for-Word Translation of the Tipitaka" subsection)
Rāga and Jhāna - Two Commonly Misunderstood Words - 28/05/22 (in the "Often Mistranslated Pāli Keywords" subsection)
Often Mistranslated Pāli Keywords - 28/05/22 (in the "Word-for-Word Translation of the Tipitaka" subsection)
Bhava and Jāti Within a Lifetime - Example - 22/05/22 (in the "Paticca Samuppāda During a Lifetime" subsection)
Sakkāya Ditthi and Pañcupādānakkhandhā - 15/05/22 (in the "Paticca Samuppāda During a Lifetime" subsection)
Noble Truth of Suffering- Pañcupādānakkhandhā Dukkhā - 07/05/22 (in the "Paticca Samuppāda During a Lifetime" subsection)
Pañcupādānakkhandha - Attachment to One's Experiences - 01/05/22 (in the 'Paticca Samuppāda During a Lifetime" subsection)

Five Aggregates - Experiences of Each Sentient Being - 24/04/22 (in the "paticca Samuppāda During a Lifetime" subsection)
Rūpakkhandha in Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda - 16/04/22 (in the "Paticca Samuppāda During a Lifetime" subsection)
Aggregate of Forms - Collection of "Mental Impressions" of Forms - 10/04/22 (in the "Paticca Samuppāda During a Lifetime" subsection)
Seeing Is a Series of "Snapshots" - 03/04/22 (in the "Paticca Samuppāda During a Lifetime" subsection)
Khandhā in Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda - 27/03/22 (in the "Paticca Samuppāda During a Lifetime" subsection)
Change of Mindset Due to an Ārammana - 21/03/22 (in the "Paticca Samuppāda During a Lifetime" subsection)
Paticca Samuppāda During a Lifetime $-21 / 03 / 22$ (in the "Word-for-Word Translation of the Tipitaka" subsection)
Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda - Bhava and Jāti Within a Lifetime - 14/03/22 (in the "Paticca Samuppāda During a Lifetime" subsection)
Niddesa (Brief Description) of Paticca Samuppāda - 07/03/22 (in the "Word-for-Word Translation of the Tipitaka" subsection)
Elephant in the Room 1 - Direct Translation of the Tipitaka - 01/03/22 (in the "Word-for-Word Translation of the Tipitaka" subsection)
Word-for-Word Translation of the Tipitaka - 01/03/22 (in the "Elephants in the Room" subsection) Elephants in the Room - 01/03/22 (New Section)
Where Are Memories Stored? - Viñ̃̃āna Dhātu - 21/01/22 (in the "Memory, Dhammā, and Viñ̃̃āna Dhātu" subsection)
Gandhabba (Mental Body) Separating from Physical Body in Jhāna - 14/01/22 (in the "Memory, Dhammā, and Viññāna Dhātu" subsection)
Near-Death Experiences (NDE): Brain Is Not the Mind - 08/01/22 (in the "Memory, Dhammā, and Viññ̄āna Dhātu" subsection)
Critical Influence of Wrong Views on Akusala Citta - 02/01/22 (in the "Memory, Dhammā, and Viññāna Dhātu" subsection)
Memory, Dhammā, and Viññāna Dhātu - 02/01/22 (in the "Understanding the Terms in Paticca Samuppāda" subsection)
Anidassana, Appatigha Rūpa Due to Anidassana Viññāna - 01/23/22 (in the "Viññāna - Two Critical Meanings" subsection)
Summary of Key Concepts About Viñ̃̃āna and Sañkhāra - 01/16/22 (in the "Viññāna - Two Critical Meanings" subsection)
Two Types of Kamma Viññāna - 01/08/22 (in the "Viññān̄a - Two Critical Meanings" subsection) Abhisañkhāra Lead to Kamma Viññāna - 01/03/22 (in the "Viññ̄̄na - Two Critical Meanings" subsection) Viññāna - Two Critical Meanings - 01/03/22 (in the "Understanding the Terms in Paticca Samuppāda" subsection)

Year 2021
Rebirths Take Place According to Abhisañkhāra - 12/27/21 (in the "Sañkhāra - Many Meanings" subsection)
Kusala-Mūla Sañkhāra Are Needed to Attain Nibbāna - 12/20/21 (in the "Sañkhāra - Many Meanings" subsection)
Kamma and Sañkhāra, Cetanā and Sañcetanā - 12/14/21 (in the "Sañkhāra - Many Meanings" subsection)

Sañkhāra - Should Not be Translated as a Single Word - 12/07/21 (in the "Sañkhāra - Many Meanings"" subsection)
Distortion of Pāli Keywords in Paticca Samuppāda - 11/29/21 (in the "Understanding the Terms in Paticca Samuppāda" subsection)
Dhammānudhamma Patipatti - Connection to Paticca Samuppāda/Tilakkhana - 11/21/21 (in the "Patticca Samuppāda, Tilakkhana, Four Noble Truths" subsection)
Dhamma - Different Meanings Depending on the Context - 11/16/21 (in the "Paticca Samuppāda, Tilakkhana, Four Noble Truths" subsection)
Yoniso Manasikāra and Paticca Samuppāda - 11/09/21 (in the "Paticca Samuppāda, Tilakkhana, Four Noble Truths" subsection)
Sotāpannā - Just Starting on the Noble Path - 11/01/21 (in the "Paticca Samuppāda, Tilakkhana, Four Noble Truths" subsection)
Sotāpanna - One With the "Wider Worldview" of the Buddha - 10/25/21 (in the "Paticca Samuppāda, Tilakkhana, Four Noble Truths" subsection)
Future Suffering (Loka/Dukkha Samudaya) Starts With Sensory Input (Ārammana) - 10/19/21 (in the "Paticca Samuppāda, Tilakkhana, Four Noble Truths" subsection)
What Did the Buddha Mean by a "Loka"? - 10/11/21 (in the "Paticca Samuppāda, Tilakkhana, Four Noble Truths" subsection)
Paticca Samuppāda - Introduction - 10/04/21 (in the "Paticca Samuppāda, Tilakkhana, Four Noble Truths" subsection)
Paticca Samuppāda, Tilakkhana, Four Noble Truths - 10/04/21 (in the "Paticca Samuppāda" subsection)
Anatta in Anattalakkhana Sutta - Part 2 - 09/26/21 (in the "Tilakkhana - Introduction" subsection)
Anatta in Anattalakkhana Sutta - Part 1 - 09/19/21 (in the "Tilakkhana - Introduction" subsection)
Anatta is a Characteristic of the World, not About a "Self" - 09/13/21 (in the "Tilakkhana - Introduction" subsection)
How Does Anicca Nature Lead to Dukkha? - 08/30/21 (in the "Tilakkhana - Introduction" subsection) Attachment to Things with Dukkha Lakkhana Leads to Dukkha - 08/23/21 (in the "Tilakkhana Introduction" subsection)
Dukkha in Tilakkhana Is a Characteristic - Not Dukkha Vedanā - 08/16/21 (in the "Tilakkhana Introduction" subsection)
Anuloma Khanti and Sammattaniyāma - Pre-requisites for a Sotāpanna - 08/09/21 (in the "Tilakkhana Introduction" subsection)
Anicca and Anatta - Two Characteristics of the World - 07/27/21 (in the "Tilakkhana - Introduction" subsection)
Anicca Nature - Not Possible to Overcome Suffering in This World - 07/27/21 (in the "Tilakkhana Introduction" subsection)
Anicca Nature, the First Noble Truth, and Paticca Samuppāda - 07/19/21 (in the "Basic Framework of Buddha Dhamma" subsection)
Noble Truths, Paticca Samuppāda, Tilakkhana - Key Relationships - 07/14/21 (in the "Basic Framework of Buddha Dhamma" subsection)
Buddha Dhamma - Noble Truths, Paticca Samuppāda, Tilakkhana - 07/02/21 (in the "Basic Framework of Buddha Dhamma" subsection)
Basic Framework of Buddha Dhamma - 07/02/21 (in the "Key Dhamma Concepts" section)
Key Steps of Kammic Energy Accumulation - 05/01/21 (in the "Paticca Samuppāda - Essential Concepts" subsection)
Dukkha Samudaya Starts With Samphassa-Jā-Vedanā - 04/23/21 (in the "Paticca Samuppāda - Essential Concepts" subsection)

Loka Sutta - Origin and Cessation of the World - 04/16/21 (in the "Paticca Samuppāda - Essential Concepts" subsection)
Where Are Memories "Stored"? - Connection to Pañcakkhandha - 04/07/21 (in the "Paticca Samuppāda Essential Concepts" subsection)

Concepts of Upādāna and Upādānakkhandha - 04/04/21 (in the "Paticca Samuppāda - Essential Concepts" subsection)

Bhava and Punabbhava - Kammic Energy Giving Rise to Renewed Existence - 03/28/21 (in the "Paticca Samuppāda - Essential Concepts" subsection)

Bhava - Kammic Energy That Can Power an Existence - 03/21/21 (in the "Paticca Samuppāda - Essential Concepts" subsection)

Jāti- Different Types of Births - 03/14/21 (in the "Paticca Samuppāda - Essential Concepts" subsection)
Icchā, Tanhā, Kāma - Root Causes of Suffering - 03/07/21 (in the "Paticca Samuppāda - Essential Concepts" subsection)

Pañca Nīvarana and Sensual Pleasures (Kāma) - 02/28/21 (in the "Paticca Samuppāda - Essential Concepts" subsection)

Nibbāna - Rāgakkhaya Dosakkhaya Mohakkhaya - Part 1 - 02/19/21 (in the "Paticca Samuppāda Essential Concepts" subsection)

Anatta and Sakkāya Ditthi - Two Different Concepts - 02/13/21 (in the "Sakkāya Ditthi and Paticca Samuppāda" subsection)

Sakkāya Ditthi - Wrong View of "Me" and "Mine" - 02/04/21 (in the "Sakkāya Ditthi and Paticca Samuppāda" subsection)

Sakkāya Ditthi and Paticca Samuppāda - 02/04/21 (in the "Paticca Samuppāda" subsection)
Arising of the Five Aggregates With an Ārammana - 01/20/21 (in the "Understanding the Terms in Paticca Samuppāda" subsection)

Phassa (Contact) - Contact With Pasāda Rūpa - 01/15/21 (in the "Understanding the Terms in Paticca Samuppāda" subsection)

Citta Vithi - Fundamental Sensory Unit - 01/06/21 (in the "Understanding the Terms in Paticca Samuppāda" subsection)

Understanding the Terms in Paticca Samuppāda - 01/06/21 (in the "Paticca Samuppāda" subsection)
Year 2020
Interpretation of the Tipitaka - Gandhabba Example - 12/30/20 (in the "Buddha Dhamma - A Scientific Approach" subsection)

How Do We See? - Role of the Gandhabba - 12/22/20 (in the "Buddha Dhamma - A Scientific Approach" subsection)

Antarābhava Discussion in Kathāvatthu - Not Relevant to Gandhabba - 12/16/20 (in the "Buddha Dhamma - A Scientific Approach" subsection)

Antarābhava - No Connection to Gandhabba - 12/11/20 (in the "Buddha Dhamma - A Scientific Approach" subsection)
Antarābhava and Gandhabba - 12/11/20 (in the "Buddha Dhamma - A Scientific Approach" subsection)

Abhidhamma Pitaka - Deeper Analyses of Concepts - 12/03/20 (in the "Buddha Dhamma - A Scientific Approach" subsection)

Vinaya Pitaka - More Than Disciplinary Rules - 11/26/20 (in the "Buddha Dhamma - A Scientific Approach" subsection)

Pāli Canon Is Self-Contained but Requires Detailed Explanation - 11/19/20 (in the "Buddha Dhamma - A Scientific Approach" subsection)

Tipitaka - The Uniqueness of Buddha Dhamma - 11/11/20 (in the "Buddha Dhamma - A Scientific Approach" subsection)

Tipitaka - A Systematic Approach - 11/11/20 (in the "Buddha Dhamma - A Scientific Approach" subsection)

Nāma Loka and Rūpa Loka - Two Parts of Our World - 11/04/20 (in the "Buddha Dhamma - A Scientific Approach" subsection)
Ārammana Plays a Critical Role in a Sensory Even - 10/28/20 (in the "Buddha Dhamma - A Scientific Approach" subsection)

Response to a Sensory Stimulus - Role of Gati/Anusaya - 10/21/20 (in the "Buddha Dhamma - A Scientific Approach" subsection)

Rūpa and Rūpakkhandha, Nāma and Nāmagotta - 10/16/20 (in the "Buddha Dhamma - A Scientific Approach" subsection)

Autobiographical Memory - Preserved in Nāma Loka - 10/09/20 (in the "Buddha Dhamma - A Scientific Approach" subsection)

Our Two Worlds - Rūpa Loka and Nāma Loka - 10/09/20 (in the "Buddha Dhamma - A Scientific Approach" subsection)

Memory Recall for Gandhabba in a Human Body - 10/02/20 (in the "Buddha Dhamma - A Scientific Approach" subsection)

Patient H.M. - Different Roles of Brain in Memory - 9/18/20 (in the "Buddha Dhamma - A Scientific Approach" subsection)
Persistent Vegetative State - Buddhist View - 9/18/20 (in the "Buddha Dhamma - A Scientific Approach" subsection)

Gandhabba in a Human Body - an Analogy - 9/11/20 (in the "Buddha Dhamma - A Scientific Approach" subsection)

Mind Is Not in the Brain - 09/06/20 (in the "Buddha Dhamma - A Scientific Approach" subsection)
Kammic Energy Leads to Consciousness - 08/29/20 (in the "Buddha Dhamma - A Scientific Approach" subsection)

Sensual Pleasures - The Hidden Suffering - 08/22/20 (in the "Buddha Dhamma - A Scientific Approach" subsection)

Mind and Matter - Buddhist Analysis - 08/15/20 (in the "Buddha Dhamma - A Scientific Approach" subsection)
Theories of Our World - Scientific Overview - 08/09/20 (in the "Buddha Dhamma - A Scientific Approach" subsection)
Buddha Dhamma - A Scientific Approach - 07/31/20 (in the "Buddha Dhamma" subsection)

Introduction - A Scientific Approach to Buddha Dhamma - 07/31/20 (in the "Buddha Dhamma - A Scientific Approach" subsection)

Pātihāriya (Supernormal Abilities) of a Buddha - Part II - 07/24/20 (in the "Buddha Dhamma" subsection)
Pātihāriya (Supernormal Abilities) of a Buddha - Part I - 07/17/20 (in the "Buddha Dhamma" subsection)
Buddhahood Controversies - Introduction - 07/09/20 (in the "Buddha Dhamma" subsection)
Buddhahood Associated Controversies - 07/09/20 (in the "Buddha Dhamma" subsection)
The Way to Nibbāna - Transcription of a Discourse by Waharaka Thero - 07/6/20 (in the "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta" subsection)

Atta - Two Very Different Meanings - 07/01/20 (in the "Five Aggregates - Connection to Tilakkhana" subsection)

Sakkāya Ditthi - "Me and Mine" View - 06/23/20 (in the "Five Aggregates - Connection to Tilakkhana" subsection)

Difference Between "Me and Mine" and Sakkāya Ditthi - 06/16/20 (in the "Five Aggregates - Connection to Tilakkhana" subsection)
"Me" and "Mine" - The Root Cause of Suffering - 06/09/20 (in the "Five Aggregates - Connection to Tilakkhana" subsection)

Icca, Nicca, Anicca - Important Connections - 06/02/20 (in the "Five Aggregates - Connection to Tilakkhana" subsection)

Five Aggregates and Tilakkhana - Introduction - $05 / 27 / 20$ (in the "Five Aggregates - Connection to Tilakkhana" subsection)

Five Aggregates - Connection to Tilakkhana - 05/27/20 (in the "The Five Aggregates (Pañcakkhandha)" subsection)

Pañca Upādānakkhandhā - Introduction - 05/19/20 (in the "The Five Aggregates (Pañcakkhandha)" subsection)

Memory Records - Critical Part of Five Aggregates - 05/13/20 (in the "The Five Aggregates (Pañcakkhandha)" subsection)

Arising of Five Aggregates Based on an Ārammana - 05/07/20 (in the "The Five Aggregates (Pañcakkhandha)" subsection)

Rūpakkhandha and Rūpa Upādānakkhandha - 05/01/20 (in the "The Five Aggregates (Pañcakkhandha)" subsection)

Re-written Post: Difference Between Physical Rūpa and Rūpakkhandha - $04 / 24 / 20$ (in the "The Five Aggregates (Pañcakkhandha)" subsection)

Re-written Post: Five Aggregates - Introduction - 04/18/20 (in the "The Five Aggregates (Pañcakkhandha)" subsection)

Gati (Habits/Character) Determine Births - Samsappanirya Sutta - 04/11/20 (under "Worldview of the Buddha" in the "Origin of Life" subsection)

Kāma Assāda - A Root Cause of Suffering - 04/04/20 (under "Worldview of the Buddha" in the "Origin of Life" subsection)

Kamma and Patticca Samuppāda - Introduction - 3/27/20 (under "Worldview of the Buddha" in the "Origin of Life" subsection)

Fear of Nibbāna (Enlightenment) - 3/18/20 (under "Wider Worldview of the Buddha" in the "Origin of Life" subsection)

Sammā Ditthī - Only One Leads to the Noble Path - 03/14/20 (under "Wider Worldview of the Buddha" in the "Origin of Life" subsection)

Dangers of Ten Types of Wrong Views and Four Possible Paths - 03/7/20 (under "Wider Worldview of the Buddha" in the "Origin of Life" subsection)

The Suffering (Dukkha) in the First Noble Truth - 02/29/20 (under "Wider Worldview of the Buddha" in the "Origin of Life" subsection)

The Framework of Buddha Dhamma 02/22/20 (under "Wider Worldview of the Buddha" in the "Origin of Life" subsection)
"Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars - Part 2 - 02/15/20 (in the "Historical Background" section)
"Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars - Part 1 - 02/08/20 (in the "Historical Background" section)

Mental Body Versus the Physical Body - 02/02/20 (under "Worldview of the Buddha - Explanatory Material" in the "Origin of Life" subsection)

Origin of Life - One Creates One's Own Future Lives - 01/25/20 (in the subsection "Origin of Life")
Ghost 1990 Movie - Good Depiction of Gandhabba Concept - 01/17/2020 (under "Worldview of the Buddha - Explanatory Material" in the "Origin of Life" subsection)

Paticca Samuppāda - From Mind to Matter - 01/11/20 (in the subsection "Views on Life")
Two re-written posts: "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception" and "Cloning and Gandhabba" - 01/05/20 (in the subsection "Views on Life")

Pure Dhamma - Reflections on 2019 - 01/01/2020

Essays - 2019
Essays - 2018
Essays - 2017
Essays - 2016
Essays - 2015
Essays - 2014

## Revised Posts:

Please note (4/25/15): I am going to start listing the revised posts that are included with each update of the eBook.

Difference Between Dhammā and Sañkhāra - 7/23/18
Dasa Akusala/Dasa Kusala - Basis of Buddha Dhamma - 6/28/18
Patthāna Dhamma - Connection to Cause and Effect (Hetu Phala) - 6/21/18
Infinity - How Big Is It? - 6/8/18
The 89 (121) Types of Citta - 6/8/18
31 Realms of Existence $-6 / 8 / 18$
Sansāric Time Scale, Buddhist Cosmology, and the Big Bang Theory
What are rūpa? - Dhammā are rūpa too! - 6/3/18
Right Speech - How to Avoid Accumulating Kamma - 6/3/18
31 Realms of Existence $-6 / 3 / 18$
Citta Vithi- Processing of Sense Inputs $-6 / 3 / 18$
Possible Outcomes of Meditation - Samādhi, Jhāna, Magga Phala - 6/3/18
What is "Kāya" in Kāyānupassanā? - 5/22/18
Pāli Dictionaries - Are They Reliable? - 5/22/18
What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Samsāra) - 5/22/18
How Does One Know whether the Sotāpanna Stage is Reached? - 5/22/18
Akusala-Mula Pavutti (or Pravurthi) Paṭicca Samuppada - 5/14/18
Kusala-Mūla Paticca Samuppāda - 5/14/18
Akusala-Mūla Paticca Samuppāda - 5/14/18
Samādhi, Jhāna, Magga Phala - Introduction - 5/6/18
Kāma Guna, Kāma, Kāma Rāga, Kāmacchanda - 5/6/18
Difference Between Jhāna and Stages of Nibbāna - 5/6/18
Parinibbāna of Waharaka Thero - 5/6/18
Anussati and Anupassanā - Being Mindful and Removing Defilements - 4/28/18
Kilesa - Relationship To Akusala, Kusala, And Puñña Kamma - 4/28/18
The Double Slit Experiment - Correlation between Mind and Matter? - 3/29/18
Quantum Entanglement - We Are All Connected - 3/29/18
Feynman's Glass Plate Experiment - 3/29/18
Photons Are Particles Not Waves - 3/17/18
Patisandhi Citta - How the Next Life is Determined According to Gati $-3 / 17 / 18$
Details of Kamma - Intention, Who Is Affected, Kamma Patha - 2/28/18

Mahā Chattārisaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty) - 2/28/18
Dasa Samyojana - Bonds in Rebirth Process - 2/20/18
Is Eating Meat an Akusala Kamma (Immoral Deed)? - 2/20/18
Sanikhāra - What It Really Means - 2/20/18
Parinibbāna of Waharaka Thero $-2 / 11 / 18$
What are Dhammā? - A Deeper Analysis - 2/11/18
Mundane versus Supramundane Jhāna - 2/11/18
Conditions for the Four Stages of Nibbāna - 2/11/18
Bhava and Bhavañga - Simply Explained! - 2/11/18
The Infinity Problem in Buddhism $-2 / 11 / 18$
Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta - Wrong Interpretations - 2/4/18
Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta - According to Some Key Suttā - 2/4/18
Rūpa (Material Form) - 2/4/18
Sakkāya Ditthi is Personality (Me) View? - 1/25/18
Pabhassara Citta, Radiant Mind, and Bhavañga-1/25/18
Sotāpanna Anugami and a Sotāpanna - 1/19/18
Pabhassara Citta, Radiant Mind, and Bhavañga - 1/19/18
Preservation of the Dhamma $-1 / 13 / 18$
Pure Dhamma Discussion Forum Guidelines - 1/7/18
Sañkhāra - What It Really Means - 1/7/18
Gathi (Gati), Anusaya, and Āsava - 1/7/18
What is Suñyāta or Suñ̃āāta (Emptiness)? - 1/2/18
Pure Dhamma Discussion Forum Guidelines - 1/2/18
The Origin of Matter - Suddhatthaka $-1 / 2 / 18$
Anatta - the Opposite of Which Atta? - 1/2/18

Revised Posts - 2017
Revised Posts - 2016
Revised Posts - 2015
Revised Posts - 2014

### 21.4.1 Google Translations to Other Languages

October 2, 2016

1. Couple of days ago, I installed the capability to translate the whole site into different languages. A different language can be selected in the "Google Translate" button right above this post.

- I received input from a couple of people. Based on those, it seems that translation is $60 \%-80 \%$ good for Chinese translation.

2. The main problem is that with "word-to-word" translations, meanings can get lost. So, please use the translations only if necessary. For example, it may able to provide translation of some words that are not familiar.

- Therefore, it is a good idea to use the English version as much as possible. I really worry about meanings getting lost in the translation.

3. There are other languages that can be added. I did not want to add too many at this early stage, especially until I get some feedback on the usefulness. I would appreciate feedback on the accuracy/usefulness of these translations, in the comments box below.

- If you like other languages to be added, also please comment below. Just type the language(s) you like. I think you need to add your email address too, in order to avoid spam. Comments are not published. I normally respond only if a question is asked.


### 21.4.2 Pure Dhamma Discussion Forum Guidelines

December 12, 2017; revised December 17, 2017; January 23, 2018; January 7, 2019
A link to the Forum is provided at the lower right in the main menu.

1. In order to post questions or answers (i.e., to participate in discussions), one will need to register first. But anyone can read existing posts without registering.

## To Register:

Click on the "Forum" at the very end of the main menu or FORUM to enter the Forum.

1. Click on the "Register" button (in red) at the LOGIN box and enter a username and an email address and submit.
2. It will say that it will send you a link and then display a "WORDPRESS" screen. CLOSE that screen. Do not do anything with that screen.
3. You will get an email to that address within minutes. Open your email browser and click on the link that was sent to you.The link in that email WILL EXPIRE within a certain time, so you need to use it before it expires. (If you don't see an email within minutes, check you "Junk" folder).
4. If you don't get an email within 5 minutes, send me an email and I can setup a temporary password for you. It is easy to do and you can then reset to anew password. This is the easiest way.
5. It will ask to enter the username that you selected earlier and you also need to choose a password. Once you hit enter, you may get another "WORDPRESS" screen. CLOSE that screen. Do not do anything with that screen.
6. Enter the Forum and login with that username/password at the "Forum Login" box.

When first registered, one will receive an email with a link to setup your own password. One needs to use that link within 15 minutes or so (I am guessing, I don't know exactly how much time is allowed), because that link expires. Check you Junk folder if you do not see an email within minutes.

- If it does not work within a few tries, DO NOT keep trying. After 5 tries or so, the system will lock you out and then it becomes more difficult. Please send me an email at la@puredhamma.net, and I can help you.

2. If one forgets the password at a later time, a new password can be generated by clicking on the red "Lost Password" link at the Login box.

- Even an unregistered person would be able to read the posts by others on any topic. One needs to register to ask a question or to post a reply to another's question.
- Please respect the viewpoints of others. No one knows everything (except for a Buddha), and we should help each other in uncovering the truth.

3. Mr. Seng Kiat Ng from Singapore has kindly agreed to act as a moderator. He will be able to move topics to "better matching" forums and also to open up new forums as necessary. He is doing this in addition to maintaining and updating the eBook; much merits to him and his family!

- Within a forum, anyone who is registered can open a new topic. Please find the forum that seems to match; we can add more forums if needed.
- Any question even remotely connected to Buddha Dhamma (Buddhism) is welcome. There are people of very different levels of exposure to Buddhism.
- If you feel uncomfortable posting here initially, please send it to me at lal@puredhamma.net.
- But I encourage everyone to participate because there will be people who can benefit from information at different levels. Also, it is critical to comprehend basic concepts; otherwise it will be difficult to make progress.

4. I can set the time one has to come back and edit a given post, and it is currently set at one hour. This allows one to think about one's comment and change it, if needed. Please think carefully before making comments. It is not a good idea to write too many posts on the same issue. I try to write my response in a Word document and post it when I feel comfortable. Even then I may have to come back and revise.

- This is in no way to restrict discussions. We just need to try to make our points without repeating. I have seen online forums where people just go back and forth "trying to push their views" without making any progress for themselves or helping others learn.

5. Replying to a question: If one hits the reply button, one can directly respond to a comment by that specific person (i.e., one's comment will appear below that comment or that thread). Then a reader will need to scan to find the new comment (especially if there are newer threads at the bottom).

- If one just types in the default window, then the comment will appear at the very end of the discussion, as a new thread. Anyone will be able to see that as the latest comment, but then one needs to refer to the comment that he/she is responding to.
- You can figure this out by looking at the posts already there.

6. A discussion forum for the Pure Dhamma website is beneficial in several aspects:

- I receive many good questions via email. When I reply to that email, only that person will get the information, and in many cases it could be of interest to so many others.
- There could be "gaps" in a given section. A given section at the website starts at a base level with initial posts and move to deeper stages with subsequent posts. If one has a question about a certain post, one could open a new topic with the post name.
- I also plan to have some information access threads on topics like "Päli Resources". I will post some key tools available at this site as well as at other sites, and users can add more information to it.
- This forum will also give an opportunity for others with different opinions to express their viewpoints (i.e., how they interpret a given Sutta or a verse in the Dhammapada, etc). In most cases, there can be more than one explanation.
- Sometimes, each individual may have their own interpretation even if it looks incorrect to others. No one should expect others to come to agreement with one's viewpoint. It is up to each person to decide for him/herself.
- Thoughtfil, logical, and respectful discussions can be an important part of the learning process.

7. Following the Path is not merely following some set precepts or blindly following a "guru." One needs to engage in stimulating discussions with oneself first (contemplation), and also with others. It is an intellectual process.

- I hope this forum will be a "virtual community center" which will help people with different levels of exposure to Buddha Dhamma to come together and grow together.
- In my own experience, I know that when trying to answer a question posed by another person - who is looking at the issue from a totally different point of view - forces me to look at the issue from a different angle. I have learned many things over the past few years that way.

8. The Buddha was the greatest scientist to be born, and we are trying to recover those deep teachings that have been buried over many centuries. Thanks to my late Noble teacher, Waharaka Thero ("Parinibbāna of Waharaka Thero"), true meanings of key concepts (eg., anicca, anatta, viññāna) have been uncovered.

- We need to maintain this momentum and make it easier for the future generations to access the pure and original teachings of the Buddha.

9. Finally, I keep the right to delete any posts that are not appropriate for the forum. I make such decisions based on the goal of this website (to teach Buddha's original teachings per Tipitaka), and it will be for the benefit of the general audience.

### 21.4.3 How to Post/Reply to a Forum Question

## Revised August 12, 2022

## Formatting a Post

1. The formatting buttons " $b$ " for bold, " i " for italics, etc. can be used to make the text more legible.
2. In particular, it is good to use the "link" button to provide a link to another post on this website or an external web page. To describe the procedure, let us assume that you want to provide a link to the "Abhidhamma - Introduction" post on the website.

- Open that post in a separate window by clicking the following link: "Abhidhamma - Introduction."
- Copy the post's title ("Abhidhamma - Introduction") and paste it into your text window.
- Select that text with the title ("Abhidhamma - Introduction") and click the "link" button. It will open a new window to put in the web address.
- Go to that other open window with the "Abhidhamma - Introduction" post and copy the web address from that web page (which in this case is "https://puredhamma.net/abhidhamma/abhidhammaintroduction/").
- Come back and paste that to provide the link at the URL input. Note: Don't forget to check the little box "Open link in a new tab" so that when someone clicks on the link, it will be opened in a new window.
- That is it!

Follow the same procedure to provide an external link.
3. You can edit your comment within an hour. If you try to edit after an hour, it may delete that comment.

## To Post a New Question/Comment

4. Select a suitable forum from the list of forums ("Abhidhamma" forum, "Dhamma and Science" forum, etc.) and click on it.

- That will open that particular forum with a list of already existing topics.
- Go to the end of that list and start typing a suitable topic for your question in the box, "Topic Title (Maximum Length: 80):"
- Then type the question in the box below and hit the "submit" button. If you need to post a link to the question, please follow the steps in \#3 below.
- You can edit your question/comment within an hour. If you try to edit after an hour, it may delete the question.


## To Reply to an Existing Post

5. If one just types in the default window, the comment will appear at the end of the discussion as a new thread. Anyone can see that as the latest comment. but then one needs to refer to the comment that he/she is responding to.

- It is NOT a good idea to hit the reply button. If you do that, your comment will appear directly below that comment. Then a reader will need to scan to find the new comment (especially if there are newer threads at the bottom).
- Therefore, it is better to type your comment in the default window at the very bottom. If you need to, you can refer to an earlier comment by the poster's name and date or copy and paste the part of that post you need to comment on.


### 21.4.4 April - July 2017

The Infinity Problem in Buddhism - 7/15/17 (in the "Dhamma and Philosophy" section).
List of "San" Words and Other Pāli Roots $-6 / 29 / 17$ (in the "Tables and Summaries" section).
Pure Dhamma Discussion Forum Guidelines - 6/22/17
Sañkhāra and Kammā, Viññāna and Kamma Bīja - 6/16/17 (in the "San" section).
User's Guide to Pure Dhamma Website - 6/8/17 (in "Buddha Dhamma" section).
Is Ānāpānasati Breath Meditation? - 6/2/17 (in "Bhāvanā (Meditation)" section).
Viññāna - What It Really Means - 5/26/17 (in "Living Dhamma" section).
Working of Kammā - Critical Role of Conditions - 5/21/17 (in "Living Dhamma" section).
What are rūpa? - Dhamma are rūpa too! - 5/13/17 (in "Living Dhamma" section).
Micchā Ditthi, Gandhabbayā, and Sotāpanna Stage - 5/6/17 (in "Living Dhamma" section).
Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga - A Focused Analysis - 4/29/17 - 4/29/17 (in the "Historical Background" section).

Misinterpretation of Anicca and Anatta by Early European Scholars - 4/29/17 (This replaces a recent post, "Answers to Criticism of Pure Dhamma Interpretations".

I have also combined two previous posts, "Theravada - Problems with Current Interpretations of Key Concepts" and "Historical Timelines of Buddha Dhamma and Sri Lanka - End of Sinhala Commentaries" to make a new post, "Incorrect Theravāda Interpretations - Historical Timeline" -4/29/17.

Are There Procedures for Attaining Magga Phala, Jhāna and Abhiñ̃̃ā? - 4/23/17 (in the "Power of the Human Mind" section)

Answers to Criticism of Pure Dhamma Interpretations - 4/16/17 (in the "Historical Background" section).
Pabhassara Citta, Radiant Mind, and Bhavanga - 4/13/17 (in the "Abhidhamma" section).
Buddhaghosa and Visuddhimagga - Historical Background - 4/8/17 (in the "Historical Background" section)
Dasa Akusala and Anatta - The Critical Link - 4/2/17 (in the "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta" section)

### 21.4.5 January - March 2017

Difference Between Jhāna and Stages of Nibbāna - 3/24/17 (in the "Power of the Human Mind" section)
Anatta - the Opposite of Which Atta? - 3/17/17 (in the "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta" section)
Sakkāya Ditthi is Personality (Me) View? - 3/10/17 (in the "Sotāpanna Stage of Nibbāna" section)
Parinibbāna of Waharaka Thero - 3/9/17
Pāli Dictionaries - Are They Reliable? - 3/4/17 (in the "Sutta Interpretations" section)- Revised 3/7/17.
Attā Hi Attano Nātho - 3/4/17 (in the "Dhammapada" section).
Sañkhāra - What It Really Means - 2/25/17 (in the new "Four Aggregates" subsection in the "Living Dhamma" section).

Vedanā - What It Really Means - 2/18/17 (in the new "What is Vedanā (Feelings)?" subsection in the "Living Dhamma" section).

Cattāro Āhāra for Mental Body or Gandhabbayā - 2/11/17 (in the new 'Mental Body - Gandhabbaya" subsection in the "Living Dhamma" section).

Mental Body (Gandhabbayā) - Personal Accounts - 2/5/17 (in the "What is Saññā (Perception)?" subsection in the "Living Dhamma" section).

Vipallāsa (Ditthi, Saññā, Citta) Affect Sañkhāra - 1/28/17 (in the "What is Saññā (Perception)?" subsection in the "Living Dhamma" section).

Also, a really good Sinhala translation of many sections of the website by Professor Sarath Bandara is now available: "Pure Dhamma - Sinhala Translation."

Future Suffering - Why It Arises - 01/22/17 (in the "What is Saññ̃a (Perception)?" subsection in the "Living Dhamma" section)

Sexual Orientation - Effects of Kamma and Gati (Sañkhāra) - 1/14/17 (in the "Living Dhamma Fundamentals" subsection in the "Living Dhamma" section)
Nikāya in the Sutta Pitaka - 1/7/17 (in the "Sutta Interpretations" section)
Pure Dhamma - Reflections on 2016 - 01/01/17

### 21.4.6 Essays - 2019

Dhammā, Kamma, Sañkhāra, Mind - Critical Connections - 12/28/19 (in the subsection "Views on Life")

Icchā (Cravings) Lead to Upādāna and to Eventual Suffering - 12/21/19 (in the subsection "Views on Life") Moha/Avijiā and Vipāka Viññāna/Kamma Viññāna - 12/14/19 (in the subsection "Views on Life") Tanhā Paccayā Upādāna - Critical Step in Paticca Samuppāda - 12/07/19 (in the subsection "Views on Life")

Vacī Sañkhāra - Sañkappa (Conscious Thoughts) and Vācā (Speech) - 11/30/19 (in the subsection "Views on Life")

Kamma, Sañkhāra, and Abhisañkhāra - 11/23/19 (in the subsection "Views on Life")
Paticca Samuppāda - A "Self" Exists Due to Avijijā - 11/16/19 (in the subsection "Views on Life")
Tanhā - The Origin of Suffering - 11/10/19 (in the subsection "Views on Life")
Paticca Samuppāda - Not "Self" or "No-Self" - 11/10/19 (in the subsection "Views on Life")
An Apparent "Self" Is Involved in Kamma Generation - 11/2/19 (in the subsection "Views on Life")
Sakkāya Ditthi in Terms of Attā or "Self" or "Ātma" - 10/26/19 (in the subsection "Views on Life")
Chachakka Sutta - Six Types of Vipāka Viññāna 10/19/19 (in the subsection "Views on Life")
Kāma Guna - Origin of Attachment (Tanhā) - 10/6/19 (in the subsection "Views on Life")
Vipāka Vedanā and "Samphassa jā Vedanā" in a Sensory Event - 9/29/19 (in the subsection "Views on Life").

Is There a "Self"? - 9/22/19 (in the subsection "Views on Life").
Citta - Basis of Our Experience and Actions - 9/22/19 (in the subsection "Views on Life").
Indriya Make Phassa and Āyatana Make Samphassa - 9/15/19 (in the subsection "Views on Life").
How Do Sense Faculties Become Internal Āyatana? - 9/08/19 (in the subsection "Views on Life").
Contact Between Āyatana Leads to Vipāka Viññ̄n̄a - 9/02/19 (in the subsection "Views on Life").
Buddhist Worldview - Introduction - 8/26/19 (in the subsection "Views on Life").
Wrong View of Creationism (and Eternal Future Life) - Part $2-8 / 19 / 19$ (in the subsection "Views on Life").

Wrong View of Creationism (and Eternal Future Life) - Part 1 - 8/12/19 (in the subsection "Views on Life").

Views on Life - Wrong View of Materialism - 8/04/19 (in the subsection "Views on Life").
Views on Life - 7/28/19 (in the subsection "Origin of Life").
Mystical Phenomena in Buddhism? - 8/04/19 (in the subsection "Origin of Life").
Living Cell - How Did the First Cell Come to Existence? - 7/24/19 (in the subsection "Origin of Life").
Clarification of "Mental Body" and "Physical Body" - Different Types of "Kāya" - 7/19/19 (in the subsection "Origin of Life").

Human Life - A Mental Base (Gandhabba) and a Material Base (Cell) - 7/15/19 (in the subsection "Origin of Life"').

Origin of Life - There is No Traceable Origin - 7/10/19 (in a new subsection "Origin of Life").

Upapatti Paticca Samuppāda (How We Create Our Own Rebirths) - 7/6/19 (in the "Paticca Samuppāda" section).

Associations (Sevana)- A Root Cause of Wrong Views - 6/29/19 (in the "Sotāpanna Stage and Tilakkhana" section).

Sakkāya Ditthi - Getting Rid of Deeper Wrong Views - 6/22/19 (in the "Sotāpanna Stage and Tilakkhana" subsection).

Sotāpanna Stage and Tilakkhana - 6/22/19 (in the "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta" section).
Sakkāya Ditthi and Tilakkhana - 6/14/19 (in the "Sotāpanna Stage and Tilakkhana" subsection).
Anatta - No Refuge in This World - 6/7/19 (in the "Anattā - A Systematic Analysis" section).
Anattā in Anattalakkahana Sutta - No Soul or an Ātma - 5/31/19 (in the "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta" subsection).

Anicca - Inability to Keep What We Like - 5/26/19 (in the "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta" subsection).
Yamaka Sutta (SN 22.85) - Arahanthood Is Not Annihilation but End of Suffering - 5/23/19 (in the "Sutta Interpretations" subsection).

Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda -5/18/19 (in the "Paticca Samuppāda"section).
Kamma are Done with Sañkhāra - Types of Sañkhāra -5/13/19 (in the "San" subsection).
Do Buddhists Pray and Engage in Idol Worshipping? -5/5/19 (in the "Myths or Realities?" subsection).
Complexity of the Mind - Viññāna and Sañkhāra - 4/28/19 (in the "Dhamma with Less Pāli" subsection).
Anuloma Patiloma Paticca Samuppāda - Key to Sotāpanna Stage - 3/15/19 (in the "Sotāpanna Stage of Nibbāna" subsection).

Vitakka, Vicāra, Savitakka, Savicāra, and Avitakka, Avicāra - 3/7/19 (in the "Samādhi, Jhāna (Dhyāna), Magga Phala" subsection).

Attha Purisa Puggalā - Eight Noble Persons - 3/4/19 (in the "Seeking Nibbana" subsection).
Jhānic Experience in Detail - Sāmaññaphala Sutta (DN 2) - 3/2/19 (in the "Samādhi, Jhāna (Dhyāna), Magga Phala" subsection).

Tapussa Sutta (AN 9.41) - Akuppā Cetovimutti - 2/28/19 (in the "Sutta Interpretations" subsection).
Viññāna and Sañkhāra - Connection to Paticca Samuppāda - 2/25/19 (in the "Essential Buddhism" subsection).

Account of Angulimāla - Many Insights to Buddha Dhamma - 2/17/19 (in the "Dhamma Concepts" subsection).

Sotāpanna Anugāmi - No More Births in the Apāyā - 2/11/19 (in the "Sotāpanna Stage of Nibbāna" subsection).

Sati in Ānāpānasati/Satipatthāna - Two Meanings of Sati - 2/4/19 (in the "Essential Buddhism" subsection).
Ānāpāna and Satipatthāna - Fundamentals - 1/30/19 (in the "Essential Buddhism" subsection).
Buddhism and Evolution - Aggañña Sutta (DN 27) - 1/24/19 (in the "Sutta Interpretations" subsection).
Ānāpānasati Eliminates Mental Stress Permanently - 1/21/19 (in the "Essential Buddhism" subsection).

Breath Meditation Is Addictive and Harmful in the Long Run - 1/15/19 (in the "Essential Buddhism" subsection).

Connection Between Sañkhāra and Viññāna - 1/11/19 (in the "Essential Buddhism" subsection).
Four Noble Truths - Suffering and Its Elimination - 1/6/19 (in the "Essential Buddhism" subsection).
Viñ̃̃āna - Consciousness Together With Future $-1 / 1 / 19$ (in the "Essential Buddhism" subsection).
Pure Dhamma - Reflections on 2018 - 1/1/19

### 21.4.7 Essays - 2018

Introduction to Citta, Vedanā, Sañ̃̄̄a, Sañkhāra, and Viññāna (OLD==Pāli to English - Serious Problems With Current Translations) - 12/25/18 (in the "Essential Buddhism" subsection).

Essential Buddhism - 12/25/18 (in the "Living Dhamma" section).
Finest Manomaya Kāya of an Arūpāvacara Brahma - 12/19/18 (in the "Anattā - A Systematic Analysis" subsection).

Types of Bodies in 31 Realms - Connection to Jhāna - 12/12/18 (in the "Anattā - A Systematic Analysis" subsection).

Anattā - A Systematic Analysis - 12/12/18 (in the "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta" subsection).
Anattā (Mundane Interpretation) - There is no "Unchanging Self" - 12/5/18 (in the "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta" subsection).

Kāmacchanda and Icca - Being Blinded by Cravings - 11/29/18 (in the "Sorting out Some Key Pali Terms (Tanha, Lobha, Dosa, Moha, etc)" subsection).

Boy Who Remembered Pāli Suttā for 1500 Years - 11/21/18 (in the "Myths or Realities?" section).
Pāpa Kamma Versus Akusala Kamma - 11/14/18 (in the "Gati, Bhava, and Jāti" subsection).
List of "San" Words and Other Pāli Roots - 11/10/18 (in the "Tables and Summaries" section).
Vedanā and Samphassa Jā Vedanā - More Than Just Feelings (new title)- 11/10/18 (in the "Mental Aggregates" section).

Free Will in Buddhism - Connection to Sañkhāra - 11/3/18 (in the "Dhamma and Philosophy" section).
Difference Between Tanhā and Upādāna - 10/25/18 (in the "Gati, Bhava, and Jāti"' subsection).
Essence of Buddhism - In the First Sutta - 10/23/18 (in the "Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta" section).
Difference Between Physical Rūpa and Rūpakkhandha - 10/20/18 (in the "The Five Aggregates (Pañcakkhandha)" section).
"The Life of the Buddha" by Bhikkhu Nānamoli - 10/13/18 (in the "Book Reviews" section).
Karaniya Metta Sutta - Metta Bhavana - 10/7/18 (in the "Bhāvanā (Meditation)" section).
Is It Necessary for a Buddhist to Eliminate Sensual Desires? - 9/28/18 (in the "Living Dhamma" section).
Essential Abhidhamma - The Basics - 9/23/18 New subsection in the "Abhidhamma" section.
State of Mind in the Absence of Citta Vithi - Bhavaniga - 9/23/18 (in the "Essential Abhidhamma - The Basics" subsection).

Paññāvimutti - Arahanthood without Jhāna - 9/12/18 (in the "Samādhi, Jhāna (Dhyāna), Magga Phala" subsection).

I have re-written an old post on a key subject: "Viññāna (Consciousness)" - 9/10/18 (in the "The Five Aggregates (Pañcakkhandha)" subsection).

The Amazing Mind - Critical Role of Nāmagotta (Memories) - 9/1/18 (in the "Dhamma Concepts" subsection).

Do I Have "A Mind" That Is Fixed and "Mine"? - 8/30/18 (in the "Sakkāya Ditṭhi" subsection).
Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta) - 8/23/18 (in the "Dhamma Concepts" section).
Ye Dhammā Hetuppabhavā.. and yam kińci samudaya dhammam. - 8/16/18 (in the "Living Dhamma" section).

Imasmim Sati Idam Hoti - What Does It Really Mean? - 8/5/18 (in the "Paticca Samuppada" section).
Dhamma, Sañkhāra, Sankata, Rūpa, Viññ̄̄na, Gati, Āsava, Anusaya - 7/22/18 (in the "Dhamma with Less Pālil" section).

Six Root Causes - Loka Samudaya (Arising of Suffering) and Loka Nirodhaya (Nibbāna) - - 7/19/18 (in the "Living Dhamma" section).

Sotāpatti Anga - The Four Qualities of a Sotāpanna - 7/8/18 (in the "Sotāpanna Stage of Nibbāna" section).
Dasa Akusala/Dasa Kusala - Basis of Buddha Dhamma - 2 - 6/27/18 (in the "Sutta Interpretations" section).
Añguttara Nikāya - Suttā on Key Concepts - 6/20/18 (in the "Sutta Interpretations" section).
Dasa Akusala/Dasa Kusala - Basis of Buddha Dhamma - 6/20/18 (in the "Sutta Interpretations" section).
Kanha (Dark) and Sukka (Bright) Kamma and Kammakkhaya - 6/11/18 (in the "Seeking Nibbāna" section).

Kukkuravatika Sutta (Majihima Nikāya 57) - Kammakkhaya - 6/11/18 (in the "Sutta Interpretations" section).

Pathama Mettā Sutta - 6/7/18 (in the "Sutta Interpretations" section).
Ānantariya Kamma - Connection to Gandhabba - 6/2/18 (in the "Living Dhamma" section and Mental Body - Gandhabba subsection).

Na Cetanākaranīya Sutta - 5/21/18 (in the "Sutta Interpretations" section).
Sammā Ditthi - Realization, Not Memorization - 5/13/18 (in the "Sotāpanna Stage of Nibbāna" subsection).
Manopubbangamā dhammā.. $-5 / 5 / 18$ (in the "Dhammapada" subsection).
Kilesa - Relationship To Akusala, Kusala, And Puñña Kamma - 4/27/18 (in the "Dhamma Concepts" subsection).

Anussati and Anupassanā - Being Mindful and Removing Defilements - 4/16/18 (in the "Bhāvanā (Meditation)" subsection).

Buddha Dhamma for an Inquiring Mind - Part I - 4/12/18 (in the "Dhamma with Less Pāli"" subsection).
"Exploring All Possible Paths" Leads to Fermat's Principle of Least Time $-4 / 1 / 18$ (in the "Quantum Mechanics and Dhamma" section).

Feynman's Method of "A Particle Exploring All Possible Paths" - 3/29/18 (in the "Quantum Mechanics and Dhamma" section).

Will Quantum Mechanics Be Able to Explain Consciousness? - 3/20/18 (in the "Quantum Mechanics and Dhamma" section).

The Observer Effect in Quantum Mechanics - 3/20/18 (in the "Quantum Mechanics and Dhamma" section).
Feynman's Glass Plate Experiment - 3/16/18 (in the new "Quantum Mechanics - A New Interpretation" subsection).

Quantum Mechanics and Dhamma - Introduction - 3/13/18 (in the new "Quantum Mechanics and Dhamma" section).

What Is a Wave and What Is a Particle? - 3/13/18 (in the new "Quantum Mechanics - A New Interpretation" subsection).

Photons Are Particles Not Waves - 3/13/18 (in the new "Quantum Mechanics - A New Interpretation" subsection).

Cloning and Gandhabba - 3/5/2018 (in the "Dhamma and Science" section).
"Discourse 5 - Tilakkhaṇa and Micchā Ditṭhi" added to Three Marks of Existence - English Discourses - 3/2/2018 (in the "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta" section). This is the last one in this series.
"Discourse 4 - Sakkāya Ditṭhi - What is "a Person"?" added to Three Marks of Existence English Discourses - 2/27/2018 (in the "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta" section).
"Discourse 3 - Distorted Perceptions or Saññā Vipallāsa" added to Three Marks of Existence English Discourses - 2/19/2018 (in the "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta" section).

Nirodha Samāpatti, Phala Samāpatti, Jhāna, and Jhāna Samāpatti - 2/13/2018 (in the "Living Dhamma" section).
"Discourse 2 - Icca, Nicca, Anicca" added to Three Marks of Existence - English Discourses 2/10/2018 (in the "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta" section).
"Discourse 1 - Nicca, Sukjha, Atta" in the Three Marks of Existence - English Discourses 2/3/2018 (in the "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta" section).

Three Marks of Existence - English Discourses - 2/3/2018 (in the "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta" section).
Citta, Mano, Viññāna - Stages of a Thought - 1/24/2018 (in the "Living Dhamma" section).
Bhava and Bhavañga - Simply Explained! 1/19/2018 (in the "Living Dhamma" section).
Does Bodily Pain Arise Only Due to Kamma Vipāka? 1/12/2018 (in the "Living Dhamma" section).
Anidassana Viññāna - What It Really Means - 1/6/2018 (in the "Living Dhamma" section).
Pure Dhamma - Reflections on 2017 - 1/1/2018

### 21.4.8 Essays - 2017

Bhūta and Yathābhūta - What Do They Really Mean - 12/28/2017 (in the "Rūpa Aggregate" subsection of "Living Dhamma" section).

12/17/2017: Puredhamma Discussion Forum is now open: "Pure Dhamma Discussion Forum Guidelines."
Kamma Viñ̃̄āña and Nāmarūpa Paricceda Ñān̄a - 12/12/2017 (in the "Nāmarūpa Formation" subsection of "Living Dhamma" section).

Tipitaka Commentaries - Helpful or Misleading? - 12/6/2017 (in the "Historical Background" section).
Pure Dhamma - Sinhala Translation - 12/2/2017 (More sections added by Prof. Sarath Bandara).
Kamma Viññāna - Link Between Mind and Matter - 11/30/2017 (in the "Nāma \& Rūpa to Nāmarūpa" subsection of "Living Dhamma" section).
Root of All Suffering - Ten Immoral Actions - 11/14/2017 (in the new "Dhamma with Less Pāli" subsection of "Living Dhamma" section).
Kāma Guna, Kāma, Kāma Rāga, Kāmacchanda - 11/9/2017 (in the "Assāda, Ādīnava, Nissarana" subsection of "Sotāpanna Stage of Nibbāna").

Difference Between Dhammā and Sañkhāra - 11/5/2017 (This is an old post in the section "Key Dhamma Concepts." I basically re-wrote the post. This is a much better version).

Assāda, Ādīnava, Nissarana - Introduction - 11/1/2017 (in the NEW "Assāda, Ādīnava, Nissarana" subsection of "Sotāpanna Stage of Nibbāna").

Pure Dhamma - German Website - 10/21/2017
Avyākata Paticca Samuppāda for Vipāka Viññāna - 10/17/2017 (in the "Paticca Samuppāda Cycles" subsection).
Samādhi, Jhāna, Magga Phala - Introduction - 10/12/17 (in the new subsection "Samādhi, Jhāna (Dhyāna), Magga Phala" of the "Living Dhamma" section).

Mundane versus Supramundane Jhāna - 10/12/17 (in the new subsection "Samādhi, Jhāna (Dhyāna), Magga Phala" of the "Living Dhamma" section).

Ascendance to Nibbāna via Jhāna (dhyāna) - 10/4/17 (in the "Transition to Noble Eightfold Path" subsection of the "Living Dhamma" section).

Abnormal Births Due to Gandhabba Transformations - 9/30/17 (in the "Mental Body - Gandhabba" subsection of the "Living Dhamma" section).

Gandhabba State - Evidence from Tipitaka - 9/16/17 (in the "Mental Body - Gandhabba" subsection of the "Living Dhamma" section).

Sila, Samādhi, Pañ̃̃ā to Paññā, Sila, Samādhi - 9/2/17 (in the "Transition to Noble Eightfold Path" subsection).

Anicca - Worthlessness of Worldly Things - 8/20/17 (in the "Anicca - True Meaning" subsection).
Dasa Samyojana - Bonds in Rebirth Process - 8/6/17 (in the "Bhāvanā (Meditation)" section).

The Infinity Problem in Buddhism - 7/15/17 (in the "Dhamma and Philosophy" section).
List of "San" Words and Other Pāli Roots $-6 / 29 / 17$ (in the "Tables and Summaries" section).
Pure Dhamma Discussion Forum Guidelines - 6/22/17
Sañkhāra and Kammā, Viññāna and Kamma Bīja - 6/16/17 (in the "San" section).
User's Guide to Pure Dhamma Website - 6/8/17 (in "Buddha Dhamma" section).
Is Ānāpānasati Breath Meditation? - 6/2/17 (in "Bhāvanā (Meditation)" section).
Viññāna - What It Really Means - 5/26/17 (in "Living Dhamma" section).

Working of Kammā - Critical Role of Conditions - 5/21/17 (in "Living Dhamma" section).
What are rūpa? - Dhamma are rūpa too! - 5/13/17 (in "Living Dhamma" section).
Micchā Ditthi, Gandhabbayā, and Sotāpanna Stage - 5/6/17 (in "Living Dhamma" section).
Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga - A Focused Analysis - 4/29/17 - 4/29/17 (in the "Historical Background" section).

Misinterpretation of Anicca and Anatta by Early European Scholars - 4/29/17 (This replaces a recent post, "Answers to Criticism of Pure Dhamma Interpretations".

I have also combined two previous posts, "Theravada - Problems with Current Interpretations of Key Concepts" and "Historical Timelines of Buddha Dhamma and Sri Lanka - End of Sinhala Commentaries" to make a new post, "Incorrect Theravāda Interpretations - Historical Timeline" - 4/29/17.

Are There Procedures for Attaining Magga Phala, Jhāna and Abhiñ̃ñ̄? - 4/23/17 (in the "Power of the Human Mind" section)

Answers to Criticism of Pure Dhamma Interpretations - 4/16/17 (in the "Historical Background" section).
Pabhassara Citta, Radiant Mind, and Bhavanga - 4/13/17 (in the "Abhidhamma" section).
Buddhaghosa and Visuddhimagga - Historical Background - 4/8/17 (in the "Historical Background" section) Dasa Akusala and Anatta - The Critical Link - 4/2/17 (in the "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta" section)

Difference Between Jhāna and Stages of Nibbāna - 3/24/17 (in the "Power of the Human Mind" section) Anatta - the Opposite of Which Atta? - 3/17/17 (in the "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta" section)

Sakkāya Ditthi is Personality (Me) View? - 3/10/17 (in the "Sotāpanna Stage of Nibbāna" section)
Parinibbāna of Waharaka Thero - 3/9/17
Pāli Dictionaries - Are They Reliable? - 3/4/17 (in the "Sutta Interpretations" section)- Revised 3/7/17.
Attā Hi Attano Nātho - 3/4/17 (in the "Dhammapada" section).
Sañkhāra - What It Really Means - 2/25/17 (in the new "Four Aggregates" subsection in the "Living Dhamma" section).

Vedanā - What It Really Means - 2/18/17 (in the new "What is Vedanā (Feelings)?" subsection in the "Living Dhamma" section).

Cattāro Āhāra for Mental Body or Gandhabbayā - 2/11/17 (in the new "Mental Body - Gandhabbaya" subsection in the "Living Dhamma" section).
Mental Body (Gandhabbayā) - Personal Accounts - 2/5/17 (in the "What is Saññā (Perception)?" subsection in the "Living Dhamma" section).
Vipallāsa (Ditthi, Saññā, Citta) Affect Sañkhāra - 1/28/17 (in the "What is Saññā (Perception)?" subsection in the "Living Dhamma" section).

Also, a really good Sinhala translation of many sections of the website by Professor Sarath Bandara is now available: "Pure Dhamma - Sinhala Translation."

Future Suffering - Why It Arises - 01/22/17 (in the "What is Sañ̃̃̄a (Perception)?" subsection in the "Living Dhamma" section)

Sexual Orientation - Effects of Kamma and Gati (Sañkhāra) - 1/14/17 (in the "Living Dhamma -
Fundamentals" subsection in the "Living Dhamma" section)
Nikāya in the Sutta Pitaka - 1/7/17 (in the "Sutta Interpretations" section)
Pure Dhamma - Reflections on 2016-01/01/17

April - July 2017
January - March 2017

### 21.4.9 Essays - 2016

December 2016
November 2016
October 2016
September 2016
August 2016
July 2016
June 2016
May 2016
April 2016
March 2016
February 2016
January 2016

### 21.4.9. January 2016

Tiparivattaya and Twelve Types of Ñāna (Knowledge) - 1/29/16 (Dhamma Cakka Pavattana sutta in the Sutta Interpretations section)
Majiima Patipada - Way to Relinquish Attachments to this World - 1/22/16 (Dhamma Cakka Pavattana sutta in the Sutta Interpretations section). Revised 1/23/16.
Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta Interpretation - Uddesa, Niddesa, Patiniddesa - 1/16/16 (in the Sutta Interpretations section).
Popup Pāli Glossary with Pronunciation - 1/7/16. There will be no new essay this weekend.
Pancaupadanakkhandha - It is All Mental - 1/1/16 (in the "The Five Aggregates (Pañcakkhandha)" section.

### 21.4.9. February 2016 <br> 2

Nibbatti Lakkhana in Udayavaya Ñāna - 2/26/16 (under the Sotāpanna Stage of Nibbāna)
Hidden World of the Gandhabbayā: Netherworld (Paralowa) - 2/18/16 (in Manomaya Kāya section) Uadayavaya Ñāna - Introduction - 2/12/16 (under the Sotāpanna Stage of Nibbāna)

Relinquishing Defilements via Three Rounds and Four Stages - 2/4/16 (Dhamma Cakka Pavattana sutta in the Sutta Interpretations section)

### 21.4.9. March 2016

3
Getting to Samādhi via Formal Meditation Sessions - $3 / 25 / 16$ (in Meditation section)
Āhāra (Food) in Udayavaya Ñāna - 3/19/16 (under the Sotāpanna Stage of Nibbāna; new subsection on Udayavaya Nāna)
How Perceived Pleasures (Assāda) lead to Dukkha - 3/11/16 (Under Āsvada (Mind-Made Pleasures), $\bar{A} d e e n a v a(B a d ~ O u t c o m e s), ~ N i s s a r a n a ~(R e l i n q u i s h)) ~(~) ~$
Craving for Pornography - How to Reduce the Tendency - 3/4/16 (Under Discussion of Comments)

### 21.4.9. April 2016

4/29/2016 New Section: Myths or Realities?
Two posts: Animisa Locana Bodhi Poojawa - A Prelude to Acts of Gratitude
and Paramita and Niyata Vivarana - Myths or Realities?
Brain - Interface between Mind and Body - 4/22/16 (in the Abhidhamma section. Don't be discouraged even if you don't have any exposure to Abhidhamma; I am trying to make Abhidhamma easy to grasp. No need to memorize anything)
What are Dhamma? - A Deeper Analysis - 4/15/16 (in the Abhidhamma section)
Two Versions of 37 Factors of Enlightenment - 4/8/16 (in "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta" subection under "Key Dhamma Concepts")
Why are Tilakkhana not Included in 37 Factors of Enlightenment? - 4/1/16 (in "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta" subection under "Key Dhamma Concepts")

Getting to Samādhi via Formal Meditation Sessions - 3/25/16 (in Meditation section)
Āhāra (Food) in Udayavaya Ñāna - 3/19/16 (under the Sotāpanna Stage of Nibbāna; new subsection on Udayavaya Nāna)

How Perceived Pleasures (Assāda) lead to Dukkha - 3/11/16 (Under Āsvada (Mind-Made Pleasures), $\bar{A} d e e n a v a(B a d ~ O u t c o m e s), ~ N i s s a r a n a ~(R e l i n q u i s h)) ~(~) ~$
Craving for Pornography - How to Reduce the Tendency $-3 / 4 / 16$ (Under Discussion of Comments)

### 21.4.9. May 2016

Supreme Qualities of Buddha, Dhamma, Sañgha $-5 / 28 / 16$ (This is a re-write of a previous short post).
Tisarana Vandana and Its Effects on One's Gati- 5/28/16
5/20/2016 New Subsection: The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma, which includes two old posts and a new post: 31 Realms Associated with the Earth. New post in Tables and Summaries section: 31 Realms of Existence

Our Two Worlds: Material and Immaterial - 5/14/16 (in Buddha Dhamma section)
Indriya and Ayatana - Big Difference - 5/7/16 (in the Key Dhamma Concepts section)

### 21.4.9. June 2016

Possible Effects in Meditation - Kundalini Awakening - 6/25/16 (In the section on Bhāvanā (Meditation))
Can Buddhist Meditation be Dangerous? - 6/17/16 (In the section on Myths or Realities)
Gandhabbayā Sensing the World - With and Without a Physical Body $-6 / 11 / 16$ (In the subsection on the Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma)

Gandhabbayā - Only in Human and Animal Realms - 6/4/16 (In the subsection on the Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma)

### 21.4.9. July 2016

Antarabhava and Gandhabbayā-7/29/16 (In the section Myths or Realities?)
Udayavaya Ñāna - Importance of the Cittaja Kaya - 7/22/16 (In the subsection on the Udayavaya Ñāna in the Sotāpanna stage of Nobbana)

New section: Abhidhamma via Science (Changed to Inconsistencies with Science on 06Mar2018) and a new post: Vision (Cakkhu Viññāna) is Not Just Seeing - 7/15/16
Nibbāna in the Big Picture - 7/8/16 (In the subsection on the Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma) Hetu-Phala, Paccuppanna, and Paticca Samuppāda - 7/2/16 (In the section Sorting out Some Key Pāli Terms (Tanhā, Lobha, Dosa, Moha, etc)

### 21.4.9. August 2016

Started a new section: Living Dhamma. The subsection "New Approach to Meditation" was deleted and those posts are now in this section. New post in this section: What Are Kilesa (Mental Impurities)? Connection to Cetasika - 8/26/16

Starting on the Path Even without Belief in Rebirth (Nirāmisa Sukha to Nibbāna Suva - The Key Step) 8/19/16

New subsection in the "Bhāvanā (Maditation)" section : Living Dhamma and a new post in it: Peace of Mind to Nibbāna - The Key Step - 8/12/16

Also, Pāli Glossary replaced by two posts with over 400 Pāli words:
Pāli Glossary - (A-K) and Pāli Glossary - (L-Z) - 8/12/16
and, updated version of Popup Pāli Glossary with Pronunciation - 8/12/16
Living Dhamma - Introduction - 8/5/16 (In the section Bhāvanā (Meditation))

### 21.4.9. September 2016

Noble Eightfold Path - Role of Sobhana Cetasika - 9/30/16 (in the "Living Dhamma" section)
How Are Gati and Kilesa Incorporated into Thoughts? - 9/22/16 (in the "Living Dhamma" section)
Satipatthāna Sutta - Relevance to Suffering in This Life -9/10/16 (in the "Living Dhamma" section)
Two new posts:
Nibbāna "Exists", but Not in This World - 9/2/16 (in the 'Nibbāna" subsection)
Suffering in This Life - Role of Mental Impurities - 9/2/16 (in the "Living Dhamma" section)

### 21.4.9. October 2016

10
Suffering in This Life and Paticca Samuppāda - 10/28/16 (in the "Living Dhamma" section)
Started a new subsection: Patthāna Dhammā in the Pațicca Sumuppada section. New post in this section: Patthāna Dhamma - Connection to Cause and Effect (Hetu Phala) - 10/22/16
September 30, 2016: I just installed Google Translator at top right of the website. I have setup only a few languages for now. I would appreciate feedback on the quality of the translations. Also, if you need a language that is not there, please let me know and I can add. You can use the "Comments" box below to provide input.
Micchā Ditthi - Connection to Hethu Phala (Cause and Effect) - 10/18/16 (in the "Living Dhamma" section) Getting to Samādhi - 10/7/16 (in the "Living Dhamma" section)

### 21.4.9. November 2016

11
Sutta Learning Sequence for the Present Day - 11/30/16 (in Sutta Interpretations section).
Asevana and Annamanna Paccaya - 11/20/16 (in Patthāna Dhammā subsection in the Pațicca Sumuppada section).

Correct Meaning of Vacī Sañkhāra - 11/10/16 (in the "Sorting out Some Key Pāli Terms" sub section of the "Key Dhamma Concepts" section)

### 21.4.9. December 2016

Saññā - What It Really Means - 12/31/16 (in the "What is Sañ̃̃ā (Perception)?" subsection in the "Living Dhamma" section)
Our Mental Body - Gandhabbayā - 12/26/16 (in the "What is Sañ̃̃a (Perception)?" subsection in the "Living Dhamma" section)

Suffering in This Life and Paticca Samuppāda II - 12/7/16 (in the "Living Dhamma" section)
21.4.10 Essays - 2015

December 2015
November 2015
October 2015
September 2015
August 2015
July 2015
June 2015
May 2015
April 2015
March 2015

February 2015
January 2015

### 21.4.1 December 2015

Pañcakkhandha or Five Aggregates - A Misinterpreted Concept - 12/25/15 (in the "The Five Aggregates (Pañcakkhandha)" section.

Does the Hell (Niraya) Exist? - 12/18/15 (in the "Role of the Brain in Human Consciousness" section).
Feelings: Sukha, Dukha, Somanassa, and Domanassa - 12/11/15 (in the Paṭicca Samuppāda section).
13. Kammattana (Recitations) for the Sotāpanna Stage $-12 / 5 / 15$ in the Bhāvanā (Meditation) section

### 21.4. November 2015

The Origin of Matter - Suddhatthaka - 11/27/15 (in the Abhidhamma section)
Kāma Assāda Start with Phassa Paccayā Vedanā or Samphassa Ja Vedanā - 11/19/15 (in Paṭicca Samuppāda Section)
12. Key Factors to be Considered when "Meditating" for the Sotāpanna Stage - 11/13/15 (in the Meditation section).

How Are Paticca Samuppāda Cycles Initiated? - 11/6/15 (in the Paṭicca Samuppāda section).

### 21.4.1 October 2015

Do Things Just Happen? - The Hidden Causes - 10/30/15 (in the Moral Living and Fundamentals section).
"Self" and "no-self": A Simple Analysis - Do We Always Act with Avijiā?? - 10/23/15 (in the Comments/Reviews section).

Is Buddha Dhamma (Buddhism) a Religion? - 10/21/15 (in the Dhamma and Philosophy section).
Āsvada (Mind-Made Pleasures), Ādeenava (Bad Outcomes), Nissarana (Relinquish) - 10/16/15 (New subsection with the following two posts under it)

Āsvada, Ādeenava, Nissarana - Introduction - 10/16/15
What is "Kāma"? It is not Sex-10/16/15
How to Cultivate the Anicca Saññā - 10/8/15 (I revised the original post with this title and made two posts; most of the new material is in this first post and is better to be read first)

How to Cultivate the Anicca Saññā - II - 10/8/15

I have also added audio files to "Pāli Glossary" - 10/6/15
Is Eating Meat an Akusala Kamma (Immoral Deed)? - 10/2/15

### 21.4.1 September 2015 <br> 0.4

Would Nibbāna be Possible if Impermanence is the Cause of Suffering? - 9/25/15
Anicca vata Sankhara... - 9/17/15
Details of Kamma - Intention, Who Is Affected, Kamma Patha - 9/11/15 (in a new section on "Discussion of Comments" under "Comments/Reviews").

Nirāmisa Sukha - In a Chart - 9/4/15
Learning Buddha Dhamma Leads to Nirāmisa Sukha - 9/4/15

### 21.4.1 August 2015 <br> 0.5

What is the only Akusala Removed by a Sotāpanna? - 8/28/15
Cetasika - Connection to Gati - 8/20/15
Body Types in 31 Realms - Importance of Manomaya Kāya - 8/13/15
Citta Vithi - Processing of Sense Inputs $-8 / 6 / 15$

### 21.4.1 July 2015 <br> 0.6

10. Attaining the Sotāpanna Stage via Removing Ditthasava - 7/30/15 (This is a major revision of a previous post with a different title).

Four Conditions for Attaining Sotāpanna Magga/Phala - 7/27/15
Four Noble Truths: Recipe for Problem Solving - 7/16/15
Gati to Bhava to Jāti- Ours to Control - 7/9/15
Gati and Bhava-Many Varieties - 7/3/15

### 21.4.1 June 2015

0.7

Namagotta, Bhava, Kamma Bija, and Mano Thalaya (Mind Plane) - 6/26/15
Arogya Parama Labha - 6/19/15
Key to Sotāpanna Stage - Ditthi and Vicikicchā - 6/13/15
Why Do People Enjoy Immoral Deeds? - Ditthi Is Key - 6/6/15
What is Unique in Buddha Dhamma? - $6 / 1 / 15$

### 21.4.1 May 2015 <br> 0.8

How to Cultivate the Anicca Saññ̄a - 5/24/15
Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta - According to Some Key Suttā - 5/15/15

How Does One Know whether the Sotāpanna Stage is Reached? - 5/9/15
Buddha Dhamma: Non-Perceivability and Self-Consistency - 5/3/15

### 21.4.1 April 2015

Bhava paccayā Jati. ...Jara, Marana, ... -4/29/15 (under 'Paticca Samuppāda in Plain English').
Phassa paccayā Vedana....to Bhava - 4/24/15 (under "Paticca Samuppāda in Plain English").
Difference between Phassa and Samphassa - 4/18/15 (under "Paticca Samuppāda in Plain English").
Namarupa paccayā Salāyatana - 4/11/15 (under "Paticca Samuppāda in Plain English").
Mahā Cattārīsaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty) - 4/6/15
Does any Object (Rūpa) Last only 17 Thought Moments? - 4/1/15

### 21.4.1 March 2015

0.10

Viññāna paccayā Namarupa - 3/28/15 (under "Paticca Samuppāda in Plain English").
Sañkhāra paccayā Viññāna - 2 - 3/24/15 (under "Paticca Samuppāda in Plain English").
Sañkhāra paccayā Viññāna - $1-3 / 20 / 15$ (under "Paticca Samuppāda in Plain English").
Avijjā paccayā Sanikhāra - 3/16/15 (under "Paticca Samuppāda in Plain English").
Introduction - 2 - The Three Categories of Suffering 3/12/15 (under "Paticca Samuppāda in Plain English").
Introduction - What is Suffering? 3/8/15 - new sub section on "Paticca Samuppāda in Plain English" where I will use minimum Pāli words.
3. Viññāna, Thoughts, and the Subconscious $3 / 4 / 15$

### 21.4.1 February 2015

0.11

What is "Kaya" in Kāyānupassanā?- 2/26/15.
Difference between a Wish and a Determination (Paramita) 2/18/15
Are you not getting expected results from meditation? 2/15/15
Lobha, Dosa, Moha versus Raga, Patigha, Avijiā 2/13/15
Prerequisites for the Satipatthāna Bhāvanā 2/12/15
Kāyānupassanā - The Section on Habits (Sampajanapabba) 2/9/15
First Noble Truth - A Simple Explanation of One Aspect 2/6/15
"Spark" by John Ratey 2/5/15

Satipatthāna Sutta - Structure $2 / 4 / 15$ - I have revised the other two older posts on the Satipattha sutta in order to insert this post in the beginning.

Kāyānupassanā - The Foundation (Iriyapathapabba) 2/1/15

### 21.4.1 January 2015 <br> 0.12

Wrong Views (Micchā Ditthi) - A Simpler Analysis 1/28/15
Mahā Satipatthāna Sutta - Satipatthāna - Introduction - 1/22/15
Sutta Interpretation - Uddesa, Niddesa, Patiniddesa - Starting a new section on Suttā - 1/20/15
Origin of Morality (and Immorality) in Buddhism 1/17/15
Recent Evidence for Unbroken Memory Records (HSAM) 1/15/15
11. How to Select and "Grow" Meditation Procedures for Magga Phala - Meditation Section (1/12/15) Possible Outcomes of Meditation - Samādhi, Jhāna, Magga Phala (1/8/15)

If Everything is Anicca Should We Just give up Everything? (1/7/15)
"The Language of God", by Francis Collins - Book Review (1/3/15)

### 21.4.11 Essays - 2014

December 2014
November 2014
October 2014
September 2014

## August 2014

July 2014
June 2014

### 21.4.1 December 2014

1.1

Sañkhāra - Life is a Bundle of Sañkhāra $(12 / 28 / 14)$
Anicca - Repeated Arising/Destruction (12/24/14)

1. Thoughts (Citta), Consciousness (Viñ̃̃āna), and Mind (Hadaya Vatthu) - Introduction (12/20/14)
2. Viññāna (Consciousness) can be of Many Different Types and Forms (12/20/14)

Three Kinds of Ditthi, Eightfold Paths, and Samādhi (12/18/14)
Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception (12/14/14)

## Citta and Cetasika - How Viññāna (Consciousness) Arises (12/12/14) - Abhidhamma

Manomaya Kāya - Introduction (12/12/14). I am starting a new subsection in the "Key Dhamma Concepts" section on Manomaya Kāya, and have added two previous posts from other sections to here as well. This section is a prerequisite for the Abhidhamma material, but this material may help clarify other issues as well.
"Waking Up" by Sam Harris (12/9/14) - I am starting a new section on "Book Reviews". I have moved a post that I did last month on "Why Does the World Exist?" by Jim Holt from a different section to this section.

The Cooling Down Process (Nibbāna) - How the Root Causes are Removed (12/5/14)

### 21.4.1 November 2014

1.2

What Does "Paccaya" Mean in Paticca Samuppāda? - Effect not Guaranteed (11/21/14)
Memory, Brain, Mind, Nama Loka, Kamma Bhava, Kamma Vipāka (11/19/14)
Saddharma Pundarika Sutra (Lotus Sutra) - A Focused Analysis (11/16/14)
Sadhu - Symbolizes Purified Hadaya Vatthu (Mind) (11/12/14)

Cuti-Patisandhi - An Abhidhamma Description (11/9/14) - Technical but informative!
Sotāpanna Magga and Phala - How to Distinguish (11/7/14)
Vinaya - The Nature Likes to be in Equilibrium (11/6/14)

### 21.4.1 October 2014

1.3

Najajja Vasalo Hoti. ..... (10/28/14)
Why Does the World Exist? (10/28/14)
Ariya Jhānā via Cultivation of Saptha Bojjanga (10/25/14)
Appamado Amata Padam.... (10/23/14)
Nirodha and Vaya - Two Different Concepts (10/19/14)
Difference Between Giving up Valuables and Losing Interest in Worthless (10/15/14)
Patisandhi Citta - How the Next Life is Determined According to Gati $(10 / 12 / 14)$
How Character (Gati) Leads to Bhava and Jāti (10/12/14)
A Simple Way to Enhance Merits (Kusala) and Avoid Demerits (Akusala) (10/7/14)
Buddhist Chanting - Introduction (10/4/14)
The Double Slit Experiment - Correlation between Mind and Matter? (10/2/14)

### 21.4.1 September 2014 <br> 1.4

Namaskaraya - What does it Really Mean? (9/29/14)
Javana of a Citta - The Root of Mental Power (9/26/14)
Tiratana Vandana - Supreme Characteristics (9/25/14)
Sutta Chanting (with Pāli Text) (9/25/14)
Panca Indriya and Panca Bala - Five Faculties and Five Powers (9/24/14)
Namaskaraya - Homage to the Buddha and The Five Precepts - Panca Sila (9/24/14) - new section on Buddhist Chanting

Sabba Papassa Akaranan...... (9/22/14) - new section on Dhammapada
What is Samādhi? - Three Kinds of Mindfuilness (9/17/14)
What Does Buddha Dhamma Say about Creator, Satan, Angels, and Demons? (9/16/14)
Ultimate Realities - Table (9/12/14)
First Noble Truth is Suffering? Myths about Suffering (9/11/14)
Kāma Tanhā, Bhava Tanhā, Vibhava Tanhā (9/9/14)
Lobha, Raga and Kamaccanda, Kamaraga (9/9/14)
Vipassana (Vidassana) Bhāvanā - Insight Meditation (9/7/14)
Ariya Metta Bhāvanā (Loving Kindness Meditation) (9/6/14)

### 21.4.1 August 2014 <br> 1.5

Conditions for the Four Stages of Nibbāna ( $8 / 31 / 14$ )
How Habits are Formed and Broken - A Scientific View (8/31/14)
Āsava, Anusaya, and Gati (Gathi) $(8 / 31 / 14)$
37 Factors of Enlightenment (8/30/14)
Second Law of Thermodynamics is Part of Anicca! (8/29/14)
Ghost in the Machine - A Synonym for the Manomaya Kāya? (8/24/14)
Key to Ānāpānasati-How to Change Habits and Character (Gati) (8/23/14)
The Five Precepts - What the Buddha Meant by Them (8/18/14)
Truine Brain - How the Mind Rewires the Brain via Meditation/Habits (8/15/14)

Implications of the Rebirth Process in Daily Life and in Society (8/14/14)
What is in a Thought? Why Gati are so Important? (8/12/14)
Why is it Necessary to Learn Key Pāli Words? (8/9/14)
Is Suffering the Same as the First Noble Truth on Suffering? (8/8/14)
"What is a Thought?" (8/7/14)
Akusala Citta and Akusala Vipāka Citta (8/6/14)

### 21.4.1 July 2014

1.6

What is Ānāpāna? (7/31/14)
Difference Between Dhamma and Sañkhāra (7/30/14)
Transfer of Merits (Pattidana) - How Does it Happen? (7/29/14)
Abhidhamma - Introduction (7/25/14)
Ten Moral Actions (Dasa Kusala) and Ten Meritorious Actions (Puñ̃̃a Kriya) (7/21/14)
Anicca - The Incessant Distress ("Pilana") (7/18/14)
Anantara and Samanantara Paccaya (7/15/14)
Dhamma and Philosophy - Introduction (7/3/14)
Philosophy of the Mind (7/3/14)

### 21.4.1 June 2014

1.7

Myths about Meditation (6/26/14)
Myths about the Sotāpanna Stage (6/23/14)
Dhamma and Philosophy ( $6 / 21 / 14$ )
I did not document to postings by date before $6 / 21 / 14$.
Postings started in January 2014.
21.4.12 Revised Posts April - July 2017

What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Samsāra) - 6/30/17
Tables and Summaries - 6/30/17
Sañkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka - 6/23/17
Welcome! - 6/17/17

Parinibbāna of Waharaka Thero - 6/17/17
Key Dhamma Concepts - 6/17/17
Historical Background - Introduction - 6/2/17
Pāli Glossary - (A-K) - 6/2/17
Pāli Glossary - (L-Z) - 6/2/17
Viññāna - What It Really Means - 5/27/17
Complexity of Life and the Way to Seek "Good Rebirths" - 5/22/17
Bhava and Jāti - States of Existence and Births Therein - 5/14/17
What is the only Akusala Removed by a Sotāpanna? - 5/14/17
Misinterpretation of Anicca and Anatta by Early European Scholars - 5/7/17
Rebirth - Connection to Suffering in the First Noble Truth - 5/7/17
Mahā Cattārissaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty) - 5/7/17
Background on the Current Revival of Buddha Dhamma - 4/30/17
Sutta Interpretation - Uddesa, Niddesa, Patiniddesa - 4/24/17
Difference Between Dhamma and Sañkhāra - 4/24/17
Nibbāna "Exists", but Not in This World - 4/24/17
Answers to Criticism of Pure Dhamma In - 4/24/17
Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta - Wrong Interpretations - 4/17/17
Historical Timelines of Buddha Dhamma and Sri Lanka - End of Sinhala Commentaries - 4/8/17
7. What is Ānāpāna? - 4/8/17

Āsava, Anusaya, and Gati (Gathi) - 4/3/17

### 21.4.13 Revised Posts - January to March 2017

Difference Between Dhamma and Sañkhāra - 3/25/17
How Does One Know whether the Sotāpanna Stage is Reached? - 3/25/17
Welcome! - $3 / 11 / 17$
About-3/11/17
Pāli Dictionaries - Are They Reliable? - 3/11/17
Why is it Necessary to Learn Key Pāli Words? - 3/5/17
Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways - 2/12/17
Need to Experience Suffering in Order to Understand it? - 2/6/17
Pure Dhamma - Reflections on 2016-1/8/17

### 21.4.14 Revised Posts - 2017

What is Suñyāta or Suñ̃nāta (Emptiness)? - 1/2/18
Pure Dhamma Discussion Forum Guidelines - 1/2/18
The Origin of Matter - Suddhatthaka - 1/2/18
Anatta - the Opposite of Which Atta? - 1/2/18
Animisa Locana Bodhi Poojāwa - A Prelude to Acts of Gratitude - 12/7/17
Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta - According to Some Key Suttā - 12/7/17
Indriya and Āyatana - Big Difference - 12/7/17
Noble Eightfold Path - Role of Sobhana Cetasika - 12/7/17

Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala) - 12/1/17
Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta - Wrong Interpretations - 12/1/17
Sañkhāra - Life is a Bundle of Sañkhāra - 12/1/17
What is Suñyāta or Suññāta (Emptiness)? - 12/1/17
How to Cultivate Anicca Saññā - 12/1/17
How to Cultivate the Anicca Saññā - II - 12/1/17
Wrong Views (Micchā Ditthi) - A Simpler Analysis - 12/1/17
Mahā Chattārisaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty) - 12/1/17
Pabhassara Citta, Radiant Mind, and Bhavañga - 12/1/17
Cattāro Āhāra for Mental Body or Gandhabba - 12/1/17
Preservation of the Dhamma - 11/15/17
Dasa Akusala and Anatta - The Critical Link - 11/15/17
Difference Between Dhammā and Sañkhāra - 11/10/17
Pancupādānakkhandha - It is All Mental - 11/10/17
How Are Paticca Samuppāda Cycles Initiated? - 11/10/17
Anatta - the Opposite of Which Atta? - 11/10/17
Akusala Citta and Akusala Vipāka Citta - 11/10/17
What are rūpa? - Dhammā are rūpa too! - 11/10/17
The Four Stages in Attaining Nibbāna - 11/2/17
How Are Gati and Kilesa Incorporated into Thoughts? - 11/2/17
Preservation of the Dhamma - 11/2/17
Satipatthāna Sutta - Structure - 11/2/17
How Are Paticca Samuppāda Cycles Initiated? - 10/18/17
Ascendance to Nibbāna via Jhāna (Dhyāna) - 10/12/17

Kāma Assāda Start with Phassa Paccaya Vedanā or Samphassa Ja Vedanā - 10/12/17
Tanhhā - How We Attach Via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance - 10/12/17
Abnormal Births Due to Gandhabba Transformations - 10/12/17
User's Guide to Pure Dhamma Website - 10/2/17
Gandhabba State - Evidence from Tipitaka - 10/2/17
Arogyā Paramā Lābhā.. - 10/2/17
Four Conditions for Attaining Sotāpanna Magga/Phala - 10/2/17
Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta - Wrong Interpretations - 9/18/17
Nirāmisa Sukha - 9/18/17
7. What is Ānāpāna? - 9/3/17

Is Ānāpānasati Breath Meditation? - 9/3/17
The 89 (121) Types of Citta - 9/3/17
Gathi (Character), Anusaya (Latent Defilements), and Āsava (Cravings) - 9/3/17
Anicca - Inability to Keep What We Like - 8/21/17
Anicca - Repeated Arising/Destruction - 8/21/17
Sotāpanna Anugāmi and a Sotāpanna - 8/21/17
Manomaya Kāya (Gandhabbaya) and the Physical Body - 8/6/17
10. Attaining the Sotāpanna Stage via Removing Ditthasava - 8/6/17
11. Magga Phala via Cultivation of Saptha Bojianga - 8/6/17

What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Samsāra) - 6/30/17
Tables and Summaries - 6/30/17
Sañkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka - 6/23/17
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Bhava and Jāti - States of Existence and Births Therein - 5/14/17

What is the only Akusala Removed by a Sotāpanna? - 5/14/17
Misinterpretation of Anicca and Anatta by Early European Scholars - 5/7/17
Rebirth - Connection to Suffering in the First Noble Truth - 5/7/17
Mahā Cattārīsaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty) - 5/7/17
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Difference Between Dhamma and Sañkhāra - 4/24/17
Nibbāna "Exists", but Not in This World - 4/24/17
Answers to Criticism of Pure Dhamma In - 4/24/17
Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta - Wrong Interpretations - 4/17/17
Historical Timelines of Buddha Dhamma and Sri Lanka - End of Sinhala Commentaries - 4/8/17
7. What is Ānāpāna? - 4/8/17

Gathi (Character), Anusaya (Latent Defilements), and Āsava (Cravings) - 4/3/17

Difference Between Dhamma and Sañkhāra - 3/25/17
How Does One Know whether the Sotāpanna Stage is Reached? - 3/25/17
Welcome! - 3/11/17
About - 3/11/17
Pāli Dictionaries - Are They Reliable? - 3/11/17
Why is it Necessary to Learn Key Päli Words? - 3/5/17
Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways - 2/12/17
Need to Experience Suffering in Order to Understand it? - 2/6/17
Pure Dhamma - Reflections on 2016-1/8/17

Revised Posts April - July 2017
Revised Posts - January to March 2017

### 21.4.15 Revised Posts - 2016

December 2016 Revisions
November 2016 Revisions
October 2016 Revisions
September 2016 Revisions
August 2016 Revisions
July 2016 Revisions

June 2016 Revisions
May 2016 Revisions
April 2016 Revisions
March 2016 Revisions
February 2016 Revisions
January 2016 Revisions

### 21.4.1 January 2016 Revisions <br> 5.1

Majiima Patipada - Way to Relinquish Attachments to this World - 1/30/16
Need to Experience Suffering in Order to Understand it? - 1/22/16
What is Buddha Dhamma? - 1/22/16
Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta Interpretation - Uddesa, Niddesa, Patiniddesa - 1/22/16
There are as many creatures on your body as there are people on Earth! $-1 / 22 / 16$
Quantum Entanglement - We Are All Connected - 1/22/16
Sutta Interpretation - Uddesa, Niddesa, Patiniddesa - 1/17/16
What is Sunyata or Sunnata (Emptiness)? $-1 / 1 / 16$
Sañkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka - 1/1/16

### 21.4.1 February 2016 Revisions <br> 5.2

Udayavaya Nāna - Introduction - 2/23/16
Four Conditions for Attaining Sotāpanna Magga/Phala - 2/19/16
Uadayavaya Nāna - Introduction - 2/19/16
Sotāpanna Stage of Nibbāna - 2/12/16
The Four Stages in Attaining Nibbāna - 2/4/16

### 21.4.1 March 2016 Revisions

5.3

Udayavaya Ñāna
Manomaya Kāya -3/26/16
Gati, Bhava, and Jāti -3/26/16
Four Conditions for Attaining Sotāpanna Magga/Phala -3/26/16
Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala) -3/26/16
Ten Moral Actions (Dasa Kusala) and Ten Meritorious Actions (Puñña Kriya) -3/26/16
Bhāvanā (Meditation) -3/26/16
Javana of a Citta - The Root of Mental Power - 3/20/16
What Are Rūpa? (Relation to Nibbāna) - 3/20/16

### 21.4.1 April 2016 Revisions <br> 5.4

Manomaya Kāya and Out-of-Body Experience (OBE) -4/30/16
What Does "Paccaya" Mean in Paticca Samuppāda? -4/30/16
Does any Object (Rūpa) Last only 17 Thought Moments? -4/30/16
Gandhabbayā (Manomaya Kāya)- Introduction -4/23/16
Manomaya Kāya (Gandhabbayā) and the Physical Body -4/23/16
Neuroscience says there is no Free Will? - That is a Misinterpretation! -4/23/16
Ditthi (Wrong Views), Sammā Ditthi (Good/Correct Views) -4/9/16
Three Kinds of Ditthi, Eightfold Paths, and Samādhi -4/9/16
Mahā Cattārīsaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty) -4/9/16
Manomaya Kāya - Introduction -4/9/16
Does any Object (Rūpa) Last only 17 Thought Moments? -4/9/16
Hidden World of the Gandhabbayā: Netherworld (Paralowa) -4/9/16
Kamma, Debt, and Meditation -4/9/16
3. The Second Level - Key to Purify the Mind $-4 / 2 / 16$

Wrong Views (Micchā Ditthi) - A Simpler Analysis -4/2/16
Seeking Nibbāna -4/2/16

## ${ }_{5}^{21.4 .1}$ May 2016 Revisions <br> 5.5

31 Realms of Existence - 5/28/16
Namaskaraya - Homage to the Buddha - 5/28/16
Does the Hell (Niraya) Exist? - 5/21/16
Viññāna (Consciousness) - 5/21/16
Patisandhi Citta - How the Next Life is Determined According to Gati-5/21/16
Our Two Worlds: Material and Immaterial - 5/21/16
Sañkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka - 5/14/16
Sorting out Some Key Pāli Terms (Tanhā, Lobha, Dosa, Moha, etc) - 5/7/16

### 21.4.1 June 2016 Revisions

5.6

Can Buddhist Meditation be Dangerous? - 6/25/16
Bhāvanā (Meditation) - 6/25/16
Myths or Realities? - 6/25/16
Is Eating Meat an Akusala Kamma (Immoral Deed)? - 6/5/16
Transfer of Merits (Pattidana) - How Does it Happen? - 6/5/16
Tisarana Vandana and Its Effects on One's Gati - 6/5/16

### 21.4.1 July 2016 Revisions

5.7

Ditthi (Wrong Views), Sammā Ditthi (Good/Correct Views) - 7/30/16
About - 7/30/16
Welcome! - 7/30/16
Possible Effects in Meditation - Kundalini Awakening - 7/23/16
Vision (Cakkhu Viñ̃̃āna) is Not Just Seeing - 7/23/16
Hetu-Phala, Paccuppanna, and Paticca Samuppāda - 7/9/16
Possible Effects in Meditation - Kundalini Awakening - 7/2/16
Sorting out Some Key Pāli Terms (Tanhā, Lobha, Dosa, Moha, etc - 7/2/16

## ${ }_{5.8}^{21.4 .1}$ August 2016 Revisions

Peace of Mind to Nibbāna - The Key Step (Nirāmisa Sukha to Nibbāna Suva - The Key Step) - 8/26/16
Starting on the Path Even without Belief in Rebirth - 8/26/16
Good Explanations - Key to Weeding Out Bad Versions of Dhamma - 8/26/16
How do we Decide which View is Wrong View (Ditthi)? - 8/26/16
Sutta Chanting (with Pāli Text) - 8/19/16
Need to Experience Suffering in Order to Understand it? - 8/19/16
A Buddhist or a Bhauddhayā? - 8/19/16
Buddhism without Rebirth and Nibbāna? - 8/19/16
Ten Moral Actions (Dasa Kusala) and Ten Meritorious Actions (Puñña Kriya) - 8/10/16
Popup Pāli Glossary with Pronunciation - 8/12/16
Sutta Chanting (with Pāli Text) - 8/6/16
Key to Calming the Mind - The Five Hindrances - 8/6/16
What Reincarnates? - Concept of a Lifestream - 8/6/16
Conditions for the Four Stages of Nibbāna - 8/6/16
Kilesa (Defilements), Diṭ̣hi (Wrong Views), Sammā Ditṭhi (Good/Correct Views) revised to "Ditthi (Wrong Views), Sammā Ditthi (Good/Correct Views)" - 8/6/16

## ${ }_{5.9}^{21.4 .1}$ September 2016 Revisions <br> 5.9

How Are Paticca Samuppāda Cycles Initiated? - 9/23/16
Nibbāna - Is it Difficult to Understand? - 9/23/16
Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways - 9/11/16
Bhava and Jāti- States of Existence and Births Therein - 9/11/16
Myths about the Sotāpanna Stage - 9/11/16
Patisandhi Citta - How the Next Life is Determined According to Gati $-9 / 11 / 16$
Living Dhamma - 9/11/16
What Are Kilesa (Mental Impurities)? - Connection to Cetasika - 9/3/16

Satipatthāna Sutta - Structure - 9/3/16

### 21.4.1 October 2016 Revisions

### 5.10

13. Kammattana (Recitations) for the Sotāpanna Stage - 10/23/16

Is Eating Meat an Akusala Kamma (Immoral Deed)? - 10/7/16
Misinterpretations of Buddha Dhamma - 10/7/16
Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)
Truine Brain: How the Mind Rewires the Brain via Meditation/Habits - 10/1/16
Starting on the Path Even without Belief in Rebirth - 10/1/16
Suffering in This Life - Role of Mental Impurities - 10/1/16
Satipatthāna Sutta - Relevance to Suffering in This Life - 10/1/16
Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception - 10/1/16

### 21.4.1 November 2016 Revisions

5.11

Nibbāna "Exists", but Not in This World - 11/30/16
Our Two Worlds: Material and Immaterial - 11/30/16
10. Attaining the Sotāpanna Stage via Removing Ditthasava - 11/12/16
11. Magga Phala and Ariya Jhānā via Cultivation of Saptha Bojjanga - 11/12/16
12. Key Factors to be Considered when "Meditating" for the Sotāpanna Stage - 11/12/16
13. Kammattana (Recitations) for the Sotāpanna Stage - 11/12/16

New Approach to Meditation - 11/12/16

### 21.4.1 December 2016 Revisions

5.12

Welcome! - 12/26/16
How Are Gati and Kilesa Incorporated into Thoughts? - 12/26/16
Rebirth - Connection to Suffering in the First Noble Truth - 12/26/16
Truine Brain: How the Mind Rewires the Brain via Meditation/Habits - 12/26/16
Nibbāna - Is it Difficult to Understand? - 12/26/16
Living Dhamma - 12/26/16
Peace of Mind to Nibbāna - The Key Step - 12/21/16
Myths about the Sotāpanna Stage - 12/8/16
Sansāric Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Āsava) - 12/8/16
Living Dhamma - 12/8/16
Living Dhamma - Overview - 12/8/16
Living Dhamma - Fundamentals - 12/8/16

Mundane Sammā Samādhi - 12/8/16

### 21.4.16 Revised Posts - 2015

December 2015 Revisions
November 2015 Revisions

## October 2015 Revisions

September 2015 Revisions
August 2015 Revisions
July 2015 Revisions
June 2015 Revisions
May 2015 Revisions
April 2015 Revisions

### 21.4.1 December 2015 Revisions <br> 6.1

The Five Aggregates (Pañcakkhandha) - 12/26/15
Gati to Bhava to Jāti - Ours to Control - 12/20/15

Three Levels of Practice - 12/20/15
Vinaya - The Nature Likes to be in Equilibrium - 12/20/15
Vedanā (Feelings) - 12/20/15
What Does "Paccaya" Mean in Paticca Samuppāda? - 12/20/15
How Are Paticca Samuppāda Cycles Initiated? - 12/20/15
Evidence for Rebirth - 12/12/15
Difference Between Dhamma and Sañkhāra - 12/12/15
Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways - 12/12/15
Āsvada (Mind-Made Pleasures), Ādeenava (Bad Outcomes), Nissarana (Relinquish) - 12/12/15
Tables and Summaries -12/6/15
Cuti-Patisandhi - An Abhidhamma Description - 12/6/15
Citta Vithi - Processing of Sense Inputs - 12/6/15
Sañkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka -12/6/15
5. Ariya Metta Bhāvanā (Loving Kindness Meditation) - 12/6/15

### 21.4.1 November 2015 Revisions

6.2

Philosophy of the Mind $-11 / 28 / 15$
Abhidhamma - 11/28/15
Dhamma and Philosophy - Introduction - 11/20/15
Sutta Interpretations - 11/20/15
Paticca Samuppāda - 11/20/15
Āsvada, Ādeenava, Nissarana - Introduction - 11/20/15
What is "Kāma"? It is not Sex - 11/20/15
Javana of a Citta - The Root of Mental Power - 11/20/15
Dhammapada - 11/20/15
4. What do all these Different Meditation Techniques Mean? - 11/14/15

Is Buddha Dhamma (Buddhism) a Religion? - 11/14/15
Why a Sotāpanna is Better off than any King, Emperor, or a Billionaire - 11/14/15
Moral Living and Fundamentals - 11/14/15
Bhāvanā (Meditation) - 11/14/15
Sotāpanna Stage of Nibbāna - 11/14/15
"Self" and "no-self": A Simple Analysis - Do We Always Act with Avijijā? - 11/7/15
Paticca Samuppāda - Overview - 11/7/15
Philosophy of the Mind - 11/7/15
Key to Calming the Mind - The Five Hindrances - 11/7/15
Welcome! - 11/3/15
Key Dhamma Concepts - 11/3/15
Dhamma and Philosophy - 11/3/15
Does any Object (Rūpa) Last Only 17 Thought Moments? - 11/3/15
The 89 (121) Types of Citta - 11/3/15
21.4.1 October 2015 Revisions
6.3

Āsvada (Mind-Made Pleasures), Ādeenava (Bad Outcomes), Nissarana (Relinquish) - 10/24/15
Akusala-Mūla Paticca Samuppāda - 10/17/15
Paticca Samuppāda in Plain English - 10/17/15
Sotāpanna Anugāmi and a Sotāpanna - 10/17/15

Five Aggregates - Introduction - 10/17/15
How to Cultivate the Noble Eightfold Path starting with Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta - 10/17/15
Pāli Glossary - 10/9/15
Ghost in the Machine - Synonym for the Manomaya Kāya? - 10/9/15
Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta - Wrong Interpretations - 10/9/15
Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala) - 10/3/15
Ten Moral Actions (Dasa Kusala) and Ten Meritorious Actions (Puñña Kriya) - 10/3/15
Arogya Parama Labha.. - 10/3/15
The Five Precepts - What the Buddha Meant by Them - 10/3/15

### 21.4.1 September 2015 Revisions <br> 6.4

Anicca - Repeated Arising/Destruction - 9/25/15
Anicca - Inability to Keep What We Like - 9/25/15
The Four Bases of Mental Power (Cattāro Iddhipāda) - 9/25/15
Does the First Noble Truth Describe only Suffering? - 9/25/15
What is the only Akusala Removed by a Sotāpanna? - $9 / 25 / 15$
Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala) - 9/25/15
How to Evaluate Weights of Different Kamma - 9/25/15
Anicca - Repeated Arising/Destruction - 9/18/15
Anatta and Dukkha - True Meanings - 9/18/15
Nirāmisa Sukha - In a Chart - 9/18/15
Learning Buddha Dhamma Leads to Nirāmisa Sukha - 9/18/15
Manomaya Kāya and Physical Body - 9/18/15
7. What is Ānāpāna? - 9/18/15

Learning Buddha Dhamma Leads to Nirāmisa Sukha - 9/12/15
What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Samisāra) - 9/12/15
Second Law of Thermodynamics is Part of Anicca! - 9/12/15
About - 9/12/15
Welcome! - 9/12/15
Paticca Samuppāda - 9/12/15
Sañ̃̃ā (Perception) - 9/4/15

How to Cultivate the Anicca Saññā - 9/4/15
10. Attaining the Sotāpanna Stage via Removing Ditthasava - 9/4/15

Nirāmisa Sukha - 9/4/15

### 21.4.1 August 2015 Revisions <br> 6.5

Difference Between Dhamma and Sañkhāra - 8/29/15
Nibbāna - Is it Difficult to Understand? - 8/29/15
Vedanā (Feelings) - 8/29/15
Lobha, Dosa, Moha versus Raga, Patigha, Avijijā - 8/29/15
The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma - 8/21/15
Why is Correct Interpretation of Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta so Important - 8/21/15
Citta Vithi - Processing of Sense Inputs $-8 / 14 / 15$
Difference Between Dhamma and Sañkhāra (Sankata) - 8/14/15
Abhidhamma - Introduction - 8/14/15
Javana of a Citta - The Root of Mental Power - 8/14/15
Sansāric Time Scale - 8/14/15
Four Conditions for Attaining Sotāpanna Magga/Phala - 8/7/15
Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta - According to Some Key Suttā - 8/7/15
"Spark" by John Ratey - 8/7/15
What is a Thought $-8 / 7 / 15$
What is Mind? How do we Experience the Outside World? - 8/7/15

### 21.4. July 2015 Revisions <br> 6.6

11. Magga Phala and Ariya Jhānā via Cultivation of Saptha Bojjanga - 7/30/15

Sotāpanna Anugāmi and a Sotāpanna - 7/28/15
The Sotāpanna Stage - 7/28/15
What is Unique in Buddha Dhamma? - $7 / 28 / 15$
Buddha Dhamma - In a Chart - 7/28/15

Six Kinds of Consciousness in Our 3-D World -7/17/15
Why Do People Enjoy Immoral Deeds? - Ditthi Is Key - 7/4/15
Why is it Necessary to Learn Key Pāli Words? - 7/4/15

Dhamma and Philosophy - Introduction - 7/4/15
Sotāpanna Magga and Phala - How to Distinguish - 7/4/15
Gathi (Character), Anusaya (Latent Defilements), and Āsava (Cravings) - 7/4/15
10. Magga Phala and Ariya Jhānā via Cultivation of Saptha Bojjanga - 7/4/15

Possible Outcomes of Meditation - Samādhi, Jhāna, Magga Phala - 7/4/15
Truine Brain: How the Mind Rewires the Brain via Meditation/Habits - 7/4/15

### 21.4.1 June 2015 Revisions

6.7

Key Problems with Mahāyāna Teachings - 6/26/15
Sutta Chanting (with Pāli Text) - 6/26/15
What Reincarnates? - Concept of a Lifestream $-6 / 26 / 15$
Bhava and Jāti - States of Existence and Births Therein - 6/26/15
Manomaya Kāya and Physical Body - 6/26/15
What is Unique in Buddha Dhamma? - 6/26/15
Five Aggregates - Introduction - 6/26/15
Welcome! -6/20/15
Akusala Citta and Akusala Vipāka Citta -6/20/15
What is a Thought? $-6 / 20 / 15$
Sabba Papassa Akaranan.... -6/20/15
A Buddhist or a Bhauddhayā? - $6 / 20 / 15$
Sañkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka -6/20/15
What is Kamma? - Is Everything Determined by Kamma? -6/20/15
5. Ariya Metta Bhāvanā (Loving Kindness Meditation) -6/20/15
11. How to Select and "Grow" Meditation Procedures for Magga Phala -6/20/15

Preservation of the Dhamma -6/20/15
First Noble Truth is Suffering? Myths about Suffering -6/14/15
Kilesa (Defilements) , Diṭthi (Wrong Views), Sammā Diṭ̣hi (Good/Correct Views) -6/14/15
Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta - Wrong Interpretations -6/14/15
Buddhist Chanting - Introduction -6/14/15
Sotāpanna Stage of Nibbāna -6/14/15
Buddha Dhamma - In a Chart - 6/6/15

What is Unique in Buddha Dhamma? $-6 / 6 / 15$
Myths about the Sotāpanna Stage -6/6/15
Cetasika (Mental Factors) -6/6/15
Consciousness Dependence on Number of Dimensions -6/6/15
Akusala Citta and Akusala Vipāka Citta -6/6/15
How to Cultivate the Anicca Saññā - 6/2/15
Rebirth - Connection to Suffering in the First Noble Truth $-6 / 2 / 15$
Ghost in the Machine - Synonym for the Manomaya Kāya? - 6/2/15

### 21.4.1 May 2015 Revisions <br> 6.8

Does the First Noble Truth Describe only Suffering? - 5/25/15
The Way to Nibbāna - Removal of Āsavas - 5/25/15
Three Levels of Practice - 5/25/15
Gödel's Incompleteness Theorem - 5/25/15
How do we Decide which View is Wrong View (Ditthi)? - 5/25/15
Key to Calming the Mind - The Five Hindrances - 5/25/15
Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta - Wrong Interpretations - 5/25/15
Anicca - The Incessant Distress ("Pilana") $-5 / 25 / 15$
Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta - 5/25/15

1. Thoughts (Citta), Consciousness (Viññāna), and Mind (Hadaya Vatthu) - Introduction -5/15/15

How to Taste Nibbāna -5/15/15
Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta - Wrong Interpretations -5/15/15
The Way to Nibbāna - Removal of Āsavas -5/15/15
How Does One Know whether the Sotāpanna Stage is Reached? -5/15/15
Akusala Citta - How a Sotāpanna Avoids Apayagami Citta -5/15/15
The Cooling Down Process (Nibbāna) - How Root Causes are Removed -5/15/15
Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala) -5/9/15
10.Ariya Jhānā via Cultivation of Saptha Bojjanga -5/9/15

Infinity - How Big Is It? -5/9/15
Misinterpretations of Buddha Dhamma -5/9/15
Abhidhamma - Introduction -5/9/15

The 89 (121) Types of Citta -5/9/15
Why a Sotāpanna is Better off than any King, Emperor, or a Billionaire $-5 / 9 / 15$
Welcome! -5/4/15
Buddhism without Rebirth and Nibbāna? -5/4/15
What is Buddha Dhamma? -5/4/15
Pāli Glossary -5/4/15

### 21.4.1 April 2015 Revisions <br> 6.9

Vinaya - The Nature Likes to be in Equilibrium -4/30/15
What is Mind? How do we Experience the Outside World? - 4/30/15
Anicca - Inability to Keep What We Like - 4/30/15
Transfer of Merits (Pattidana) - How Does it Happen? - 4/25/15
Anatta and Dukkha - True Meanings - - 4/25/15
Nibbāna - Is it Difficult to Understand? - - 4/25/15

### 21.4.17 Revised Posts - 2014

Evidence for Rebirth (9/30/14)
Four Bases of Mental Power (Satara Iddhipada) 9/6/14
Introduction to Buddhist Meditation (8/26/14)
What is Avijjā (Ignorance)? (8/26/14)
Neuroscience Says There is no Free Will? - That is a Misinterpretation! (8/25/14)
The 89 Types of Citta ( $8 / 3 / 14$ )
Preservation of the Dhamma ( $8 / 2 / 14$ )
How do we Decide Which View is Wrong View (Ditthi)? (7/28/14)
Sañkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka (7/20/14)
The Five Aggregates (Pañcakkhandha) (7/10/14)
Akusala Citta - How a Sotāpanna Avoids Apayagami Citta (7/8/14)
What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Samsāra)(7/8/14)
Kilesa (Defilements), Diṭthi (Wrong Views), Sammā Diṭ̣hi (Good/Correct Views) (7/8/14)
Foundation of Dhamma (6/30/14)

### 21.5 Buddha Dhamma - In a Chart

I have made a single page chart that shows the uniqueness of the Buddha's message, and also outlines the Path that he suggested clearly.

The pdf file can be saved or printed for reference:
WebLink: PDF File: Buddha Dhamma - In a Chart


Discussion of the chart is at:
What is Unique in Buddha Dhamma?

### 21.6 Pure Dhamma Essays in Book Format

For those who may like to read the posts in epub book format, please download it at the below website: WebLink: Pure Dhamma Essays in Book Format

### 21.7 Nirāmisa Sukha - In a Chart

There are several posts at the site on "nirāmisa sukha." It is NOT a feeling (vedanā) in the sense of a sense pleasure; it does not belong in the vedana cetasika. It is a "sense of relief" when one starts realizing the "burdens" associated with sense pleasures.

- The closest analogy (if one can be given) is the feeling one gets when one is relieved of an headache that one had since birth.

I have made a single page chart that shows how the nirāmisa sukha starts as one starts when one first hears the true message of the Buddha and starts comprehending it, and becomes a Sotāpanna Anugami. Then it makes permanent stepwise jumps at the four stages of Nibbāna culminating in the Arahanthood.

The pdf file can be saved or printed for reference:

## WebLink: PDF File: Nirāmisa Sukha - In a Chart

Discussion of the chart is at:
Learning Buddha Dhamma Leads to Nirāmisa Sukha

### 21.8 Popup Pali Glossary with Pronunciation

February 20, 2020: Updated \#5 URL Link for Windows and Mobile iPhone/iPad. Added at \#5 and \#7Plain Dictionary for Mobile Android. (by Seng Kiat Ng)
August 12, 2016: Mr. Seng Kiat Ng added the new words in the two new posts "Pāli Glossary - (A-K)" and "Pāli Glossary - (L-Z)" to the pop-up dictionary, so that there are now a total of 414 Pāli words. Please download the two new files in \#3 below and delete the old files, if you have already installed the GoldenDict dictionary.

- Installation instructions are given below for those who have not installed the pop-up GoldenDict dictionary, but would like to do so.


## January 7, 2016

This post was written by Mr. Seng Kiat Ng. Much merits to him and his family for this meritorious work. This is a very useful feature that can be used with any other site as well (by downloading other dictionaries; see below).

- Please remember that once you download the files as he instructed, you will be able to highlight a Pāli word (178 words as of today) in any of the posts at the site and a popup screen will display the English meaning. You also be able to hear the Pāli pronunciation if clicked on the audio button.
- The old Pāli Glossary (with the same 178 words) is still there in case anyone wants to peruse there; the audio files have been removed since they take too long to download.

1. We will be using the GoldenDict online dictionary platform. First, one needs to install it on one's computer and then download the two Puredhamma Pāli dictionary files to a folder on one's computer.

- Other online or downloadable (free) dictionaries can also be used as described below.

2. Goto http://goldendict.org/download.php and choose the version suitable for you. I chose the first option to download the Windows version.

- Download the .exe file and double click to run it and install it.
- Mine was installed in the C:Program Files (X86)\GoldenDict directory. There should a "GoldenDict.exe" file there. This is the "clickable icon" that will open the application. It does not automatically create this "clickable icon" on the desktop, so right click on that and make a copy on the desktop for convenience.
- Now the GoldenDict application can be opened by double clicking that link on the desktop.

3. Next download the two files (one text, one audio) for the Pāli dictionary from Puredhamma.net to a folder in your computer (could be the same "GoldenDict" folder above).

- Pure-Dhamma-Pāli-English Glossary [399 words] 25Feb2020.mdx (Text) Updated 25Feb2020
- Pure-Dhamma-Pāli-English Glossary [399 words] 25Feb2020.mdd (Audio) Updated 25Feb2020

You may want to close any other screens (other than the one with the "Download" button) that pop up with advertisements. Wait until the "Download" button becomes "clickable".
4. Now open the GoldenDict as instructed in \#2 above.

- Go to "Edit" and choose "Dictionaries" and then choose the folder that you put the above two Pāli Glossary files.
- Now, right next to the "search button" on GoldenDict, there is the "scan popup" option selection button indicated by a "pen like" symbol. Click on it to enable scan popups.
- Now, open any page on Puredhamma.net and select a Pāli word. If you are running Windows Explorer, just placing the cursor on the word will make the dictionary popup (if that word is one of the 414 words that are so far in the Pāli dictionary). Try "anicca" in a post to test because that word is there.
- If you have Google Chrome, you need to select the word (highlight) and hit CTRL+C+C (hold CTRL button and hit C twice) for it to popup.
- There is a "speaker" symbol there in the popup and you can click on it to play back the audio file (pronunciation).
- In order for the popup dictionary to work, GoldenDict must be opened at the same time.

5. Here is a complete list of options to download the GoldenDict platform:

- Windows GoldenDict-1.5.0-RC-517
- Mac OS X GoldenDict Early Access Builds for Mac OS X
- Linux GoldenDict Eng-Rus-En v1.1

Other Dictionary:

- Mobile Android Plain Dictionary BlueDict
- Mobile iPhone/iPad MDict (Windows, Android, IOS, Tools, Dictionary files)

6. You can use the GoldenDict platform to access other online or downloadable dictionaries (to be used either with this site or any other site). Some can be chosen at the "Edit" menu. Go to "Edit" and choose "Dictionaries" and on the second raw of that screen there are some online dictionaries that you can choose from.

- More information at the GoldenDict.org site.
- If you have two or more dictionaries loaded, then the popup will display translations provided by all of them (if that word is in them).

7. Other than GoldenDict, the following two platforms also could be used.

- Plain Dictionary (Android - Free, unlimited Dictionary with no advertisement)
- BlueDict (Android - Free; limited to 10 Dictionaries and with advertisement)
- MDict (Windows/IPhone/Ipad/Windows Mobile/Android - Free with limitations)


### 21.9 Reflections on 2019

## January 1, 2020

1. Puredhamma.net completed a full six years online. There are over 600 posts at the site. It may look challenging to navigate through.

- It may be difficult to get an idea about the layout of the website, especially for those who are using a mobile phone or a tablet. I recommend reviewing the "Pure Dhamma - Sitemap."
- I just went through the whole site and collected all the posts under specific sections and subsections.

2. I very much want to highlight the fact that Buddha Dhamma is not about hiding in a remote place and shying away from society or subjecting oneself to harsh living.

- It is not those enticing or seducing things that make us do immoral things and make our minds stressed in turn. rather it is our own defiled gati (habits/character) making us do immoral things.
- One with a purified mind can live in the most seductive place and yet not be perturbed.
- But to get there, one needs some self-control to stay away from such extremes initially. Learning pure Dhamma is the only way to break through that first barrier. Once the Sotāpanna stage is attained, one will never go back.

3. In his very first discourse to the five ascetics, the Buddha explained that there is nothing in this world that is worth to be taken as "mine." The First Noble Truth is not about the suffering that we experience in this life. In fact, some people may not even experience that much suffering in this life until the end.

- Rather, what the Buddha said is that we create CAUSES to bring about FUTURE SUFFERING if we ATTACH to worldly pleasures. We are not any different than a fish biting into a tasty bait, say, a worm. That fish does not see the hook hidden in the "delicious worm." It will be subjected to much suffering once it bites the worm, and the hook attaches to its mouth.
- The difficulty in our case is that the deeds we do to get those sensory pleasures may not show their CONSEQUENCES in this life. That is why it is useless to follow Buddha Dhamma if one does not believe in rebirth or kamma/vipāka.
- As long as we CRAVE for sensual pleasures (that is different from just experiencing them,) we WILL be born with bodies that are subjected to diseases, decay, and eventual death. See, "Is It Necessary for a Buddhist to Eliminate Sensual Desires?"

4. I had an experience that really "opened my eyes" early in 2019. A brain tumor about $2-3 \mathrm{~cm}$ in diameter was found in the frontal lobe of my brain. Within 5 weeks they were able to operate and remove the tumor. Luckily, it was non-cancerous.

- That experience was a reminder of how fickle this life is. I was lucky to be able to survive with just losing my sense of smell. If it was not found, the tumor could have grown more and damaged my vision too.
- We all should work towards Nibbāna as if we have only a short time to live. In fact, that was the last advice of the Buddha before his Parinibbāna: 'vayadhammā sañkhārā, appamādena sampādethā'" $t i$.

5. I discussed this key point in a recent post, "Icchā (Cravings) Lead to Upādāna and to Eventual Suffering." I highly recommend reading the new series of posts on "Origin of Life" and, in particular, the subsection there "Paticca Samuppāda - Not 'Self' or 'No-Self"

- However, those of you who are not familiar with the fundamentals of Buddha dhamma (Buddhism), I recommend first reviewing the "Pure Dhamma - Sitemap" and reading on the earlier sections there, or any sections of interest.
- First, one needs to get an idea of what Buddha Dhamma is.

6. I am appreciative of many kind comments on the usefulness of the site, and about personal achievements. That gives me confidence that there are people who can see the value of Pure Dhamma and can make genuine progress.

- Special thanks to Seng Kiat Ng from Singapore for putting together all the posts in an eBook format and for updating it every week as I write new posts and update old posts. He has done that for a few years now. He is also helping manage the discussion forum. The link to the eBook at, "Pure Dhamma Essays in Book Format."
- Tobias Große in Heilbad Heiligenstadt, Germany, has now translated many pages of pure dhamma to German. Here is the link: https://puredhamma/de
- Puredhamma.net is now available in Korean, thanks to Mr. Ja-nyun Kim and his son who is the manager (DHK) of the Puredhamma Study Group Cafe (https://cafe.naver.com/puredhamma). The link to the website is https $/ / /$ puredhamma.kr
- There are few others who are working on translations to their own languages.
- There are also several other disciples of the Waharaka Thero who are working diligently to deliver the true teachings of the Buddha in the Sinhala (and English) languages; see, "Parinibbāna of Waharaka Thero." We have also discussed others at the discussion forum.
- Christian Schoenrock has organized a group in Eastern Europe. He also has a forum discussing Pure Dhamma in English that is open to everyone: https://discordapp.com/invite/g6UWq4b
- Many others have contributed by pointing out errors in some posts leading to improvements. My goal is to have $100 \%$ inter-consistency as well as consistency with the Tipitaka. My thanks all of them.

7. I am happy about the status of the discussion forum at puredhamma.net. It completed the second full year on December 17th: "Forum."

- Even though only a limited number of people are posting there, the quality of discussions is good. I encourage questions and take each question seriously. Most people have not been exposed to key concepts, and are not aware of them due to no fault on their own.
- There have been few issues with the submission of comments within the last month or so. I am using a software package dedicated to Word Press websites, and they are working on the issue. If anyone has a problem in submitting a question/comment, please send me an email: lal@puredhamma.net.

Happy New Year!
May the Blessings of the Triple Gem (Buddha, Dhamma, Sañgha) be with you always!

### 21.10 Reflections on 2018

## January 1, 2019

1. Puredhamma.net completed full five years online. There are well over 500 posts at the site. It is getting a bit complex to browse through.

- I am thinking about splitting it to three sites based on the complexity of the material. May be something like: Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced.
- Even though there are many posts, I have not been able to adequately cover certain sections, especially Abhidhamma.

2. On the other hand, last year was an eye-opener for me, in that there is a need to explain basic concepts in Buddha Dhamma. I participated in a well-known Buddhist discussion forum, and only during the past three months or so that I realized that most people there do not have a basic understanding of the key concepts of Buddha Dhamma.

- Deep sutt $\bar{a}$ are discussed there without having an understanding of key concepts like the five aggregates: rūpa, vedanā, saññā, sañkhāra, viñ̃̄̄ạna.
- Since only a limited number of people make comments there, I am not certain how bad this problem really is.

3. I am seriously thinking about having a "sub-site" where introductory concepts in Buddha Dhamma are explained.

- That includes dasa akusala, Four Noble Truths, Noble Eightfold Path, and an introduction to Patticca Samuppāda.
- By the way, if you are new to puredhamma.net, please read the "Moral Living and Fundamentals" and the first subsections of the "Living Dhamma" section.
- It is absolutely necessary to learn the basics before getting into advanced concepts.

4. I am happy about the status of the discussion forum at puredhamma.net. It completed the first full year on December 17th: "Forum."

- Even though only a limited number of people are posting there, the quality of discussions is good. I encourage questions, and take each question seriously. Most people have not been exposed to key concepts, and are not aware of them due to no fault on their own.
- I am glad to see that at least a limited number of people are making significant progress due to those discussions. It is hard to explain everything in a post. Therefore, the forum is a good way to bring up points that I missed, or not paid enough attention to.
- My sincere thanks to all who are contributing to the discussions by proving their own input.

5. I am appreciative of many kind comments on the usefulness of the site, and about personal achievements; that gives me confidence that there are people who can see the value of Pure Dhamma and can make genuine progress.

- Special thanks to Seng Kiat Ng from Singapore for putting together all the posts in an eBook format and for updating it every week as I write new posts and update old posts. He is also helping manage the discussion forum.
- Tobias Große in Heilbad Heiligenstadt, Germany, has now translated many pages of puredhamma to German. Here is the link: https://puredhamma/de
- I understand that there is a Korean translation too. The person who is doing the work has written to me, but seems to want to stay anonymous.
- Christian Schoenrock has organized a group in Eastern Europe. He also has a forum discussing Pure Dhamma in English that is open to everyone: https:/discordapp.com/invite/g6UWq4b
- Many others have contributed by pointing out errors in some posts leading to improvements. My goal is to have $100 \%$ inter-consistency as well as consistency with the Tipitaka. My thanks all of them.


## Happy New Year!

May the Blessings of the Triple Gem (Buddha, Dhamma, Sañgha) be with you always!

### 21.11 Reflections on 2017

## January 1, 2018

1. Pure Dhamma discussion forum was launched on December 17. I had wanted to do that for a while, and I am glad to see that there are several good discussions started already. I hope more readers will take part, not only to ask questions but also to answer questions by others.

- Over the past few years, I have learned a lot by trying to answer questions put forth by others. Such questions force me to look at a given issue from a different point-of-view.
- Now more people can benefit in two ways: One can get answers from multiple people (different people look at the same issue from different angles), and everyone can benefit from the discussions.

2. I want to start working a new project that I have been wanting to do for a while. It is to illustrate the real connection between quantum mechanics and Buddha Dhamma. Some people have tried to do that highlighting "quantum weirdness", but in fact there is no weirdness in quantum mechanics.

- So, I hope the discussion forum will grow and I can only drop by once in a while.
- Forum guidelines and how to register: "Pure Dhamma Discussion Forum Guidelines."
- One does not need to register to read questions and comments by others.

3. Puredhamma.net is now available in German language, thanks to Mr. Tobias Große in Heilbad Heiligenstadt, Germany. Here is the link:

## https://puredhamma/de

- Professor J. M. R. Sarath Bandara has added more sections to the Sinhala translation of the Puredhamma website recently: Pure Dhamma - Sinhala Translation

4. I have personally made significant progress. Even though I am not certain that I have been released from the kāma loka, it seems I am almost there.

- However, I do not worry about specific attainments. I believe that if I pursue the Path, the fruits will appear naturally, just like a tree will grow and bear fruit if it is taken care of by providing water, sunlight, and nutrients.

5. I need to make a comment about the $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$, since there are some misconceptions. If one cultivates $j h \bar{a} n a$, the fourth Ariya jhāna can be attained only by an Anāgāmī. It is fairly easy to verify if one has attained the Anāgāmī stage (no cravings left for any sensual pleasures including sex, food, music, etc).

- When one attains the $A n \bar{a} g \bar{a} m \bar{\imath}$ stage, Samm $\bar{a} S a m a \bar{a} h i i$ is complete; hence if one has cultivated $j h \bar{a} n a$, one would attain the fourth Ariya jhāna.
- One finally attains the Arahant stage by completing Sammã Nāña and SammāVimutti: "atthāngehi samannāgato Sekhā, dasāngehi samannāgato Arahant", i.e., there are ten steps to the Arahant stage.
- These are discussed in detail at: "Samādhi, Jhāna (Dhyāna), Magga Phala."

6. A related issue is that one does not lose "kāma guna" associated with the human bhava (i.e., any sense pleasure like the ability to taste the sweetness of sugar) even when attaining the Arahant stage. One just loses any craving for them. One has seen the fruitlessness and dangers in craving for them.

- Therefore, one with any type of magga phala will still taste delicious food as such, or good music as pleasant, or feel the comfort in an air-conditioned room. These are "kāma guna" associated with the human bhava, and are removed only when an Arahant attains Parinibbāna, i.e., at the physical death of the body.
- This is explained in "Kāma Guna, Kāma, Kāma Rāga, Kāmaccandha".

7. Buddha's true message is contrary to the message embodied in all other religions and philosophies/world views. The goal is not to merely live a moral life, but also to see the dangers in "maintaining status quo" by just living a good, moral life: It is imperative to get out of the rebirth process in order to prevent unimaginable types of suffering in future lives.

- It is true that a "normal human mind" sees this as a pessimistic message. Stopping the rebirth process seems very drastic and disconcerting.
- Therefore, it is not even advisable to focus on that in the beginning. It is better to try to understand basic concepts first, as discussed in the first subsections in the "Living Dhamma" section (and the "Bhāvanā (Meditation)" section), and feel the increasing levels of nirāmisa sukha as one makes progress.
- When one advances to higher subsections of the "Living Dhamma" section, one will be reading advanced concepts. In the end, one would realize that the key message of the Buddha is actually the best message that one could receive and is more valuable than anything in this world.
- The unconventional message of the Buddha is "a world view that has never been known to the world" or "pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu." That is what I try to explain at this website in a systematic way.

8. If even a single person can attain the Sotāpanna stage, that would be worthwhile my time writing for even ten years. That means stopping an uncountable number of births in the ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$ for that person.

- But I know that number is higher even for a given year, based on emails that I receive. That will keep me going for as long as I can write. And there is so much to write! Even if I write for ten more years, there will still be more to write.
- Of course, I or anyone else cannot verify whether another has attained the Sotāpanna stage or any other magga phala. But even if one has become a Sotāpanna Anugāmi, he/she is an Ariya and is bound to attain the Sotāpanna stage in the immediate future. Sotāpanna Anugāmis are included in "Attha purisa puggala"" or the "Eight types of Noble Persons".

9. I am appreciative of many kind comments on the usefulness of the site, and about personal achievements; that gives me confidence that there are people who can see the value of pure Dhamma and can make genuine progress.

- My thanks also to those who made comments/suggestions/questions that have led to improvements of many web pages. Special thanks to Mr. Seng Kiat Ng from Singapore for putting together all the posts in an eBook format and for updating it every weekend as I write new posts and update old posts.
- Many others also pointed out many errors in posts which have led to improvements. My goal is to have $100 \%$ inter-consistency as well as consistency with the Tipitaka.
- I also want to illustrate that there is no need to consult late commentaries like Visuddhimagga; that can only lead to confusion. I have shown many inconsistencies in them; see, "Historical Background." There are three original commentaries included with the Tipitaka and those are sufficient.

9. Finally, I always highlight the fact that Buddha Dhamma is not about hiding in a remote place and shying away from the society or subjecting oneself to harsh living.

- One with a purified mind can live in the most seductive place and yet not be perturbed. But of course to get to that point, one needs to gradually reduce attachment to excess sense pleasures, and to stay away from bad friends and bad environments (in order to see for oneself how much "peace of mind" can be realized).
- It is not those enticing or seducing things that make us do immoral things and make our minds stressed in turn; rather it is our own defiled minds making us do immoral things (defilements can vary from hate and excess greed to just being ignorant of the true nature of the world).
- All we need to do is to get rid of our bad gati (or gathi; I note that I have used both spellings over the years) and cultivate good gati. This is the key to Nibbāna. During that process, one will start feeling the
"cooling down", and then start comprehending anicca, dukkha, anatta, which leads to the Sotāpanna stage. Therefore, it is a step-by-step process.


## Happy New Year!

May the Blessings of the Triple Gem (Buddha, Dhamma, Sangha) be with you always!

### 21.12 Reflections on 2016

## January 1, 2017; revised (\#7) January 6, 2016

1. Buddha's true message is contrary to the message embodied in all other religions and philosophies/world views. The goal is not to just live a moral life, but also to see the dangers in "maintaining status quo" by just living a good, moral life. It is imperative to get out of the rebirth process in order to prevent unimaginable types of suffering in future lives.

- This unconventional message of the Buddha is "a world view that has never been known to the world" or "pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu."
- However, it is not possible for a "normal human mind" - no matter how brilliant - to comprehend the fact that this apparently pessimistic message of the Buddha is actually the best message that one could receive and is more valuable than anything in this world.

2. I know this by own experience and that is why I am willing to state this straightforwardly, even though it may scare off some, who have been erroneously led to believe that Buddha Dhamma (Buddhism) is not that different from other religions or world views that confine a life's goal to just to live a moral life.

- It is definitely true that one MUST live a moral life. If one lives an immoral life, one's mind will be too contaminated to grasp that critical message of the Buddha.

3. Expressed in a different way: One needs to live a moral life and follow the mundane Eightfold Path first to get rid of the worst defilements (cobwebs that cover the mind) so that one could grasp this unique message.

- So, after three years of writing, and contemplating how to guide someone through the easiest path to grasp that key message of the Buddha that goes against our traditional beliefs, I have started a new section - "Living Dhamma" - that can hopefully make this process easier.
- One starts at a place even without having to accept any key foundational concepts like kamma and kamma vipāka or the validity of the rebirth process.
- One does not need to believe in anything except one's own experience. Through the improvements in one's sense of well-being, one's mind will become clear and will be able to grasp the key aspects of Buddha Dhamma.

4. My goal is to make this section section the centerpiece of the website. Anyone - regardless of one's familiarity with Buddha Dhamma (Buddhism) - should start at the very beginning, because it is imperative to grasp the very basics. I have had enough correspondences with many readers over these three years to see that many have not fully grasped the basics; that could leave out key pieces in the big picture.

- It could be a big mistake to assume that one knows the basics and thus skip them.
- It is also a mistake to try to contemplate on concepts like anicca, dukkha, anatta or sunyata without grasping the essential fact that one needs to start experiencing the "peace of mind" (nirāmisa sukha) by staying away from those thoughts, speech, and actions that can defile and make a mind stressful and not susceptible to grasping "a world view that has never been known to the world".
- The goal should be to "capture the essence" and not to try to memorize everything. Bits and pieces of the jigsaw puzzle will start falling into place, leading to joyful "Aha! moments".

5. The website is completing three full years in existence, and I am glad that there an increased interest among countries all over the world despite the fact that pure Dhamma is unconventional.

- When one starts seeing and experiencing the "true Dhamma", it will become a joyful experience and one will be compelled to dig deeper and find more.

6. This is why I am appreciative of many kind comments on the usefulness of the site; that gives me confidence that there are people who can see the value of pure Dhamma.

- My thanks also to those who made comments/suggestions/questions that have led to improvements of many web pages. Special thanks to Mr. Seng Kiat Ng from Singapore for putting together all the posts in
an eBook format and for updating it every weekend as I write new posts and update some old posts. He and many others also pointed out many errors in posts which led to improvements.
- There are readers from many countries and for the year 2016, the top 20 countries are: United States, Singapore, New Zealand, Great Britain, Sri Lanka, Japan, China, Australia, India, Sweden, Hong Kong, Canada, Germany, Bulgaria, Thailand, France, Malaysia, Russian Federation, Indonesia, South Africa.
- A few more statistics from Google Analytics on user experience: Sessions $=50,688$; page views $=$ 720,269 ; Pages $/$ Session $=14.21$; Bounce Rate $=1.83 \% ; \%$ New Users $=54.41 \%$. And in December, $8.3 \%$ spent over an hour at a time at the site according to the web host.
- Pure Dhamma seems to have no national boundaries, as it should be. It describes the true nature of our world.

7. Another related comment from some is their anxiety of why it is taking too long for them to attain the Sotāpanna stage, and how can one know for sure whether one is even making progress.

- This is a very important question. The Buddha was asked the same question. His answer was: "Do not worry about those things day in and day out. Just concentrate on learning Dhamma and keep living by that Dhamma".
- His gave a simile: "How does a good farmer go about making sure that he gets a good harvest? He prepares the field, uses good seeds, and once they germinate he makes sure to keep the weeds out and provide necessary nutrients. He does not waste time worrying about the harvest".
- The best way to gauge one's progress is to look back and see whether one has made improvements in controlling one's anger and greed by being mindful of one's thoughts and actions.

8. I would like to share a personal experience that illustrates the "anicca nature" of this world. I eat healthy and exercise regularly (yoga and cardio), and have been able to avoid even a minor ailment since 2009. But two weeks ago, a herniated disk (which was first diagnosed in 2008) started giving me physical pain on my left arm/shoulder without any obvious physical cause.

- By the way, I can also confirm that it is impossible to get into $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$ when one is under such physical pain. Therefore, there is no relief from this obvious kamma vipāka.
This is a good example of the anicca nature: unexpected problems can arise even if you take necessary precautions. I must hasten to point out two facts:
- I am not saying that this happened without a cause. It is obviously a strong kamma vipāka that was hard to avoid despite taking precautions (eating well/exercise) or in the Abhidhamma language, not making bad conditions (samanantara paccayā) for such kamma vipāka to bear fruit.
- If I had not been engaging in a good exercise program or had not paid attention to what I eat, I am sure I would not have been able to go 7 years without a significant health problem.

But with my productivity plunging (it is almost impossible to concentrate with such acute pain), it has brought me back to reality.
9. Finally, I very much want to highlight the fact that Buddha Dhamma is not about hiding in a remote place and shying away from the society or subjecting oneself to harsh living.

- Even if one is not be able to attain the Sotāpanna stage in this life, the effort will not go to waste: it will make it easier in the future. As the Buddha advised, just follow the Path if it seems to make sense; results will follow.
- But to get there, one needs some self-control to stay away from such extremes initially. Learning pure Dhamma is the only way to break through that first barrier. Once the Sotāpanna stage is attained, one will never, ever go back. (if one becomes a Sotāpanna magga anugami, one will never go back in this human bhava, which could be many more human births).
- One with a purified mind can live in the most seductive place and yet not be perturbed.
- It is not those enticing or seducing things that make us do immoral things and make our minds stressed in turn; rather it is our own defiled minds (defilements can vary from hate and excess greed to just being ignorant of the true nature of the world) making us do immoral things.

Happy New Year!
May the Blessings of the Triple Gem (Buddha, Dhamma, Sangha) be with you always!

### 21.13 Reflections on 2015

## January 1, 2016

I started the website sometime in early January of 2014. I am pleasantly surprised to see a marked increase in audience in 2015 compared to 2014. Actually, the increase in time spent at the site (indicated by the bandwidth and pages) has increased much more than the number of visits. That is what I really like: those who "really get it" spend more time learning pure Dhamma.

1. First of all, my heartfelt thanks for the many kind comments on the usefulness of the site, and also making comments/suggestions/questions that have led to improvements of many web pages. Special thanks to Mr. Seng Kiat Ng from Singapore for putting together all the posts in an eBook format and for updating it every weekend as I write new posts and update some old posts; he has also pointed out many errors in posts which led to improvements.

- Many others have pointed out such errors and suggested improvements to the site, and I am grateful to all.
- There are readers from over 50 countries and for the month of December, 2015, the top 20 countries are: United States, Singapore, New Zealand, Great Britain, Sri Lanka, India, Australia, Malaysia, Bulgaria, Ecuador, Netherlands, China, Canada, France, Indonesia, Thailand, Austria, Brazil, Hong Kong, and Russian Federation. Pure Dhamma seems to have no national boundaries, as it should be. It describes the true nature of our world.
- In early December, 2015, I upgraded the hosting platform to have a virtual private server and it also seems to have helped speed up the page loading.
- If you encounter problems accessing the site, avoid the www in the address line: It should just be: https:/puredhamma.net. Normally, typing just "puredhamma.net" should direct to https://puredhamma.net. Or, one could Google search "puredhamma" and the link will come out on the top.
- I also upgraded to a more secure "https" from "http" just to assure that the content will not be tampered with. I encourage sharing or using anything that is on the site. Anyone is "free to copy" any of the content. Reference to the site is a courtesy, but not required.

2. The most common feedback I get is on the usefulness of the site. I appreciate those comments.

- When I started the site, some of my friends warned me that "pure Dhamma" is too difficult to understand, and I may turn off people. But my goal is to present the true message of the Buddha as much as possible. Not everyone may be able to understand it initially, but for those who can, it will be a life-changing experience as it has been for me.

3. Another related comment from some is their anxiety of why it is taking too long for them to attain the Sotāpanna stage, and how can one know for sure whether one is even making progress.

- This is a very important question. The Buddha was asked the same question. His answer was: "Do not worry about those things day in and day out. Just concentrate on learning Dhamma and on contemplating the anicca nature of this world. The rest will follow".
- His gave a simile: How does a good a farmer go about making sure that he gets a good harvest? He prepares the field, uses good seeds, and once they germinate he makes sure to keep the weeds out and provide necessary nutrients. He does not waste time worrying about the harvest",

4. In the same way, one just needs to learn pure Dhamma and live by it. One needs to understand what Nibbāna or Nivana is, in a step-by-step process. Initially, one does not need to worry about stopping the rebirth process (this is true even up to the Sotāpanna stage). One should first focus on "quenching the fires that burn inside": One should experience the "peace of mind" that is palpable when one gradually loses extreme greed, hate, and ignorance (not knowing the true nature of this world).

- "Ragakkhayo Nibbanan, dosakkhayo Nibbanan, Mohakkhayo Nibbanan" ("Cooling down is attained with getting rid of greed, hate, and ignorance") is valid from this initial "cooling down" all the way to the attainment of the Arahant stage. Just concentrate on getting rid of the strongest immoral acts via the body, speech, and the mind first.
- Thus the best way to gauge the progress is to see how much greed, hate, and ignorance has been lost over a given time.
- Here, "getting rid of ignorance" is an important aspect, which can come ONLY via learning Dhamma, i.e., only via learning the true nature of this world.

5. When one follows this basic process, one WILL start feeling the resulting cooling down. One will realize that one becomes more thoughtful and tolerant of others, even when they do inappropriate things.

- And with time, one will see that others also seem to act less harshly. It is hard to believe but one's mindset CAN affect how others treat oneself. It is a feedback loop that may not be noticeable initially, but will become apparent with time.

6. Then one day, one will realize that one does not have the gathi even remotely resembling of those in the four ap $\bar{a} y \bar{a}$ : no extreme hate suitable for a hell being, no extreme greed suitable for a preta (hungry ghost), no "animal gathi," and one does not have the mindset to rely on others (asura). Then one realizes that one is

## a Sotāpanna.

- When one understands that the consequences of extreme immoral acts can be much more harsh in the long-term compared to any short-lived satisfaction, then one's mind will automatically reject such thoughts. Comprehending the anicca nature will do the same.

7. I very much want to highlight the fact that Buddha Dhamma is not about hiding in a remote place and shying away from the society or subjecting oneself to harsh living.

- It is not those enticing or seducing things that make us do immoral things and make our minds stressed in turn; rather it is our own defiled minds (defilements can vary from vile to just being ignorant of the true nature of the world) making us do immoral things.
- One with a purified mind can live in the most seductive place and yet not be perturbed.
- But to get there, one needs some self-control to stay away from such extremes initially. Learning pure Dhamma is the only way to break through that first barrier. Once the Sotāpanna stage is attained, one will never, ever go back. (if one becomes a Sotāpanna magga anugami, one will never go back in this life).
- Even if one is not be able to attain the Sotāpanna stage in this life, the effort will not go to waste: it will make it easier in the future. As the Buddha advised, just follow the Path if it seems to make sense; results will follow.

Happy New Year! May the Blessings of the Triple Gem (Buddha, Dhamma, Sañgha) be with you always!

### 21.14 Reflections on 2014

## January 1, 2015

I started the website sometime in early January of 2014. Since there is no discussion forum at the site, I thought of making a summary on the 52 comments (excluding follow-up correspondence) that I received over the year (I did respond to all individual comments).

1. First of all, my heartfelt thanks for the many kind comments on the usefulness of the site.
2. Some people (mainly those I know personally) "complained" that once they start reading, they "got absorbed" in the material and they could not get to their "daily tasks". This could be a concern for some others as well. The easiest solution is to set an alarm.

- I assure everyone that once one gets a "foothold" one will become more responsible for their families, not the other way around. As one begins to understand the true message of the Buddha, one will start allocating one's time wisely, taking time away from "entertainment" rather than from those tasks that are one's responsibilities.
- As some of you may have already noticed, one becomes more thoughtful and considerate, when one starts truly understanding the message of the Buddha. One realizes that we all are in the same boat, trudging along in this tedious rebirth process, and one feels true compassion for others. One will not shy away from one's responsibilities to anyone let alone to one's family.
- If you do get absorbed in the material, it is not to my credit. From experience, I know that pure Dhamma is much more satisfying and fulfilling than any sense pleasure (even before the $j h a \bar{a} \bar{a}$ ). Learning Dhamma is learning about nature in a way that had not been possible before the Buddha! And there is no other task that is more important than one's own "long-term" future.

3. There were several people who made suggestions for new posts. Such suggestions are always welcome. If I have not responded to a couple of requests that is because of a reason. I do not want to "jump ahead" until the background material is presented. Please do not shy away from making suggestions.
4. Another important comment was that, "in the Satipatthanna sutta, didn't the Buddha recommend the "breathing meditation" contrary to what I described as ānāpāna?". If one is reading the sutta as commonly translated these days, that is indeed what the translations say. But we need to examine the Päli text of the sutta to get the correct interpretation. I plan to write a series of posts on the Satipatṭhāna sutta carefully going through the Pāli text.

- And we need to sort out the types of meditation recommended by the Buddha from those that have been practiced by Hindu yogis and are described in the Visuddhimagga. I think this is a "mental block" for even Theravāda Buddhists. Unless one sits down and stay like a statue, it does not count as "meditation" for many people.
- Those days, Buddha's primary recommendation was to listen to Dhamma discourses. Many people attained magga phala just by listening to such discourses. The Satipatt!hāna sutta was delivered in the later years for bhikkhus who needed systematic guidance.
- If one pays attention, one can get to samādhi while listening (and also while reading) Dhamma concepts. I highly recommend reading posts at this site at a quiet time, and see whether it makes you more calm. It will help in getting to $j h \bar{a} n \bar{a}$ in the longer term.
- Whether listening or reading, one should fully concentrate on the subject, and may even want to stop reading and think about the material when a new concept is discussed. Then the mind focuses on that point and automatically gets to samādhi. This is the key to removing defilements from the mind (which are the biggest chunk that in turn trigger other defilements). When one focuses on a "worldly thing" such as breath or a kasina object, that just gets the mind to samādhi, without doing any cleansing.

5. One does not even need to do any formal meditation initially. If one can spend some "quality time" (quite times where one can think as one reads) a few times a week, that would be more than enough. As with anything with the mind, the mind will ask for more as needed (this is the chanda and citta part in the Satara Iddhipāda of chanda, citta, viriya, vimaimsā). And when the mind asks for it, that is the best time to start getting absorbed in the material, making the effort (viriya) and critically examining the key concepts (vīmaimsā).

- One can get all the way to the Sotāpanna stage by just comprehending the main message that the Buddha was trying to convey: In the long run, it is unprofitable to strive for material things in this world. That there is a happiness of better quality when one loses craving for sense pleasures.
- But that cannot be achieved by "forcefully giving up sense pleasures", doing "breath meditation", or just by following the five precepts. Rather, by understanding the deep message of the Buddha about the "real nature of this world", one's mind gradually realizes the futility of seeking sense pleasures as one gradually comprehends anicca, dukkha, anatta. Dhamma will be the guide.

6. I very much want to highlight the fact that Buddha Dhamma is not about hiding in a remote place and shying away from the society or subjecting oneself to harsh living.

- It is not those enticing or seducing things that make us do immoral things and make our minds stressed in turn; rather it is our own defiled minds (defilements can vary from vile to just being ignorant of the true nature of the world) making us do immoral things.
- One with a purified mind can live in the most seductive place and yet not be perturbed.
- But to get there, one needs some self-control to stay away from such extremes initially. Learning pure Dhamma is the only way to break through that first barrier. Once the Sotāpanna stage is attained, one will never go back.

Happy New Year! May the Blessings of the Triple Gem be with you always!

### 21.15 List of Pāli words with diacritical mark

## Pāli characters with diacritical mark

| $\overline{\text { A }}$ | $\overline{\mathrm{I}}$ | $\bar{U}$ | $\stackrel{\text { N }}{ }$ | $\dot{M}$ | N | T | D | N | L | M |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| $\overline{\mathrm{a}}$ | $\overline{1}$ | $\overline{\mathrm{u}}$ | $\dot{\mathrm{n}}$ | $\dot{\mathrm{m}}$ | ñ | t | d | ṇ | $!$ | $\dot{\mathrm{m}}$ |


The Pāli word "xxxx" is in between two ""'s - i.e. "|xxxx|" to prevent replacement when "Find and Replace" is carried out.

| Pāli word | Pāli word with Diacritical Mark |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| \|abhijja| | abhijjā [abhijjhā] | Abhijjā [Abhijjhā] |
| \|abhinna| | abhiñ̃̃ā | Abhiññā |
| \|adinava| | ādīnava | Ādīnava |
| \|adinnadana| | adinnādāna | Adinnādāna |
| \|ahara| | āhāra | Āhāra |
| \|anagami| | anāgāmī | Anāgāmī |
| \|anapana| | ānāpāna | Ānāpāna |
| \|anapanasati| | ānāpānasati | Ānāpānasati |
| \|apaya| | apāya | Apāya |
| \|apo| | āpo | Āpo |
| \|arupa| | arūpa | Arūpa |
| \|asava| | āsava | Āsava |
| \|asavakkhaya| | āsavakkhaya | Āsavakkhaya |
| \|avijja| | avijjā | Avijaj |
| \|ayatana| | āyatana | Āyatana |
| \|bhavana| | bhāvanā | Bhāvanā |
| \|bhuta| | bhūta | Bhūta |
| \|ditthi| | diț̣hi | Dițthi |
| \|jati| | jāti | Jāti |


| \|jhana| | jhāna | Jhāna |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| \|kamesu miccacara| | kāmesu micchācāra | Kāmesu micchācāra |
| \|maha| | mahā | Mahā |
| \|mula| | mūla | Mūla |
| \|musavada| | musāvāda | Musāvāda |
| \|nana| | ñāṇa | Ñāna |
| \|nibbana| | nibbāna | Nibbāna |
| \|nikaya| | nikāya | Nikāya |
| \|niramisa| | nirāmisa | Nirāmisa |
| \|pali| | pāli | Pāli |
| \|panatipata| | pān̄ātipātā | Pān̄ātipātā |
| \|panna| | paññā | Paññā |
| \|parusavaca| | parusāvācā [pharusāvācā] | Parusāvācā [Pharusāvācā] |
| \|patisambhida| | patisambhidā | Patisambhidā |
| \|patisandhi| | pațisandhi | Pațisandhi |
| \|pisunavaca| | pisuñāācā | Pisuṇāvācā |
| \|piti| | piti | Piti |
| \|punna| | puñก̃a | Puñña |
| \|raga| | rāga | Rāga |
| \|ragakkhaya| | rāgakkhaya | Rāgakkhaya |
| \|rupa| | rūpa | Rūpa |
| \|saddha| | saddhā | Saddhā |
| \|sakadagami| | sakadāgāmī | Sakadāgāmī |
| \|salayatana| | salāyatana | Salāyatana |
| \|samadhi| | samādhi | Samādhi |
| \|samma| | sammā | Sammā |


| \|sampappalapa| | sampappalāpa | Sampappalāpa |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| \|samsara| | samsāra | Samsāra |
| \|samuppada| | samuppāda | Samuppāda |
| \|sankhara| | saṅkhāra | Saṅkhāra |
| \|sankhata| | saṅkhata | Saṅkhata |
| \|sanna| | saññā | Saññā |
| \|satipatthana| | satipatṭhāna | Satipatṭhāna |
| \|sotapanna| | sotāpanna | Sotāpanna |
| \| suddhatṭhaka| (Sinhala) <br> \|suddhatthaka| (Pali) | suddhāshtaka suddhatthaka | Suddhāshtaka <br> Suddhatthaka |
| \|tanha| | taṇhā | Taṇhā |
| \|theravada| | theravāda | Theravāda |
| \|upadana| | upādāna | Upādāna |
| \|vaci1 | vacī | Vacī |
| \|vayo| | vāyo | Vāyo |
| \|vedana| | vedanā | Vedanā |
| \|vicikiccha| | vicikicchā | Vicikicchā |
| \|vinnana| | viññāṇa | Viñ̃āṇa |
| \|vipāka| | vipāka | Vipāka |
| \|vyapada| | vyāpāda | Vyāpāda |
| \|tipitaka| | tipitaka | Tipitaka |
| \|paticca| | pațicca | Pațicca |
| \|sankhata| | saṅkhata | Sañkhata |
| \|vithi| | vithi | Vithi |
| \|tilakkhana| | tilakkhaṇa | Tilakkhaṇa |
| \|vipāka| | vipāka | Vipāka |


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### 21.16 Mars Curiosity Photos Suggest Life May Have Existed on Red Planet

"A careful study of images taken by the NASA rover Curiosity has revealed intriguing similarities between ancient sedimentary rocks on Mars and structures shaped by microbes on Earth. The findings suggest, but do not prove, that life may have existed earlier on the Red Planet":

## WebLink: NBCNEWS: Mars Curiosity Photos Suggest Life May Have Existed on Red Planet

Here is the pdf of the paper just published that proposed the hypothesis:
WebLink: LIBERTPUB: Life on Mars Hypothesis-Noffke-Astrobilogy-2015

### 21.17 Recent Publications on Benefits of Meditation

There have been an accelerated activity in studying the benefits of meditation on the brain and on physical health in general. Here are some very recent publications:

- Scientific American November 2014 (volume 311, Number 5) cover story is "Mind of the Meditator", by M. Ricard et al. : WebLink: PDF File: Ricard-Mind of the Meditator- Scientific American November 2014
- A paper that just came out online in early November (in the journal Cancer) reports that the WebLink: WIKI: Telomeres - the protein caps at the end of our chromosomes that determine how quickly a cell ages - stayed the same length in cancer survivors who meditated or took part in support groups over a three-month period: WebLink: Carlson-Mindfulness based Cancer recovery-2014

I have discussed the effects of changing habits on the brain (which is more related to insight meditation): see, "Truine Brain: How the Mind Rewires the Brain via Meditation/Habits." Insight meditation can be expected to have much more significant changes in the brain as well as in physical health. But such studies have not been conducted yet. Selected references on research studies (2011-2012) and books related to meditation can be found in that post; there have been many more publications since then.

I was surprised to come across the following article in the prestigious journal "Science" which, using real time input from 5000 people all over the world, confirmed what the Buddha said 2500 years ago: that a wandering mind is an unhappy mind; see, WebLink: PDF File: A wandering mind is an unhappy mind-Science-Killingsworth-2010.

Much merits to Neranga Abeyasinghe and his family for sending me the second publication.

### 21.18 Laniakea: Our home supercluster

Superclusters - regions of space that are densely packed with galaxies - are the biggest structures in the Universe. But scientists have struggled to define exactly where one supercluster ends and another begins. Now, a team based in Hawaii has come up with a new technique that maps the Universe according to the flow of galaxies across space. Redrawing the boundaries of the cosmic map, they redefine our home supercluster and name it Laniakea, which means 'immeasurable heaven' in Hawaiiian (from Nature Video)

## WebLink: YOUTUBE: Laniakea: Our home supercluster

- It amazing to see how unfathomably vast our "world" is, even though this is only a small part of even our universe. However, imagine this together with uncountable worlds teeming with life, that we are not aware of! This is why the Buddha said not to spend time exploring the details of this "world". There is no end to it, either spacewise or timewise.
- But we need to keep in mind that only human minds can even comprehend such things. If we are to be born an animal or worse this kind of thinking is not possible, and we will get trapped in such worlds for unimaginably long times. Thus what we need to do is to take advantage of the brief time we have in this life to comprehend the true nature of 'this world", i.e., anicca, dukkha, anatta, and to become free of it.


### 21.19 Think Outside the Box!

1. Here is an interesting presentation on the question of what motivates people. Embedded in this presentation is the fact that without self-motivation coming from self-satisfaction, it is hard to examine things from different perspectives. It works the other way too: new insights in turn provide motivation:

## WebLink: YOUTUBE: Dan Pink: The puzzle of motivation

- One of my goals has been to help others to achieve the same exhilarating experience that I have had learning and practising pure Dhamma. It cannot be matched by any other experience.

2. Many people do things just because others do, and follow the "standard practices". In following Buddha Dhamma too, many just do what their parents or other "established authorities" do. It may be a good idea to pause and re-examine some deeply-embedded ideas. Each person may have his/her own set of "beliefs".

- Some think it is enough to say some precepts and may be chant or listen to chantings to follow the Path.
- Others think it is silly to do those exact same things. And what needs to be done is to learn Abhidhamma at the deepest level.
- I think there is a value in each, if done properly. And what needs to be given priority in one's practice should be in line with one's own preferences, but the horizons need to be expanded to look into other aspects once-in-a-while and see whether there is something to be gained from those too. Our perspectives change as we make progress.

3. Yet, no matter what one does, real progress cannot be even STARTED without understanding the main message of the Buddha: the true nature of this world, i.e., anicca, dukkha, anatta.

- It makes a huge difference between the interpretation of anicca as "impermanence" or "not being able to maintain to one's satisfaction". Same with anatta as "no-self" or "one ends up truly helpless trying to seek happiness in this rebirth process".
- See, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta - Wrong Interpretations" and the follow-up posts.
21.20 There are as many creatures on your body as there are people on Earth!

January 20, 2016: A new study on household bugs added (below the video)

1. Before the simple microscope was invented in the late 1500 's, people could see only those animals visible to the naked eye. Life seemed to explode when Van Leeuwenhoek reported the discovery of microorganisms in 1676; he first reported numerous "microscopic creatures" in a glass of water.

With the new scientific instruments we can "see" even more minute lifeforms:

## WebLink: YOUTUBE: There are as many creatures on your body as there are people on Earth

2. A new study reveals that there are numerous species of bugs - not counting the actual number - that live in a house (which has only a few humans):

## WebLink: EUREKALERT.ORG: First study of arthropods in US homes finds huge biodiversity

The pdf file of the publication: WebLink: PDF File: Bertone-Arthropods of the great indoors-peerj-2016
3. The number of people on this Earth is insignificantly small compared to the number of other beings (seen and unseen), or even just the animals. As the above video shows, there are a huge number of living beings even on a human body; imagine how many would be on the body of an unclean animal. This is why the Buddha said it is extremely difficult to get a human birth; see, "Rebirth - Connection to Suffering in the First Noble Truth."
4. It must be noted that Buddha's disciples (and probably other Hindu yogis) were able to "see" such microscopic creatures with their abhiñ̃n̄a powers. There is a story in the Tipiṭaka about a bhikkhu with abhiññ̄a powers (but not yet attained Arahanthood) once focused his powers to a glass of water that he was about to drink and saw a multitude of tiny creatures. He kept trying to filter them out and was getting distressed. The Buddha saw this and told the bhikkhu that it is not possible to live in this world without hurting other beings, but that does not count as an immoral act since the intention is not to hurt.

- For example, if we have a wound on the head, we have to apply medication and get it healed; otherwise one may even die from that. Yet, numerous tiny creatures on the wound die when we apply the medication. There is nothing we can do to avoid it unless we are willing to risk our own life.
- But the point is that this single human life is much more "worthy" than all those creatures multiplied many times over, see, "How to Evaluate Weights of Different Kamma."
- This is an important point because many people get stressed over even cleaning their house for the fear of killing insects. But if we do not keep the house clean, those insects will multiply and make the problem even bigger. One always need to look at things with a deeper understanding. The best thing to do is to keep the house clean so that insects are not attracted in the first place.
- It is important to clarify these concepts, because it is difficult to attain any kind of calmness (samādhi) in the mind if one's mind is agitated by such things as "Am I sitting on some unseen tiny insects and killing them?". As long as our intent is not directed to willfully taking another life with hatred, there will not be any negative consequences.


### 21.21 News Article on Robin Williams and Buddhist Meditation

I have not read the books written by the author of this following news article, so I cannot comment on his books. But I thought this sad news about Robin Williams illustrates the concept of anicca (that one cannot maintain anything to one's satisfaction in this world and that there is hidden suffering). He had more than enough money and fame, but apparently he was depressed in the latter years.

- Having a peaceful mind cannot be matched by any amount of money or fame; see, "First Noble Truth A Simple Explanation of One Aspect."
- According to the Buddha, the suffering is proportional to the craving. Getting old is more stressful for those who have enjoyed beauty, fame, power, etc. But the inevitability of old age and dying is common to us all.


## WebLink: YOUTUBE: Aging Stars of the Golden Age

- Buddhist meditation is primarily on understanding the true nature of the world and that hidden suffering may come out unexpectedly; that understanding itself makes one have a peaceful mind; see, " 1 . Introduction to Buddhist Meditation."
- When depression or old age hits, the mind gets weak. Thus one should preferably start when the mind is sound and healthy.
- Suicide can only make things worse in the "long term" in the rebirth process. It is never too late to start at any stage. Human life is rare and should not be wasted at any stage.

Article: Meditation Isn't Enough: A Buddhist Perspective on Suicide

### 21.22 World Historical Timeline

It will be convenient to have a timeline of the major world events that I can refer to in my posts. Please let me know any errors that you may see. My goal is to provide a consistent and accurate timeline.

Note: I used c. to denote circa or about
I have added descriptive links to some events, and will try to add more links in the future.

| Date | Event |
| :---: | :---: |
| Before 10k BCE | WebLink: WIKI: Last Ice Age |
| 3.1k BCE | First king of Egypt, King Menes |
| 2.5 k BCE | WebLink: WIKI: Mohenjo Daro civilization in India |
| 2.1k-1.6k BCE | WebLink: WIKI: The Xia Dynasty of China |
| Before 1.7k BCE | Abraham came to Jerusalem from Ur (Old Testament) |
| 1.4 k BCE | City of Troy, kingdom of Crete, and other Greek cities |
| $1.4 \mathrm{k}-0.9 \mathrm{k}$ BCE | Olmec civilization in Mexico |
| 776 BCE | First Olympiad |
| 558-530 BCE | Cyrus ruled North India |
| Until 536 BCE | Daries I, II, III ruled North India; until Chandagupta, Persian and Greek kings ruled North India |
| 563-483 BCE | Buddha Gotama |
| 470-399 BCE | Philosopher Socrates |
| 538 BCE | Old Testament was written |
| 424-348 BCE | Plato: First Western philosopher whose writings survived intact |
| 384-322 BCE | Aristotle: student of Plato and teacher of Alexander the Great |
| c. 333 BCE | Emperor Alexander's Empire peaks |
| 323-325 BCE | Alexander the Great in India |
| 268-231 BCE | Emperor Asoka ruled North India |
| 307-276 BCE | King Devanampiyatissa in Sri Lanka |
| 247 BCE | Ven. Mahinda in Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka |
| 41 BCE | Beginning of the Roman Empire |


| Date | Event |
| :---: | :---: |
| 29 BCE | Tipitaka written down in Sri Lanka |
| 6-4 BC to 30-33 AD | Jesus of Nazareth or Jesus Christ |
| 31 BCE | Augustus becomes the first Roman Emperor and ruled until 14 CE |
| c. 150-250 CE | WebLink: WIKI: Life of Nagarjuna; considered to be the founder of Mahāyāna Buddhism |
| After 200 CE | Roman empire starts to decline |
| 4th century CE | Buddhism introduced to Korea |
| 380 CE | Christianity became the official religion in Roman empire |
| 5th century CE | Burma adopts Theravāda Buddhism |
| 412-434 CE | Buddhaghosa arrives in Sri Lanka and writes Visuddhimagga |
| 552 CE | Buddhism enters Japan from Korea |
| 589 CE | First Chinese commentaries written |
| 586 CE | Beginning of the Dark Ages in Europe with the decay of the Roman empire |
| 6th century CE | First diffusion of Buddhism in Tibet |
| 570-632 CE | Prophet Muhammad |
| $\begin{aligned} & 622 \mathrm{CE}-(1258-1492) \\ & \mathrm{CE} \end{aligned}$ | WebLink: WIKI: Islamic Golden Age |
| 618-907 CE | Chinese T'ang dynasty; golden age of Buddhism in China |
| 1215 CE | King John signs the Magna Carta granting rights to English citizens |
| 1280 | WebLink: WIKI: Eyeglasses invented in Italy |
| c. 1420 - c. 1600 | Renaissance in Europe starting in Florence, Italy |
| 1450 | Gutenberg in Germany invents the printing press |
| 1492 | Modern Age begins with the arrival of Columbus in America |
| 1564-1642 | Galileo Galilei |
| 1596-1650 | Rene Descartes |
| 1610 | Galelio announces observation of mountains on the Moon and the existence of four planets. |


| Date | Event |
| :---: | :---: |
| 1642 | Adding machine invented by Blaise Pascal |
| 1643-1727 | Isaac Newton |
| c. $1650-\mathrm{c} .1800$ | WebLink: WIKI: European "Enlightenment" |
| 1662 | Fermat's Principle of Least Time |
| 1678 | Huygens' wave theory |
| 1687 | Newton published Principia Mathematica |
| 1688 | English revolution |
| 1698 | Steam engine invented by Thomas Savery |
| 1749-1827 | P.S. de Laplace |
| 1774 | Priestly isolates oxygen |
| 1776 | America declares independence from England |
| 1789 | French revolution period |
| 1791 | Steamboat invented by John Fitch |
| 1798 | Vaccination invented by Edward Jenner |
| 1804 | Locomotive invented by Richard Trevithick |
| 1809-1882 | Charles Darwin |
| 1816 | Huygens-Fresnel principle explaining light interference |
| 1821 | Faraday demonstrates the principle of the electric motor |
| 1822 | Charles Babbage designs his first mechanical computer |
| 1826 | Photography invented by Joseph Nicephore Niepce |
| 1834 | Refrigerator invented by Jacob Perkins |
| 1835 | Morse code invented by Samuel Morse |
| 1837 | American Samuel Morse invented telegraph |
| 1842 | Anaesthesia invented by Crawford Long |
| 1843 | Typewriter invented by Charles Thurber |


| Date | Event |
| :---: | :---: |
| 1846 | Rotary printing press invented by Richard M. Hoe |
| 1859 | Charles Darwin publishes The Origin of Species |
| 1868 | Poisson explained Young's double slit experiment with Huygens-Fresnel principle |
| 1869 | Mendeleev produces the Periodic Table |
| 1873 | Maxwell states the laws of electro-magnetic radiation |
| 1877 | Phonograph invented by Thomas Alva Edison;Microphone invented by Emile Berliner |
| 1878 | Edison invents the incandescent lamp |
| 1883 | First skyscraper built in Chicago (ten stories) |
| 1888 | Hertz produces radio waves |
| 1893 | Wireless communication invented by Nikola Tesla |
| 1895 | Diesel engine invented by Rudolf Diesel |
| 1898 | Remote control invented by Nikola Tesla |
| 1900 | Planck develops quantum theory |
| 1901 | Vacuum cleaner invented by Hubert Booth |
| 1903 | Powered airplane invented by Wilbur Wright and Orville Wright |
| 1905 | Einstein proved that photon is a particle |
| 1905 | Einstein's Theory of Relativity |
| 1907 | Color photography invented by Auguste and Louis Lumiere |
| 1908 | Henry Ford mass-produces the Model T |
| 1919 | London to Paris air service begins |
| 1923 | Sound film invented by Lee DeForest |
| 1923 | Edwin Hubble discovers the first galaxy other than Milky Way |
| 1928 | Antibiotics, penicillin invented by Alexander Fleming |
| 1937 | Jet engine invented by Frank Whittle and Hans von Ohain |
| $1937$ | Alan Turing develops the concept of a theoretical computing machine |


| Date | Event |
| :---: | :---: |
| 1945 | The atomic bomb |
| 1951 | Nuclear power reactor invented by Walter Zinn |
| 1957 | Sputnik I and Sputnik II: Sputnik I and Sputnik II are launched by the Russians |
| 1958 | The first integrated circuit, or silicon chip, is produced by the US Jack Kilby \& Robert Noyce |
| 1960 | Laser invented by Theodore Harold Maiman |
| 1961 | Uri Gagarin is the frrst man in space |
| 1965 | The Big Bang theory confirmed by Penzias and Wilson |
| 1969 | Neil Armstrong sets foot on the moon |
| 1971 | E-mail invented by Ray Tomlinson |
| 1971 | Floppy Disk invented by David Noble with IBM |
| 1973 | Ethernet invented by Bob Metcalfe and David Boggs |
| 1973 | Personal computer invented by Xerox PARC |
| 1983 | Camcorder invented by Sony |
| 1990 | World Wide Web invented by Tim Berners-Lee |
| 2001 | WebLink: WIKI: World center attack |
| 2001 | Digital satellite radio |
| 2003 | WebLink: WIKI: Completion of the Human Genome Project |
| 2008 | WebLink: NASA: Discovery of ice on Mars |
| 2014 | First comet landing |
| 2014 | WebLink: NASA completes a successful test flight of Orion spacecraft for future trips to Mars |
| 2014 | WebLink: INTERNETLIVESTATS: Number of websites on the internet reached 1 billion |

### 21.23 Second Largest Religion by State in the US

The second largest religion by state in the United States (2012):

Second Largest Religious Tradition in Each State, 2010 (Christianity remains the largest religious tradition in every state)


WebLink: BOINGBOING: Christianity is the top Religion


However, Buddha Dhamma is not a religion, in the sense of providing a set of guidelines to live by. It is about the natural laws of nature. Any person of any religious faith (or no faith in any religion, i.e., atheist) can follow Dhamma and benefit. All religions are about leading a good moral life, but Buddha Dhamma describes a much more comprehensive "world view" where this life of 100 years is just a blip.

If one becomes convinced of the truth of the Buddha's world view, i.e., that this life is not the only we had or we will have, and that there are consequences to one's actions, and the only way to get relief from inevitable suffering at least at the old age and death is to purify one's mind, then the person is a Buddhist. It is all in one's mind. No one else is tracking one's progress, and no one else can purify one's own mind.

### 21.24 Introduction to "Rebirth by Francis Story" - Ian Stevenson

The following are the scanned pages from the book, "Rebirth-as Doctrine and Experience" by Francis Story. The first scan is an inside cover page, and the rest are the Introduction pages by Ian Stevenson. Dr. Stevenson mentions that he is a Buddhist on page 3. The whole introduction is insightful.

## WebLink: PDF File: Introduction-Stevenson

### 21.25 <br> Thirty One Planes of Existence

Here is a video from Carl Sagan to get an idea how vast our "detectable universe" is:

## WebLink: YOUTUBE: Carl Sagan "100 Billion Galaxies each W/100 Billion Stars"

The "world view" of the Buddha is not merely about the living beings on this planet. Our Solar system is one of an infinite number of "world systems" (planetary systems). In EACH planetary system with life (scientists have not found even one yet; but they are out there!), there are 31 "planes of existence". As we find out below, we can "see" only two of these realms: our human realm and the animal realm. Thus our "world" is much more complex than even the present-day science believes. As some of you may already know, science cannot account for $95 \%$ of the mass of the universe, which they label "dark energy" and "dark matter". This is why I say that the Buddha transcended "this world". He was able to "see" the whole of existence: see "Godel's Incompleteness Theorem" under "Dhamma and Science".

Now, it is not easy to describe the 31 planes of existence in a short essay. Therefore, I will use a visual to simplify things a bit.

Imagine a sphere with 31 shells, with a small sphere in the middle. Thus the total volume of the big sphere is completely filled by the center sphere and surrounding shells. The 31 sections represent the 31 planes of existence. I emphasize that this is just a visual. The reality is different. For example, animal and human realms co-exist in reality. Also, both time and space are infinite in reality.

1. The innermost sphere represent the Niraya (hell) where there is non-stop suffering; next is the animal realm. Going outward there are two more realms where suffering is higher than at the human realm (the fifth shell). The sixth through eleventh shells represent the realms of the devas (wrongly translated as gods by many), beings who enjoy higher level of mundane happiness and no suffering. These innermost 11 shells represent the kamaloka, where all five physical sense faculties are present.
2. The next 16 shells represent realms where only two physical sense faculties (eye and ear) are active. These beings have very fine (less dense) bodies. These are called rūpa lokas.
3. The last 4 shells represent the arūpa lokas, where beings have ultra fine bodies and only the mind faculty; no physical senses.
4. In rūpa and arūpa lokas, the beings are in jhānic states. These states can be attained by humans and thus a humans can "temporarily live" in those lokas by attaining jhānā. The 16 realms in the rūpa loka correspond to the four lower jhānā, and the 4 realms in the arūpa loka correspond to the higher four jhānā.
5. Any living being (including each of us) has been in all realms in this beginning-less samsāra. We have been in the niraya (hell) and we have been at the highest (except on arūpa loka which can be accessed only by Anāgāmis or Non-Returners). One time the Buddha pointed to a bunch of ants on the ground and told bhikkhus that each of those ants had lived in a Brahma loka. The samsāra is that long; there is no discernible beginning.
6. Above the human realm, there is no suffering (except at death, which is inevitable). However, unless one has achieved at least the Stream Entry (Sotāpanna) stage, even a being at the highest level can fall to any lower level, and thus will end up in the niraya (hell) at some point; once there one will spend a long agonizing time there and eventually come out. Each of us have done this many times over. I will explain the cause of births in different realms in terms of "kamma seeds" in upcoming posts.
7. So, each living being just moves from one realm to another, but spends most time in the four lower worlds, mainly because once fallen there it is hard to come out. This "sansaric wandering" is the critical point to think about and comprehend.
8. As one moves away from the center the level of suffering decreases, and level of mundane pleasure increases up to the 11th realm. After that in the rūpa and arūpa lokas it is mainly the jhānic pleasures, not the sense pleasures.
9. The human realm is the only one from which one can attain Nibbāna. Nibbāna, in this model, corresponds to getting out of all 31 shells, out of the big sphere; no more rebirth in any of the 31 realms. Nibbāna is where the permanent sukha or nirāmisa sukha, is. When one attains Nibbāna or Arahanthood, he/she looks just like any other human, but has no attachments to any worldly things. He still has some kamma vipāka to pay off from the kamma seed that he was born with. When that kammic power is used up, he dies and is not reborn because there are no kamma seeds left to start a new birth. He/she is in Parinibbāna with nirāmisa sukha.
10. Can we taste Nibbānic "pleasure"?. Yes. We can taste it in increments, even below the Stream Entry stage. This is nirāmisa sukha, the "pleasure of giving up worldly things". This nirāmisa sukha has "quantum jumps" at the four stages of Nibbāna: Stream Entry, Once-Returner, Non-Returner, Arahant. Thus when one is on the Path, one can experience nirāmisa sukha at varying degrees, all the way to Nibbānic bliss, during this very lifetime.
11. All these 31 realms are located in our solar system (Chakrawata), and are associated with the Earth. There are a great number of such Chakrawata (planetary systems) in existence at all times with living beings. These are in clusters of small (galaxies?), medium (universes?), and large (multiverse?) "world systems". But none is permanent. They come into being and eventually perish. Within the past 100 years or so, scientists have confirmed the existence of billions of planetary systems within galaxies in our universe, and are now exploring the possibility of the existence of multiple universes (multiverse).

The other big factor to take into account is that we have been born in almost all of these realms in our sansāric journey that has no traceable beginning. All of us have been bouncing around "inside the sphere" (mainly in the inner ones) from a beginning that is not even discernible to a Buddha.

Next, "Sansāric Time Scale", ........

### 21.26 Curiosity Rover finds Crater probably was once a Giant Martian Lake

According to Buddha Dhamma we are alone in the universe. These preliminary results from the NASA Curiosity Rover may not hold up in the end as evidence that life existed on Mars. But there will many more to come, especially if technology is developed to explore distant stars.

WebLink: YOUTUBE: Curiosity rover finds crater it is exploring was once a giant Martian LAKE
Here is a report that came out today, Dec 9, 2014, which has another video by NASA:
WebLink: DAILYMAIL: Curiosity rover finds crater it is exploring was once a giant Martian LAKE

### 21.27 Did Not Get a Response to Your Comment?

July 18, 2016

I reply to each and every question that comes through "Comments" under each post.

Several of my replies bounced back within the past few weeks, including one today because the email address of the sender was not typed correctly. Please make sure that you type your email address correctly.

### 21.28 Ancient teeth found in China challenge modern human migration theory

## October 16, 2015

When we discuss the Aggañña Sutta, that describes how the Earth and life originated it will become very clear that the basis of current theories on "human evolution" is completely wrong. However, they are consistent with Buddha Dhamma in the sense that species will exist only when conditions for their existence prevail.

- The current scientific theory is that human originated in Africa and then migrated to other parts of the world, starting about 50,000 years ago. Recent evidence just published in the prestigious journal Nature provides evidence of the existence of humans like us in China some 80,000 to 100,000 years ago. Below is the news article from CNN. I will add the paper from Nature when it becomes available:


## WebLink: CNN: Ancient teeth found in China challenge modern human migration theory

- In this context, I must also point out that there are other archeological evidence for the existence of humans in Sri Lanka and India dating back to 30,000 years and earlier:


## WebLink: WIKI: Balangoda Man

## December 18, 2015

The following post says, "..We're quickly learning that Europe and Africa may not provide the best model for us to use to interpret the fossil record of East Asia. For example, Denisova Cave is as far east as we've found the Neanderthals, and they don't seem to have occupied Siberia permanently. This is unlike Europe, where they lived until about 40,000 years ago. And so far, no Neanderthals have been found in China or anywhere further South of Denisova Cave.

The fact is that we've really only scratched the surface in East Asia.."
Read more at: WebLink: PHYS.ORG: Bone suggests 'Red Deer Cave people' a mysterious species of human

## XXII Sitemap

I have arranged the sections roughly in increasing complexity. However, you may want to scan through each section to get an idea of what is in each section. People have backgrounds at very different levels. Furthermore, even those who have been exposed to Buddhism for many years may not have a good understanding of the fundamentals.
Welcome!
About
Parinibbāna of Waharaka Thero
Pure Dhamma Essays in Book Format

## New / Revised Posts

- Pure Dhamma - Sinhala Translation
- Pure Dhamma - German Website
- Pure Dhamma - Korean Website


## Elephants in the Room

## Word-for-Word Translation of the Tipitaka

- Elephant in the Room 1 - Direct Translation of the Tipitaka
- Niddesa (Brief Description) of Paticca Samuppāda
- Paticca Samuppāda During a Lifetime
- Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda - Bhava and Jāti Within a Lifetime
- Change of Mindset Due to an Ārammana
- Khandhā in Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda
- Seeing Is a Series of "Snapshots"
- Aggregate of Forms - Collection of "Mental Impressions" of Forms
- Rūpakkhandha in Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda
- Five Aggregates - Experiences of Each Sentient Being
- Pañcupādānakkhandha - Attachment to One's Experiences
- Sakkāya Ditthi and Pañcupādānakkhandhā
- Bhava and Jāti Within a Lifetime - Example
- Often Mistranslated Pāli Keywords
- Rāga and Jhāna - Two Commonly Misunderstood Words
- Elephant in the Room 2 - Jhāna and Kasinna
- Samādhi, Jhāna, and Sammā Samādhi
- Jhāna, Jhāya, and Jhāyi- Different Meanings
- Elephant in the Room 3 - Ānāpānasati
- Ānāpānasati Overview
- Assāsa Passāsa - What Do They Mean?
- Ānāpānasati Not About Breath - Icchānañgala Sutta
- Mahārāhulovāda Sutta and Ānāpānasati


## Moral Living and Fundamentals

## The Basics

- "The Pale Blue Dot $\qquad$ ."
- "The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Āsavā)"
- "Habits, Goals, and Character (Gati)"
- Wrong Views (Micchā Ditthi) - A Simpler Analysis
- Four Noble Truths: Recipe for Problem Solving
- First Noble Truth - A Simple Explanation of One Aspect
- Difference between a Wish and a Determination (Paramita)


## Calming the Mind

- "Key to Calming the Mind - The Five Hindrances"
- "Solution to a Wandering Mind - Abandon Everything?"
- "Right Speech - How to avoid Accumulating Bad Kamma"
- "Three Kinds of Happiness - What is Nirāmisa Sukha?"
- "How to Taste Nibbāna"
- Learning Buddha Dhamma Leads to Nirāmisa Sukha
- "Need to Experience Suffering in Order to Understand It?"
- "Does Impermanence Lead to Suffering?"


## Buddha Dhamma and Buddhism

- "Where to Start on the Path?"
- "What Reincarnates? - Concept of a Lifestream"
- "A Buddhist or a Bhouddhaya?"
- "What is Mind? How do we Experience the Outside World?"
- Recent Evidence for Unbroken Memory Records (HSAM)
- "Buddhism without Rebirth and Nibbāna?"


## Dhamma Concepts

- "Kilesa - Relationship To Akusala, Kusala, And Puñ̃na Kamma"
- "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)"
- "Puñña Kamma - Dāna, Sila, Bhāvanā"
- "Details of Kamma - Intention, Who Is Affected, Kamma Patha"
- "The Five Precepts - What the Buddha Meant by Them"
- "How to Evaluate Weights of Different Kamma"
- "What is Kamma? - Is Everything Determined by Kamma?"
- "The Four Bases of Mental Power (Cattāro Iddhipāda)"
- "Why is it Necessary to Learn Key Pāli Words?"


## Buddha Dhamma and Morality

- Origin of Morality (and Immorality) in Buddhism
- Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception
- Is Eating Meat an Akusala Kamma (Immoral Deed)?
- Do Things Just Happen? - The Hidden Causes


## Dhammapada

- Manopubbangamā dhammā..
- Sabba Pāpassa Akaranan....
- Appamado Amata Padam.
- Najajja Vasalo Hoti.
- Arogya Parama Labha..
- Anicca vata Sañkhāra..
- Atta Hi Attano Natho


## Working Towards Good Rebirths

- "Sansāric Habits and Āsavā"
- "Vagaries of Life and the Way to Seek Good Rebirths"
- "How to Avoid Birth in the Apāyā""
- Rebirth - Connection to Suffering in the First Noble Truth
- Kamma, Debt, and Meditation
- How do we Decide which View is Wrong View (Ditthi)?
- Three Kinds of Ditthi, Eightfold Paths, and Samādhi
- Implications of the Rebirth Process in Daily Life and in Society
- What Does Buddha Dhamma Say about Creator, Satan, Angels, and Demons?
- Patisandhi Citta - How the Next Life is Determined According to Gati


## Living Dhamma (This section starts at a basic level and proceeds to deep levels)

## Essential Buddhism

- Four Noble Truths - Suffering and Its Elimination
- Introduction to Citta, Vedanā, Saññā, Sañkhāra, and Viññāna
- Viññāna - Consciousness Together With Future Expectations
- Connection Between Sañkhāra and Viñ̃n̄āna
- Viññāna and Sañkhāra - Connection to Paticca Samuppāda
- Breath Meditation Is Addictive and Harmful in the Long Run
- Ānāpānasati Eliminates Mental Stress Permanently
- Ānāpāna and Satipatthāna - Fundamentals
- Sati in Ānāpānasati/Satipatthāna - Two Meanings of Sati


## Living Dhamma - Overview

- Living Dhamma - Introduction
- Peace of Mind to Nibbāna - The Key Step
- Starting on the Path Even without Belief in Rebirth (with first Desanā "The Hidden Suffering that We All Can Understand"; desanā title different from post title)


## Dhamma with Less Pāli

- Buddha Dhamma for an Inquiring Mind - Part I
- "Root of All Suffering - Ten Immoral Actions" (with the desanā "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)".
- Is Suffering the Same as the First Noble Truth on Suffering?
- Complexity of the Mind - Viññāña and Sañkhāra
- Dhamma, Sañkhāra, Sañkhata, Rūpa, Viññān̄a, Gati, Āsava, Anusaya
- Bhava and Bhavañga - Simply Explained!
- Citta, Mano, Viññāna - Stages of a Thought


## Living Dhamma - Fundamentals

- What Are Kilesa (Mental Impurities)? - Connection to Cetasika
- Suffering in This Life - Role of Mental Impurities (with Desanā 2)
- Satipatthāna Sutta - Relevance to Suffering in This Life (with Desanā 3)
- How Are Gati and Kilesa Incorporated into Thoughts? (with Desanā 4)
- Noble Eightfold Path - Role of Sobhana Cetasika (with Desana 5; in two parts)
- Getting to Samādhi (with Desana 6)
- Sexual Orientation - Effects of Kamma and Gati (Sañkhāra)


## Mundane Sammā Samādhi

- Micchā Ditthi - Connection to Hetu Phala (Cause and Effect) (with Desanā 7)
- Suffering in This Life and Paticca Samuppāda (with Desanā 8)
- Suffering in This Life and Paticca Samuppāda II (with Desanā 9)


## Transition to Noble Eightfold Path

- Is It Necessary for a Buddhist to Eliminate Sensual Desires?
- Silla, Samādhi, Paññā to Paññā, Sila, Samādhi
- Ye Dhammā Hetuppabhavā.. and yam kiñci samudaya dhammaṁ.


## Samādhi, Jhāna (Dhyāna), Magga Phala

- Samādhi, Jhāna, Magga Phala - Introduction
- Vitakka, Vicāra, Savitakka, Savicāra, and Avitakka, Avicāra
- Jhānic Experience in Detail - Sāmaññaphala Sutta (DN 2)
- Ascendance to Nibbāna via Jhāna (Dhyāna)
- Paññāvimutti- Arahanthood without Jhāna
- Mundane versus Supramundane Jhāna
- Nirodha Samāpatti, Phala Samāpatti, Jhāna, and Jhāna Samāpatti


## Mental Body - Gandhabba

- Our Mental Body - Gandhabba
- Gandhabba State - Evidence from Tipitaka
- Antarabhava and Gandhabba
- Ānantariya Kamma - Connection to Gandhabba
- Mental Body (Gandhabba) - Personal Accounts
- Abnormal Births Due to Gandhabba Transformations
- Cattāro Āhāra for Mental Body or Gandhabba
- Micchā Ditthi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage
- Working of Kammā - Critical Role of Conditions


## Nāma \& Rūpa to Nāmarūpa

In this important subsection, we will discuss the link between mind (nāma) and matter (rūpa). These are deeper analyses. For simpler analyses, see, "The Five Aggregates (Pañcakkhandha)."

- Rūpa Aggregate
- What are rūpa? - Dhamma are rūpa too!
- Bhūta and Yathābhūta - What Do They Really Mean
- Vedanā (Feelings) Aggregate
- Vedanā - What It Really Means
- Vedanā and Samphassa-Jā-Vedanā - More Than Just Feelings
- Does Bodily Pain Arise Only Due to Kamma Vipāka?
- Saññã (Perception) Aggregate
- Saññā - What It Really Means
- Future Suffering - Why It Arises
- Ditthi, Saññā, and Sañkhāra - How They Relate
- Sañkhāra Aggregate
- Sañkhāra - What It Really Means
- Viññāna Aggregate
- Viññāna - What It Really Means
- Kamma Viññāna - Link Between Mind and Matter
- Anidassana Viññāna - What It Really Means
- Sakkāya Diṭthi
- Do I Have "A Mind" That Is Fixed and "Mine"?
- Nāmarūpa Formation
- Kamma Viññāna and Nāmarūpa Paricceda Nāna


## Buddha Dhamma

User's Guide to Pure Dhamma Website
Buddha Dhamma - A Scientific Approach

- Introduction - A Scientific Approach to Buddha Dhamma
- Theories of Our World - Scientific Overview
- Mind and Matter - Buddhist Analysis
- Sensual Pleasures - The Hidden Suffering
- Kammic Energy Leads to Consciousness
$\circ$ Brain and the Gandhabba
- Mind Is Not in the Brain
- Gandhabba in a Human Body - an Analogy
- Persistent Vegetative State - Buddhist View
- Patient H.M. - Different Roles of Brain in Memory
- Memory Recall for Gandhabba in a Human Body
- Our Two Worlds - Rūpa Loka and Nāma Loka
- Autobiographical Memory - Preserved in Nāma Loka
- Rūpa and Rūpakkhandha, Nāma and Nāmagotta
- Response to a Sensory Stimulus - Role of Gati/Anusaya
- Ārammana Plays a Critical Role in a Sensory Even
- Nāma Loka and Rūpa Loka - Two Parts of Our World
- Tipitaka - A Systematic Approach
- Tipitaka - The Uniqueness of Buddha Dhamma
- Pāli Canon Is Self-Contained but Requires Detailed Explanation
- Vinaya Pitaka - More Than Disciplinary Rules
- Abhidhamma Pitaka - Deeper Analyses of Concepts
- Antarābhava and Gandhabba
- Antarābhava - No Connection to Gandhabba
- Antarābhava Discussion in Kathāvatthu - Not Relevant to Gandhabba
- How Do We See? - Role of the Gandhabba
- Interpretation of the Tipitaka - Gandhabba Example

Buddhahood Associated Controversies

- Buddhahood Controversies - Introduction
- Pātihhāriya (Supernormal Abilities) of a Buddha - Part I
- Pātināriya (Supernormal Abilities) of a Buddha - Part II

What is Buddha Dhamma?
Foundation of Dhamma
The Importance of Purifying the Mind

## The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma

- The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma - Introduction
- Our Two Worlds: Material and Immaterial
- 31 Realms Associated with the Earth
- Gandhabba - Only in Human and Animal Realms
- Body Types in 31 Realms - Importance of Manomaya Kāya
- Gandhabba Sensing the World - With and Without a Physical Body
- Nibbāna in the Big Picture

Buddha Dhamma: Non-Perceivability and Self-Consistency
Samsāric Time Scale, Buddhist Cosmology, and the Big Bang Theory
Evidence for Rebirth

## Power of the Human Mind

- Power of the Human Mind - Introduction
- Difference Between Jhāna and Stages of Nibbāna
- Power of the Human Mind - Anāriya or Mundane Jhānā
- Power of the Human Mind - Ariya Jhānā
- Are There Procedures for Attaining Magga Phala, Jhāna and Abhiñña?

Transfer of Merits (Pattidāna) - How Does it Happen?
First Noble Truth is Suffering? Myths about Suffering
Vinaya - The Nature Likes to be in Equilibrium

## Buddhist Chanting

- Buddhist Chanting - Introduction
- Sadhu - Symbolizes Purified Hadaya Vatthu (Mind)
- Namaskāraya - Homage to the Buddha
- Supreme Qualities of Buddha, Dhamma, Sañgha
- The Five Precepts - Pañca Sila
- Sutta Chanting (with Päli Text)


## Myths or Realities?

- Animisa Locana Bodhi Poojawa - A Prelude to Acts of Gratitude
- Paramita and Niyata Vivarana - Myths or Realities?
- Tisarana Vandana and Its Effects on One's Gati
- Does the Hell (Niraya) Exist?
- Can Buddhist Meditation be Dangerous?
- Boy Who Remembered Pāli Suttā for 1500 Years
- Do Buddhists Pray and Engage in Idol Worshipping?

Also see, "Mystical Phenomena in Buddhism?" in the subsection, "Origin of Life" Also see, "Myths about Meditation" in the subsection, "Bhāvanā (Meditation)"

## Key Dhamma Concepts

## - Basic Framework of Buddha Dhamma

- Buddha Dhamma - Noble Truths, Paticca Samuppāda, Tilakkhana
- Noble Truths, Paticca Samuppāda, Tilakkhana - Key Relationships
- Anicca Nature, the First Noble Truth, and Paticca Samuppāda

Tilakkhana - Introduction

- Anicca and Anatta - Two Characteristics of the World
- Anuloma Khanti and Sammattaniyāma - Pre-requisites for a Sotāpanna
- Anicca Nature - Not Possible to Overcome Suffering in This World
- Dukkha in Tilakkhana Is a Characteristic - Not Dukkha Vedanā
- Attachment to Things with Dukkha Lakkhana Leads to Dukkha
- How Does Anicca Nature Lead to Dukkha?
- Anatta is a Characteristic of the World, not About a "Self"
- Anatta in Anattalakkhana Sutta - Part 1
- Anatta in Anattalakkhana Sutta - Part 2


## Critically-Relevant Posts in Other Sections:

- Sañkhāra - What It Really Means
- Correct Meaning of Vacī Sañkhāra


## - Concept of "San"

- What is "San"? Meaning of Sansara (or Samsara)
- Sañkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka
- Sañkhāra - Life is a Bundle of Sañkhāra
- Difference Between Dhamma and Sañkhāra
- Kamma are Done with Sañkhāra - Types of Sañkhāra


## - Nibbāna

- How to Taste Nibbāna
- Nirāmisa Sukha
- Nibbāna - Is it Difficult to Understand?
- The Four Stages in Attaining Nibbāna
- What Are Rūpa? (Relation to Nibbāna)
- Does the First Noble Truth Describe only Suffering?
- Nirodha and Vaya - Two Different Concepts
- Nibbāna "Exists", but Not in This World


## - Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta

## Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta - Wrong Interpretations

The Way to Nibbāna - Transcription of a Discourse by Waharaka Thero

- Anicca - True Meaning
- Anicca - Inability to Keep What We Like
- Anicca - Repeated Arising/Destruction
- Anicca - Worthlessness of Worldly Things
- Anicca - The Incessant Distress ("Pïlana")
- How to Cultivate Anicca Sañ̃ña
- How to Cultivate the Anicca Saññā - II
- IfEverything is Anicca Should We Just give up Everything?
- Anattā - A Systematic Analysis
- Anattā in Anattalakkahana Sutta - No Soul or an Ātma
- Anatta - No Refuge in This World
- Dasa Akusala and Anatta - The Critical Link
- Anatta - the Opposite of Which Atta?
- Anattā (Mundane Interpretation) - No "Unchanging Self"

Anatta and Dukkha - True Meanings
Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta - According to Some Key Suttā
Three Marks of Existence - English Discourses

- Sotāpanna Stage and Tilakkhaṇa
- Sakkāya Ditthi and Tilakkhana
- Sakkāya Ditthi - Getting Rid of Deeper Wrong Views
- Associations (Sevana)- A Root Cause of Wrong Views

Why are Tilakkhana not Included in 37 Factors of Enlightenment?
Two Versions of 37 Factors of Enlightenment
Types of Bodies in 31 Realms - Connection to Jhāna
Finest Manomaya Kāya of an Arūpāvacara Brahma

- Gati, Bhava, and Jāti
- Nāmagotta, Bhava, Kamma Bija, and Mano Loka (Mind Plane)
- Gati and Bhava - Many Varieties
- Gati to Bhava to Jāti - Ours to Control
- Memory, Brain, Mind, Nāma Loka, Kamma Bhava, Kamma Vipāka
- Bhava and Jāti - States of Existence and Births Therein
- Cuti and Marana - Related to Bhava and Jāti
- Anusaya, Gati, Bhava - Connection to Manomaya Kāya (Gandhabba)
- Difference Between Tanhā and Upādāna
- Pāpa Kamma Versus Akusala Kamma
- Sorting out Some Key Pāli Terms (Taṇhā, Lobha, Dosa, Moha, etc)
- Kāma Tanhā, Bhava Tanhā, Vibhava Tanhā
- Lobha, Raga and Kāmachanda, Kāmarāga
- Lobha, Dosa, Moha versus Rāga, Patigha, Avijīā
- What Are Kilesa (Mental Impurities)? - Connection to Cetasika
- Ditthi (Wrong Views), Sammā Ditthi (Good/Correct Views)
- Anantara and Samanantara Paccayā
- What is Avijjā (Ignorance)?
- Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways
- Indriya and Āyatana - Big Difference
- Hetu-Phala, Paccuppanna, and Paticca Samuppāda
- Correct Meaning of Vacī Sañkhāra
- Pañca Indriya and Pañca Bala - Five Faculties and Five Powers
- Kāmaccandha and Icca - Being Blinded by Cravings
- The Five Aggregates (Pañcakkhandha)
- Five Aggregates - Introduction
- Difference Between Physical Rūpa and Rūpakkhandha
- Rūpakkhandha and Rūpa Upādānakkhandha
- Arising of Five Aggregates Based on an Ārammana
- Memory Records - Critical Part of Five Aggregates
- Pañca Upādānakkhandhā - Introduction
- Five Aggregates - Connection to Tilakkhana
- Five Aggregates and Tilakkhana - Introduction
- Icca, Nicca, Anicca - Important Connections
- "Me" and "Mine" - The Root Cause of Suffering
- Difference Between "Me and Mine" and Sakkāya Ditthi
- Sakkāya Ditthi - "Me and Mine" View
- Atta - Two Very Different Meanings
- "Saññā (Perception)"
- "Vedanā (Feelings)"
- Sañkhāra is discussed at, "Sañkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka."
- "Viññāna (Consciousness)"
- "Rūpa (Material Form )"


## Deeper Analyses:

- Pañcakkhandha or Five Aggregates - A Misinterpreted Concept
- Pañcupādānakkhandha - It is All Mental


## Paṭicca Samuppāda

Paticca Samuppāda - "Pati+ichcha" + "Sama+uppāda"
Sakkāya Ditthi and Paticca Samuppāda

- Sakkāya Ditthi - Wrong View of "Me" and "Mine"
- What Reincarnates? - Concept Of A Lifestream
- Anatta and Sakkāya Ditthi - Two Different Concepts

Paticca Samuppāda - Essenntial Concepts

- Nibbāna - Rāgakkhaya Dosakkhaya Mohakkhaya - Part 1
- Pañca Nīvarana and Sensual Pleasures (Kāma)
- What Is "Kāma"? It Is Not Just Sex
- Icchā, Tanhā, Kāma - Root Causes of Suffering
- Jāti- Different Types of Births
- Bhava - Kammic Energy That Can Power an Existence
- Bhava and Punabbhava - Kammic Energy Giving Rise to Renewed Existence
- Concepts of Upādāna and Upādānakkhandha
- Difference Between Physical Rūpa and Rūpakkhandha
- Where Are Memories "Stored"? - Connection to Pañcakkhandha
- Loka Sutta - Origin and Cessation of the World
- Dukkha Samudaya Starts With Samphassa-Jā-Vedanā
- Key Steps of Kammic Energy Accumulation
- Generating Kammic Energy in the "Upādāna Paccayā Bhava"
- Six Root Causes - Loka Samudaya (Arising of Suffering) and Loka Nirodhaya (Nibbāna)

Paticca Samuppāda, Tilakkhana, Four Noble Truths

- Paticca Samuppāda - Introduction
- What Did the Buddha Mean by a "Loka"?
- Future Suffering (Loka/Dukkha Samudaya) Starts With Sensory Input (Ārammana)
- Sotāpanna - One With the "Wider Worldview" of the Buddha
- Sotāpannā - Just Starting on the Noble Path
- Yoniso Manasikāra and Paticca Samuppāda
- Dhamma - Different Meanings Depending on the Context
- Dhammānudhamma Patipatti - Connection to Paticca Samuppāda/Tilakkhana

Understanding the Terms in Paticca Samuppāda

- Distortion of Pāli Keywords in Paticca Samuppāda
- Sañkhāra - Many Meanings
- Sañkhāra - Should Not be Translated as a Single Word
- Kamma and Sañkhāra, Cetanā and Sañcetanā
- Kusala-Mūla Sañkhāra Are Needed to Attain Nibbāna
- Rebirths Take Place According to Abhisañkhāra
- Viññāna - Two Critical Meanings
- Abhisañkhāra Lead to Kamma Viññāna
- Two Types of Kamma Viññāña
- Summary of Key Concepts About Viññāna and Sañkhāra
- Anidassana, Appatigha Rūpa Due to Anidassana Viññāna
- Memory, Dhammā, and Viññāna Dhātu
- Critical Influence of Wrong Views on Akusala Citta
- Near-Death Experiences (NDE): Brain Is Not the Mind
- Gandhabba (Mental Body) Separating from Physical Body in Jhāna
- Where Are Memories Stored? - Viññāna Dhātu
- Citta Vithi - Fundamental Sensory Unit
- Does any Object (Rūpa) Last only 17 Thought Moments?
- Phassa (Contact) - Contact With Pasāda Rūpa
- Arising of the Five Aggregates With an Ārammana

Paticca Samuppāda - Overview
How Are Patticca Samuppāda Cycles Initiated?
What Does "Paccayā" Mean in Paticca Samuppāda?

## Paṭicca Samuppāda Cycles

- Avyākata Paticca Samuppāda for Vipāka Viñ̃̃āna
- Akusala-Mūla Upapatti Paticca Samuppāda
- Kusala-Mūla Paticca Samuppāda
- Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda
- Upapatti Paticca Samuppāda (How We Create Our Own Rebirths)


## Paticca Samuppāda in Plain English

- Introduction - What is Suffering?
- Introduction -2 - The Three Categories of Suffering
- Avijjā paccayā Sañkhāra
- Sañkhāra paccayā Viññāna - 1
- Sañkhāra paccayā Viññāna - 2
- Viññāna paccayā Nāmarūpa
- Nāmarūpa paccayā Salāyatana
- Difference between Phassa and Samphassa
- Phassa paccayā Vedanā....to Bhava
- Bhava paccayā Jāti. ...Jarā, Marana, ...

Imasmim Sati Idam Hoti - What Does It Really Mean?
Upapatti Paticca Samuppāda (How We Create Our Own Rebirths)
Patiloma Paticca Samuppāda - Key to Nibbāna

## Paṭthāna Dhamma

- Patthāna Dhamma - Connection to Cause and Effect (Hetu Phala)
- Anantara and Samanantara Paccayā
- Āsevana and Annamanna Paccayā


## Assāda, Ādīnava, Nissaraṇa

- Assāda, Ādīnava, Nissarana - Introduction
- How Perceived Pleasures (Assāda) lead to Dukkha
- Kāma Guna, Kāma, Kāma Rāga, Kāmacchanda
- Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways
- Feelings: Sukha, Dukha, Somanassa, and Domanassa
- What is "Kāma"? It is not Just Sex
- Kāma Assāda Start with Phassa Paccayā Vedanā or Samphassa Jā Vedanā


## Origin of Life

- Origin of Life - There is No Traceable Origin
- Human Life - A Mental Base (Gandhabba) and a Material Base (Cell)
- Clarification of "Mental Body" and "Physical Body" - Different Types of "Kāya"
- Four Types of Births in Buddhism
- Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception
- Cloning and Gandhabba
- Living Cell - How Did the First Cell Come to Existence?
- Mystical Phenomena in Buddhism?


## Views on Life

- Views on Life - Wrong View of Materialism
- Wrong View of Creationism (and Eternal Future Life) - Part 1
- Wrong View of Creationism (and Eternal Future Life) - Part 2
- Worldview of the Buddha
- Buddhist Worldview - Introduction
- Contact Between Āyatana Leads to Vipāka Viññāna
- How Do Sense Faculties Become Internal Āyatana?
- Indriya Make Phassa and Āyatana Make Samphassa
- Is There a "Self"?
- Citta - Basis of Our Experience and Actions
- Vipāka Vedanā and "Samphassa jā Vedanā" in a Sensory Event
- Kāma Guna - Origin of Attachment (Tanhā)
- Vision Is a Series of "Snapshots" - Movie Analogy
- Chachakka Sutta - Six Types of Vipāka Viññāna
- Sakkāya Ditthi in Terms of Attā or "Self" or "Ātma"
- An Apparent "Selp" Is Involved in Kamma Generation
- Paticca Samuppāda - Not "Self" or 'No-Self"
- Tanhā - The Origin of Suffering
- Paticca Samuppāda - A "Self" Exists Due to Avijijā
- Kamma, Sañkhāra, and Abhisañkhāra
- Vacī Sañkhāra - Sañkappa (Conscious Thoughts) and Vācā (Speech)
- Tanhā Paccayā Upādāna - Critical Step in Paticca Samuppāda
- Moha/Avijiā and Vipāka Viññāna/Kamma Viññāna
- Icchā (Cravings) Lead to Upādāna and to Eventual Suffering
- Dhammā, Kamma, Sañkhāra, Mind - Critical Connections
- Paticca Samuppāda - From Mind to Matter
- Kamma and Paticca Samuppāda
- Kamma and Paticca Samuppāda - Introduction
- Kāma Assāda - A Root Cause of Suffering
- Gati (Habits/Character) Determine Births - Samsappanīya Sutta
- Wider Worldview of the Buddha
- The Framework of Buddha Dhamma
- The Suffering (Dukkha) in the First Noble Truth
- Dangers of Ten Types of Wrong Views and Four Possible Paths
- Sammā Ditthī - Only One Leads to the Noble Path
- Fear of Nibbāna (Enlightenment)
- Worldview of the Buddha - Explanatory Material
- Ghost 1990 Movie - Good Depiction of Gandhabba Concept
- Mental Body Versus the Physical Body
- "Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars - Part 1
- "Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars - Part 2
- Origin of Life - One Creates One's Own Future Lives


## Bhāvanā (Meditation)

The numbered posts are to be read in that order. Even for those who are practicing Buddhists, I recommend starting at the Introduction (\#1), and going down the list of topics at least the first time.

- It would be a good idea to read the posts in the following subsection at some point, in order to get an idea about the reasoning behind this approach: "Essential Buddhism."
- 1. Introduction to Buddhist Meditation
- 2. The Basics in Meditation
- 3. The Second Level - Key to Purify the Mind
- 4. What do all these Different Meditation Techniques Mean?
- 5. Ariya Mettā Bhāvanā (Loving Kindness Meditation)
- 6. Ānāpānasati Bhāvanā (Introduction)
- 7. What is Ānāpāna?
- Is Ānāpānasati Breath Meditation?
- 8. The Basic Formal Ānāpānasati Meditation
- Possible Effects in Meditation - Kundalini Awakening
- 9. Key to Ānāpānasati - How to Change Habits and Character (Gati)
- Karaniya Mettā Sutta - Mettā Bhāvanā
- 10. Attaining the Sotāpanna Stage via Removing Ditthāsava
- 11. Magga Phala and Ariya Jhānā via Cultivation of Saptha Bojjanga
- 12. Key Factors to be Considered when "Meditating" for the Sotāpanna Stage
- 13. Kammattana (Recitations) for the Sotāpanna Stage


## Important Related Posts

- Anussati and Anupassanā - Being Mindful and Removing Defilements
- Myths about Meditation
- A Simple Way to Enhance Merits (Kusala) and Avoid Demerits (Akusala)
- Anicca - The Incessant Distress ("Pïlana")
- Pañca Indriva and Pañca Bala - Five Faculties and Five Powers
- Possible Outcomes of Meditation - Samādhi, Jhāna, Magga Phala
- What is Samādhi? - Three Kinds of Mindfulness
- Getting to Samādhi via Formal Mediation Sessions
- Are you not getting expected results from meditation?


## Sutta Interpretations

Sutta Interpretation - Uddesa, Niddesa, Patiniddesa
Pāli Dictionaries - Are They Reliable?
Nikāya in the Sutta Pitaka
Sutta Learning Sequence for the Present Day

## Mahā Satipaṭthāna Sutta

- Satipatthāna Sutta - Structure
- Satipatthāna - Introduction
- Kāyānupassanā - Section on Postures (Iriyapathapabba)
- Kāyānupassanā - The Section on Habits (Sampajanapabba)
- Prerequisites for the Satipatthāna Bhāvanā
- What is "Kāya" in Kāyānupassanā?

Mahā Cattārīsaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty)

## Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta

- Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta Interpretation - Uddesa, Niddesa, Patiniddesa
- Essence of Buddhism - In the First Sutta
- Majjima Patipada - Way to Relinquish Attachments to this World
- Tiparivattaya and Twelve Types of Ñāna (Knowledge)
- Relinquishing Defilements via Three Rounds and Four Stages


## Ańguttara Nikāya - Suttā on Key Concepts

- Dasa Akusala/Dasa Kusala - Basis of Buddha Dhamma
- Dasa Akusala/Dasa Kusala - Basis of Buddha Dhamma -2

Na Cetanākaranīya Sutta
Pathama Mettā Sutta
Kukkuravatika Sutta (Majihima Nikaya 57) - Kammakkhaya
Buddhism and Evolution - Aggañña Sutta (DN 27)
Tapussa Sutta (AN 9.41)- Akuppā Cetovimutti
Yamaka Sutta (SN 22.85) - Arahanthood Is Not Annihilation but End of Suffering
Three Types of "Bodies" - Potthapāda Sutta (DN 9)

## Seeking Nibbāna

- Attha Purisa Puggalā- Eight Noble Persons
- Āsava, Anusaya, and Gati (Gathi)
- "The Way to Nibbāna - Removal of Āsavas"
- Kanha (Dark) and Sukka (Bright) Kamma and Kammakkhaya
- Dasa Samyojana - Bonds in Rebirth Process
- The Cooling Down Process (Nibbāna) - How Root Causes are Removed
- "Why is Correct Interpretation of Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta so Important?"
- "How to Cultivate the Noble Eightfold Path Starting with Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta"
- "Akusala Citta - How a Sotāpanna Avoids Apāyagāmī Citta"
- Difference Between Giving Up Valuables and Losing Interest in Worthless


## Sotāpanna Stage of Nibbāna

The first stage of Nibbāna - the Sotāpanna stage - is also called the Stream Enterer in English and Sovān in Sinhala.

- The Sotāpanna Stage
- Why a Sotāpanna is Better off than any King, Emperor, or a Billionaire
- Myths about the Sotāpanna Stage
- Anuloma Patiloma Paticca Samuppāda - Key to Sotāpanna Stage
- Sotāpanna Anugāmi and a Sotāpanna
- Sotāpanna Anugāmi - No More Births in the Apāyā
- Four Conditions for Attaining Sotāpanna Magga/Phala
- Sotāpatti Anga - The Four Qualities of a Sotāpanna
- Sammā Ditthi - Realization, Not Memorization
- Assāda, Ādinnava, Nissarana
- Sakkāya Ditthi is Personality (Me) View?
- How Does One Know whether the Sotāpanna Stage is Reached?
- Akusala Citta - How Does a Sotāpanna Avoids Apāyagāmī Citta
- What is the only Akusala Removed by a Sotāpanna?
- Uadayavaya Ñāna
- Micchā Ditthi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage - (in the "Mental Body - Gandhabba" section).
- 12. Key Factors to be Considered when "Meditating" for the Sotāpanna Stage (in the Meditation section).
Also, see the following posts in the Abhidhamma section for more details (these could be helpful even if you have not studied Abhidhamma):
- Why do People Enjoy Immoral Deeds? - Ditthi is Key
- Key to Sotāpanna Stage - Ditthi and Vicikicchā


## Discussion Forum

- Forums
- Pure Dhamma Discussion Forum Guidelines


## Abhidhamma

- Abhidhamma - Introduction


## Essential Abhidhamma - The Basics

- Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)
- The Amazing Mind - Critical Role of Nāmagotta (Memories)
- Citta and Cetasika - How Viññāna (Consciousness) Arises
- State of Mind in the Absence of Citta Vithi - Bhavañga
- Bhava and Bhavañga - Simply Explained!
- Citta Vithi - Processing of Sense Inputs
- Javana of a Citta - The Root of Mental Power
- Cetasika - Connection to Gati


## Mind and Consciousness

- What is Mind? How do we Experience the Outside World?
- What is a Thought?
- What is in a Thought? Why Gati are so Important?
- What is Consciousness?
- 1. Thoughts (Citta), Consciousness (Viññ̄āna), and Mind (Hadaya Vatthu) - Introduction
- 2. Viññāna (Consciousness) can be of Many Different Types and Forms
- 3. Viñ̃nāna, Thoughts, and the Subconscious


## Citta and Cetasika

- Citta and Cetasika - How Viññāna (Consciousness) Arises
- What is a Thought?
- What is in a Thought? Why Gati are so Important?
- Citta Vithi - Processing of Sense Inputs
- Javana of a Citta - The Root of Mental Power


## Gandhabba (Manomava Kāva)

- Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya)- Introduction
- Does any Object (Rūpa) Last only 17 Thought Moments?
- Hidden World of the Gandhabba: Netherworld (Paraloka)
- Ghost in the Machine - Synonym for the Manomaya Kāya?
- Manomaya Kāya (Gandhabba) and the Physical Body
- Brain - Interface between Mind and Body
- Manomaya Kāya and Out-of-Body Experience (OBE)
- Cuti-Patisandhi - An Abhidhamma Description
- These posts complement some of the posts in the "Udayavaya Ñāna" section, which is important for the Sotāpanna stage of Nibbāna. All these are pieces of a complex puzzle, but they are all inter-consistent. So, don't worry if you do not understand it all; with time it will all make sense and will lead to unbreakable faith in Buddha Dhamma even through future lives. Faith comes via true understanding.


## Abhidhamma Via Science

- Neuroscience says there is no Free Will? - That is a Misinterpretation!
- The Double Slit Experiment - Correlation between Mind and Matter?
- Vision (Cakkhu Viññāna) is Not Just Seeing


## Role of the Brain in Human Consciousness

- Body Types in Different Realms - Importance of Manomaya Kaya
- Does the Hell (Niraya) Exist?

Why Do People Enjoy Immoral Deeds? - Ditthi Is Key

Key to Sotāpanna Stage - Ditthi and Vicikicchā

## Deeper Analyses

- The Origin of Matter - Suddhatthaka
- What are Dhamma? - A Deeper Analysis
- Pabhassara Citta, Radiant Mind, and Bhavañga


## Comments/Reviews

- Discussion of Comments (These are based on questions sent to me via email by readers prior to 2018. In late 2017, a discussion forum was launched: "Forums.")
- Details of Kamma - Intention, Who Is Affected, Kamma Patha
- Would Nibbāna be Possible if Impermanence is the Cause of Suffering?
o "Self" and "no-self": A Simple Analysis
- Craving for Pornography - How to Reduce the Tendency
- Book Reviews
- "Why Does the World Exist?" by Jim Holt
- "Waking Up" by Sam Harris
- "The Language of God" by Francis Collins
- "Spark" by John Ratey
o "The Life of the Buddha" by Bhikkhu Nānamoli


## Myths or Realities?

- Animisa Locana Bodhi Poojawa - A Prelude to Acts of Gratitude
- Paramita and Niyata Vivarana - Myths or Realities?
- Tisarana Vandana and Its Effects on One's Gati
- Does the Hell (Niraya) Exist?
- Can Buddhist Meditation be Dangerous?
- Boy Who Remembered Pāli Suttā for 1500 Years
- Do Buddhists Pray and Engage in Idol Worshipping?
- Also see, "Mystical Phenomena in Buddhism?" in the subsection, "Origin of Life"
- Also see, "Myths about Meditation" in the subsection, "Bhāvanā (Meditation)"


## Tables and Summaries

- Pāli Glossary - (A-K)
- Pāli Glossary - (L-Z)
- List of "San" Words and Other Pāli Roots
- The 89 Cittas
- Cetasika (Mental Factors)
- Rūpa (Material Form)
- Rūpa - Generation Mechanisms
- Rūpa Kalāpa (Grouping of Matter)
- Akusala Citta and Akusala Vipāka Citta
- 37 Factors of Enlightenment
- Conditions for the Four Stages of Nibbāna
- Ultimate Realities - Table
- 31 Realms of Existence


## Historical Background

- Historical Background - Introduction
- Methods of Delivery of Dhamma by the Buddha
- Misconceptions on the Topics the Buddha "Refused to Answer"
- Misinterpretations of Buddha Dhamma
- Preservation of the Dhamma
- "Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars - Part 1
- "Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars - Part 2
- Historical Time-line of Edward Conze
- Why is it Critical to Find the Pure Buddha Dhamma?
- Key Problems with Mahāyāna Teachings
- Saddharma Pundarika Sutra (Lotus Sutra) - A Focused Analysis
- What is Suñyata or Suññata (Emptiness)?
- Incorrect Theravāda Interpretations - Historical Time-line
- Buddhaghosa and Visuddhimagga - Historical Background
- Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga - A Focused Analysis
- Background on the Current Revival of Buddha Dhamma
- Misinterpretation of Anicca and Anatta by Early European Scholars
- Tipitaka Commentaries - Helpful or Misleading?


## Dhamma and Science

- Dhamma and Science - Introduction
- Good Explanations - Key to Weed Out Bad Interpretations

Subsection: Origin of Life (see above)

## Consciousness - A Dhamma Perspective

- What is Consciousness?
- What Happens in Other Dimensions? [Consciousness Dependence on Number of Dimensions]
- Six Kinds of Consciousness in Our 3-D World
- Expanding "Consciousness" by Using Technology
- Expanding "Consciousness" by Purifying the Mind


## Consistencies with Science

- Second Law of Thermodynamics is Part of Anicca!
- Quantum Entanglement - We Are All Connected
- Infinity - How Big Is It?
- Gödel's Incompleteness Theorem
- Truine Brain: How the Mind Rewires the Brain via Meditation/Habits
- How Habits are Formed and Broken - A Scientific View


## Inconsistencies with Science

1. We all are impressed by the scientific advances made during the past 100 years or so making our lives easier and more productive. I am actually a cheerleader for scientific and technological advances.

- Physics had been my passion since high school days, and that changed when I started learning Buddha Dhamma several years ago. I still love and work on topics of interest in physics (and science in general). Fortunately, I am finding that those two interests are not mutually exclusive, and there is significant overlap. In fact, this section is the result of my two overlapping interests.

2. The following posts discuss cases where current theories of science are not consistent with Buddha Dhamma. I believe that science will recognize the primary nature of the mind in the future, and will discard the current notion that the mind (consciousness) arises out of inert matter.
Neuroscience says there is no Free Will? - That is a Misinterpretation!
The Double Slit Experiment - Correlation between Mind and Matter?
Vision (Cakkhu Viññāna) is Not Just Seeing
3. Despite the advances in science and technology, there is much about the human mind that science does not understand, and has not even begun to understand. Western science is based on the five physical senses, leaving out the most important one, the mind.

- At the present time, in 2016, scientists have the wrong view that consciousness originates in the brain.
- All scientific theories relating to the mind are based on this wrong hypothesis. However, Buddha Dhamma says not only that mind is a sense of its own, but it is the most powerful of all six senses.
Here is a post from the Abhidhamma section that has a deeper analysis of the brain-mind connection:


## Brain - Interface between Mind and Body

## Quantum Mechanics and Dhamma

This section will discuss two issues:

1. A new interpretation of quantum mechanics (QM) based on non-locality is presented based on Feynman's ideas. Concepts like wave-particle duality, observer effect, are not needed. Furthermore, complex interpretations like the "Many-Worlds interpretation" are avoided. All existing experimental data will be shown to be consistent with this interpretation.
2. A deeper understanding of how kamma automatically lead to corresponding kamma vipāka in Buddhism (Buddha Dhamma), becomes clear with this interpretation.

## Quantum Mechanics and Dhamma - Introduction

Quantum Mechanics and Consciousness
Quantum Mechanics - A New Interpretation

- What Is a Wave and What Is a Particle?
- Photons Are Particles Not Waves

Basis of the Proposed Interpretation - Feynman's Technique in QED

- Feynman's Glass Plate Experiment
- Feynman's Method of "A Particle Exploring All Possible Paths"
- "Exploring All Possible Paths" Leads to Fermat's Principle of Least Time


## Dhamma and Philosophy

- Dhamma and Philosophy - Introduction
- Philosophy of the Mind
- Is Buddha Dhamma (Buddhism) a Religion?
- The Infinity Problem in Buddhism
- Free Will in Buddhism - Connection to Sañkhāra


## Miscellaneous

- Pure Dhamma - Reflections on 2019
- Pure Dhamma - Reflections on 2018
- Pure Dhamma - Reflections on 2017
- Pure Dhamma - Reflections on 2016
- Pure Dhamma - Reflections on 2015
- Pure Dhamma - Reflections on 2014
- Buddha Dhamma - In a Chart
- Nirāmisa Sukha - In a Chart
- Ancient teeth found in China challenge modern human migration theory
- Mars Curiosity Photos Suggest Life May Have Existed on Red Planet
- Recent Publications on Benefits of Meditation
- Laniakea: Our home supercluster
- Think Outside the Box!
- There are as many creatures on your body as there are people on Earth!
- News Article on Robin Williams and Buddhist Meditation
- World Historical Time-line
- Second Largest Religion by State in the US


[^0]:    "Three Levels of Practice" "Living Dhamma" "Key Dhamma Concepts" "Dhamma and Science"
    "Paticca Samuppāda" "Sutta Interpretations" "Historical Background"" "Abhidhamma"
    "Bhāvanā (Meditation)" "Buddhist Chanting" "Tables and Summaries" "Discussion Forum"
    "Quantum Mechanics and Dhamma" "Dhamma and Philosophy"

[^1]:    Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta
    Udayavaya Nana
    What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Samsāra)
    Bhūta and Yathābhūta - What Do They Really Mean

[^2]:    - Tanhā - How We Attach Via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance

[^3]:    "Kilesa - Relationship To Akusala, Kusala, And Puñña Kamma"

[^4]:    "Seyyathāpi, bhikkhave, ayamं mahāpathavī ekodakā assa. Tatra puriso ekacchiggalam் yugam் pakkhipeyya. Tamenam puratthimo vāto pacchimena samihareyya, pacchimo vāto puratthimena sam்hareyya, uttaro vāto dakkhinena sam̉hareyya, dakkhiṇo vāto uttarena samंhareyya. Tatrassa kāṇo kacchapo. So vassasatassa vassasatassa accayena sakim sakiṁ ummujjeyya. Taṁ kim maññatha, bhikkhave, api nu kho kāṇo kacchapo vassasatassa vassasatassa accayena sakim sakim ummujjanto amusmim ekacchiggale yuge givam paveseyyā"tit? "Adhiccamidam, bhante, yam so kāno kacchapo vassasatassa vassasatassa accayena sakim sakim ummujjanto amusmim ekacchiggale yuge givamं paveseyyā"ti.
    "Evam adhiccamidaṁ, bhikkhave, yamं manussattam labhati. Evamं adhiccamidam, bhikkhave, yam tathāgato loke uppajjati arahamं sammāsambuddho. Evam adhiccamidam̉, bhikkhave, yam tathāgatappavedito dhammavinayo loke dibbati. Tassidam, bhikkhave, manussattam laddhamं, tathāgato loke uppanno araham sammāsambuddho, tathāgatappavedito ca dhammavinayo loke dibbati.

[^5]:    3. As I briefly stated in a previous post, dhammā are the underlying energies (or "kamma seeds" or "kamma bīja") created by the mind. See, "Moha/Avijjā and Vipāka Viññāna/Kamma Viññān̄a."

    - A seed has the POTENTIAL to give rise to a tree under proper conditions like good soil, water, and sunlight. In the same way, dhammā (a kamma bīja) has the POTENTIAL to give rise to things (both living and inert) in this word.
    - Pațicca Samuppāda describes the complex process of a dhammā (a kamma büja) giving rise to future lives. It also explains the arising of the external world that sustains life. We will address just the first part for now.

[^6]:    "kammā vipāka vaḍ̣hanti, vipāko kamma sambhavo

[^7]:    - Brain - Interface between Mind and Body

